

# BIENNIAL REPORT 2003-2005



LOCAL CULTURE  
INTERNATIONAL SCOPE

# IVV IN AMERICA =

AVA is a member of the International Federation of Popular Sports (IVV), formed in Lindau, Germany, on January 14, 1968. The International People Sports (IPS-USA) was incorporated in Texas on April 28, 1976. It was accepted as an Associate Member of IVV on April 30, 1976.

At the first national convention of volkssporters in the United States, June 15-17, 1979, IPS-USA adopted the name of the American Volkssport Association (AVA) and it became a member nation of the IVV.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The AVA is the advocate for the promotion and organization of walking and other noncompetitive sporting events that encourage physical fitness, fun and fellowship for people of all ages and abilities.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

To be recognized as the premier noncompetitive sports organization in the United States with sustained growth and a sound financial base.

## **VALUES STATEMENT**

The AVA values fellowship, fun and fitness through quality family oriented noncompetitive events, in America's spirit of teamwork where all can achieve their personal best.

# **IVV IN AMERICA = AVA (continued)**

Volkssporting is “people sport” and began in the mid-1960’s in Europe. We promote non-competitive participation in walking and other recreational activities for fun, fitness and friendship. We are not-for-profit and dedicated to encouraging fitness for people of all ages. Clubs are located in more than 25 countries around the world and they bring unique opportunities for safe, healthy exercise without the stresses of speed and the strain of endurance. In volkssporting, all participants who complete the event of their choice at their own pace are recognized as “winners”!

Club members prepare the trails for walks, bike rides, and other sporting activities. Events are open to everyone. There are no age limitations. Because walking is a common activity, doing it for exercise is a safe and inexpensive form of “sport”. Health benefits abound, as well as recreational enjoyment as local culture is explored.

Membership in a volkssport club is not a requirement, but many volkssporters choose to join to link up with other walkers and to enjoy the company of other members.

AVA participants may join in the IVV Individual Achievement Awards Program. It is an international low-cost incentive program. Those joining the program benefit from the personal incentive and satisfaction gained by qualifying for a series of IVV awards based on the number of volkssport events completed, and/or the distances they have walked, biked, or skied. After each event their personal IVV record books are stamped, recognizing their participation in the event and the distance they have completed. Upon achieving a required progressive level, participating volkssporters forward their record books to AVA Headquarters in Universal City, Texas.

Well-earned awards in the form of an attractive pin, a patch and certificate are given for each milestone to mark accomplishments. This is given without additional cost.

# President's Message

**WE** are the American Volkssport Association. Accepted as an Associate Member of IVV first in 1976 and named *International People Sports*, in 1979 we became AVA and an Associate Member of IVV. We are a hands-on organization where each is valued for their involvement in making the organization work. Without our volunteers and the expenditure of time, money and other resources, we could not exist. So I begin my President's Report with a thank you to all those who make this organization possible.

Taking on the role of the National Presidency is an awesome task and one I took because I want to give back to what has become for me a way to live. Volkssporting has opened the world to me as I have left footsteps in places I could never have imagined before. Our motto is fun, fitness and friendship, and like you I have experienced this firsthand.

During the thirteenth term of the National Executive Council, it has been my privilege to write to clubs that are realizing their twenty-fifth anniversary. To me that says our organization is a success. Our members care and push forward through changing culture because what we have in this organization merits it. We are able to attend events for our physical fitness, but it is the foundation of the people that make the fun happen.

During our boom years in the early 1990's there were some annual reports produced. Now more than ten years later these lend historical perspective to our organization. I missed seeing them produced and so one of my goals has been to realize a biennial report where we tell our story of what has transpired during this term. Information and statistics have been pulled together and the information helps to focus in on what has been accomplished and where we need to be going.

You will see a reflection of the past NEC, and through that, one of our Association. As I've compiled information I've had to restrict my impulses because I'd love to tell you about our wonderful events like Crazy Horse, Discovery Walks, regional conferences, and on and on. But this report will focus on the business aspects of AVA. It is a tool so that successes can be shared, as well as concerns.

We have been successful. I'm going to begin with our Strategic Plan. Five years ago our Executive Director hired a consultant to help us produce a plan for increased membership and efficiency in the organization. But plans need to be taken further than the planning stage. Through the guidance of Director Myron our plan was restructured and committee chairs were held accountable. There were successes, but the NEC also found out that there is a lack of involvement in our committees, particularly those that focus on the business aspect rather than the fun. It takes both.

Our bylaws call out Publicity as a Standing Committee – in other words, one that we must have. Over the years we have merged Marketing into that, and this term we had committees for both. However, with membership of only three to four people that is not enough to accomplish what we'd like to accomplish. Marketing and publicity must be done locally and must be done by everyone. Staffing at Headquarters does not include anyone to write press releases. They must come from the local club.

To maintain clubs we must reach out and tell our story to others. I recently pulled up on the web the newspaper for Rapid City, South Dakota. In a short period of time there were seven articles published. Granted that the two-day event drew 10,646 people and so it was news worthy, but the point is that the news helps make the numbers. Healthy participation relates to healthy clubs. We find that our human resources in some areas are reaching critical proportions.

AVA gives value. This is accomplished because of our volunteers and our non-profit status. Headquarters has worked consistently this term to ensure we are in compliance with IRS regulations. We are more than walkers getting together for a fun day in the country. Because of our structure we pay the price in the business world. We need to conform on reporting requirements both for our corporations and our finances. Donations to AVA are always welcomed and we acknowledge contributors at every NEC meeting. While we continue to explore available grants, the process is difficult and the bottom line is there is nothing free.

I have seen clubs reaching out into the community more than ever. Those partnerships work for both parties as often publicity can be obtained because of the connection. Again, we are more than walkers. We are consumers and we tell others about great places to go and about great products. We are also educators and one successful program even offers college credit for learning about volkssporting. We are respected for what we can bring to the community because we share a good lifestyle activity that promotes safety along with exposure to unknown places. Our reputation is out there and we sometimes receive requests to host events that bring in more people to the main event. It also gets our walkers involved in Senior Center activities, health fairs, and invited to community volunteer recognition activities.

Another insight is some trends in club development. More and more clubs are having regular group walks of events. YRE's are used when regular events aren't being held. This builds club membership because people are looking for social outlets. We keep costs to the participant very affordable, and more clubs are choosing to use the non-IVV fee so all pay something to keep costs low for all. This choice has helped some clubs remain in business, while in other areas the free walker is strongly promoted and event focus is more on community service. Working with the community for sponsorships is a good way to override the expenses.

It is with pride that I present this report. You have done well. There is more to do, but there always is. Have fun while volkssporting, make new friends, and become involved.

# NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL XIII

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From top left to right: Chris, John F., Leonard, Herm, Fred, Joan, John B., Ed, Dennis, Ginny, Bonnie, Patty, Shirley, Jackie, Curt

## ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

# Executive Director

## Sponsors/Partnerships

- New Balance continued as our premier sponsor by holding an exclusive contract with us for the promotion of shoes and active apparel. Clubs and participants enjoyed give-away items provided by New Balance, and a lucky participant received a free pair of shoes if they won them at an event. Financial support for event trail marking supplies, start cards, and event marketing helped us keep the cost of participation low.
- On-Line Shoes partnership results in \$5.00 per pair sold for AVA
- GNC was added as a new Partner and sent information about AVA to their Gold-card members. Events began at their stores and promotional items were given to participants.
- FuelBelt was added as a new sponsor. New walkers especially benefit with gifts. A hang-tag has been placed on their product to promote AVA.

