

# Winding Trails: by Al Hobart

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Illinois Valley News

## Cascades skiing again

Last Sunday for the first time in my short but checkered career as a ski enthusiast, circumstances placed me on a moderate, uncrowded ski slope under a bright sunny sky and with snow conditions perfect for some downhill practice on the light touring skis.

And, also for the first time I found myself able to zigzag down the slope in a series of curves of varying degree and capable of coming to a stop in an upright position, instead of sliding half way across the country or terminating the uncontrolled glide in a snowbank, up against a tree, or coming to a disgraceful halt with my skis wrapped around my neck, my glasses somewhere on the scarred slope 50 yards back and my lowers crosswise in my snow-filled mouth.

On a private ski tour (not a part of our ski club program) the old gang, members of the Pruitt, Latusick, Doty, and Vannice families, and myself, a dozen of us in all, congregated in one of our favorite winter playgrounds – up on the Crater Lake Rim.

From where we left the cars at the end of the plowed-out road, some distance north of the lodge, a short tour on our skis took us to the ideal slope I've mentioned. When we first arrived there was not a track on the snow; when we left, several hours later, the slope looked like the Alpine troops had spent a week of maneuvers there.

Practicing downhill maneuvers on cross-country skis isn't quite like performing on their regular downhill counterparts; because, whereas the entire boot is securely fastened to the downhill ski to permit easy and fast lifting of the tails of the skis in making sharp turns, in cross-country skiing the heel of the boot is left free to enable the skier to walk freely where the going is on the level or uphill.

Walking any great distance with boot heels fastened to the skis is a blister-producing, tendon-torturing experience – as I learned to my painful discomfiture a winter or two ago. But for the ride-up, slide down type of skiing, where intricate maneuvering and ski-wrenching stunts are common place heel anchoring is essential.

However, with touring skis equipped with suitable bindings – like the semi-rigid cable type that our gang all use – cutting downhill didoes can be accomplished most satisfactorily,

providing you don't try crowding your luck beyond your unskilled limits. As a matter of fact, expert skiers can mingle with the flying crowd on the resort slopes without being suspected of going through the drill on heel-free cross-country skis.

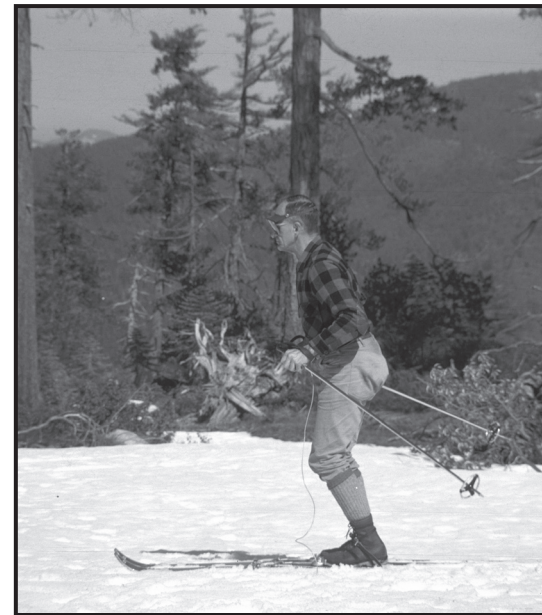
Two or three of our last-Sunday's group are pretty hot slat artists, and some are beginning hopefuls. Others (including me) are ski-cavorting question-marks: eager beavers of the twilight zone just getting the hang of things, and chomping impatiently at the bit between ski sessions.

On our private ski slope Sunday, after hitting the bottom of the first short steep pitch (at 90 mph it seemed) I cautiously angled the heel of my right ski outward and put most of my weight on that ski, keeping a slight outward pressure on the heel. Darned if it didn't bring me circling around gently to the left. Then I reversed the process, and swung around to the right—and down the 200-yard-long slope I went, maintaining the thisaway-thataway pattern to near the bottom, where I made a shorter turn into the slope and came to a halt, still standing up on my hind legs.

