

Joggers on the spot

I LOOKED OUT MY WINDOW the other morning and saw the strangest thing. A man was jogging past my house. Bear in mind that it was cold, wet, miserable and very early in the morning. And we live on a torturously long and steep hill. So I did the only thing a good neighbour could do. I went and got out the shotgun.

"What are you doing?" my wife asked.

"Look over there," I said sadly as I pointed out the window.

"Oh my goodness, do you think he's being chased by a bear?"

"What else would force a man to jog up this hill?" I said nervously.

"You're not going to shoot him are you?" she asked.

"No," I replied, "as much as that would put him out of his misery, that would probably be wrong."

Instead, I planned on doing the only sane thing a man could do. I was going to step outside in the patched-up long underwear I keep for just such an occasion, wave the scattergun in the air, and ask him if he's ever seen the movie *Deliv-*



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"That ought to give him the adrenalin burst he needs to get a real good lead on that bear," I explained. "That way, no one – not even the bear – gets hurt."

"But what if you're wrong?" Carol asked. "What if he's just jogging?"

I laughed out loud. "Up Vinegar Hill? Woman, are you crazy?"

"People do jog for fun and fitness you know," she reminded me.

"Yeah, right," I replied. "And we have robots on Mars too..."

Maybe I'm wrong but jogging for jogging's sake is sort of like pulling out chest hairs just for pulling out chest hairs' sake. Oh, I've listened to the arguments about it being good for you. I've heard how it improves your fitness level and makes you live longer. But, you've got to ask yourself the big question: "If I have to jog for two hours a week for the rest of my life, is that life really worth living?"

Even so, as I donned my long johns and billy boots, blacked out several teeth, put on my straw hat, and picked up the gun, it occurred to me that my wife just might be right. Maybe this person was simply jogging up the hill for fun and fitness.

I got out the binoculars.

"What are you doing now?" Carol asked.

"Looking for chest hairs on the man," I stated.

I couldn't see any. Instead he was decked out in quality running shoes and clothes tailor-made for running. He wore head phones and appeared to be breathing evenly. And there was not the telltale lump at the back of the pants that a close encounter with a bear brings either.

"I don't get it," I mumbled. "I think he's actually doing this willingly."

Before long, he had crested the hill and disappeared over the horizon. And I put the gun away and changed back into my normal clothes.

"Now I've seen everything," I muttered.

"Yeah," my wife said as she wiped the black from my teeth. "Some people are strange."

"Kind of makes me wonder about the last few runners that I've helped along," I mumbled.

And right there and then it occurred to me that I should have known better. Heck, even a hungry bear wouldn't run up this hill....