## Happenings

- ❖ The office lease was renewed
- ❖ The office was renovated as part of the new lease agreement, and major cleaning and organization was completed
- ❖ A new postage machine is resulting in annual savings of \$4163.00
- ❖ Electronic ESRs (Event Sanction Requests) were brought on-line
- ❖ Electronic submission of information for *Starting Point* was initiated
- ❖ Club non-profit IRS information was compiled and computerized
- ❖ Computers and some printers were upgraded and modernized
- ❖ Specialty items were evaluated and new items were added as appropriate
- ❖ The Employee Manual was updated

# NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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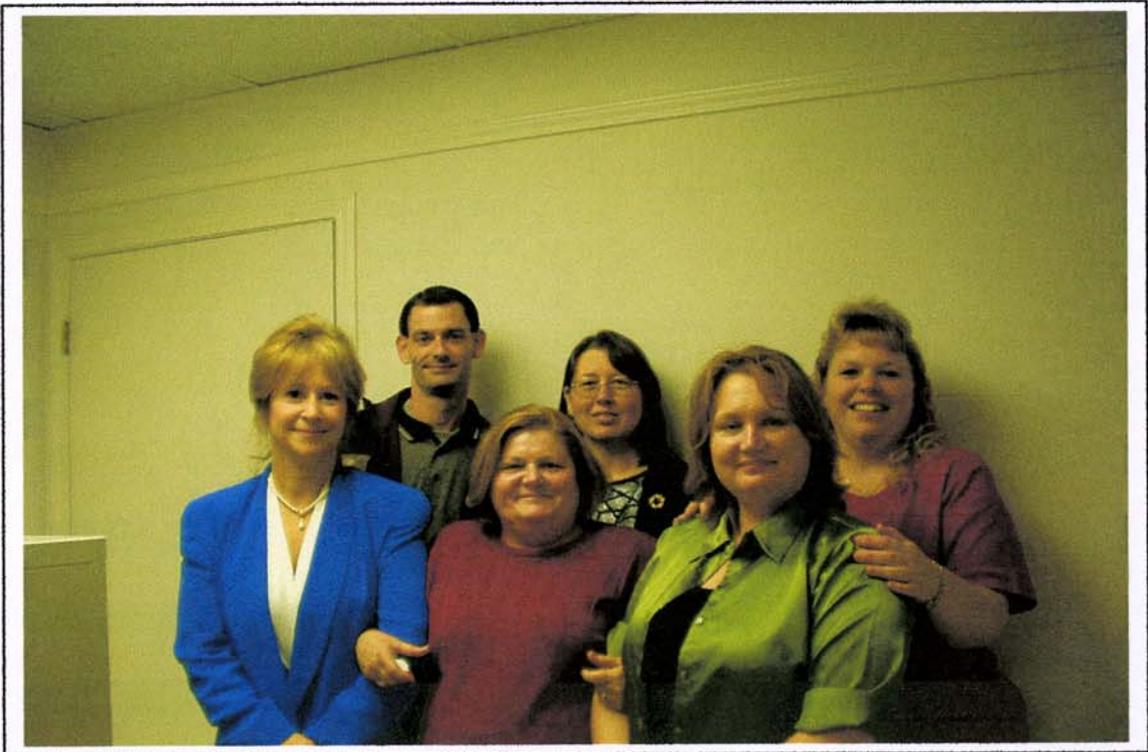
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Left to right: Linda, Kevin, Candv, Jackie, Debi and Kim

# REGIONAL REPORTS

VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

## NORTH CENTRAL – DIRECTOR JOHNSON

The North Central Region is comprised of the States of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. During the year of 2004 a total of 101 Events were held and 90 have been sanctioned so far in 2005. The total number of year round/seasonals for the year of 2005 is 114. There are a total of 29 active clubs. There is one State Organization which is in the second year of re-organization in Minnesota.

Some of the highlighted events include Crazy Horse Walk near Rapid City, SD which is held the first weekend of June each year and is very profitable for AVA with over 12,000 walkers. Sytenndai Mai is celebrated by a 28 kilometer walk each May in Madison, WI and a 10 kilometer walk in Spring Grove, MN. Omaha, NE has a Soup Walk in the early Spring, The Fargo Club took over the Dakota Dozen and made it the Dakota Six. This runs in the opposite year of the Convention. In 2004 it was held in Fargo and in 2006 it will be in Valley City, ND. They also host a walk in Barnesville, MN to celebrate Potato Days Festival. The MN Sneaker Club hosts a River Town walk and bike each year at different locations.

The Nebraska Clubs put on the Lincoln Highway walks in the years 2003-2004. This year and in 2006, the Iowa Clubs are hosting the Lincoln Highway walks. This has been very successful in keeping some of the small clubs alive.

On 5/5/05, six North Central enthusiasts walked five walks in five states in the one day. We think this set a record at AVA. This included driving over 300 miles between the first and last states between the walks.

There are at least three of the six states that have group walks each week or every other week using the year-rounds and seasonals. This includes The Greater Des Moines Club in Iowa, Madison Volkssports in Madison, WI and Twin Cities Club in Minneapolis, MN.

Two new clubs were started in Wisconsin in 2004: Hearty Sole Walkers in Fond du Lac and Manitowoc Club in Manitowoc.

## **NORTHWEST – DIRECTOR MYRON**

The Northwest region is moving forward to carry the message of volkssporting to the American public. Although we have lost a few clubs along the way, several new and enthusiastic clubs have formed and club membership is increasing again. I see new enthusiasm among volkssporters (I even overheard the comment from a volkssporter that ‘the excitement is coming back!!’) and many clubs are trying new ways to reach the uninformed public. New mega-events are forming to complement the continuing Columbia River Gorge walks (eleven events over four days in Oregon) and the Discovery Walks, which set new highs in total walks and attendance in April 2005. The new mega-events include The Whidbey Island VolksFest (five sanctions, three days, dinners and potluck) a four- walk Columbia River Labor Day weekend event in Washington, and the Bellingham VolksFest (five sanctions, three days, dinners and potlucks). Come join us!

### Accomplishments:

- \* Northwest Region covers four states, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington; has two state associations and 62 AVA clubs. During the last biennium, five clubs have become inactive, but the region has added three new clubs.
- \* Average club membership has increased by 2% in 2004, according to the 2004 AVA Survey.
- \* Hosted approximately 1050 events in the last biennium; 750 year-round/seasonal events and over 300 traditional events.
- \* Hosted 375 YRE/Seasonal events in 2005
- \* Held the biennial NW Regional Conference in Leavenworth, Washington where walks, training and social activities filled the weekend. The next Conference will be held in Seaside, Oregon on July 20 – 23, 2006.
- \* Implemented a monthly regional newsletter to keep all regional clubs informed of regional and AVA issues.
- \* Continued a monthly email listing of approved events throughout the NW Region.
- \* Implemented the “Best of the Northwest” awards program to recognize unique and popular events and individuals. Certificates are given to each event or person nominated. The top three winners among clubs receive ‘Best of the NW’ streamers to add to their IVV banners and individual winners for Friendliest Walker in the Region and Sparkplug of the Year are given certificates and trophies.
- \* Both Washington and Oregon continue ‘state-level Special Programs called the Washington Challenge and the Walk Oregon Challenge, with many patches available for completing specified categories of walks. The challenges included counties, A to Z, covered bridges, rivers, festivals, cemeteries, nurseries, etc.

## **NORTHWEST – DIRECTOR MYRON continued**

\* The Oregon Trail State Volkssport Association has become extremely active in promotion of Volkssporting. Committees for Strategic Planning and Publicity Committee focus on promotion. As a result, Volkssporting booths at Portland's Diabetes Fair, the Portland Marathon and other major events reached hundreds of potential walkers. OTSVA also reviewed AVA's New Walker Kit and added information and new walker incentive of their own.

\* The Volkswalking for college credit Pilot study continues. The course taught at Portland Community College is into its third year and all classes are filled to maximum. OTSVA provides AVA New Walker Kits free of charge to each registered student. A minimum ten AVA events are needed to complete the course. Outreach efforts to the rest of country continue through promotion by the Region Director and OTSVA.

## **SOUTH CENTRAL – DIRECTOR TOD**

Held regional roundup in St. Louis area in 2004 and will hold next roundup in Lawton, OK in September of 2006. These events bring clubs in the region together for a weekend of walks, swims and social events.

