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## The power of community and resources to increase motivation

Monday, January 07, 2013

I've written once that change has to come from within and that's still true. However, a community of likeminded people provided with resources can fuel that change and keep it recharged.

Since retirement 5 years ago I've lived in a rural area with a large retired population. I had become somewhat of a hermit. I do have church activities (25 miles away) and a small gym (10 miles away) and a few neighbors on my country road, but so many of the area activities are aimed at people with different needs and interests than me

Fortunately, I found SP and my "imaginary" friends to keep me on-track for a healthy lifestyle. The online information, advice and support are wonderful.

Still I've noticed that my distance activities (running/walking/biking/swimmi ng) have been reduced since retirement. My aerobic/weights class twice a week is very good, but my max time on a treadmill or stationary bike is less than an hour.

The roads are dangerous, - curvy, narrow, no shoulders. You really can't run or bike on them. I stay close to home where neighbors are used to "the lady who runs" and repeat ½ mile loops like a caged hamster.

The only indoor pool is 25 miles away and lap lanes are limited by numerous water aerobics and arthritis classes – very valuable for those who need them, but sharing a lane with a flip turning guy in a speedo or an oblivious backstroker can be dangerous in itself.

It's been years since I've run a race longer than a 5K.

Yesterday, almost on a whim, I drove 25 miles in a different direction and joined a community event kicking off their "100 mile in 100 days challenge." Of course, we are encouraged to do more than that according to ability and the levels of fitness of the participants at the event varied greatly.

My first surprise was the location. It was a lovely, wide, paved trail at least 25 miles long judging from the mile markers – flat, scenic and safe. I walked 5 miles so I could interact with people and it was great. Real people with similar goals and interests! OK, it's still a drive, but no further than I drive to church, to swim or even to WalMart.

When I came home from the event, I joined a new SP team (The Virtual Walk/Run Challenge) where we log our distance traveling across America. Thanks SuzyMobile for telling me about this. I've also resolved to use the new trail to increase my mileage.

We'll see how it goes. I know well how illness, injury or a stretch of bad weather can dampen enthusiasm and motivation, but as for now I'm ready for a new challenge. 300 miles in 100 days is my goal, but even more important, at the end of that time I want to have increased my "long" runs from 5 miles to 10.



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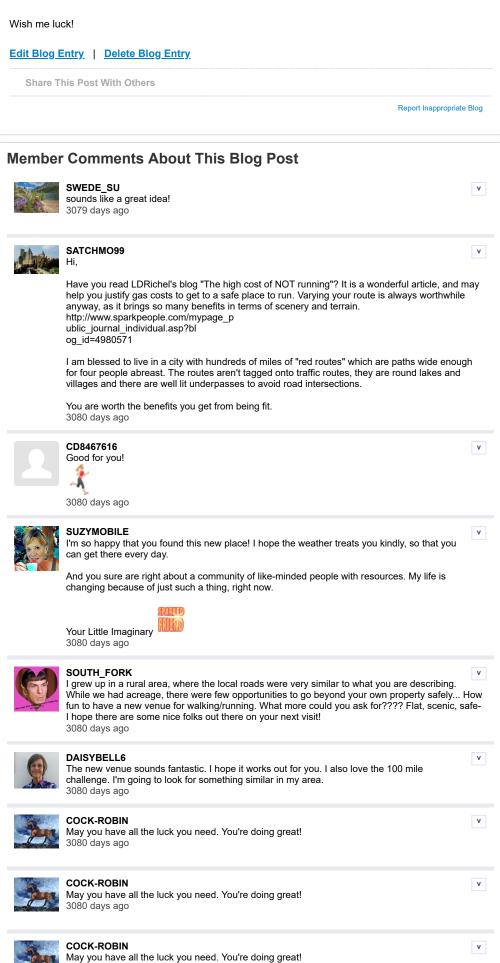
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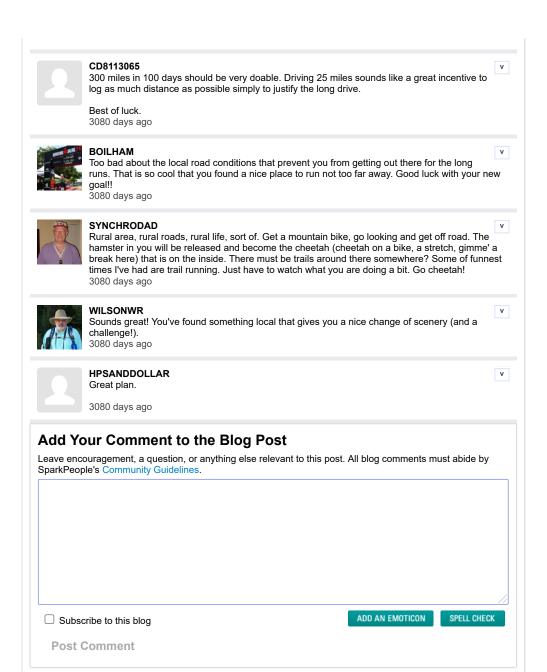
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