

BIENNIAL REPORT

July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2015



Fun, Fitness, Friendship

ASSOCIATION

Volkssporting in America

The American Volkssport Association (AVA), is a member of the International Federation of Popular Sports (IVV), formed in Lindau, Germany on January 14, 1968. The International People Sports (IPA-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 friendship 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 fun, fitness and friendship through quality family oriented noncompetitive events, in America's spirit of teamwork where all can achieve their personal best.

Volkssporting is "people sport" and began in the mid-1960's in Europe. We promote noncompetitive 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 47 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 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 the 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

Dennis Michele

The last two years have been a mixture of results. Participation for all types of event has remained level even though we have held more events. Redemption of credit books, both event and distance, has also remained steady over the last two years. The reverse side is that these numbers have not increased much even though we are holding more events. Nonetheless, we need to continue increasing the number of events, especially traditional ones, in order to spread the fun, fitness and friendship of Volkssporting to new participants.

We have placed more emphasis on biking and it is slowly showing increases. This is a relatively virgin territory for the AVA and we need to continue to stress biking. I set up a special committee, headed by the Atlantic RD, Tom Jackson, to work this area.

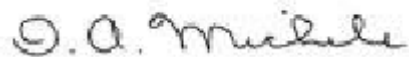
We hired a new Executive Director (ED) and she started off well. Unfortunately, she contracted a rare malady and had to resign. So another ED, Henry Rosales, has been hired and he has also started off well. His major project, besides finding new sources of funding, will be to develop a strategic plan that will guide us over the next four years.

The one area of concern is the continued loss of clubs. When I first started Volkssporting, we had close to 500 clubs. We have had a steady net loss of clubs each year and are down to 240. We must depend in our RDs, state associations and larger clubs to find and recruit more clubs. These entities have the experience and local knowledge so necessary to encourage new clubs to form. To this end, having deputy RDs will take some of the load off RDs and allow more time and energy for recruiting new clubs. I highly recommend the passage of the Bylaw amendment permitting this.

It appears we might have a small surplus this year. Not a huge amount but so much better than the deficits we had been experiencing.

We successfully passed another audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2014 and the results are attached.

We are hopefully turning the ship around. I want to thank all the HQ staff, NEC, state associations and clubs for their continued hard work and effort. Our biggest asset is the people who comprise our clubs. Their support is crucial.



Dennis Michele
President, American Volkssport Association

Money Matters

(A complete audit report is available at the AVA Headquarters.)

American Volkssport Association, Inc.

Financial Report
Years Ended June 30, 2014 and 2013



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Independent Auditor's Report

To the National Executive Council
American Volkssport Association, Inc.
Universal City, Texas

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of American Volkssport Association, Inc. (the Association) which comprise the Statements of Financial Position as of June 30, 2014 and 2013, the related Statements of Activities and Change in Net Assets, and Cash Flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. This includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

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Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association as of June 30, 2014 and 2013, the related Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets, and Cash Flows for the years then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

BDO USA, LLP

December 24, 2014

American Volkssport Association, Inc.

Statements of Financial Position

<i>June 30,</i>	2014	2013
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 238,899	\$ 191,239
Accounts Receivable:		
Trade	66,966	76,838
Other	1,185	5,927
Total Accounts Receivable	68,151	82,765
Investments	720,861	812,250
Inventory	55,741	57,306
Prepaid expenses	26,662	19,143
Furniture and equipment - at cost	138,039	137,838
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(116,558)	(110,679)
Net Furniture and Equipment	21,481	27,159
Total Assets	\$ 1,131,795	\$ 1,189,862
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts payable	\$ 14,793	\$ 6,540
Accrued expenses	10,618	10,478
Deferred Revenue:		
Annual dues	16,700	12,800
Sanction fees	11,077	12,816
TAW subscriptions and memberships	39,519	37,614
Other	1,235	1,300
Total Deferred Revenue	68,531	64,530
Capital lease obligations	17,222	21,236
Total Liabilities	111,164	102,784
Commitments - Note 7		
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	1,020,631	1,087,078
Total Net Assets	1,020,631	1,087,078
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 1,131,795	\$ 1,189,862

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

American Volkssport Association, Inc.
Statements of Activities and Change in Net Assets

<i>For the Years Ended June 30,</i>	2014	2013
Revenue, Gains, and Other Support		
Awards	\$ 48,234	\$ 39,860
Convention	-	129,454
Corporate sponsorship	-	3,400
Donations	80,312	12,580
Events	269,716	276,177
Interest income	93	132
Investment income	9,389	13,204
Membership	28,619	29,518
Other	21,055	22,332
Publications	40,210	38,503
Specialties - merchandise, net of cost	17,645	24,148
Total Revenue, Gains, and Other Support	515,273	589,308
Expenses		
Awards and events	17,872	8,218
Convention	-	117,910
Executive Council:		
Meetings	23,105	18,081
Operations	917	1,922
Insurance	34,538	33,192
National Office:		
Operations	75,182	72,707
Salaries	233,752	228,232
Other	122,277	69,781
Professional services	16,870	22,943
Publications	43,742	44,762
Specialties - merchandise	13,465	15,026
Total Expenses	581,720	632,774
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	(66,447)	(43,466)
Unrestricted Net assets, beginning of year	1,087,078	1,130,544
Unrestricted Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 1,020,631	\$ 1,087,078

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

American Volkssport Association

	14-15	15-16		
	APPROVED	PROPOSED		
BUDGET ITEM	BUDGET	BUDGET		
INCOME				
<u>MEMBERSHIP INCOME</u>				
Charter Memberships	\$ -	\$ -		
Volkssports Associate Memberships	\$ 25,590	\$ 14,710		
Annual Dues	\$ 15,950	\$ 11,550		
Total Membership	\$ 41,540	\$ 26,260		
<u>EVENT INCOME</u>				
Sanction Fees	\$ 60,540	\$ 62,790		
Participation Fees	\$ 84,198	\$ 76,892		
Participation Fees, YRE/Seasonal	\$ 135,792	\$ 91,385		
YRE/Seasonal Processing Fees	\$ 36,420	\$ 34,276		
Total Event	\$ 316,950	\$ 265,343		
<u>SALES INCOME</u>				
Specialties	\$ 29,000	\$ 28,922		
Awards	\$ 2,700	\$ 150		
IVV Books	\$ 35,000	\$ 25,698		
New Walker Packets	\$ 11,000	\$ 8,690		
Freight/Shipping Income	\$ 7,100	\$ 7,520		
Sales Returns/Allowances	\$ (100)	\$ (50)		
Member Discounts	\$ (11,810)	\$ (9,202)		
Total Sales	\$ 72,890	\$ 61,728		
<u>PUBLICATION INCOME</u>				
TAW Subscriptions/Library	\$ 31,584	\$ 29,160		
TAW & Web Advertising	\$ 4,200	\$ 9,410		
Total Publication	\$ 35,784	\$ 38,570		
<u>SPONSORSHIP INCOME</u>				
Foundations & Grants	\$ 30,000	\$ 35,000		
Corporate	\$ -	\$ 5,000		
Total Sponsorship	\$ 30,000	\$ 40,000		
<u>MISCELLANEOUS INCOME</u>				
Royalties	\$ 150	\$ 1,272		
Interest	\$ 100	\$ 100		
Interest, Restricted	\$ 13,059	\$ 13,023		
Youth Program/Heritage Event	\$ 1,579	\$ 1,326		
Other/Conv0X/Insurance	\$ 134,454	\$ 4,825		
Total Miscellaneous	\$ 149,342	\$ 20,546		
<u>FUND RAISING INCOME</u>				
EC Events	\$ -	\$ -		
Donations	\$ 100,200	\$ 82,000		
Special Funds Development	\$ 100	\$ 100		
Special Programs	\$ 8,126	\$ 7,391		
Total Fund Raising	\$ 108,426	\$ 89,491		
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 754,932	\$ 541,938		