Held bi-state picnic and walk - A yearly event in which the 7 clubs in the greater St Louis area get together

Director serves and represents the AVA on the technical advisory committee of the great river greenway which provides about \$4,000,000 a year in funding to build walking and biking trails in the region.

Director serves on the Missouri State committee that provides guidance on establishing walking, biking and equestrian activities.

## **SOUTHEAST– DIRECTOR MICHELE**

The Southeast was visited by 4 major storms in 2004 and suffered damage from FL, especially the panhandle, to the mountains of NC. Hurricane force winds, storm surge, torrential rains and flooding severely affected many walks and start points. One "walk box" in NC floated down a river to the Atlantic. Floribama 2005 had to be canceled because of destruction of facilities. However, due to the resiliency of SE Volkssporters (many with homes still not fully repaired), all walks but one have reopened and Floribama 2006 is on its way.

Cooperation with the Girl Scouts of America (GSA) continues to grow. Walk Abouts in NC have tripled and the NC Council has been selected to design the next GSA/AVA patch. AL had it's second annual regular event with GSA and attendance doubled. FL clubs have begun to work with their local Girl Scout troops.

YREs continue to grow and flourish in the Southeast. While some old ones were canceled, they were more than offset by new, exciting walks, many of which support the various Special Programs in the AVA. Growth was most notable in AL and the new walk in Knoxville, TN.

All in all, despite storms and floods, the last two years have gone well for Volkssporting in the Southeast and we look forward to more great walking.

## **ROCKY MOUNTAIN– DIRECTOR BAIRD**

The leadership of the clubs in the region have taken a long time to recover from five years of work to put on a great AVA Convention in June of 2003. Burnout of many has resulted in a decrease in Volkssporting. Having said this, there have been some people who have come forward to bring life back into the clubs. Clubs in Cheyenne, Denver and Colorado Springs have recently started moving forward with this new leadership.

The region started with 20 clubs and ended with 20 clubs. A gain of one in Colorado and a loss of one in Montana. Regular events have stayed at approximately 60 events per year while the YR/Seasonal events have increased to over 80.

## **MID-AMERICA -- DIRECTOR WOJTYSIAK**

Our region comprises five states: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan & Ohio.

As Regional Director I have attended numerous walks in all five states through the last two years meeting a lot of new and interesting walkers/volunteers. Not enough can be said for all the hours and energy that these volunteers donate to our organization! Plus it is mind boggling as a region to see all the beautiful areas we have to hold walks.

Our region had a very busy and successful two years of walking with an average of almost 180 regular walks per year. Also the region has hosted an average of 140 YRE/Seasonals per year.

We have had two interesting clubs start up with Don Vartanian reviving his Father's old club (Michigan Pathfinders) in Michigan with the first walk starting from the college that his father was affiliated with and one checkpoint at the old Grandfather clock his father donated to the college.

The other club (Germania Volksmarch Gruppe) is part of the German Society Club in Ohio and they wanted to put on a true traditional German walk twice a year. Their accomplished just that on their first walk! They had all the right things like food & nine beers on tap at the finish. But what no walker saw was all the many hours of work that was done prior to the walk making trails, putting chips down in muddy areas, draining wet areas, and removing truck loads of trash so the trails through the forest would be pleasant for us walkers. Taking all this into account this had to be our region's top walk for the year!

We have a very strong region so come to our region for beautiful walks in beautiful areas with beautiful people!

## PACIFIC – DIRECTOR HUSBANDS

### California:

Clubs: 21  
State Organization 1  
Weekend Events 57  
YRE's 121  
Hosted NEC March 2004  
Held First Ever Region/CVA Meeting:  
30 April-2 May, 2004  
Active 2007 AVA Convention Committee  
"Friendship Walks" in Northern California  
to maintain the enthusiasm of the  
walkers in that area.

### Arizona:

Weekend Events 10  
YRE's: 19

### Nevada:

Report from Las Vegas:  
Weekend Events 8  
YRE's: 6  
Participated in the Senior Olympics  
Nine members attended the Region/CVA  
meeting in '04

### Hawaii:

Weekend Events: 11  
YRE's: 9  
Club Social Events: 2  
Business Meetings: 4  
Quarterly Newsletters: 4

Initiated the "Hui Hele" group to maintain  
contact electronically and to do walks as  
a group.

## NORTHEAST – DIRECTOR MELLEN

Every October the Region meets to provide each other with a calendar of events and the RD coordinates the dates to avoid conflicting times. Training and testing of Electronic Sanctions is an on going process.

Significant Anniversaries by these clubs were celebrated. The Seacoast Striders of NH Southern Maine and Walk n Mass.

Last fall the West Point Club received a Proclamation by the Mayor of Poughkeepsie, New York. The Empire State Club has been averaging 100 walkers on 20 sanctioned Wednesday Walks generating significant revenue for AVA.

Our clubs have encouraged new walkers with walker packets, participated in Health Fairs, advertised thru the media., sanctioned Girl Scout Events and promoted AVA participation.

## **SOUTHWEST- DIRECTOR FERGUSON**

With the assistance of the clubs of this Region the following were accomplished:

Hosted the IVV Presidium meeting and related social events in September, 2003.

Established marketing relationships with Texas AARP, the statewide Walk Across Texas Program, and local NBC TV station. These will be ongoing partnerships.

Participated in the national kickoff of the McDonalds American Challenge 'Go Active' Program in Dallas.

Encouraged local clubs to participate with other like-minded organizations, such as REI, to build new walking trails as in the Samuel Farm area in Dallas.

Worked with Hispanic organizations to market the AVA program to the Hispanic community, including translating AVA materials into Spanish.

Supported local Girl Scouts with Volkssport efforts toward their progression toward their Gold Award.

Participated in the NBC5 regional health fitness fair in Dallas during January '04 and '05. Additional participation in events later in '05 has been invited.

Participation and marketing at the National Trails Symposium in Austin in October, 2004. This participation has lead to invitations from the Corps of Engineers for us to be planning participants in future trail programs.

Coordinating AVA volunteer support and participation for marketing at the National AARP meeting in New Orleans in September, 2005.

### 2003-2005 STATS

37 registered clubs

1 state organization

113 YREs for 2005

Over 200 Regular events in 2003-2005

## **ATLANTIC – DIRECTOR LAMPART**

For the past two years, the Atlantic Region has been very busy preparing for the 14<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention in Cherry Hill, NJ. Much of my time was spent attending the various committee meetings and then following up on the 6 committees I chair.

The region is unique, in that we hold regional meetings twice a year in different locations in the region. This gives clubs an opportunity to react with each other and to discuss successes and failures. I have been able to build a bond with the Atlantic Region Clubs through this endeavor and by being visible at as many of the events as possible and by listening to what they have to say.

In my first term as Regional Director, I initiated a Regional Conference that would be held biennial (even years). In 2004, the Second Biennial Atlantic Regional Conference was held in Gettysburg, PA. The York White Rose Wanderers coordinated the event. The conference included workshops, general sessions, walks in two states and socials. We met the criteria for Fun, Fitness, Friendship and Food. The Third biennial Atlantic Region Conference will be held in Maryland in 2006.

Participated in the Pennsylvania Keystone Games, which is an annual event. The Games include all types of sporting activities for all age groups over a three-day period. Volkssporting was one of the activities. Keystone Games will be in York, PA in 2005.

Had the opportunity to assist in exhibiting at the NBC10 Fit Fest in Washington, DC. This event I understand is produced by NBC affiliates throughout the country. It draws 80,000 people over a two-day period. The AVA Atlantic Region will continue to promote volkssporting at this event every year. Through this exhibiting, we were able to talk to at least 1000 (if not more) of the visitors – many of which were former volkssporters in Germany and surprised to know that it came to America.

I represented AVA at the Canadian Volkssport Federation conference in Quebec, Canada this past Memorial Day. It was indeed an honor to represent the American Volkssport Association along with Lynn Clark, IVV Vice President. The Canadians are a wonderful group of people and treated me royally.

