

# Winding Trails: by Al Hobart

Thursday, January 12, 1967  
Illinois Valley News

## Babyfoot Bat Story

When I was prowling around among my souvenirs a while ago I ran across one that brought back pleasant memories of a botanizing trip I made around Babyfoot Lake a few years ago, and the silent but dramatic story of a minor tragedy revealed to me there by the surprising evidence I found hanging from a tree limb some distance above the water's edge.

The souvenir consists of a small glass jar containing a tangled length of transparent nylon fishing line, with a brown-hackle fly attached, and with the barbed hook securely caught in the still-open mouth of a tiny brown bat.

From some distance away, when I first spotted the strange little object dancing eerily in the breeze my first thought was that it must be a large moth caught in a spider's web. On moving nearer I saw what it was, and no voice was needed to tell me the story of what had happened. The sad truth could probably be told something like this:

One day a fisherman, enjoying an outing at this beautiful secluded little fishing lake, stood beneath the high fir boughs that overhung the water, and made his cast. Right off the bat—at once, that is—he got a nibble and, reacting in a manner that I, as a similarly trigger-nerved amateur angler can readily appreciate, whipped up his pole with enough force to lift a hippopotamus out of the water. If a fish had been on the hook he'd have torn

its head off or the hook loose, depending on how firmly imbedded the hook. Anyway the fishless hook went soaring skyward with the velocity of a Titan booster, taking the near-invisible line with it. A great green bough 15 or 20 feet overhead intercepted the line, which became hopelessly entangled amid the tough twigs and stiff green needles.

The fisherman, whose nervous and impetuous nature should have dictated some other sport than angling, such as solitaire or tiddlywinks, tried in vain to retrieve his line and hook. With characteristic haste and peevishness he soon broke the line, leaving the hook dangling free, high above the water, and went stomping and cursing back along the shore and out of the story.

Later that same day, at the coming of twilight when the bat-folk come forth from their dark hidey-holes to prey on the pestiferous insect life that abounds around our lakes and ponds, the hero of our story, a small brown teenager of the bat community, came flitting gracefully and happily around the lake shore.

Suddenly, unbelievably, he saw what appeared to be a beautifully fat and delicious-looking insect doing a strange dance against the dark green background. Being contemptuous, like all teenagers, of what authority dictates as to proper conduct and due caution; and, after his day long sleep, feeling ravenously hungry for his favorite water flies and fuzzy brown bugs (the equivalent of cokes and candy bars) with mouth agape he dove onto the deadly imitation fly—and was instantly doomed to a terrifying and cruelly lingering death.

The sudden sharp pain and shocking disruption of his flight brought the realization

of impending disaster to the little brown bat. He fought frantically to free himself, but to no avail. Finally, after many hours of weary, nightmarish struggle, he was overcome with fatigue and hung dangling and dying above the placid water at the edge of beautiful cliff and forest-encircled Babyfoot Lake.

The capricious breezes that often ripple the surface of exclusive little Babyfoot and keep the dark green evergreen boughs a-whisper and waving gently around its shore, now for many days performed the grim task of keeping the little bat doing its macabre dance in the cool pure air.

When I came along, the pitiful wee body was entirely dessicated and perfectly preserved. What happened to the departed soul of the little brown bat (if little brown bats have souls) I've no way of knowing? But the tiny body has been given a decent and fitting interment in the little glass sarcophagus that rests over there on my cluttered chest of drawers.

## The Champion Runner

by Al Hobart

There's no creature in the forest  
That's so fleet as I;  
I run in great long leaps  
So fast I almost seem to fly.

When my enemies come prowling  
I don't even try to fight;  
I waste no time but take right off  
In graceful bounding flight.

I am peaceable and gentle,

And I mind my own affairs –  
I'm content to leave the fighting  
To the cougars, wolves and bears.

My food is mostly leaves and twigs  
Of tender woodland plants  
But sometimes I raid a garden  
When I dare to take a chance.