American Volkssport Association

	14-15	15-16		
	APPROVED	PROPOSED		
BUDGET ITEM	BUDGET	BUDGET		
COST OF GOODS SOLD				
Awards, Sold	\$ 783	\$ 96		
Awards, Issued	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,600		
IVV Books	\$ 1,750	\$ 1,465		
New Walker Packets	\$ 1,870	\$ 1,543		
Specialties	\$ 14,688	\$ 12,681		
Youth Program	\$ -	\$ -		
Shipping/Freight/Rounding	\$ 5,100	\$ 5,640		
Total Cost of Goods	\$ 28,691	\$ 26,025		
GROSS PROFIT				
	\$ 726,241	\$ 515,913		
EXPENSES				
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</u>				
Bad Debt/Convention 200X	\$ 117,960	\$ -		
Credit Card Service Fees	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,236		
Bank Service Charges/Rate Exch	\$ (180)	\$ (180)		
Interest Charges/Expense	\$ 1,184	\$ 835		
Total Administrative	\$ 120,664	\$ 1,891		
<u>EQUIPMENT EXPENSE</u>				
Equipment Rental	\$ 4,584	\$ 5,220		
Equipment Maintenance	\$ 972	\$ 972		
Total Maintenance	\$ 5,556	\$ 6,192		
<u>SERVICE EXPENSES</u>				
Financial Services	\$ 15,000	\$ 14,940		
Insurance, Events	\$ 33,593	\$ 34,671		
Insurance, National Headquarters	\$ 2,067	\$ 2,089		
Legal Services	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000		
Total Service	\$ 60,660	\$ 56,700		
<u>GENERAL EXPENSE</u>				
Executive Council Meetings	\$ 4,599	\$ 9,660		
Executive Director Expenses	\$ 2,000	\$ 5,486		
Executive Council Miscellaneous	\$ 1,092	\$ 889		
National Committees	\$ 200	\$ -		
Travel, Executive Council	\$ 5,700	\$ 15,680		
Total General	\$ 13,591.00	\$ 31,715		
<u>POSTAL EXPENSES</u>				
National Headquarters	\$ 4,000	\$ 5,000		
TAW	\$ 8,800	\$ 8,812		
Executive Council	\$ 450	\$ 450		
Total Postal	\$ 13,250.00	\$ 14,262		
<u>PRINTING EXPENSE</u>				
TAW Contract	\$ 34,000	\$ 25,302		
TAW	\$ 34,000	\$ 25,302		
Total Printing				

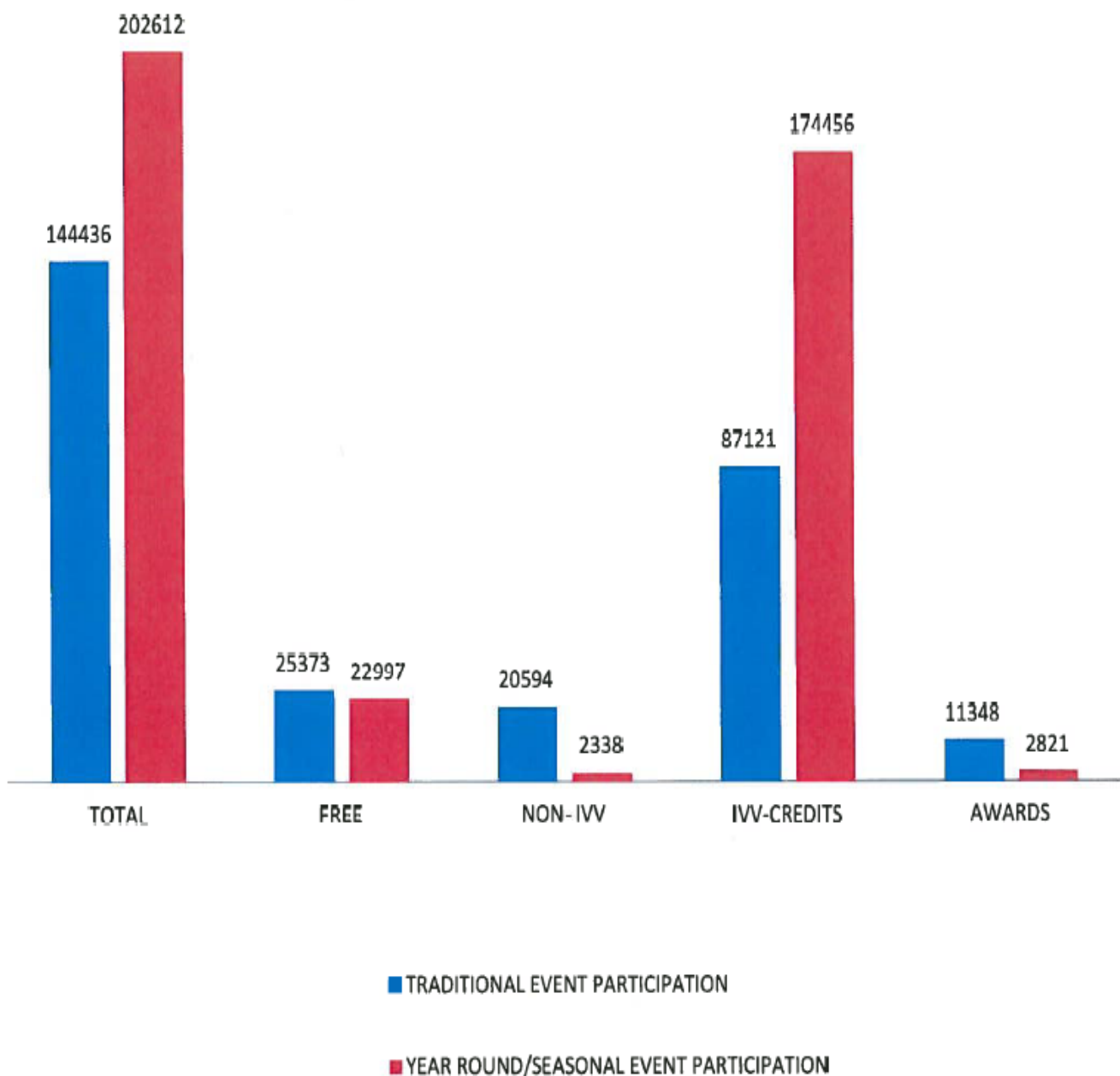
American Volkssport Association

	14-15	15-16		
	APPROVED	PROPOSED		
BUDGET ITEM	BUDGET	BUDGET		
PROMOTIONAL EXPENSE				
Promotional Publicity	\$ 20,095	\$ -		
Promotional Marketing - Volks Assoc	\$ 79,300	\$ 4,250		
Telephone 800 Service	\$ -	\$ -		
Promotional Club/Event Support	\$ 8,085	\$ 4,800		
Promotional Sponsor Recruitment	\$ 4,356	\$ -		
Total Promotional	\$ 111,836	\$ 9,050		
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES				
Rent, National Headquarters	\$ 39,426	\$ 40,410		
Staff Training	\$ 500	\$ 1,000		
Supplies- small Equip-repairs	\$ 21,319	\$ 14,816		
Miscellaneous Operations	\$ 2,100	\$ 1,100		
Youth /Special Funds Dev.	\$ 2,255	\$ 1,104		
Membership Dues	\$ 1,230	\$ 765		
Computer Support	\$ 5,400	\$ 2,500		
Publications	\$ 500	\$ -		
Web Site Support/Internet/Fee	\$ 19,300	\$ 17,440		
Telephone, National Headquarters	\$ 2,305	\$ 2,364		
Telephone, Executive Council	\$ -	\$ 500		
Strategic Planning	\$ -	\$ 25,000		
Depreciation Expense	\$ 7,943	\$ 6,368		
Loss of Disposition of Equip/Mer	\$ 2,500	\$ -		
Total Operational	\$ 104,778	\$ 113,367		
IVV EXPENSES				
Dues	\$ 4,550	\$ 4,400		
Liaison	\$ 100	\$ 50		
Meetings	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,000		
Stamps	\$ 4,160	\$ 3,854		
Total IVV	\$ 12,810	\$ 10,304		
PERSONNEL EXPENSE				
Payroll Taxes	\$ 18,728	\$ 18,078		
Payroll Benefits	\$ 16,840	\$ 31,989		
Wages, Staff	\$ 189,120	\$ 191,840		
Total Personnel	\$ 224,688	\$ 241,907		
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 701,833	\$510,690		
GROSS PROFIT / (LOSS)	\$24,408	\$5,223		