# AVA Committees

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Joan Lampart, Chair

Over the past two years, the Special Events Committee has been very busy promoting and increasing programs. What a thrill I get when someone suggests an event and then lists all the programs that one can get credit for. The following programs and their POC should be applauded:

National Heritage Event  
POC: Victor J. Shaff

Lewis & Clark Expedition  
POC: Jim and Norma Jones

Walk the USA A-Z  
POC Becky Adams

College Campus Program  
POC Chris Mellen

US Presidents Program  
POC Nancy C Nancy Stenger

American Revolution Walks  
POC Barbara Kolapakka

Lighthouses USA  
POC Teri Morosco,

Great Lakes, Great Walks, Great Fun  
POC Jim Muma.

Walking Europe in the United States  
POC Jan Wood.

### Programs to be completed by December 31, 2005

Original 13 State  
POC Joan Lampart,

Route 66  
POC Elaine Samus

Civil War Battlefields  
POC Barb Peiffer

### Extended to December 31, 2007

Golden Heritage  
POC Roberta Murray

### Coming in 2006

Pony Express  
POC Millie Haupt

Railroad Heritage  
POC Lorraine Weaver

Riverwalk America  
POC Lorraine Weaver

### In addition to the above

50 State/51 State Capitals  
POC AVA HQ

There are 15 Special Event programs for everyone's special interest. Three programs will be completed and 3 new programs will take their place. All these events are to promote Volkssporting and to get you out there to see the USA.

## AVA COMMITTEES CONTINUED

### STANDARDS AND EVALUATION

#### John H. Ferguson, Chair.

Recommended changes and secured approval in definitions to clarify policy on required waiver of liability signatures.

Completed the revision to the "NEC Handbook" per the requirements of NEC XIII and published same to NEC XIII members.

Completed revision in 2005 of the "AVA Policy Manual" to conform with current practice/policy and publishing same at the 2005 Convention.

Review and recommendation to the Executive Director for modifications to the various Standard Forms used by AVA in club and event management.

Review of the Event Brochure Check List is still on going at this date.

Met the goals for this committee contained in the Strategic plan

Short Fall: Leaving the revision to the Event Handbook to successor committee.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

#### Curt Myron, Chair

Accomplishments include:

- Completed a thorough review and revision of the existing strategic plan, which included specific action items and due dates.
- Tracked completion of action items through each NEC meeting and updated the plan concurrently; and
- Motivated the NEC to accomplish tasks.
- Completed and published the 2004 AVA Survey of Club Presidents, State Presidents and National Executive Council Officers. With a 59% response rate, the survey gives an accurate picture of issues facing AVA.
- Survey reports offered to all AVA clubs, and
- A series of survey articles appears in *The American Wanderer*.

## AVA COMMITTEES CONTINUED

### SPECIAL FUNDS DEVELOPMENT

**Chris Mellen, Chair**

Accomplishments include:

Researching grants.

### OUTYEARS CONVENTION

**Don Ratliff, Chair; Herm Husbands, NEC Liaison**

Accomplishments include:

- Deciding on the host hotel for the 2007 Convention.
- Developed a logo for convention use.
- Established committees and chair positions.
- Having convention 2007 t-shirts available for sale.

### BYLAWS

**John Baird, Chair**

Accomplishments include:

Reviewing of the AVA Bylaws and editing changes to make them grammatically correct and consistent.

Developing proposals for bylaw changes at the biennial meeting.

### NOMINATING

**Dan Peters, Chair**

Accomplishments include:

Securing candidates and establishing guidelines for candidates.

Publicity regarding nominations and a report to the NEC and all member clubs, along with an article to the membership that was published in TAW.

Prepared list of responsibilities for the Nominating Committee.

## AVA COMMITTEES CONTINUED

### AUDIT

**Jim Geith, Chair; Dennis Michele, NEC Liaison**

Accomplishments include:

The Audit Committee engaged Carneiro, Chumney & Co. to perform the audit of the AVA statement of financial position and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2003 and June 30, 2004.

The Independent Certified Public Accountants, Carneiro, Chumney & Co., L.C. found that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the AVA as of June 30, 2003 and 2004, and the results of its activities and changes in net assets and cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with United States generally accepted accounting principles. While not a required part of the basic financial statements, the information in the schedules of unrestricted revenues and expenses was fairly stated.

The Audit Committee ensured the annual audits were completed and reports provided to the Executive Director and members of the Executive Council. The Audit Committee reviewed the auditor's reports and made recommendations to the Executive Council.

Recommendations made:

The 2005 Convention Committee members should be reminded of the importance of providing timely information to the administrative staff. Additionally, the Executive Director and Financial Director should be immediately notified whenever a cash or investment account is opened for the Association. This recommendation was made in March 2004 and February 2005.

The Executive Council should appoint a committee to review the current procedures for convention accounting and how the Convention Committees are notified of the procedures. The committee should include the Treasurer, Financial Director, and past/present Convention Committee Treasurers. This recommendation was made in February 2005.

The Executive Council should ensure there is an approved budget for the fiscal year, before the fiscal year begins. The fiscal year 2005 budget was approved at the September 25, 2005 Executive Council meeting, 3 months after the beginning of the fiscal year. This recommendation was made in February 2005.

The Treasurer and AVA Director should implement procedures to ensure that the Treasurer or alternate Executive Council member approves credit card purchases made by management on behalf of the AVA and purchases greater than \$5,000 in a timely manner. This recommendation was made in February 2005.

## AVA COMMITTEES CONTINUED

### **PUBLICITY**

**Leonard Wojtysiak, Chair**

Accomplishments include:

Promoting an awards program for clubs that do an exceptional job of publicity through brochures and newsletters.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

**Ron Drumm, Chair; Chris Mellen, NEC Liaison**

Accomplishments include:

Brought on-line sanctioning of events.

Club web pages hosted through the AVA server.

Evaluated equipment and upgraded some computers and printers.

### **FINANCE**

**Ginny Drumm, Chair**

Accomplishments include:

Information to clubs regarding non-profit corporation practice.

### **PARTNERSHIPS**

**Jacklyn Wilson, Chair**

Accomplishments include:

Establishment of the committee by the NEC in July, 2004.

Following up on many emails received regarding partnership/sponsorship possibilities. While many turned out to be nothing but scams, the following three did produce partners/sponsors.

GNC, partnership secured

FuelBelt, sponsorship secured

Yamax Corporation, sponsorship secured

Currently working on Partnership marketing package and on establishing a list of possible potential partners that fit the established criteria. Once list is finalized, we will begin working on contacting them to arrange possible partnerships or sponsorships.

## AVA COMMITTEES CONTINUED

### TRAINING

**Dennis Michele, Chair**

Goals include:

Developing and implementing a total training program for all levels within 3 years;

Identifying target groups to train, such as club members, officers at all levels, office employees;

Identifying areas of needed training:

How to host a quality event

How to deal with the media

How to attract new members

How to run a meeting using Roberts Rules of Order

How to design and order awards

How to mark a trail

How to find sponsors

How to do a web page

How to do a club newsletter

What are the rules?

Establishing focused training at weekend and convention workshops

Expanding the web site to include training

## AVA COMMITTEES CONTINUED

### OFFICE AUTOMATION AD HOC

#### **Curt Myron, Chair**

Accomplishments (with Technology Committee) included:

Completed an inventory of all AVA HQ office equipment.

Reviewed the function of equipment at HQ to identify necessary computer upgrades and create a schedule for systematic improvements in the future.

Completed the equipment/software review and installed computer upgrades.

### AWARDS RECOGNITION

#### **Bonnie Johnson, Chair**

Accomplishments include:

Promoted procedures and timetables for soliciting nominations for recognition awards;

Reviewed all applications for recognition and made recommendations to assure conformity and consistency with AVA policies and between regions;

Recommended to the NEC those nominated individuals, clubs, or organizations for approval; and

Worked to produce an Awards Book for presentation at the biennial meeting.