In autumn I eat acorns  
Till I'm really fat and sleek,  
So if winter's cold and snowy  
I won't get too thin and weak

In the winter's snow-clad forest  
I just wander to and fro,  
My only food, the lichens  
That blow down on the snow.

I wait hungrily for springtime  
When the leaves unfold again,  
When there's lots of food and sunshine –  
I'll be strong and happy then.

In the spring or early summer  
When the earth is green and warm,  
The little spotted babies  
That all children love, are born

Then when the summer's over  
And again fall rolls around,  
The babies' spots have vanished  
And their coats are pale brown.

And those that were he-babies  
Grow new antlers every year,  
To show off before their "ladies" –  
That's the way with all buck DEER

## PATROL . . .

Continued from A-7

\*A trouble-maker was arrested at 406 S. Redwood Hwy. following an incident at 2:38 p.m. David Bryant, 32, was detained at Josephine County Jail on charges of fourth-degree assault, menacing, first-degree burglary, and interfering with making a report.

\*At 4:41 p.m. a tree was hanging over the road a mile or so up Deer Creek Road. The tree had not yet fully cracked, but it was about to do so at any time. Dept. of Public Works was advised of the situation, and was sending a road crew.

### Outside the Valley

\*Eighteen listings.

### Saturday, Jan. 7

\*A gal's vehicle was reported as stolen to Grants Pass Department

of Public Safety in the morning, and at 2:50 p.m. she spotted the car in the 500 block of Schumacher Street. The registered owner watched as three thieves brushed the snow off her car, then she phoned a tow truck to bring her jalopy home.

\*At 3:20 p.m., the dispatcher could hear a man saying, "Help, help, help," but then nothing could be heard in the background. Another caller stated that there were no lights on in the church in the 200 block of S. Junction Avenue. Everything appeared secure when law enforcement arrived at 5:01 p.m.

\*At 3:40 p.m. a gal refused to leave the 100 block of Ollis Road, even though she and her guests were not welcome. The dispatcher heard two clueless people cussing at each other and talking about their past relationship. Although one of them stated that he could see a deputy

outside, neither party came out to meet him.

\*A 911 hang-up call was received at 3:59 p.m. from the 19500 block of Redwood Hwy. When law enforcement arrived, there was no evidence of a crime, but the gal relocated for the evening.

\*At 4:44 p.m. a deputy rendered assistance to a resident in the 100 block of Ollis Road who could not go outside because the entry door was swollen shut due to the weather.

\*A fellow in the 100 block of Ollis Road threatened to kill a gal who was yelling and pounding on windows at 5:13 p.m. She was trespassed from that location.

### Outside the Valley

\*Ten items.

### Sunday, Jan. 8

\*Domestic violence was

reported in the 100 block of O'Brien Road at 8:06 a.m., according to a fax from Oregon State Police (OSP). A woman was hysterically yelling and crying because a guy was trying to take a trailer with his truck. Everything was peachy-keen when law enforcement contacted her at 1:28 p.m.

\*OSP reported a failure to leave name at the scene of an accident at MP 34 on Hwy. 199 at 12:25 p.m. The suspect vehicle is an older black Jeep Cherokee with damage to the front driver's side light.

\*Search and Rescue and their snow cat saved the day for a man who was having medical issues in the 600 block of Draper Valley Road at 2:24 p.m.

\*A guy claimed that there was a red Dodge Durango parked in front of his residence in the 100 block of Pine Cone Drive at 3:27 p.m. He

thought the Durango was involved in a hit-and-run because of a Facebook posting that he had seen. However, the actual Facebook posting described a white Subaru, and there were no reports of a crash involving a red Dodge.

\*A family in the 1900 block of Rough and Ready Creek Road posted to Facebook that they were stuck and needed medications, but they declined law enforcement assistance at 5:14 p.m. (They weren't rough or ready.)

\*At 5:16 p.m. a man in the 27800 block of Redwood Hwy. activated his Lifeline alarm because he wanted someone to check on his caretaker. The only problem was he did not know her name or where she lived, other than in a mobile home somewhere in Takilma.

### Outside the Valley

\*Nine items.



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