2012 - 2014 Participation

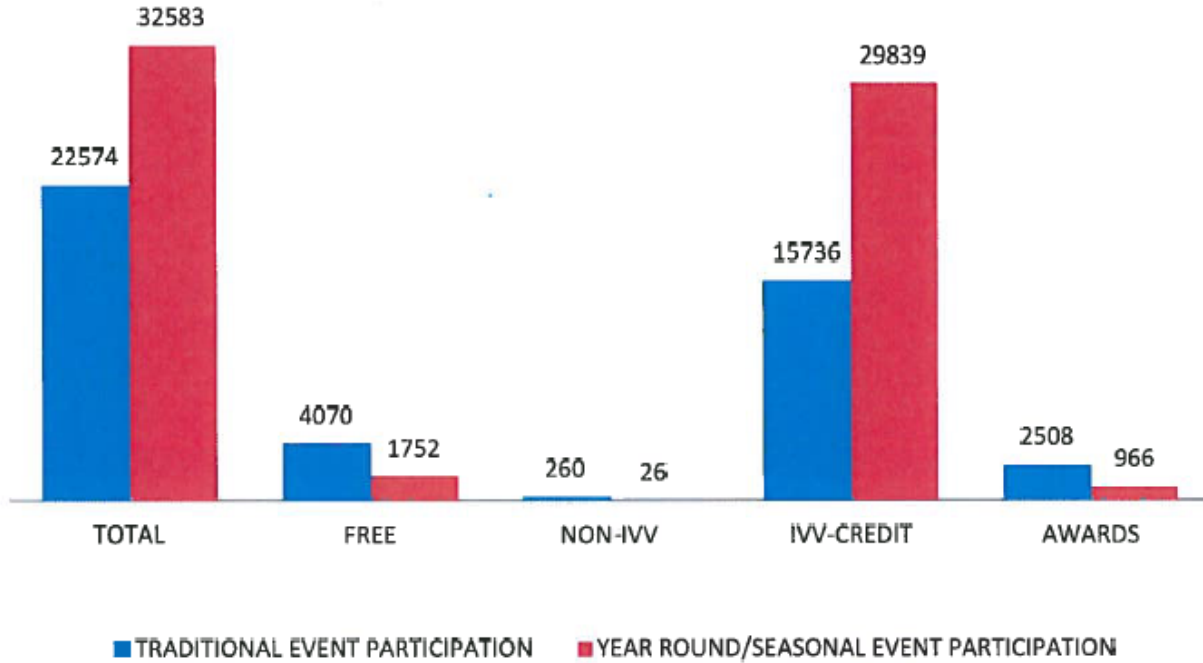
July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2014 Participation

