

Winding Trails: by Al Hobart

*Thursday, May 18, 1967
Illinois Valley News*
Dump Nostalgia

From my back door a steep narrow path leads the short distance down to Packer’s Creek. Across the miniature canyon, worn deeper and wider each year by the rushing floodwaters, a rickety, bouncy foot-bridge stretches across to the further bank. Continuing on a few yards, the path enters a shadowy nook well hidden from view from above or from any direction. And here is the vast repository of all the cast-off, superfluous and crowded-out detritus that has tended to accumulate in my still over-stuffed abode over the 36 years of my residence in Packer’s Gulch: here is The Dump.

More than a hundred times a year I make the short trip to the dump, bearing each time a load of waste matter—never any garbage—such as tin cans, bottles, old catalogs, etc.;

and, callously-spurned, once-treasured objects such as worn clothing, scuffed and tattered space-filling books and magazines, outmoded or broken-down furniture.

Watching the old dump grow—getting higher and expanding noticeably each year (now about a third as big as my cabin)—has been a source of mild wonder to me, and has provided me with a sort of hard-to-explain secret pleasure. Every load I add to its increasing bulk gives me a pleasant little feeling of minor achievement. Rather than make a cheery bonfire of old cartons, boxes or other combinations, I carry them happily off to the dump to add another small stone, as it were, to the only great monument that is ever likely to be erected in my honor.

Sometimes a feeling of nostalgic sadness assails me when I enter that shady little near-hallowed alcove and let my gaze wander idly over the visible contours of my private little mountain of yesterday’s decaying

treasures: the rim-racked remains of Mom’s old iron-bound trunk stands forlorn and half-buried at this end of the dump. Farther along and higher up on the soggy mound I see a now-shapeless feathered mass with great taloned feet still clasping the artificial rock to which it was attached more than 50 years ago—the, mounted bald eagle my stepfather brought to earth while riding the bleak range in northern Montana. And farther along still I see the protruding horn of an antelope, belonging to a mounted head that once proudly adorned the folks’ home, and that I fell heir to when they were gone. A crumpled ear is still visible, and one glassy eye peers eerily out from the slowly enveloping waste-mass. The sleek, fleet little creature that once bore that moss-grown horn at amazing speed across its level home terrain was brought down by my stepdad in his young cow punching days, shot from the back of his running horse on a Dakota prairie.

Maybe it’s only my imagination,

but it always seems to make me a little drowsy when my eyes come to rest on that rotting corner of my fast-disappearing old Beautyrest mattress, and a little ghostly sigh escapes me when I recall the many wonderful nights of floating dreamily off into the fantasy-filled Yonder on that, little down-soft man-made cloud.

I’d almost forgotten what led me to abandon this luxurious example of our comfort-conscious inventors’ ingenuity. I guess the little twin size mattress just succumbed to the ravages of old age and mistreatment. The fabric and cords inside just gave way and allowed the countless little coil springs to turn crosswise and otherwise, producing annoying little bumps that left corresponding uncomfortable depressions in my flesh.

My more or less skillful attempts at surgery proved fruitless; with each succeeding operation the malady seemed to grow worse. At last the awful truth dawned on me—the little

Beautyrest was done. So, with sadness in my heart, I carried it down and placed it reverently on the dump.

The new nylon-sheathed, foam-rubber upstart that has taken the place of the old mattress is, I must admit, fully as comfortable. Still, out of loyalty to the little Beautyrest I guess, I still half resent its smug presence over there in the bedroom corner.

In time, like the central-sinking gook in a pot of boiling fudge, those old sentiment-stirring objects—Mom’s old trunk, Clyde’s mounted treasures, the little Beautyrest mattress, and a dozen other aged-cloaked memory-nudgers—will be overwhelmed by new additions to the old dump, and will sink from view forever.

Then maybe I can add my armloads of junk to the dump without all those morbidly sentimental complications, and, with as much secret, simple enjoyment as the circumstances might seem to warrant, just watch the darned thing grow.



ROGUE VALLEY
COUNCIL
OF GOVERNMENTS

Food & Friends Menu

FRIDAY – MAY 19
BEEF CABBAGE BAKE

MONDAY – MAY 22
EARLY AMERICAN
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WEDNESDAY - MAY 24
BREAD BAKED FISH

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Gardening/exercise tips
Now that it’s time to plant those gardens, preparing the soil and lots of bending over, can cause pain in your joints, muscles and tendons. How can you avoid such problems? Start now with some mild stretching exercises (including your back) to get that body ready for the work your going to put it through. Chances are you haven’t done a lot of exercises in the cold weather, so avoid making repeated motions with the wrist, either lifting it up or twisting it out with the palm down, prolonged or tense gripping, full extension of the arm, coupled with force or holding the wrist firm while exerting forces on the arm.

Instead, consider switching tasks periodically or take frequent breaks so that you don’t end up overworking a specific group of muscles or tendons. Try to avoid gripping a tool harder than is necessary and being gentle with twisting or up and down motions of the wrist. Wearing gloves or extra padding on a handle to reduce grip tension and reduce the impact of using the tool. Try lifting items without gripping. Use rolling tools to move heavy items. And always use the best tool for the task and use it appropriately so that the tool does the work!

You can also contact I.V. Wellness Resources at www.ivwellnessresources@gmail.com and please like our Facebook Page @ [facebook.com/ivwellnessresources](https://www.facebook.com/ivwellnessresources).

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