

Yellow Is for Big Dogs, Blue for Little Ones

By Irv Sternberg

There was a time when I could walk two miles at a fairly fast pace with a couple of younger neighbors but as the years caught up with me I realized I could no longer keep up with their long strides. It mattered that they were both six-footers while I was more than a half-foot shorter. I had to take two steps for their one. So I stopped walking and soon was transformed into a sloth. My joints tightened, my belly burgeoned, and my energy and stamina bid me sayonara. But recently I overheard an elderly woman say she had just walked completely around the Windsor Gardens circle and I thought: If she can do it, so can I. I'm glad I did. I'm told it's about one mile, and it took me exactly 30 minutes.

A walk around the Windsor Gardens complex at a steady pace provides not only some needed exercise for a codger like me, but also an occasional delight. Take, for example, the recent day when I first noticed two miniature fire hydrants placed about fifty yards apart on E. Center Ave.

Unlike the conventional full-sized hydrants, which were painted yellow, these fixtures were blue – and very conspicuous. They immediately captured my attention, and aroused my curiosity. What in the world were they doing there? I had to know.

So I sent an email to Dana Cusack, Supervisor of Grounds and Maintenance, saying I was amused and wondered what purpose they served. I was delighted to get this unexpected response:

"Irv," he wrote, "I put them out to give our four-legged residents a place to aim at, instead of some of our new plant material. I'm glad you were amused by them because that was kinda the idea as well. I put four of them around the complex, and have two more in the shop. When we plant them in the spring we will have them around to protect the plants. Thanks for your note."

I wrote back immediately, telling Dana I thought the idea was funny and ingenious and that when I first spotted the tiny hydrants my first thought was: This is for little dogs only, big dogs please use the big hydrants. I imagined photos of each, side by side, captioned as such.

As I continue to walk around the complex, I'm always on the lookout for a new surprise, preferably whimsical. The anticipation adds to the joys of walking. And I'm really pleased to know that we have people on our staff with a lively imagination and a great sense of humor.