All Regions

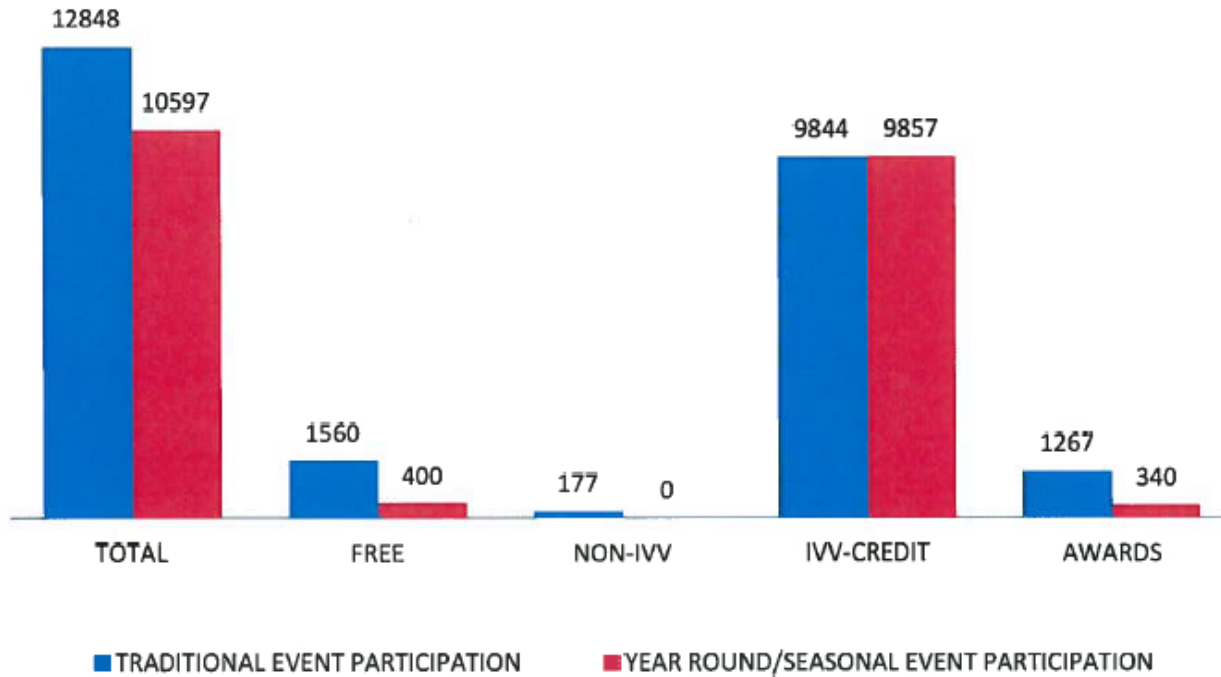


JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2014 PARTICIPATION

ATLANTIC REGION

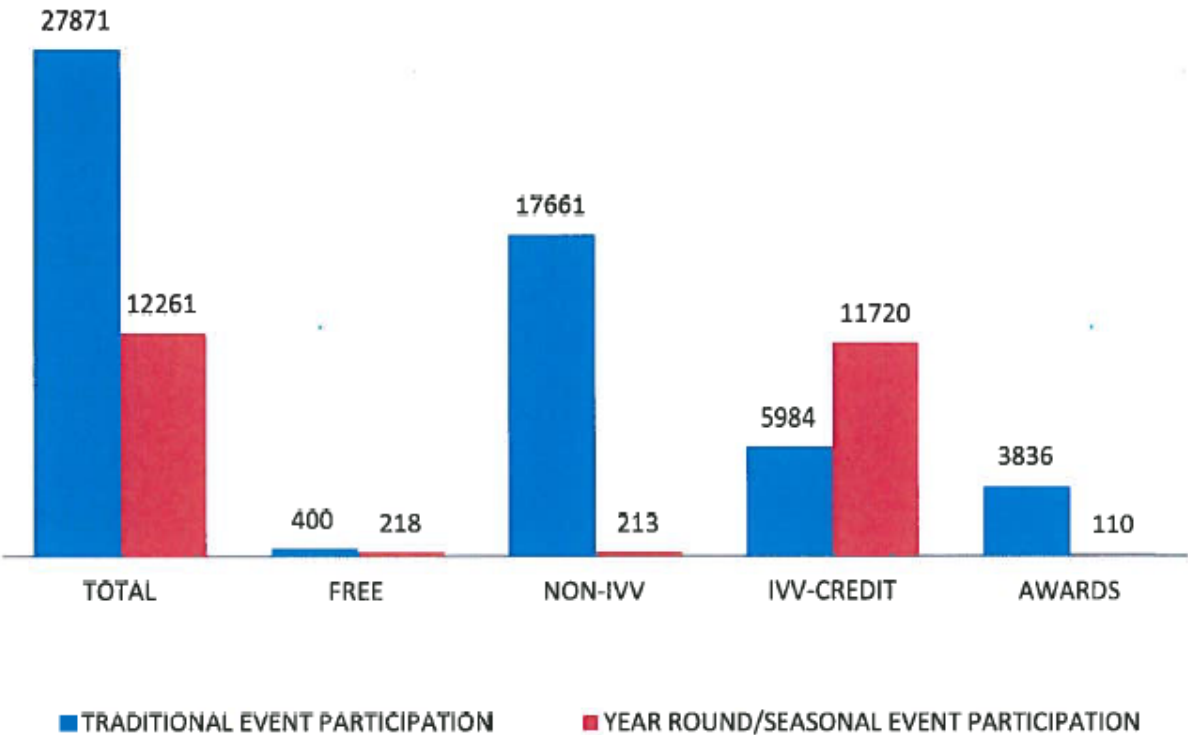


MID-AMERICA REGION

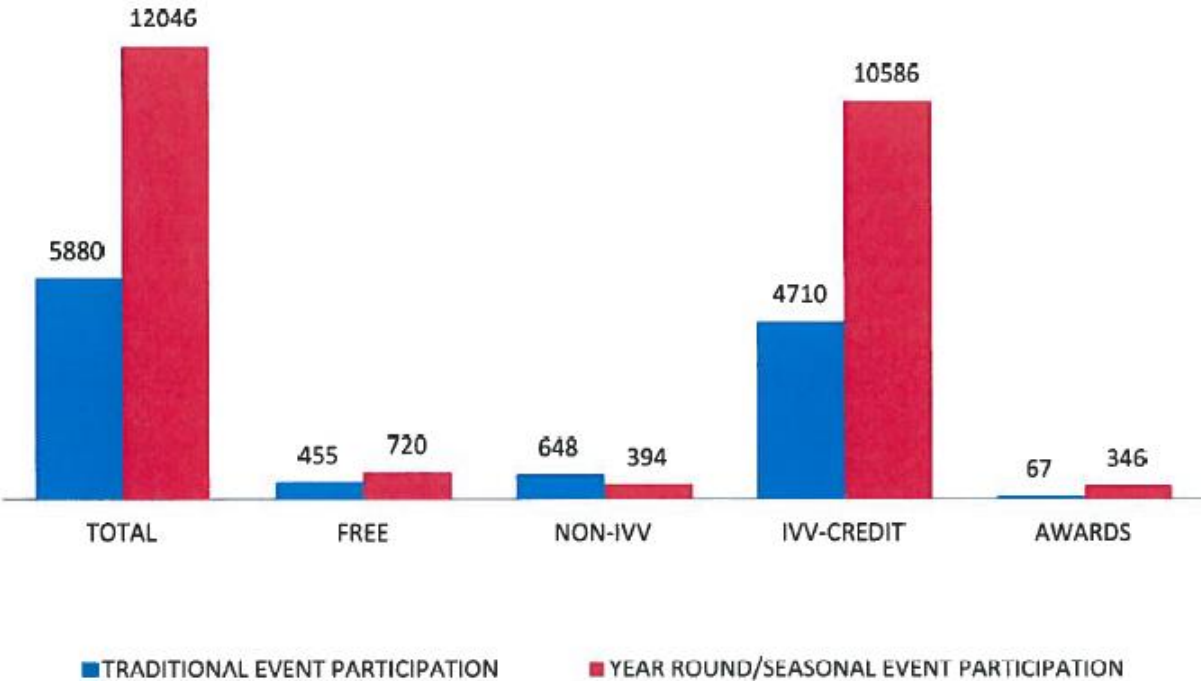


JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2014 PARTICIPATION

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

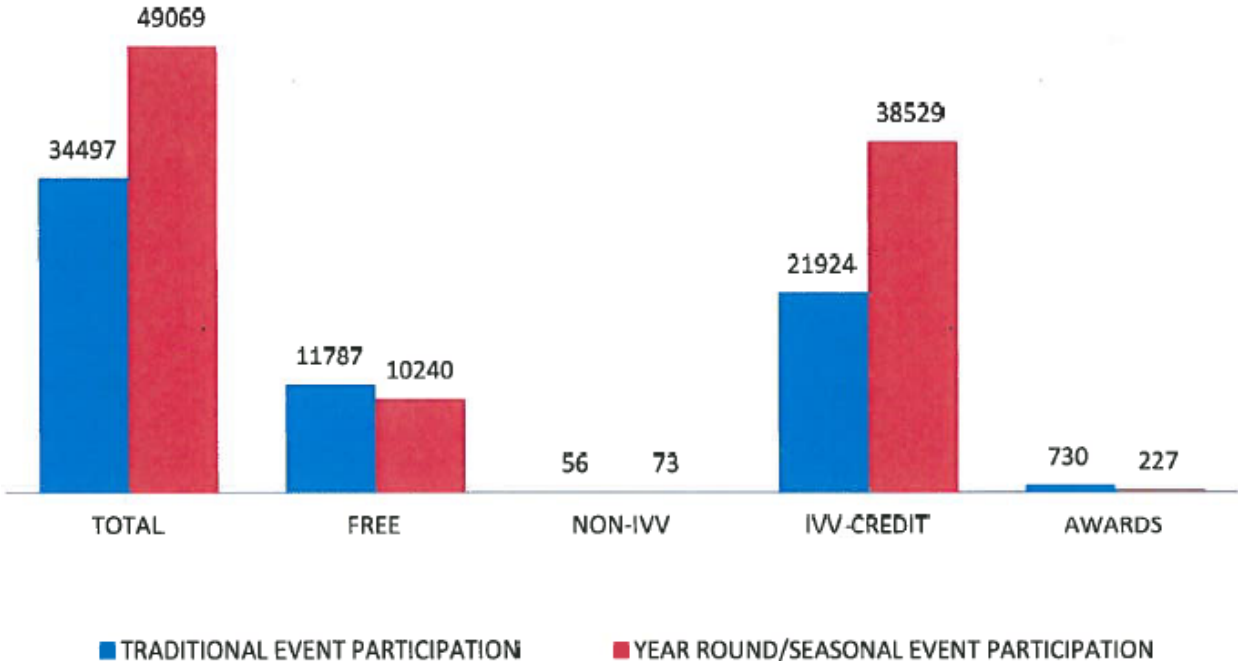


NORTHEAST REGION

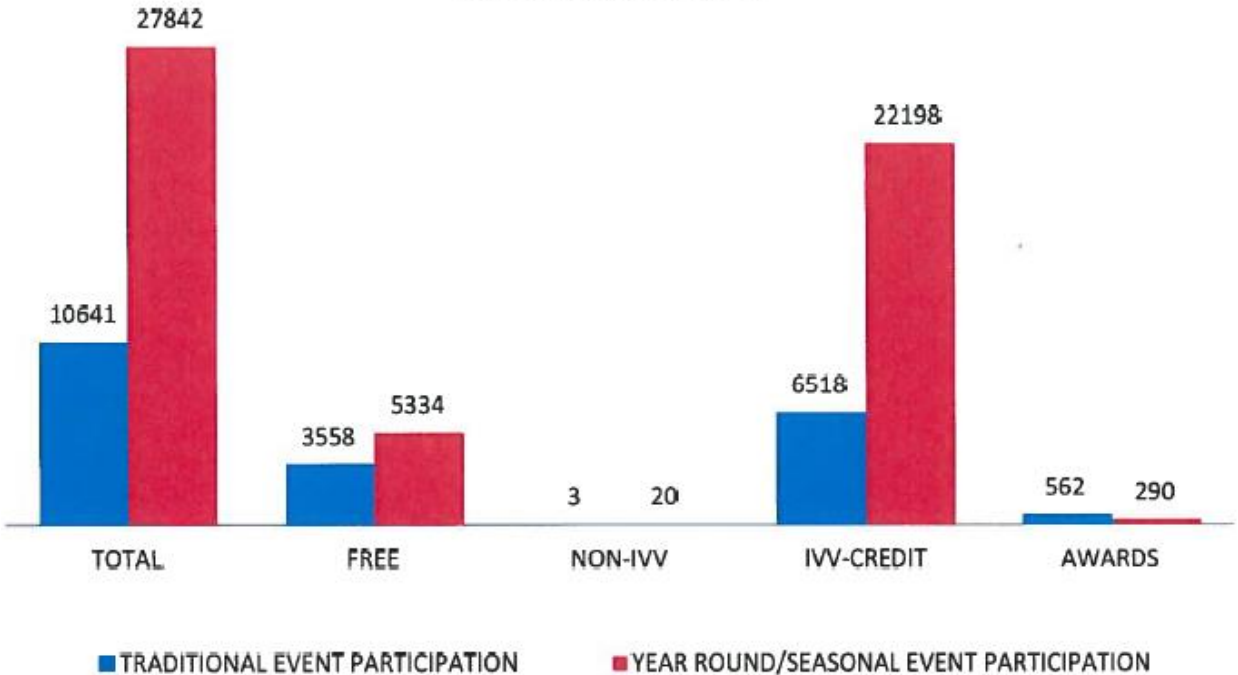


JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2014 PARTICIPATION

NORTHWEST REGION

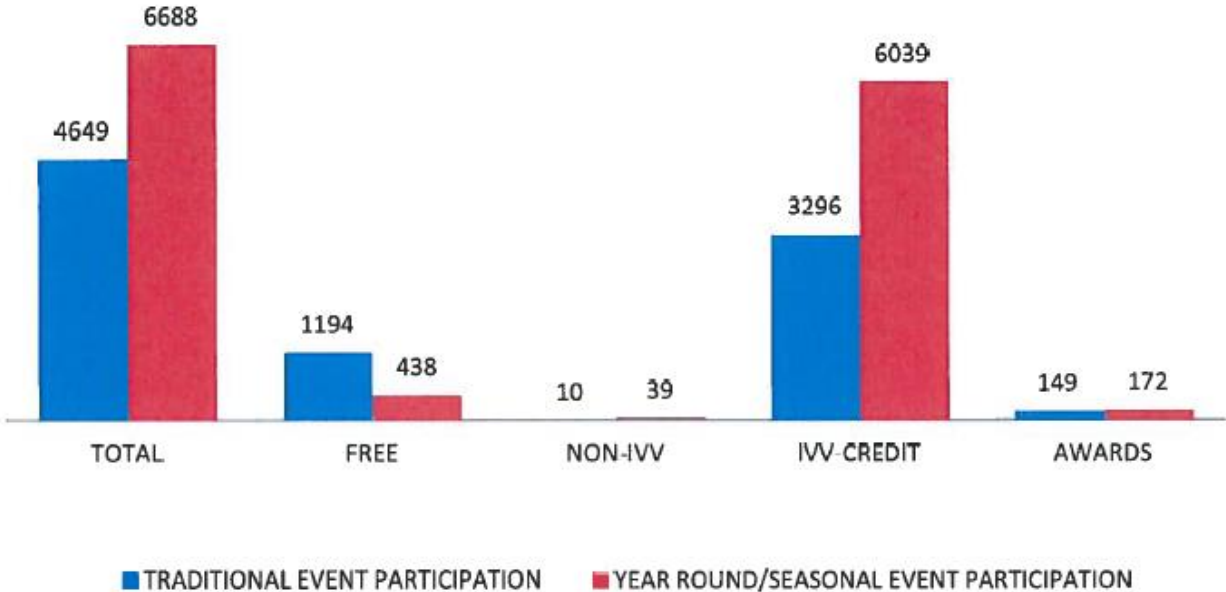


PACIFIC REGION

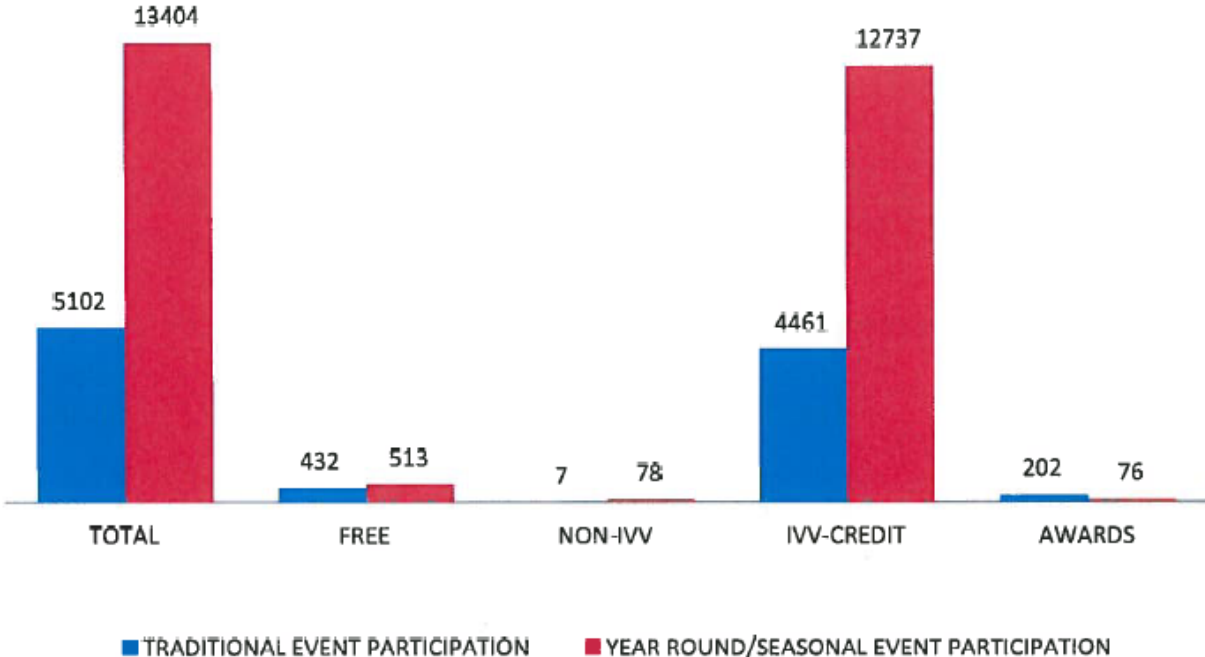


JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2014 PARTICIPATION

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

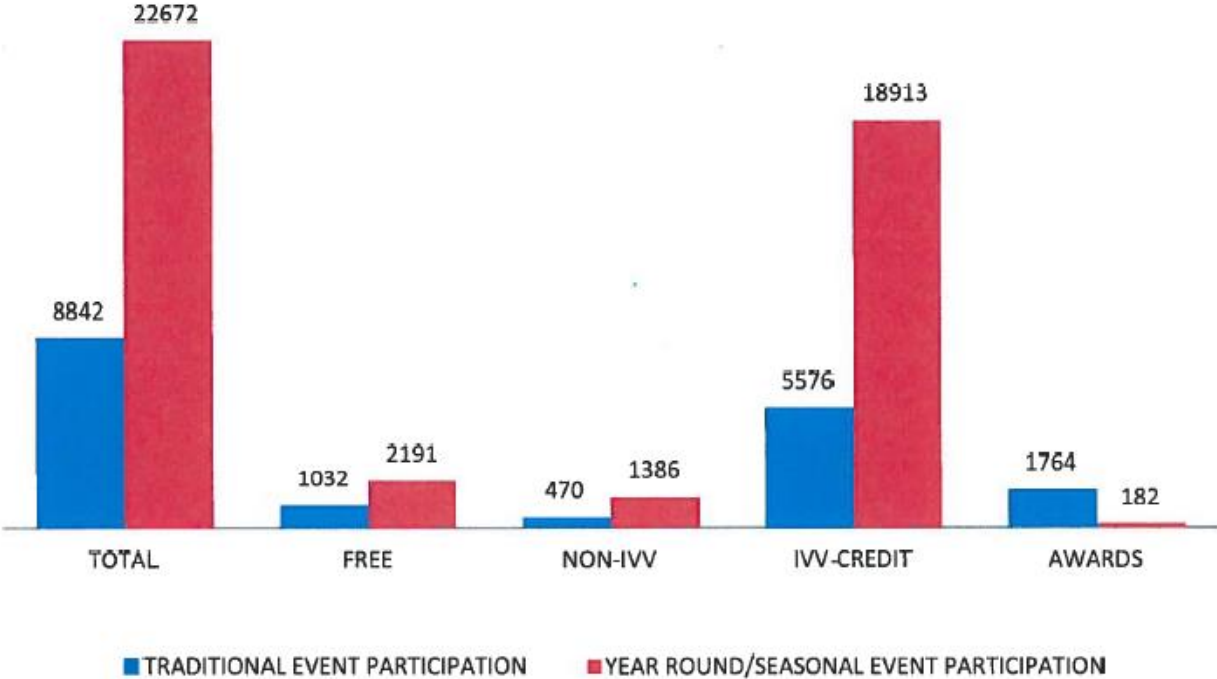


SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

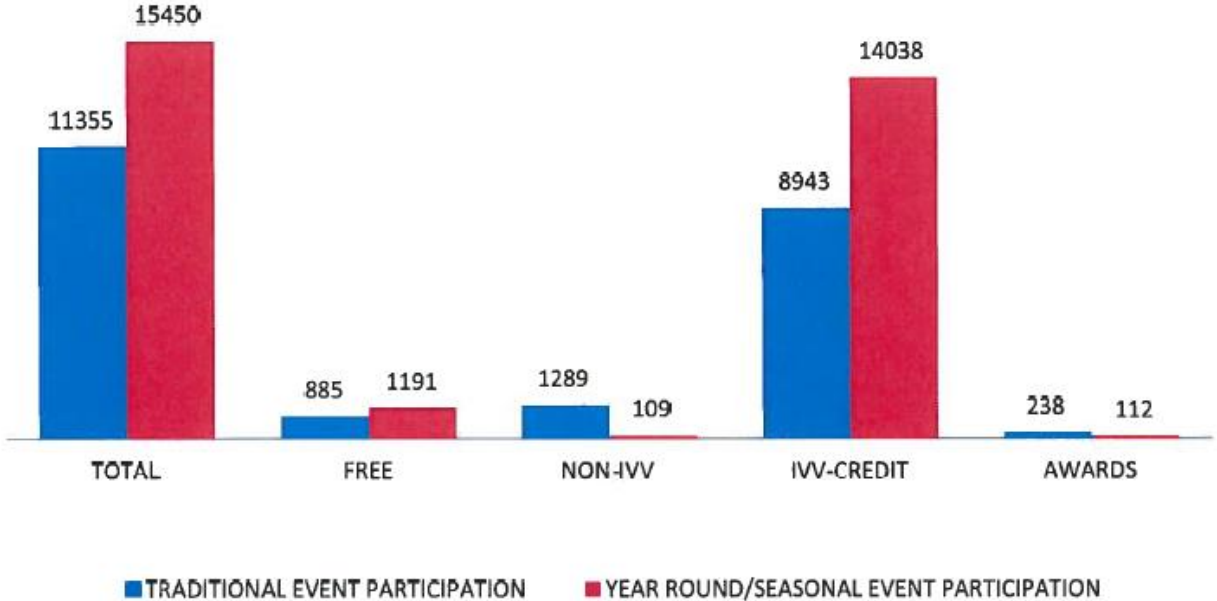


JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2014 PARTICIPATION

SOUTHEAST REGION



SOUTHWEST REGION



National Executive Council XVIII

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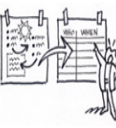
Executive Director's Message Henry J. Rosales

Words cannot express my gratitude to our Anonymous Donor, our Volkssporting Community and all of our friends who contributed to the Big Give 2015 fundraising campaign. We raised a grand total of \$72,312 dollars within one month! I take to heart this support as a directive to move this organization forward with a sense of urgency and a commitment to be inclusive of the membership and our key stakeholders in the creation of a shared vision for our future.



