



For the last three years I have been enjoying a new way to fit my running workout into my daily routine. Every day before work I catch the earliest commuter train downtown and head straight for the health club. I squeeze in a quick twenty minute cardio lifting program, shower, and hustle across the city to the trading floor at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. After work I head back to the health club, toss my running clothes on, leave my work clothes in my gym locker, and dash for the train.

I live in Lombard, which is in the Western suburbs of Chicago. The method I came up with is to simply get off the train a few stops early and run home. This works out really well as once I'm off the train I have to complete the distance home and since nobody ever seems to offer a ride, I run. It also eliminates having to motivate myself to run later in the day which many times would be all too easy to talk myself out of. I have several distance options; Villa Park is 4 miles, Elmhurst is 6, Berkeley is 7.5 and Bellwood is about a 10 mile run. This has worked out very well as a way to "change up" my running routine. I'll try and do the "home stretch" run as I call it 2-3 times a week throughout most of the year, Winter excluded. The really nice part of this routine is the Illinois Prarie Path, which is accessible from all these drop off spots. A reclaimed railroad route, the I.P.P. is made of crushed limestone gravel and wends it's way for miles lined by trees and through woods, prarie and suburban neighborhoods. Since moving to Lombard in 1996 It has become one my all time favorite places to run not only for my 'home stretch' runs but also for runs West of Lombard into Glen Ellyn, Wheaton and far beyond. There is not a more peaceful, serene setting to run in that I know. The Prarie path made running the distances I run possible due to the aforementioned reasons!

All this leads me to part two of this blog; while enjoying one of the most beautiful weather day runs we have had in quite some time, the reason that OnYerLeft exists was very clearly illustrated for me.(not for the first or last time I'm sure.) I jumped off the train and began my run in Elmhurst and was enjoying the start of a 6 mile venture home. I had already run South from the station through the bucolic Elmhurst neighborhoods and joined the Prarie Path at the bridge which traverses Salt Creek. I was about 30 yard behind two women runners when a cyclist pulling his child in a bike trailer came up from behind all three of us. It always seems to me that

humans must have a gravitational pull towards each other because one can run for miles and not see another pathway user, but suddenly three or four groups of people, runners, bikers and walkers will intersect each other all at once.

This is what happened today; the two women runners were running side by side taking up most of the space the path had to offer. I was closing behind them and coming towards all three of us down the hill was another runner. Human gravity. The man on the bike coming from behind us was not sure how to approach the situation, said nothing as he passed me, all too closely and then tried to pass *between* the two women! **BAD** idea to say the least. Upon catching a glimpse of the man on the bike in her periphery, the woman on the left skittered into the path of the oncoming runner. Luckily they avoided a collision. The woman on the right though not in any danger was startled off the path into the grass!

*'Bike Man'*

finally realizing the ruckus he caused, gave a weak smile and a wave, and peddled over the bridge out of sight! Nobody was injured but it was very close. Upon passing the two women I gently called out "OnYerLeft" and remarked on how glad I was nobody was injured. They expressed their dismay to me on how few people know what to do in these situations. I agreed wholeheartedly and told them about onyerleft.com Later in the run I had stopped for water and the two women passed me when another cyclist tried to pass all three of us again on the right side through the grass!!

This is our mission. At OnYerLeft.com we are here to spread the message of community, safety and communication on all pathways. Urban and suburban alike. In this day and age too many of us have become fearful of saying "hello" to each other especially during exercise. Sometimes actually resulting in injury to athletes and casual pathway users. My fervent wish is to make calling out "OnYerLeft" not only a way to alert those around you on the pathways of your presence, but a way to say "Hey, how are you today?" and maybe meet some new friends in the process. I have met some of my best friends while running. I hope you'll join our OnYerLeft community and help spread the word and maybe make some new friends as well. "OnYerLeft!" the new black in athletics??? See ya on the pathways, Dave.