### MARKETING

#### **Ed Tod, Chair**

Accomplishments include:

New Walker packets redone to get new member data earlier.

In conjunction with the publicity committee, selected winners of awards for brochures, newsletters, etc.

Prepared draft marketing plan, solicited comments and incorporated them. The plan will be provided to the next NEC for implementing.

## AVA COMMITTEES CONTINUED

### YOUTH

**Nancy Wittenberg, Chair; Curt Myron, NEC Liaison**

Accomplishments include:

Reviewed the Girl Scout Walk Together Program. Developed guidelines for clubs who work with Girl Scout Councils to plan Walk-Togethers and published them in *The American Wanderer*.

Wrote procedures for clubs working with Girl Scout Councils to create the Walk-Together patch. Selected the Walk-Together patch for 2005-2006 through the Triangle Trailblazers AVA club and Pines of Carolina Girl Scout Council. Selected the Anchorage Volkssport Club to work with Girl Scouts – Susitna Council to design the 2006-2007 Walk-Together patch.

Reviewed and revised all materials related to the AVA Master Program. Revised the brochure, website, application form, logbook and procedures to simplify program management.

Responded to inquiries from Girl Scout councils and troop leaders, AVA clubs and individuals regarding the Girl Scout Walk Together program and the AVA Master program and served as a liaison encouraging clubs and councils to work together to get girls walking.

Committed to provide and staff the AVA's table display at the Girl Scout national council meeting in Atlanta in October and will coordinate a volksmarch of the Atlanta downtown YRE with the Roswell Striders club for Girl Scout adults attending the meeting.

# AVA NEC MEETINGS

September 26, 2003	San Antonio, Texas
March 13, 2004	Sacramento, California
September 25, 2004	Bloomington, Minnesota
February 19, 2005	Orlando, Florida
June 20, 2005	Cherry Hill, New Jersey

## Positive actions taken by the NEC include:

Approval for special event programs;

Approval to give two event stamps per year for Seasonal events as well as YRE events;

Approval for a pilot program for Walking for College Credit based on an accredited volkswalking course at Portland Community College, Portland, OR;

Adoption of a mailing list policy for AVA that protects AVA member addresses.

A change in issuance of AVA achievement numbers to be assigned up front;

Addition of informational materials in the New Walker packets;

Revision of the Policy Manual;

Formal adoption of the NEC Handbook;

Electronic submission of sanction requests;

Electronic transfer of Starting Point information from ESR data base;

# IVV PRESIDIU COMES TO AVA



The IVV Managing Presidium met with us in San Antonio, TX in September 2003. Members from L to R, back to front, are: Frantisek Moser – IVV VP from Czech Republic; Ewald Kraeft – IVV VP from Germany; Karl-Heinz Beckmann – IVV Treasurer from Germany; Odd Ivar Ruud – IVV President from Norway; Emil Dannemark – IVV Secretary from Belgium; Arne Roosen – CVA President from Canada; Monica Nogarth – IVV Translator; Lynn Clark – IVV VP from America; and Shirley Lindberg – AVA President

## IVV PRESIDIUUM COMES TO AVA continued



Dignitaries from IVV joined AVA and locals at a reception sponsored by the Fredericksburg club. Pictured (l-r) are Kenn Knopp (the person responsible for bringing volkssporting to America in 1976), IVV President Odd Ivar Ruud, AVA President Shirley Lindberg, Canadian Volkssport Federation President Arne Roosen, and Lester Frantzen (from Fredericksburg club, AVA #1).

# MONEY MATTERS

- Based on the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, total revenues were \$711,399 and total expenses were \$532,391. There was an increase in unrestricted net assets of \$179,008.
- A quick overview of the components of revenue are:
  - Events \$362,969
  - Donations \$16,320
  - Membership & Dues \$69,119
  - Corporate sponsors \$75,000
  - Publications & Advertisement \$45,007
  - Special programs \$8,502
  - Sales \$115,895
  - Other Incomes \$48,587
- A quick overview of the components of expenses are:
  - Insurance \$74,795
  - HQ Operations \$177,726
  - HQ Salaries and taxes \$205,689
  - NEC meetings & expenses \$15,331
  - Audit & Financial \$9,860
  - IVV dues & meetings \$7,712
  - TAW contract \$31,714
  - TAW postage \$9,564

# AVA PUBLICATIONS

- **TAW:** 3330 subscriptions

Under contract with Typesetting a la Macque the contract was extended and will be reviewed later in 2005.

- **STARTING POINT:** 2767 sold in 2004

Computerized entry of information saved many woman-hours and brought the information entry to the club level.

- **OTHER PUBLICITY:** Articles in Woman's Day, Prevention Magazine and on the WebMD page are results, among others, of connecting with the media.

# 2004 AWARDS PROCESSED

Event Awards Processed January through December 2004 = 4929  
10 Events = 580  
30 Events = 333  
200 Events = 172  
500 Events = 99  
1500 Events = 25  
2500 Events = 5  
4200 Events = 1

Distance awards = 2263

Bike awards = 17

**Total IVV Awards  
Processed for 2004 = 7209**

# 2004 EVENTS

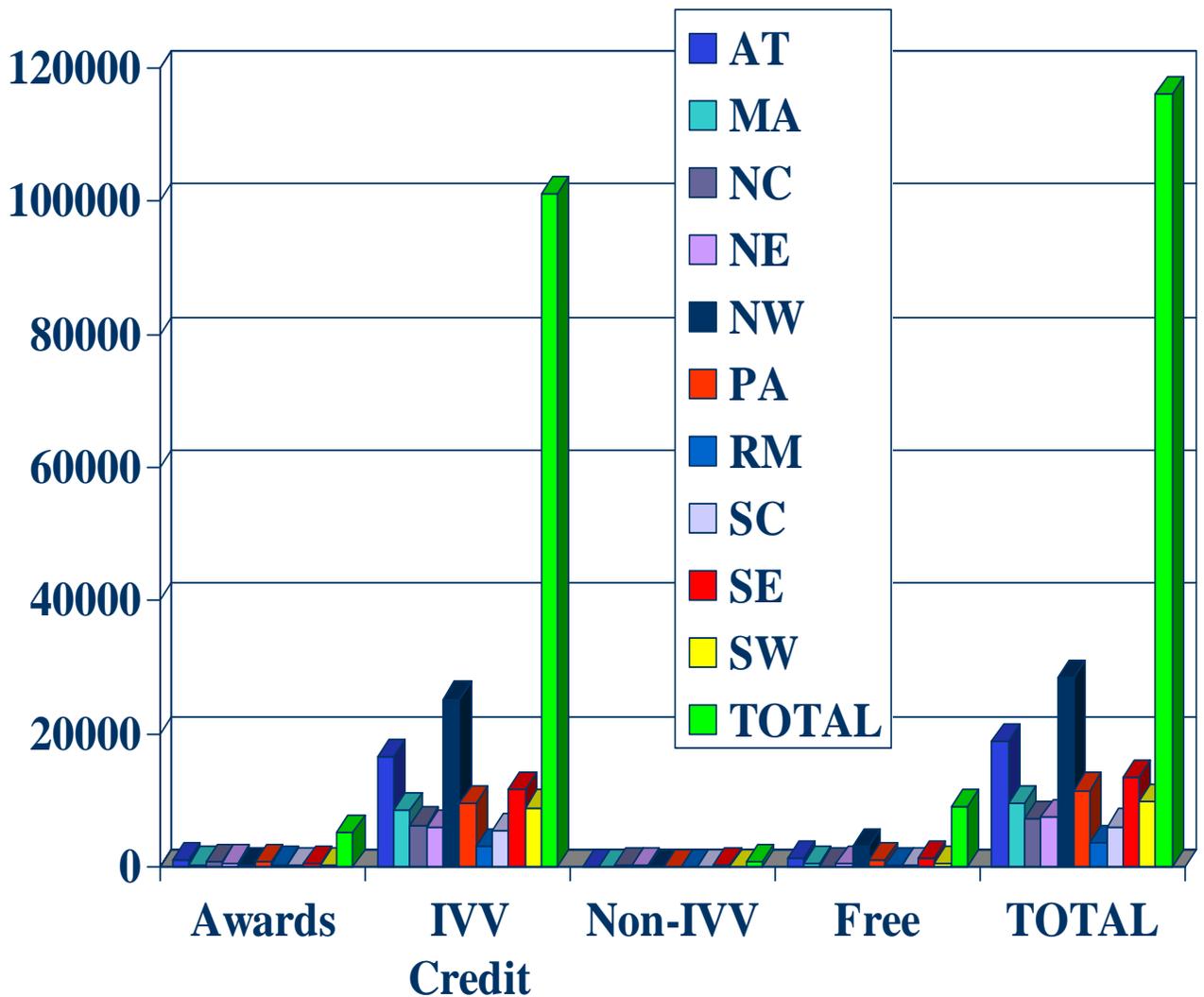
●	<u>BIKE</u>	<u>31</u>	
●	<u>GLOBALS</u>		<u>13</u>
●	<u>GUIDED WALKS</u>		<u>84</u>
●	<u>MARATHON</u>		<u>01</u>
●	<u>NIGHT SWIMS</u>	<u>10</u>	
●	<u>NIGHT WALKS</u>		<u>21</u>
●	<u>SWIMS</u>	<u>50</u>	
●	<u>SNOW SHOE</u>	<u>05</u>	
●	<u>WALKS</u>		<u>1064</u>
●	<u>X CNTRY SKI</u>	<u>05</u>	
●	<u>YRE BIKE</u>		<u>67</u>
●	<u>YRE SWIM</u>	<u>01</u>	
●	<u>SNL BIKE</u>		<u>21</u>
●	<u>SNL WALK</u>		<u>242</u>
●	<u>SNL X SKI</u>	<u>02</u>	
●	<u>YRE WALKS</u>		<u>1192</u>
●	<u>YRE X SKI</u>	<u>02</u>	
●	<u>YRE SNOWSHOE</u>	<u>01</u>	

