

# Winding Trails: by Al Hobart

Thursday, November 24, 1966  
Illinois Valley News

## RATS!

My emotional reactions to the experiences I've had with our local wild animals have run the gamut from extreme pleasurable interest through glee, wonder and sadness, to near-nervous breakdown, and on one occasion, to towering rage.

These last two items were occasioned by my battles with the rats, in my estimation the most disgusting animals in creation. A group of these pesky critters decided one time to take over my cabin, and when I contested their right to make my castle their home they persisted till I was on the point of flipping my lid. It was during the last World War when I was away from home for much of the

time working in the meat-packing industry up north.

To begin with, I guess the rats—with some justification—thought I'd abandoned the place. First they found a hole big enough to squeeze through; from then on the run of the place was theirs. They carved new holes and dragged in half the forest to build the kind of nests they were accustomed to. These they reinforced and lined comfortably with tablecloths, towels, mattress stuffing, shredded garments, etc. On my several yearly vacations of course I came back to the old diggings, and divided my time between fighting the invaders and roaming the hills in search of bigger game.

When at last I came home to stay, the rats and I settled down to a determined war of occupation. Mostly it was a war of wits and nerves, to see who would crack first, the rats or me. Being nocturnal they had certain

advantages, and a time or two I was on the point of tossing in the sponge. They'd raid my supplies, drag things noisily across the floor. They would wake me up half a dozen times during the night. My nerves were in such a state that sometimes I'd wake up trembling like an aspen.

Finally, when I'd plugged half a dozen holes where they'd got into the cabin, I decided I had them licked, and declared myself the winner. But that night I awoke to the familiar bumpity-bump of a potato being rolled across the floor and down the step into the storeroom, where they'd found several ways to get into the house. I never did figure out where this last one got in, but luckily (for me) he chose the wrong exit in trying to escape.

I had used any available object at hand to stop up the rat holes I'd found, and one of these I'd finished sealing

off with a pair of pliers that happened to be handy. When this last big brown slick-tailed rascal found himself being pursued by a naked demon with a flashlight in his hand, he decided to abandon his potato harvesting project temporarily and dived for one of the familiar escape holes. He managed to squeeze his head and front quarters into the tampered-with hole, and there he stuck. Grabbing the pair of pliers from an adjacent one-time escape corridor, I clamped them down on the base of his thick, long tail. He let out a squall that must have awakened the neighbors half a mile away, and warned the other rats to get out of the country. At any rate that was the final battle in my war with the rat invaders.

This last bold, reckless martyr to the rats' cause came to a sad and sticky end. His hair-raising screech naturally startled me into jerking back and involuntarily

swinging my arm, hanging on to my captive of course. He described a sizzling, neat arc through the air and came down wham on the floor with enough force to crack a plank. He suffered concussion, severe hemorrhage and multiple skull fracture, expiring without ever regaining consciousness. His departing next of kin were notified with E.S.P.

Another time I got into a one-sided shooting scrape with a monstrous big rat that had more determination than sense. On the occasion referred to I had found it expedient to spend the night in an old mining shack up in Cyclone Gap. In the middle of the night I was awakened by a rat making enough racket to rouse the dead. I went after him with my flashlight and Colt 45, and half an hour later succeeded in laying him by the heels—after wrecking the sink, tipping over the cupboard and nearly shooting

down the shack. The rest of the night was peaceful and calm, but I thought I'd never get to sleep again; every time I'd start slipping across the border into the Land of Nod my finicky conscience would prod me awake. After all, my F.C. would remind me, that rat had lived in this old shack so long that by every moral and legal code the title should have been his. I was the intruder kept saying, and really had no business trying to dislodge the rightful occupant.

"But," I heard another little voice whisper soothingly in the other ear, "the rat is a rat wherever he's at, in your home or up here in the sticks; he is rightly defined as a foe of mankind, and never the twain shall mix."

Thus vindicated, I told my blue-nosed conscience to go roll a hoop, tucked myself in and at once fell into a deep, untroubled sleep.

### ROGUE VALLEY



### Food & Friends Menu

**FRIDAY - NOV. 25**

CLOSED FOR  
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY  
**MONDAY - NOV. 28**  
ROAST PORK W/ GRAVY  
**WEDNESDAY - NOV. 30**  
TUNA LOAF  
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delivered please call  
541-955-8839.

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Sponsored by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments

### Thanksgiving in the Community

Free Thanksgiving dinner in Cave Junction will be at Jubilee Park from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. sponsored by the Doug Hoskins Resource Center the Cultural and Ecological Education Network. Volunteers can call 541-291-8860.

I.V. Grange will also provide a free Thanksgiving dinner from 1 - 4 p.m. The Grange is located at 3763 Holland Loop Road. Bridgeview Church will be providing free rides to the Grange. Please call 541-295-7579 to make a reservation.

Sponsored by I.V. Wellness Resources

### Healthy Dogs for the Holidays

Keeping our dogs healthy seems second nature for those of us who have had them for awhile. However, as Thanksgiving draws close and the potential of dinner guests feeding our dogs some of their food becomes a real possibility, perhaps a review of commonly eaten foods toxic to dogs would be appreciated. Here is a list of foods which can harm your dogs. There are reasons for the inclusion of each, but those reasons will not be given here as the article would then be far too long. Anyone curious about the rationale for listing any of the foods can find them easily on-line.

Bones, fat and skin; scallions, garlic and onions; mushrooms; nutmeg; alcohol; nuts—especially macadamia; raw dough; sage; chocolate; (I have listed these first as they are

likely to be included in a Thanksgiving dinner); xylitol; avocado; caffeine; grapes and raisins; dairy products; persimmons, peaches and plums; and raw eggs, meat and fish.

I know many people have given their dogs some of these things many times over the years and have had no trouble, YET. As an illustration I will briefly discuss the first item on the list—bones. Bones, especially turkey and chicken bones, raw or cooked, can splinter into sharp and pointed fragments. This is also true of any animals' ribs and many other cooked bones. These fragments can puncture your dog's intestine causing tremendous pain and death or a very expensive trip to a veterinary hospital. Small bones can get lodged in your dog's throat and choke him/her. Raw bones can carry microbes which

can infect your dog. This is becoming more and more of a problem as too many non-organic commercial food animals are frequently given antibiotics just to keep them alive in the filthy, crowded conditions they are raised in. This routine antibiotic treatment is causing the rise of "super bugs" which are resistant to antibiotics. There is no guarantee that raw organic bones or flesh is safe either. If your dog gets a "super bug" infection, treatment will be expensive or might not be available.

As stated, there are reasons for all the foods listed.

Here is wishing you a happy Thanksgiving and wellness for the holiday season.

For comments you can go to [www.ivwellnessresources@gmail.com](mailto:www.ivwellnessresources@gmail.com).



Illinois Valley Wellness Resources

### Senior Bulletin

#### HOME SAFETY EVALUATIONS

Call Pat Jenkins, RN, MSN with I.V. Wellness Resources for a low cost evaluation at 541-415-0465.

**CHAIR FITNESS** classes FREE at Healthy U, Monday and Wednesdays from 2 - 2:45 p.m. 535 E. River St., Cave Junction Call 541-592-4888.

#### FREE for Seniors

If you are a senior and want to place a **FREE AD** for a living or health care need call Laura at 541-592-2541 or email [laura@illinois-valley-news.com](mailto:laura@illinois-valley-news.com).

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