What’s going on here?

I haven’t posted anything here in almost a week; that’s obvious. There has been little else of consequence going on behind the scenes here on the Fox Lake Road, either. I’ve spent precious little time in the studio, and managed only a bit of tidying while I was there. I didn’t tackle any of the big home-improvement projects I have planned for this winter, either. In fact, I have done little more than the bare minimum to keep this house running along.
Some good news: I have been able to – every single day – check off “yoga,” “walk” and “strength” on my habit tracker, thanks to a book on “mini-habits” by Stephen Guise. He advises forming habits based on the very smallest increments. In his own experience, he set his sights on completing one push-up a day, adding one fruit to his diet, meditating for one minute, and writing fifty words a day. With those minimal goals, he has managed – in a very short time – to form exercise and meditation habits, become physically fit, and write three books.

Of course, this involves going beyond the minimum requirement on many days, but even on the absolute worst days, he can meet his goal. Success brings good feelings which leads to more motivation to continue. It certainly sounds more inviting than my usual New Year set-up, where failure is inevitable.

So, this year, my concentration is on forming the habits, rather than any end-goal. My minimum requirements are, well... minimal. The first three [warm-up] poses in my yoga book; a walk to the end of the driveway and back; a dozen repetitions of an upper-body exercise or half that many squats: each counts as completion of that task. With that in mind, I am happy to report that – almost two weeks in to this new year – I haven’t missed a day yet!

It’s also true that engaging in the activity is the most difficult part. Once I get through the warm-up poses in my yoga book, I often continue on to Side Stretch, Tree Pose and Arm Stretches and Cactus Pose. I’ve only stopped at the end of the driveway on a couple of the iciest, coldest days. We usually meander down the road for a stretch, and on a couple exceptional days, Darla and I got more than a mile in, while Rosa Parks waited in the yard. Once the weights are in hand, I generally add a few repetitions of other exercises before I put them back on the shelf.

Taking the author’s advice, I am not starting with a hundred mini-habits (though I could easily think of that many areas that need improvement in my life!). He suggests no more than five, and allowing enough time – say, three months – to absolutely form the habit before adding something else to work on. So far, with not quite two weeks success under my belt, I am encouraged, and already looking toward tiny increments of progress in other areas: “Just walk into the studio,” for one. That’s what I plan to do right now!