

Jo's journey



Jo Ball wants to “walk the walk” -- the fifth annual Whitewater Experience (formerly Whitewater Walk). She's getting ready by walking and getting back to good health. She's writing this blog about her progress. We're sharing her story with you.

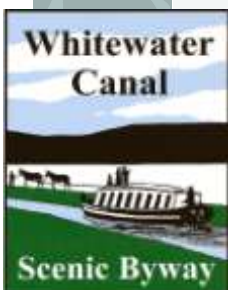
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My Buddy and I

This week my Weight Watcher leader, Julie talked about the importance of having people around us who will be encouraging. It is helpful to have support buddies when you are struggling from day to day. These buddies should have a similar goal as you in order to hold you up and not drag you down. A good buddy will encourage you to stay on track and go a little further each day. Pick a buddy that is walking at your same level. If you are walking with someone whose skills and stamina are far above yours, it could possibly be discouraging to you when you can't keep up. On the other hand, you may be bogged down if you are walking with someone much slower than you. If you prefer walking alone or have no other option, I suggest you take along head phones and walk to a good lively music CD. There are lots of good choices available that can really put pep into your step.

Armed with our pepper spray, our bottle of water, and our protein snack, my buddy and I set out to walk the Whitewater Canal Trail on a beautiful April morning. My buddy for that day happened to be my 69 year old sister Regina. I have two other sisters, Loretta and Rose who were not able to join us that day.

Regina and I talked and laughed as we walked along and really enjoyed our surroundings. What a beautiful valley we live in! We should pause every single day and thank God for allowing us to live in such an awesome place. The sun was warm and a soft breeze ruffled our hair as we walked at a steady pace. The birds were singing almost as if they were there for our entertainment. The humming of a single engine plane overhead did not overpower the steady crunching sound of the crushed limestone under our feet. As we walked, Regina and I talked about what an absolutely perfect day we had to enjoy nature and get healthy all at the same time.



Before starting out that day, I had set a personal goal of walking all the way to the mile marker 52 and back which would put me over my current two miles a day. Everything was going fine until I heard dogs barking across the canal. I have a phobia about large dogs. Of course, I instantly wanted to turn around and head back where we came from. My buddy would not allow me to give in to my fears. She just kept encouraging me to keep walking because we had a goal to reach that day and those dogs were not going to stop us. We kept walking until we reached the mile marker. Before starting back, we just sat for a minute or two and enjoyed the scenery and of course discussed how beautiful the area would look with wild flowers growing all around. We noticed that there were some flowers just coming up that someone had planted the years before.

After our brief rest we started the walk back. It's funny how the walk back is so much easier than the walk forward. We had our second wind and were feeling pretty proud of ourselves as we approached the parking area. There was a family sitting at the picnic table across the canal. I waved and said hello to them and suddenly I looked up and saw a magnificent white tailed eagle soaring and diving above us. If I live to be a hundred, the sighting of this majestic bird will always remind me of how blessed and how proud I am to be an American. This was my reward from God that day for standing my ground and meeting the goal that I had set for myself. I immediately remembered one of my favorite Scriptures of God's Word. From this day forward, this verse will go before me as I continue my adventure. With God's help and the support of my buddies, I will soar on eagle's wings!

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. Isaiah 40:31



From Sunday, September 19, through Sunday, September 26, the Whitewater Experience will allow participants to Bike, Hike and Paddle the state-designated Whitewater Canal Scenic Byway and its loops in the Valley. Formerly known as the Whitewater Walk, it will begin in Hagerstown **at the historic canal's northern terminus and conclude in Lawrenceburg on the Ohio River – 109 miles in 7 days.** This year's event will include a mixture of biking and hiking the Byway and its Loops, boating and floating the Whitewater River, and riding the Whitewater Valley Railroad. In addition, participants can also take a twilight walk in one of the historic communities that dot the hills and valleys of this beautiful region or join around a campfire in the evenings.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.WHITEWATERCANALSCENICBYWAY.ORG