

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



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Deep-breathing exercises can help maximize oxygen exchange, facilitate relaxation and reduce stress. They can also act on centers in your brain that lower blood pressure. The following exercise can help you get started:

* Get comfortable- wear clothes that are loose at the waist and either lie on your back or sit comfortably in a chair with your feet resting on the floor.

* Take position- if lying down, rest one hand on your abdomen and one hand on your chest. If sitting, place your feet flat on the floor, relax your shoulders and [ut your hands in your lap.

* Basic breathing to start- inhale through your nose, as this filters and warms the air. Exhale through your mouth. Concentrate on your normal breathing for a few minutes.

* Inhale deeply- inhale while slowly counting to four or for about four seconds. Expand your abdomen

slightly as you inhale. As you breathe in, imagine the air flowing to all parts of your body, supplying you with cleansing energizing oxygen.

* Exhale slowly- You may wish to hold the air in your lungs for a few seconds. Next, exhale to a count of four, as your abdomen contracts. Imagine tension flowing out of you along with the exhaled air.

* Repeat- Pause for a moment. Repeat this exercise for one to two minutes until you feel calm.

If you experience lightheadedness, shorten the length and depth of your breathing.

When I have trouble falling asleep, this technique always works for me. Try it! *Mayo Clinic Health Letter- Volume 31, Number 12, December, 2013*

You can also contact I.V. Wellness Resources at www.iwellnessresources@gmail.com or 541-592-9781 and please like our Facebook Page @ [facebook.com/iwellnessresources](https://www.facebook.com/iwellnessresources).



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