To this end I have started the strategic planning process to determine our future success and create a roadmap to get us there. This effort which is supported by our President Dennis Michele and our National Officers and Executive Council (NEC) will be a grassroots ground up process guided by a strategic planning committee comprised of the NEC leadership and one AVA Volkssporter representative from each region as well as other key stakeholders. Everyone will have an opportunity to contribute their ideas and recommendations via surveys, focus groups and direct correspondence with your Regional Directors and Strategic Planning Committee Representative.

Below is a synopsis on how the strategic planning process will unfold with *projected* timelines.

PROCESS	Phase One: Assess the Current Environment		Phase Two: Build a Shared Vision & Create a Plan		Phase Three: Communication & Evaluation	
	Where have we been?	Where are we now?	Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	What are the next steps?	Are we progressing?
						
	Where have you been and where are you now?	What do your customers and stakeholders have to say?	What is your shared vision of the future?	How will the work get done? Who will do what by when?	How will you align Marketing and Communications with Strategy?	How will you determine strategic progress and success?
	STEP 1: Charter the Planning Committee	STEP 2: Conduct Organizational Assessment	STEP 3: Board Retreat to Set Vision & Strategic Direction	STEP 4: Approve the Plan and Delegate Strategic Objectives	STEP 5: Create Implementation Plan	STEP 6: Determine Evaluation, Methods, and Tools.
	May - June 2015	July - September 2015	September-November 2015	December - January 2015	February - April 2015	May - June 2015

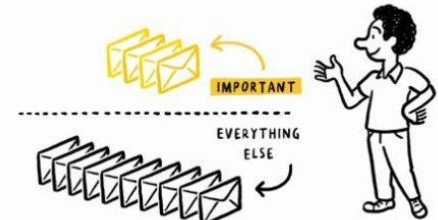
The planning will be conducted in three phases. During phase one utilizing what is called a balance scorecard approach we will evaluate **customer service**, to see how we can better support and meet the needs of our clubs and other customers of AVA; **efficient operations**, to see how we create efficiencies and streamline processes in how we do business and govern ourselves; **financial stability**, to see how we can diversify our revenue streams and create sustainability of our clubs and AVA operations; and **workforce learning and growth**, to identify and address our gaps in capacity and training for our clubs, AVA leadership and headquarters associates.

Once we have collected all the data we will embark on a strategic planning retreat (phase two) where the NEC Officers and Directors and the strategic planning committee will interpret the data and create our new shared vision with strategic goals and objectives. The shared vision, goals, and objectives will be shared with the membership and leadership of AVA for input, recommendations, clarifications, and changes.

Phase three is the development of the implementation plan with measurable benchmarks. In this phase we will identify who will do the work, what resources are needed to complete the work, timelines for completion of the work, and how and when will we measure the success and failures of our work as a result of the strategic plan. The final step will be the approval of the plan by the NEC Officers and Directors.

Some of the funds raised from the Big Give (approximately \$25,000) will be used for the development of our strategic plan and be applied towards travel, lodging, and meals for the strategic planning committee as well as consulting fees for the Master Facilitator who will help us with the process, design and evaluation of our plan. I welcome everyone's involvement in the design of our future. If you would like to get involved or have any questions feel free to contact me at the AVA headquarters.

As the planning continues so will the day to day operations of the National Headquarters. Projects and initiatives of priority that are currently being worked on or will be addressed within the upcoming months include:



Creation of a new database-The Chair of the internet technology committee, Mr. Frank Sayers has been working with Young Consulting and Mr. Bill Wilson (who is volunteering his time) on a single master database to support our business processes which include tracking clubs, members, achievements (awards), events and club fees. Thus far a data dictionary and the membership and awards components of the database have been completed. The expected completion date for the database is March 2017. Upon completion of our strategic plan, work will begin on the development of a new website.

Marketing and Publicity-AVA is not ready for a successful National Marketing Campaign until the strategic plan has been completed so that we know what we are marketing and how we will market. What we can do is begin to look at ways to leverage existing national and local partnerships with companies we currently do business with and other nonprofit organizations and municipalities like city governments, health clinics, and AARP local chapters as well as local media and newspaper outlets (to include the TAW) to increase our outreach and publicity exposure. One of my immediate goals is to see how we can maximize corporate advertisement adds in the TAW and our website. This would help us with exposure and revenue generation! We also need to look at how we can leverage our Biennial Convention to market AVA to the nation.

Diversification of Revenues-AVA generates revenues primarily from fees to sustain its operation. The trickle-down effect of declining participation is less sanction and participation fees. AVA cannot continue to be so dependent on income from fees and must diversify its revenue streams so that income is derived from different sources like grants, corporate sponsorships, paid advertisements (TAW and Website) individual donors, fundraising events, conventions and perhaps even a social enterprise?

Club Support-AVA's membership is our clubs and without clubs there is no national organization. We are currently losing clubs annually at a rate of approximately 10%! The strategic plan will address how we can better support our clubs and what resources are needed to help them grow. In the meantime I will continue to work with Regional Directors to support the immediate needs of clubs large and small so that we can sustain **all** existing clubs!

20th Biennial Convention-I am grateful to Sam Korff and his planning committee for a job well done with the 19th Biennial Convention in Salem Oregon. I believe a standard has been set and the challenge moving forward will be not to reinvent the national convention but rather to enhance the convention and address some of the concerns to include convention costs, floor fees, online registration, electronic voting, and corporate sponsorship. I look forward to working with the 20th Biennial Convention committee to build on our success

and create a convention that will have plenty of volkssporting events, educational workshops, entertainment, and guest speakers that will draw new and larger audiences.

Collaborative Partnerships-AVA National Headquarters must be more intentional about creating partnership at the national level and supporting our clubs with the creation of partnership at the local level. This includes the use of social media to create and support the relationships that lead to quality partnerships. In the nonprofit sector it is the quality of partnerships that harvests resources like volunteers, funding opportunities, and free marketing exposure, to name a few. I will continue to work with the NEC Officers and Directors, State Associations and AVA Clubs in a unified effort to create quality partnerships that are mutually beneficial.

Communications and Social Media-Communication is one of our keys to a successful national organization. We currently communicate via the AVA and club websites, Facebook, Twitter, email, LinkedIn, cell phones, tablets and soon even watches! Social media is one of the quickest and most effective means to communicate, market and provide customer service if it is properly planned and executed. Most important is the use of social media to create trust and community within our Volkssporting community. Look for AVA to become more involved in social networks to meet the needs of our operation and membership. We will also be seeking advice from the AVA leadership and membership regarding the proper communication tools and strategies for AVA.

In conclusion, there is much work that needs to be done in the areas of technology, (electronic TAW, online start boxes, website upgrade, social media, etc.) club support and streamlined operations. I caution AVA moving at the pace of technology *without first having a plan in place that meets the needs of AVA*. Once we have a plan in place we can then begin to take a look at and invest in the proper tools that will help us reach our destination and accomplish our mission.

I thank the National Executive Officers and Directors for their vote of confidence in my ability to lead AVA to a new level of success. I also thank the AVA headquarters team, our local office volunteers, our State Associations, Clubs and all volunteers and supporters of the American Volkssport Association and I look forward to a bright future. The future is in our hands.



National Headquarters

The American Volkssport Association

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Club Reference List

- **Executive Director: Henry J. Rosales** execdir@ava.org
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- **Financial and Operations Director: Candace Purcell** candy@ava.org
Supervision of finance, accounting, operations, and staff.
- **Accounts Receivable Specialist: Theresa Hutchison** theresa@ava.org
All billing, club statements, payments, and order processing.
- **Awards/Membership Coordinator: Karen Winkle** karen@ava.org
Processing of event books, issues awards, associate memberships, and RD service awards.
- **Communications Specialist: Jessica Blazejewski** avawebmaster@ava.org
Website updates, Starting Point Book changes, distribution of Checkpoint, and Multi-Event Calendar changes.
- **Events Coordinator: Marie Bebley** events@ava.org
Club participation, sanctions, insurance, new clubs, clubs deactivations, and club reporting.

Regional Reports

Atlantic Region

Director Tom Jackson

The Atlantic Region consists of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. There are 28 clubs in the Atlantic Region; an application packet has recently been submitted to start a new club in Pennsylvania. Although we lost three clubs from two years ago, all of their Year Round Events were picked up by the remaining clubs.

We have three very active state associations. The state association presidents are Bob Schmick in Maryland, Joan Lampart in Pennsylvania, and Annette Tollett in Virginia. All three state associations sponsor events – primarily in geographic areas outside of the club's normal areas of responsibility. The state association for Pennsylvania also sponsors two events in West Virginia which has no clubs. All three state associations have challenges designed to increase participation, have events across their state, and spark the interest of volksmarchers.

The Atlantic Region has a weekend conference every even numbered year. The seventh biennial conference was held in March 2014 and was hosted by the Keystone State Volkssport Association. Given the location was Lancaster, PA, it was natural to have a "Pennsylvania Dutch" theme. Conference attendees participated in three walks and a swim plus a number of year round events were available nearby. There were two workshops and the Atlantic Region Meeting on Saturday afternoon plus dinners on Friday and Saturday nights. The next conference will be in March 2016 in Hagerstown, MD.