# 2004 PARTICIPATION

REGULAR	REGION	YRE/SEASONAL
20630	ATLANTIC	18949
13804	MID AMERICA	9545
16634	NORTH CENTRAL	7292
5948	NORTHEAST	7381
35689	NORTHWEST	28508
8468	PACIFIC	11505
3698	ROCKY MOUNTAIN	3610
6080	SOUTH CENTRAL	6051
7384	SOUTHEAST	13463
13014	SOUTHWEST	9802
131349	TOTAL	116106

# 2004

## PARTICIPATION FOR YEAR ROUND & SEASONALS



# AVA Clubs

## THE GRASS ROOTS

### **ALABAMA**

Boll Weevil Volksmarchers Assn.  
Capital City Wanderers  
CV Hobo Hikers  
Redstone Wanderers

### **ALASKA**

Anchorage Volkssport Club

### **ARIZONA**

Flagstaff Scalawags Walking Club  
Saguaro Sun Striders  
Thunder Mountain Trekkers  
Tucson Volkssport Klub  
Valley Volkssporters Assn.

### **ARKANSAS**

Arkansas Octoberfest Volksmarsch

### **CALIFORNIA**

Bay Bandits Volksmarch Club  
California Volkssport Assn.  
Central Coast Peregrine Pathfinders  
Coronado Beachcombers  
Davis Dynamos  
Delta Tule Trekkers  
Green Valley Gaiters, Inc.  
Hollywood Star Trekkers  
Laguna Turf 'N Surf Walkers  
Low Desert Roadrunners  
Monterey Peninsula Walking Club  
Placer Pacers  
Sacramento Walking Sticks  
San Diego County Rockhoppers  
SLO Soles  
Sonoma County Stompers  
South Bay Roadrunners  
South Bay Striders  
Tahoe Trail Trekkers  
Vaca Valley Volks  
Ye Olde Chico Walking Club

### **COLORADO**

Colorado High Country Hikers  
Colorado Springs Walking Club  
Columbine Country Cruisers  
Falcon Wanderers  
High Plains Drifters  
Northern Front Range Wanderers  
Rocky Mountain Wanderers  
Upper Rio Grande Mountain Walkers  
Woodland Wanderers

### **CONNECTICUT**

Connecticut Valley Volkssport Club  
Hardware City Hoofers

### **DELAWARE**

Diamond State Trekkers  
First State Webfooters

### **DISTRICT of COLUMBIA**

Mid-Atlantic Walking Assn.  
U.S. Freedom Walk Festival Club

### **FLORIDA**

First Coast Trail Forgers  
Florida Volkssport Assn.  
Happy Wanderers  
Meandering Manatees  
Mid-Florida Milers Walking Club  
Panama City Volksmarchers  
Patrick Pacers Volkssport Club  
Pensacola Volksmarch Club  
Suncoast Sandpipers Volkssport Club  
Tallahassee Volkssport Club  
Tyndall Trekkers

### **GEORGIA**

Alpine Helen Volkswanderung Club  
Georgia Walkers  
International City Volkssport Assn.  
McIntosh Trail Walkers  
Roswell Striders

### **HAWAII**

Menehune Marchers

### **IDAHO**

Coeur d'Alene Volkssport Club  
Selkirk Striders  
Treasure Valley Volkssports

### **ILLINOIS**

Decatur Park Dist. Rec. Office  
Illinois Trekkers Volkssport Club  
Illinois Volkssport Assn.  
Kountry Walkers  
Lebanon Cedar Cruisers  
Mississippi River Ramblers  
Railsplitter Wanderers  
Ridgewalkers Walking Club  
Rock River Valley Volkssporters  
Traveling Trekkers  
Windy City Walkers

### **INDIANA**

Auburn Duesey Walkers  
Bedford Hiking Club  
Bloomington Flying Fish  
Blue River Walking Club  
Columbus Wellness Walkers  
Friendly Village Marchers  
Goodtime Trailblazers  
Hoosier Hikers  
Indiana Volkssport Assn.  
Indy 'G' Walkers  
Marion Fussgangers  
River City Ramblers  
Three Rivers Strollers  
Wabash Wanderers  
White River Ramblers  
Whitewater Valley Wanderers

### **IOWA**

Charles City Area Volkssport Club  
Greater Des Moines Volkssport  
Hawkeye Hikers  
Tri- State Trekkers

# AVA Clubs Continued

## **KANSAS**

Free State Walkers  
Heart Of America Volkssport Assn.  
Kansas JayWalkers of Leavenworth  
Sunflower Sod Stompers  
Wichita Skywalkers

## **KENTUCKY**

Derby City Walkers  
Northern Kentucky Trotters

## **LOUISIANA**

Baton Rouge Striders Assn.  
Crescent City Volkssport Club

## **MAINE**

Southern Maine Volkssport Assn.