I repeated that performance over and over, making that day of ski-play one of my most satisfying and thrilling ever. And others of the party felt the same way. Charles, for instance, who,

like myself, has been jeopardizing his chances of skiing in the sky when our earthly slopes no longer beckon, because of the seemingly endless frustration at getting on to those pesky turns, was as elated as I was at finding that he too is beginning to get the hang of the thing.

That whole sunny, pleasure-packed day was one grand picnic. And for me the time can't move along too fast to the day when I'll be doing it again—at the same or as satisfactory a place, and with the same old gang.



(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

Al Hobart at Crazy Ridge in 1965.

### ROGUE VALLEY



### Food & Friends Menu

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CORNED BEEF

**MONDAY – MAR 20**

BEEF MUSHROOM PATTY

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MEATLOAF W/ GRAVY

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## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Sponsored by I.V. Wellness Resources

### Social isolation and loneliness.

Social isolation is a state of complete or near-complete lack of contact between an individual and society. Loneliness reflects a temporary lack of contact with other humans and can accelerate cognitive decline in older adults. Isolated individuals are twice as likely to die prematurely than those with more robust social interactions. The loneliness of older adults often results from family members moving away and close friends passing away. As one senior put it, "Your world dies before you do." Since the 1980s, the percentage of American adults who say they're lonely has doubled from 20 percent to 40 percent. About one-third of Americans older than 65 now live alone and half of those over 85 do. People in poorer health — especially those with mood disorders like anxiety and depression — are more likely to feel lonely. Individuals with less social connection have disrupted sleep patterns, altered immune systems, more inflammation and higher levels of stress hormones. One recent study found that isolation increases the risk of heart disease by 29 percent and stroke by 32 percent. Social isolation is typically considered unhealthy when people spend excessive time alone, particularly when they no longer benefit from time spent alone. Socially isolating oneself can mean staying home for days, not talking with friends or acquaintances, and generally avoiding contact with other people. Isolation itself is not a diagnosis, but it can be a symptom of depression, social anxiety, or agoraphobia.

Emotional isolation- when a person lacks a close confidant or intimate partner- can occur as a result of social isolation. Even though relationships are necessary for our wellbeing, they can trigger negative feelings and thoughts, and emotional isolation can act as a defense mechanism to protect a person from emotional distress. When people are emotionally isolated, they keep their feelings completely to themselves, are unable to receive emotional support from others, feel "shut down" or numb, and are reluctant or unwilling to communicate with others, except perhaps for the most superficial matters. Ideally, experts say, neighborhoods and communities should keep an eye out for such older people and take steps to reduce social isolation.

This is the reason that Illinois Valley Wellness Resources is initiating a "Friendly Caller Program." It will allow our seniors and disabled folks to make or receive a call on a regular basis. The calls allow you to know that someone out there cares and that they know you are alright. It gives you an opportunity to maintain a social connection. Human connection lies at the heart of human wellbeing. It's up to all of us - neighbors and community- to maintain bonds where they're fading, and create ones where they haven't existed.

You can contact I.V. Wellness Resources at [www.iwellnessresources@gmail.com](http://www.iwellnessresources@gmail.com). Please like our Facebook page by searching for [iwellnessresources](http://iwellnessresources).



### WANTED

### ILLINOIS VALLEY WELLNESS RESOURCES SEEKING SERVICES

Valley seniors are looking for transportation, caregivers, firewood, handymen, computer skills, housekeepers and yard work.

If you would like to provide one of these services and will complete a background check and have references, please contact Laura Mancuso at 541-592-9781.

### CAREGIVERS AVAILABLE

If you are a senior or disabled resident and are looking for a caregiver please call Illinois Valley Wellness Resources at 541-592-9781.

### SENIOR BULLETIN

#### HOME SAFETY EVALUATIONS

If you are in need of a home safety evaluation with a registered nurse please call I.V. Wellness Resources for an appointment. We have flexible hours to meet your needs. Call 541-592-9781.

#### FREE ADS

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

#### DEPRESSION & ANXIETY RECOVERY PROGRAM

Call Kathy at 541-291-7016 for information, next class is Monday, March 20 at 6 p.m.

#### AARP TAX-AIDE PROGRAM

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Saturday, March 25 • 5:30pm – 9pm

Selma Community Center, 18255 Redwood Hwy., Selma



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