The only International Marching League (IML) Walking Association event in the United States is held each October in Arlington, VA. This event, which is sponsored by the US Freedom Walk Festival Club, attracts walkers from around the world and is the largest volkssport event in the region.

Our biggest challenge is keeping our existing clubs alive and viable. For too many clubs, the same individual had served multiple terms as President. Many clubs do not have a Vice President. The loss of just one or two key individuals due to death, illness, moving away, or just burn out will lead to the demise of many clubs.

Most of our clubs are financially solid; however, there are not enough paying participants at many of our traditional events for the clubs to cover their costs or make it worthwhile to have an event. Having to pay to use a start point is becoming the norm rather than the exception.

I would like to remember David Scull who was the Atlantic Region Director until his death on June 6, 2014. In the last two years, we also lost two former Regional Directors – Ron Bowers and Skip Coburn. Volkssporting in the Atlantic Region is better because of the efforts of these three.

Mid-America Region

Director Linda Neu

The Mid America region, is made up of the Land of Lincoln Illinois, the Hoosier state of Indiana, the Bluegrass state of Kentucky, the Great Lake state of Michigan and the Buckeye state of Ohio.

Located in the Cross Roads of America, we have thirty clubs and two state associations. This is both a decrease in clubs and state associations.

I'm sorry to say that the Mid-America Region lost 7 clubs and 1 state association, in the last two years. We did however gain the Bloomington Flying Fish back. After a year and a half trying to get their 501 C3 back. Many of

the members of the disbanded clubs, joined other clubs. Existing clubs took over many of the year round events.

I have logged in over 25,000 miles in travel in the last two years, visiting almost all clubs in the region, and attending NEC meetings. I have enjoyed meeting and spending time with walkers across the region.

The Mid-America Region has celebrated several anniversaries over the past two years, they are: The Ohio Wonder Freunde 35 years, Illinois Trekkers 35 years, Valley Vagabonds 35 years, Michigan Pathfinders 30 years, Purple Penguins 30 years, Bulls Run Ramblers 30 years, Queen City Skywalkers 30 years, Tecumseh Trailblazers 30 years, The Indiana Volkssport association 30 Years, Ridgewalkers Walking club 25 years, Wondering Wheels 25 years, and the Germania Volksmarch Club 15 years,

The region has a conference every year. In 2013 it was held in Louisville, Kentucky, and was centered around Church Hill Downs. In 2014 it was held in Springfield, Illinois. We learned about Abraham Lincoln and the capital city.

Indiana hosted the NEC meeting June 13 and 14 at Plainfield Indiana. Indiana was honored to have the NEC meet in our state.

The Indiana Volkssport Association, and the region had a great loss on March 9, 2015, when Donald N. Vartanian, LTC, US Army, Retired, passed away. Don had served as president of the state association four times. He also served in other offices at both the state and National level. Don was a blessing to all who knew him. Don's smile and willingness to get things done will always be in our memories.

North Central Region

Director Phyllis Olson

The six states in the North Central Region are: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Several of the 18 clubs in the region reached significant milestones in the past two years. The Nebraska Trailblazers and the Red River Volkssport Association celebrated 35 year anniversaries. The Black Hills Volkssport Association and the Greater Des Moines Volkssport Association celebrated 30 year anniversaries. Other significant anniversaries were: Madison Area Volkssport Association – 20 years; Tri-State Trekkers and Hawkeye Hikes – 15 years and the Manitowoc City Centre Association – 10 years.

Clubs in the North Central Region sanctioned 74 traditional events in 2013. Excluding the 13,732 participants for the spring and fall Crazy Horse events, they averaged 46.1 participants/event. In 2014, the clubs sanctioned 81 traditional events. Again excluding the 9912 participants for the two Crazy Horse events, the average was 52.7 participants/event.

In 2013 the North Central Region Clubs provided 151 Year-round and Seasonal events for 6365 volkssporters to enjoy; averaging 42.2 participants/event. In 2014 they sponsored 152 YRE and Seasonal events with a participation of 6868, averaging 45.2.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my two terms as Regional Director. I have traveled extensively around the region and met many dedicated volkssporters. The hours and hours it takes to assure each event provides the fun, fitness and friendship of volkssporting is a true indication of the dedication of our volunteers. I thank you for allowing me to be your Regional Director and making it so enjoyable.

Northeast Region

Director Doug Reynolds

The AVA's NE Region includes all New England States (ME; NH; VT; MA; RI; CT) & NYS. Each state has at least one of the 10 AVA sanction clubs in the Region, except there is no individual club within the boundaries of RI; however, it does have five events sponsored by Walk'n Mass. As reported by the clubs, their memberships during the 2013-15 term (2011-13 in parentheses): Southern Maine VC- 30 (53); Twin State VA- 60 (75); Walk'n Mass VC- 271 (278); Two Towns Walking C.- 34 (34); Connecticut Valley VC- 30 (30); Empire State Capital V.- 309 (326); VC at West Point- 76 (77); Finger Lakes VC- 34 (34); & Niagara Frontier VC- 51 (51). The Great Lakes Seaway Trail V (23), & Niagara Escarpment VA (21) both became "Inactive". A new club formed in this time period, NH Patriot Pathfinders – 4 (0). These totals of 899 (1,002) club members include some multiple count as some persons belong to more than one club. The number of AVA Associate/Life Members is not known. This represents a change in club memberships of -107 (-103), or a loss of 10.7%, a value that is alarming, but a trend line similar to what is happening nationally.

In the spring of 2011, the Region acquired a new club, Great Lakes Seaway Trail, located at eastern end of Lake Ontario, helping to fill one of our major gaps in the Region. During the 2011-13 reporting period, leadership of Seaway Trails did a great job of creating walks in cooperation with other clubs along the length of Ontario & Erie lakes, with encouragement & support from our region's adjoining AV clubs. But, in 2014, resulting from unfortunate death of the Director who was a great supporter of the enterprise, her replacement immediately suspended the AVA operation. Fortunately, leaders & members of the Niagara Frontier VC picked up the sponsorship of all the walks of Seaway Trails. Since that time, Frontier club has been instrumental in trying to establish a new club in the Greater Rochester area, including sponsoring the Boxes in the potential sites of a new club's territory.

During this reporting period, one club, Niagara Escarpment became "inactive" after 21 years. The reason was a strategy to form up with a nearby club, Niagara Frontier, to consolidate their memberships and efforts. Interestingly, the combined club have pretty much maintained all of the two clubs' YRs/SEs. It was a smooth transition with the financial resource being combined, as well as some of the officer positions.

In summer of 2014, a small group in New Hampshire chose to establish a new volkssport club in their community & an adjoining town, both of which are very rural and a very low population density. In August 2014 they were sanctioned as a member club, NH Patriot Pathfinders, sponsored by Lions Club of Andover, NH. They got up and running such that they were able to conduct their first Traditional Event in October with an Oktoberfest theme. In addition, they developed a short seasonal event period with a Christmas theme, all happening within four month, and before the end of the calendar year. Due to the NH winter weather, the club has been dormant, awaiting spring.

RD's Travel to Clubs: During the Reporting Period, the RD has attended walking events sponsored by nine of the ten clubs, some single, some multiples by the time of this report's submission date. The 10th should be visited before the end of the term. Having the Tri-States event in June 2014 was a big help in obtaining this goal, considering round trip travel costs for a single event at a time. Doubling up is the way to go, when possible. Still, a very big impediment to the RD is the travel time & expenses associated with visiting existing clubs, say nothing of the creation of new clubs. Technical assistance for completion of this enormous task, plus helping clubs before they become "inactive", needs to be done with resource agents much closer to the scene than even a centrally located RD in the region can provide, even in those regions where State Organizations exist. Hopefully, with the passage of a Bylaws' modification allowing regions that elect to implement positions for a Deputy RD and for Assistant RDs, the AVA middle level operators, the RDs, will have a fighting chance to help turn the tide of the unacceptable net loss of clubs over the past decade. It is much easier to close a club down, than it is to create a new one.

Google Calendar & Web Site: Mike Green (West Point club), has been the lead in providing technical assistance to clubs' representatives on how to set up their own club's **Google Calendar** program, and maintain it with current, accurate information regarding their club's activities, such as events and meetings, and directions to events from the member's current location. Call upon Mike for assistance. Eileen Skinner (Empire State Capital Volkssporters club) manages the NE Region's **RD Web Site**. The site provides information on numerous activities within the Region for club members and leaders, as well as those coming into the Region from other areas. In addition to the AVA Interactive website for YR/SE, & for TEs, it provides "one-stop" shopping for information, either directly, or through links to the NE clubs. You are invited to visit the site (www.avaclubs.org/NE_RD).