## **MARYLAND**

Annapolis Amblers  
Baltimore Walking Club  
Chesapeake Bay Country Wanderers  
Columbia Volksmarch Club  
Freestate Happy Wanderers  
Great Greenbelt Volksmarchers, Inc.  
Maryland Volkssport Assn.  
Piedmont Pacers  
Potomac River Volksmarching Club  
Seneca Valley Sugarloafers  
Washington DC Area Volksmarch Club, Inc.  
Worldwide Volkssport Tours

## **MASSACHUSETTS**

Two Town Walking Club  
Walk 'N Mass Volkssport Club

## **MICHIGAN**

Historic Pathwalkers  
Mackinaw Walkers Volkssport Club  
Michigan Pathfinders  
Zeeland Volk's Corporation

## **MINNESOTA**

Central Minnesota Volkssports  
Crow River Crawlers  
Minnesota Sneakers  
Minnesota Volkssport Assn.  
NorthStar Trail Travelers  
Pelican Rapids CC Walking Club  
Riverbend Striders Volksmarch Club  
Syttende Mai Folkemarsj Stiftelse  
Twin Cities Volkssport

## **MISSISSIPPI**

Magnolia State Volkssport Club

## **MISSOURI**

Clay-Platte Trackers  
Dogwood Trailblazers  
Florissant Valley Walkers  
Hermann Volkssport Assn.  
Missouri Marching Mules  
Missouri Milers Volksmarch Club  
Pace Setters Volkssport Club  
St Louis-Stuttgart Volksmarch Club

## **MONTANA**

Big Sky Wanderers  
Kin-Knee-Kin-ic-Kick Striders  
Madison County Volkssport Club

## **NATIONAL OFFICE**

Ramstein Roadrunners  
Spangdahlem Eifel Wanderers

## **NEBRASKA**

Homestead Striders  
Lincoln Volkssport Club, Inc.  
Mid-Nebraska Trail Seekers  
Nebraska Wanderfreunde Trailblazers  
Panhandle Walkers  
Wellness Wanderers  
Wild West Walkers

## **NEVADA**

Las Vegas High Rollers & Strollers  
Sierra Nevada Striders

## **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Granite State Trail Walkers  
Seacoast Striders

## **NEW JERSEY**

Garden State Wanderers  
Jersey Cape Sandy Sneakers  
Monmouth Shore Walkers  
Princeton Area Walkers

## **NEW MEXICO**

Double Eagle Hike & Bike Club  
Kiwanis Club of Raton  
Pecos Valley Volkssporters  
Santa Fe Trail Blazers  
Sun Country Striders

## **NEW YORK**

Empire State Capital Volkssporters  
Finger Lakes Volkssports Club  
Niagara Escarpment Volkssport Assn.  
Niagara Frontier Volkssport Club  
North Country Wanderers  
Travelwalk  
Volkssport Club of West Point

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

Asheville Amblers  
Greenway Walkers  
Metrolina Walkers  
Rowan Roamers  
Tarheel State Walkers Volkssport Assn.  
Triangle Trailblazers  
Winston Wanderers

## **NORTH DAKOTA**

Bismarck-Mandan CVB  
Koda Manipe Volkssport Club  
Red River Volkssport Assn

## **OHIO**

Beaver Walkers  
Blanchard Valley Volkssporters  
Buckeye Wander Freunde  
Bulls Run Ramblers  
Cuyahoga Valley Spaziergangers  
De 'Fence Walkers Volkssport Club  
Flusstalvolk  
Gemutlich Wanderers  
German Village Wander Volk  
Germania Volksmarch Gruppe  
Heart of Ohio Hikers  
Kettering Kilometer Climbers  
Maumee Valley Volkssporters  
Miami Indian Trekkers  
Ohio Volkssport Assn.  
Ohio Wander Freunde  
Olentangy Owls  
Penny Pickers, The  
Pickawillany Walkers  
Purple Penguins  
Queen City Skywalkers  
Sister Cities of Vandalia, Inc.  
Southern Ohio Trekkers  
Stillwater Leisure Sport Assn., Inc.  
Tecumseh Trailblazers  
Trail Trolls Inc.  
Valley Vagabonds, Inc.  
Village Walkers of Path'N Glen  
Wandering Wheels Volkssports Club  
Xenia Walking Club

## **OKLAHOMA**

Frontier Walkers, Inc.  
Holy Family Walkers  
Prairie Dog Plodders  
Tulsa Walking Club  
Wandergruppe Walking Club  
World Wide Walkers

# AVA Clubs Continued

## OREGON

Albany Fitwalkers  
Cedar Milers  
Columbia River Volkssport Club  
Corvallis Cruisers  
East County Windwalkers  
Four D's Volkssport Club  
International Wanderers  
Lake Oswego Puddle Jumpers  
McMinnville Mac Trackers  
Monitor Petal Trekkers  
Mossback Volkssport  
Oregon Trail State Volkssport Assn.  
Ponderosa Pathfinders  
Rivercity Strollers  
Rogue Valley Walkers  
Rose City Roamers  
Sherwood Merrywalkers  
Silverton Walk Abouts  
Tualatin Valley Volks  
Turnaround Trekkers  
Umpqua Valley Walkers  
Vaea Walk and Run Club  
Valley Volkswalkers  
Willamette Wanderers  
Y B Normal Adventurers  
Yachats Coastal Gems Volkssport Club

## PENNSYLVANIA

Altoona-Johnstown Summit Striders  
Atlantic Region  
Baloney Stompers, Inc.  
Cumberland Valley Lead Foot Club  
Keystone State Volkssport Assn.  
Liberty Bell Wanderers  
Nittany Nomads  
Penn-Dutch Pacers Volksmarch Club  
Susquehanna Rovers Volksmarch Club  
York White Rose Wanderers

## SOUTH DAKOTA

Black Hills Volkssport Assn.  
Capital City River Ramblers  
Prairie Wanderers Volkssport Club

## TENNESSEE

Gatlinburg Hiking Club  
Hillbilly Walkers  
Lewis County Volkssport Club  
Trail of Tears Club  
Tuck-A-See Wanderers

## TEXAS

Amigo Amblers  
Austin Sertoma Club  
Buffalo Chip Kickers  
Bushwalkers  
City of McAllen Parks and Rec. Dept.  
Colorado River Walkers  
Dallas Trekkers, Inc.  
East Texas Trekkers  
Friendswood Fun Walkers  
Hill Country Volkssportverein  
Hood County Hummers  
Houston Happy Hikers  
HQ U.S. Army Medical Command  
Kerrville Trailblazers  
Midland Walkabout  
NB Marsch-und Wandergruppe  
Plano Walking Club  
Randolph Roadrunners  
San Marcos River Walkers  
Selma Pathfinders  
Shoeleather Express  
Sparkling City Strollers  
Star Trekkers of Irving  
Tarrant County Walkers  
Texas State Parks Volkssport Assn.  
Texas Volkssport Assn.  
Texas Wanderers  
Trinity Trekkers  
Trotting Texas Turtles  
Volkssportverein Friedrichsburg  
Weslaco Pacers  
West Texas Trail Walkers

## UTAH

Footloose Volkssport Club  
Gadabout  
Golden Spike Striders

## VERMONT

Twin State Volkssport Assn.

## VIRGINIA

All American Walking Club  
Bad Pennies, The  
Boy Scout Troop 118  
Ft Belvoir Outdoor Rec.  
Gator Volksmarsch Club  
German American Volkssport Assn.  
Germanna Volkssport Association  
Lee Lepus Volksverband  
Loudoun Walking & Volkssport Club  
Northern Virginia Volksmarchers  
Peninsula Pathfinders of Virginia  
Pentagon Pacesetters  
Virginia Volkssport Assn.  
Walking Scouts  
Wood and Dale Wanderers

## WASHINGTON

All Point Explorers  
All Weather Walkers  
Bavarian Volkssport Assn.  
Border Crossers  
Capitol Volkssport Club  
Daffodil Valley Volkssport Assn.  
Emerald City Wanderers  
Evergreen State Volkssport Assn.  
Evergreen Wanderers  
Federal Way Lions Volkssport Club  
Four-Plus Foolhardy Folks  
FS Family Wanderers  
Global Adventurers  
Grand Coulee Dam Volkssport Assn.  
HopkinsTelephone Pioneers  
Interlaken Trailblazers Volkssport Club  
International Walk Fest  
Key Peninsula Lions Volkssport Club  
Kitsap Volkssporters Club  
Lilac City Volkssport Assn.  
Northwest Striders Volkssport Club  
NW Tulip Trekkers  
Olympic Peninsula Explorers  
Over-The-Hill-Gang Volkssport Club  
P.E.O. Pathfinders  
Palouse Hills Volkssport Assn.  
Sea-Tac Volkssports Club  
Sound Steppers Volkssport Club  
The Naturals Club  
Third Planet Volkstours  
Vancouver USA Volkssporters  
Yakima Valley Sun Striders

