

# Winding Trails: by Al Hobart

Thursday, December 7, 1967  
Illinois Valley News

## First Winter Rain

With the pleasant activities of summer over and winter lurking in the wings, and with winter sports in our chosen playgrounds lagging a trifle behind schedule, I'm just drifting through a short period of the doldrums, my only activity besides my homework being a short hike in the hills now and then to keep my blood in circulation.

The days are far from being dreary ones, but certain aspects of the unusual slack period are not exactly according to the script and tend to joggle slightly out of plumb the usual order of things.

For instance, the little empty garage out there seems to have the home picture twisted all out of balance. Poor Little Toot has been in the hospital for a week undergoing treatment for wracking internal disturbances. It seems to be something that's going around. First,

severe cramps in his clutch caused that indispensable member to cease functioning entirely. Obviously immediate major surgery was indicated, and so out came that ailing organ, and surgeon Matt successfully transplanted a new one.

Only a day or two later I noticed that the little fellow was running another temperature, and an ominous grinding of teeth indicated further painful complications. Seat of the alarming symptoms was soon discovered and a set of differential dentures was ordered at once.

So the garage has been standing empty, and I've been waking up nights with the painful sensation of my right arm being missing. A small engine, a little steel cab, a set of oversized wheels and the bolts, beams, wires and pipes that tie them all together into a miraculous little trail locomotive—funny what an important and indispensable brick such a combination can make in one's life structure.

Ah well, in a day or two the saucy little rascal will come chuffing

up the lane excitedly vibrating the good news that all is okay again, and suggesting that we'd better get going, that time's a-wastin' and the Gang's wondering what's become of us.

Meanwhile, I'll keep the home fires burning and just wait more or less patiently for the status to return to what has always been so pleasantly quo.

What a dandy blow that was that just came swirling up the gulch. At last we're having a real nice storm. It rained hard most of the night and is still at it, the temperature being low enough that the hills low down are white with the first snow of the late season. In fact, a few flakes come down with the rain now and then here at my 1,900-ft. level. Guess I'll have to get busy and check over my ski gear. I'll soon be finding out whether the imaginary skiing I've been doing the past month has improved my style any.

At home and in out of the weather the situation can only be described as right snug. The rain is hammering down like it's got something in mind besides just

washing the cinders off the roof; the roof isn't leaking 'ary a drop; the old cast-iron heater is crackling merrily; the woodshed is filled to the gunnels with good dry wood, and Don was just up and filled my tank with enough propane to keep the lights, fridge, and gas range going till next summer.

It's nearly midday and so dark in the old cabin I can hardly see to write, but I don't want any artificial light to dispel that cozy, bug-under-a-chip feeling that takes possession of me at times like this.

Another profitable summer has joined its predecessors in the realm of unforgettable history; fall's chores have all been done, and now it's just a matter of drifting across a short hill into winter, and making the most of what that sometimes grim old rascal has in store for us.

Unpredictable old Winter, with his dubious, mixed-up presentation of keen pleasure and irritating minor hardships, can best be met head-on with courageous determination to slug it out with him toe to toe, and keeping

a wary eye out for the low blows the cagey old trickster is so fond of delivering.

When I say I like winter I suppose I'm speaking as a minority member of society.

Still, there's one thing about the season that surely must be appreciated by most of us. The hordes of pesky insects have been driven into hiding or into oblivion; the dust, smoke, and pollen have been mostly cleansed from the air we have to breathe; and for a few months we will be spared the irritating heat and sweat of the inevitable hot-spots of summer.

If I had the power to alter seasons I wouldn't make a single change. A year-round season without variety would be unbearable. I look forward with pleasure to each succeeding season, and the rigors and peculiar pleasures that winter brings offer a stimulating challenge and healthful diversion whose value should by no means be down-graded or ignored.



### Food & Friends Menu

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Call 541-955-8839 to volunteer or if you need meals.

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

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### Microwaves Make Meals Easy

The microwave has been relegated as the heater of left-overs or popcorn, however, it can be used for so much more! Often the hesitation to use the microwave has been due to little convincing evidence that they are "cancer-causing death traps" due to the radiation they emit. Per the Cancer Council microwave ovens do NOT make foods radioactive.

Microwave ovens have taken underserved criticism for way too long and are called "ovens" for a reason; they can create meals equal to anything from a standard oven in less than half the time! From steaming vegetables to cooking poached eggs, try making a healthy meal in your microwave today!

The following recipes are examples of the delicious meals you can create using your microwave:

#### Two-minute French Toast in a Mug

Ingredients: 2 French bread slices, 1 egg, 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract, 1/2 tsp. cinnamon, 1 tsp. maple syrup and 1/2 tsp. powdered sugar. Directions: Cut-up

bread slices, crack egg and whisk with vanilla and cinnamon. Pour egg over bread in a mug, heat in microwave for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes, or until egg is fully cooked. Top with maple syrup.

#### Chicken Fajitas

Ingredients: 4 boneless chicken breasts, taco seasoning, onion, green and red bell pepper and whole grain torilla. Directions: Slice bell peppers and onion, toss with taco seasoning, place into microwave-safe dish. Slice chicken into long strips. Season well. Add to seasoned vegetable. Cover and heat for 10 minutes. Serve with tortilla.

Adapted from "balanced choices for a healthy lifestyle" from Senior Nutrition Services, December 2017

You can contact I.V. Wellness Resources at 541-592-9781 or [www.ivwellnessresources@gmail.com](mailto:www.ivwellnessresources@gmail.com) and please like our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/ivwellnessresources](http://www.facebook.com/ivwellnessresources).

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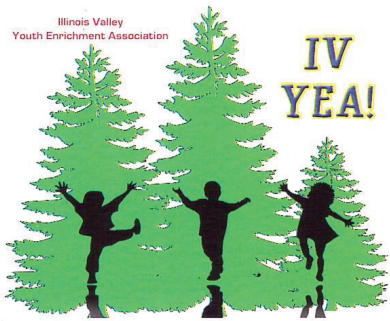
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