## WEST VIRGINIA

Riverfront Ramblers

## WISCONSIN

Hearty Sole Walkers  
Madison Area Volkssport Assn.  
Manitowoc City Centre Association  
Menominee River Volkssport Club

## WYOMING

Casper Pathfinders  
Cheyene High Plains Wanderers  
Clear Creek Volkssports Assn.  
Northern Hills Walking Club  
[Wyoming State Parks and Historic Sites](#)

# AVA SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

CLUB PRESIDENTS  
STATE ASSOCIATIONS  
NEC MEMBERS

1. Many AVA clubs are healthy with growing memberships and healthy finances, while other clubs flounder. Five Regions show growth and five show decline. AVA Associate Membership has declined due to perceived lack of value, lack of publicity and lack of communication with members and potential members.
2. Forty percent of AVA Club Presidents are in their first two years in the position.
3. While AVA is accurately portrayed as family-oriented, AVA is not composed of a high percentage of family units. Most club members are at the age where children have grown and left home, or are in high school or college. Responses show that less than one in twenty club members is under the age of 21. Most AVA club members are empty nesters whose children are grown and left home, or are interested in other activities.
4. Although the number of AVA clubs continues to decline, there is evidence that the much-broadcast decline of our sport may be overstated. **Eighty percent** of club presidents report that club membership is steady or increasing. From numerous responses, a lack of available finances is not the major issue facing AVA clubs.
5. Club Activities. When asked 50% of AVA clubs reported that they had monthly meetings; 53% reported having a club newsletter; 55% have an email address and 43% have a website. The degree to which AVA clubs have embraced technology to market volkssporting is gratifying, but what of the other 45-50% of AVA clubs? Local publicity and marketing need to be improved. Successes achieved by some clubs need to be shared with other clubs.

## AVA SURVEY CONCLUSIONS CONTINUED

6. The major problem facing AVA clubs is a lack of members in general and a lack of active volunteers willing to hold office, and conduct events. Clubs perceive that national publicity from AVA would help them locally. The evaluations show that AVA clubs want their Regional Directors, State Organizations (where applicable) and their national Headquarters to increase their assistance to troubled clubs and help create new clubs.
7. The average AVA club holds four traditional events and five year-round/seasonal events each year. The overwhelming majority of events are walks. Most clubs review and revise traditional event routes every year and year-round/seasonal events every two to three years although almost half of the responding clubs never revise year-round/seasonal routes unless forced to do so. Aside from club websites, clubs focus their local publicity more internally through volkssporting channels than through external sources to the non-volkssporting public. The number and quality of year-round events nationwide, as well as within each of the states, rates slightly higher than the number and quality of traditional volkssporting events.
8. Evaluations of State Organizations, Regional Directors and Officers, and AVA Headquarters clearly show successes and areas for improvement. Promotion of volkssporting and better communications with constituent clubs are the two most important areas of improvement for State Organizations according to clubs. Regional Directors need to focus more on assisting troubled clubs and the creation of new clubs while working to increase participation.
9. AVA Publications are important. Clubs rate *The American Wanderer*, the AVA Website, *The Starting Point* and the AVA Checkpoint as valuable communications aids. Although subscriptions to *The American Wanderer* are declining many clubs have noted improvements in both content and format. Suggestions for improvement of content were numerous. The AVA Website is a success. Automated sanctioning of events is a major improvement in administration. Many clubs want improvements in other areas of administration as well.
10. AVA Special Programs are popular. While some respondents feel a bit overwhelmed by the number of special walking programs, others love it and want more. Recent decisions by the Special Programs Committee that limit the number of programs at any one time, focus on regional/national programs and systematically rotate new programs to replace older programs seem to be exactly what most walkers want.
11. The majority of responders view AVA fees and charges as appropriate and reasonable. The two fees viewed as too high are event sanction fees and the fee for AVA Associate Membership.

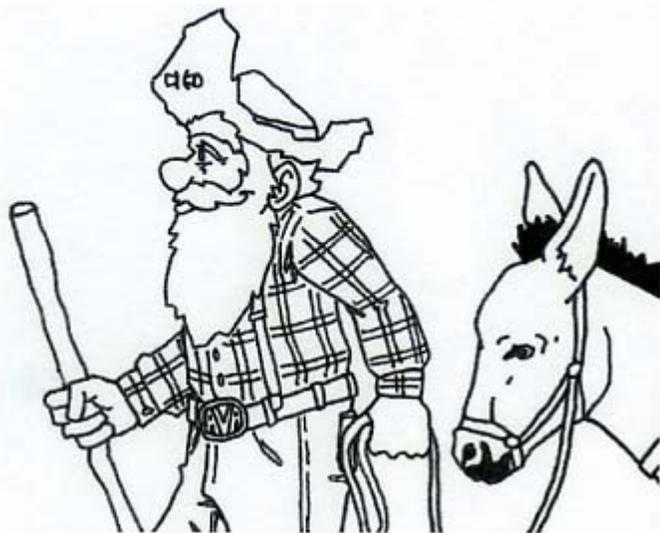
## AVA SURVEY CONCLUSIONS CONTINUED

12. A large majority (94%) of clubs support the objectives of AVA's Strategic Plan (increasing participation in AVA events and acquiring stable broad-based financial resources. Some are unaware that the Strategic Plan exists.
13. New Balance continues to be a popular sponsor for volkssporters. New Balance giveaways and event sponsorships are effective tools for local publicity.
14. AVA Headquarters responsiveness to customers is good considering the limited staff available and the number of clubs, state organizations and national officers.
15. AVA Associate Membership (per the AVA Executive Director) has declined much faster in the last 12 months than total AVA membership (10.6 % vs. 0.43 %). This indicates that AVA Associate Membership is not effectively promoted, particularly to new volkssporters. Another conclusion is that AVA Membership is not sufficiently attractive or meaningful to volkssporters. There is confusion as to the requirements for AVA Associate Membership and the Associate Membership fee is least popular of all AVA fees. The content and sheer volume of detailed responses suggest that most respondents perceive individual AVA Associate Membership as having no meaningful benefits for their membership fee, or only the TAW subscription as a benefit.
16. TAW subscriptions have declined in the same manner as AVA Associate Memberships in spite of the fact that AVA provides significant numbers of complimentary copies. Several Club President's did not renew their personal TAW subscription when the free club copy of TAW began coming to them.
17. AVA Life Membership is different than Associate Membership, but viewed as the same by many clubs. Some responders feel that the best way to improve Life Memberships is to offer more and more discounts, which tends to defeat the purpose of fund-raising in support of AVA. Other AVA Life Members note that they purchased life membership simply to support the organization they love. There is also a perception that AVA doesn't live up to its past offers of benefits, particularly priority processing of IVV award books. Others felt more recognition of life members may cause improvement.

# CONVENTION 2007

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The Pacific Region clubs invite you to the 15<sup>th</sup> AVA Biennial Convention, June 23 through July 1, 2007. The host hotel will be the Radisson Hotel Sacramento, located just five minutes from the state capitol at 500 Leisure Lane.

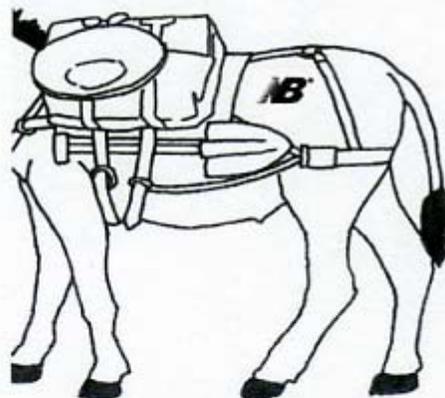
[www.radisson.com/sacramentoca](http://www.radisson.com/sacramentoca)

Exceptional walks are being planned so you can explore California scenery, history and the wine country.

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Don Ratliff [dratliff@softcom.net](mailto:dratliff@softcom.net)

Wayne Holloway [gandw@softcom.net](mailto:gandw@softcom.net)



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