Observations & Reflections: I am finishing two, two-year terms (thank heavens for term limits). Time to pass the torch to another who will have new ideas from a different perspective. I discovered it takes one term to learn the RD job, and a second term to continue to learn the job of RD. I shall be available to my replacement when asked. I leave this role the way I came to it – with great enthusiasm.

Reality Check: My foremost remembrance will be my first-term's sixth week as RD. Following the sign in process on a perfect morning for a Wed. TE, Aug 10, 2011, is when my home club, Empire State CV (Albany, NY), tragically lost three of our members in a horrible accident at that event. One moment, I am talking with the three ladies in registration line & within four minutes Rosemarie Hume, Carol Lansing, and Frances Pallozzi were gone. How uncertain life is, & each moment so precious. The outpouring of condolences from our sister clubs across the Region, US, & Canada gave me new insights into this national/international federation we call IVV/AVA. Under the leadership of then President Lea Darling, she navigated the over 300 member of our club through the grieving process with the assistance of professionals in this field. Although that tragic day will remain with us, our memories of those three during better times will be paramount.

Support System: As a result of that accident, I got a first-hand education of how many of the parts of the AVA protocols come together. Behind the scenes resource people kicked into action to start the process of protecting our club and its elected offices from any legal ramifications. Our headquarters' staff, attorney, & insurance underwriter's investigator started immediately to gather necessary citations from TV interviews, newspaper accounts, & statements provided by witnesses to governmental agents. The sheriff's officer wanted immediately names, addresses, & phone numbers of all our participants. The sign in sheets (waivers) with two-thirds of the requested information made a simple worksheet to also add my colleagues' phone contacts. (The Deputy said to me as I gave her the completed sheets with all three pieces of information of our members: "Wow, you people are well organized." A few weeks after I had submitted the completed AVA "Incident (accident) Report", the insurance investigator wanted five written pieces of information. What do you think were the five?

Evidence: I strongly recommend two very important items to take care of when participants arrive at your event: #1, each participant sign in immediately before doing anything else. #2, do not let anyone sign in for someone else (except children's parent/guardian). These two steps are a must that clubs should monitor very carefully at Registration Table; no one signs in for someone else, even before going to use the rest rooms to ensure our participants are identified as being a part of the club's event. What did the insurance agent want?: Announcement of the event (such as a brochure, or electronic notice); Sign in sheets (waivers) that included the signatures of the ladies; Walk directions; Map of the walk's route; and Any past sign in sheets of events to which the ladies had participated going back five years (gave added evidence that the women were familiar with the process). Fortunately, we had all five items. Most important was probably that each woman had signed in with her own signature (no one signed in for them) automatically having them fall in under AVA's protection as participants in that event. As long as there are no extreme injury/death at an event, there is no problem;

however, over time, it can lead us to getting sloppy with our protocols. The very infrequent occurrence of a serious situation is when you need to have appropriate background information to provide.

Club's Purpose: I have been very impressed how hard our club leaders work to make for a successful club. They understand the purpose of the club is, not to just offer a few members opportunities to do a few events (mostly walks), but to work at providing a robust offering of many different experiences (YR/SE/TE), so those outside the club who might well become members, as well as to provide a great experience when others are traveling through. We possess within our clubs' "territories" some wonderful sites and sights that we need to share with others. A very active club is a happy club.

NE Contributions: Several of our clubs have a "tough row to hoe" as the population density and geography makes it very difficult for them to conduct a level of offerings like those clubs that have a concentrated area of members. A club must work with what it has. Clubs that have more favorable conditions can help pick up the shortfalls in our Region's offerings. From Starting Point 2014, there were 1830 YR/SE offered across the US. As one of 10 regions, NE clubs contributed 112, a substantial shortfall from the about 180 we should have. (We had 54 TEs, as well.) This really highlights the need to help establish new clubs.

Club Membership: For many of our clubs in the NE Region, as well as across US, as reported by clubs, growth in our clubs' memberships continues to decline, or remain stagnate. The number of AVA clubs about 25 years ago (1988-89), there were about 521; at the last NEC meeting in Jan 2015, the count was about 230. Participation at events continues to decline with the loss of clubs, and loss of events. What are the secrets of some clubs growing in numbers, while others do not grow, or even slip? Active clubs attract members, and members who bring a person(s) to an event are two big factor in club growth. If clubs are active, it seems to trump club dues or paying to participate at events. Check how many "New Walker Packets" were sold over the last two years by your club.

Replacing Leaders: Too many of our clubs, as across US, rely way to heavily on a single person to hold the club operations together. If something happened to him/her, such as family, age, health, moving away, the club could very easily fold. A primary goal of each club should be to develop a tier of persons in each of the slots, often acting as a committee member, or having an Assistant position, not only for the officers, but the various committees (it is part of being a member of a club). Clubs, like most organizations, think nothing of electing a VP to back up the President, but, do not have backup persons such as an Assistant Treasurer who knows financial tasks, how the banking works, when financial items are due, or other club members' responsibilities so essential to the club like how to do "After Action Reports", E-card mailings, getting events sanctioned, and insurance forms, if necessary. A show of hands of who is willing to take on an administrative role is usually not very affective; a private conversation with a person, giving an opportunity to shadow the job as a committee member or assistant for a year or two is much less of a threat; tends to work better. Term Limits does have an advantage in that it overcomes the notion that a person is being replaced due to bad performance, or through a lack of loyalty. Having to continuously hold the same office over many years should not be a punishment for having done a good job; build on it.

Event Participation: TE's PoC's often are disappointed in turnout for a major club activity. Often it cannot even be blamed due to adverse weather, nor conflicting activities, but people just didn't come out. It sometimes can be traced to failed model for advertising the activity, or there was no model. While contacting your sister clubs is a good start, we must remember they are conducting their own events, and the distances between clubs are large. Again, the best model for increasing participation is assuring that the members come, & if so, bring at least one new, or nearly new participant. Extending the fellowship through a meal is very attractive – "Let's do lunch!"

Forming New Clubs: Clubs picking up the events for clubs that have become "inactive" is a noble contribution, but it should be a short term solution until a replacement or new club is formed. As you may know,

across the country we have been losing clubs at an alarming rate, approximately 11 ½ per year over the past decade. While people complain that we have got to do something about this condition, there has not been a systemic change in AVA policy to address this issue. Who is responsible to form new clubs, and assist weak clubs before they fold? State Organizations, of which there are only 10 in the US, 40 states without; Regional Directors of which there are 10 across the US; or clubs? Maybe all three? How are we doing? Just looking at the data of decline in clubs, the existing model is not working effectively. Some other approaches need to be developed and tried. I have put forth one specific “turnkey” model that was successfully used in my profession for many years for the purpose of large scale dissemination of services. It is based on the notion that when a single agent cannot adequately cover an assigned area due to such impediments as: size of the territory; difficult geography to navigate; need for more immediate intervention; services needed for an extended period of time; limited financial and other resources; difficulty of the assignment; etc., a more sophisticated model is needed that calls for the lone agent to “clone” him/herself (“turnkey agents”). As mentioned above in the section on “RD’s Travel to Clubs”, I call upon those persons at the club level who have mastered many of the tasks of running a club, to avail themselves to serve at the midlevel of our national organization in strengthening existing and new clubs; if not across the whole Region, at least serving within a state, or section of a state to cultivate our national sport within new clubs, and those existing clubs that could benefit from technical services by an outside resource agent.

Sign In Sheets (Waivers): There are two official AVA “Event Registration Log” (Sign In Sheets): Form 900A—provides participant selection for “Free Walkers”, as well as those for “Non IVV” credit. Form 900B- “Non IVV Credit” does not provide space for Free Walkers, so all participants must pay an amount as determined by the club. The two forms allow clubs the option of providing Free Walkers, or no Free Walkers. However, some clubs have altered the official 900A Form so that participants are unable to select “Non IVV” credit, a feature of both Forms. Therefore, by altering the Form 900A so the “Non IVV” is unavailable, the club has unilaterally depriving AVA from the participants’ contribution to the national organization via the club’s accounting. Some clubs have discovered that it is financially more advantageous to the club not be to assessed for “Non IVV” credit participants, and use a club’s donation can to solicit a participant’s gift of funds directly, as none of those resources are shared with our national organization. With over 25,000 “free walkers” again in the past year, annually this cuts deeply into the AVA financial resources available to carry out its mission. Add to that the enormous revenues loss from the decrease in sales of the Starting Point book by having it available “free” at the AVA web site (over the years sales dropping from 5,000 copies to last year’s 650), fewer participants, fewer participants purchasing books for recording achievement, a large number of our clubs across the country conducting no TEs, and clubs not wanting to increase the sanctioning fees or club dues, you can see the pressure being placed on our overall operations at the national level. If not these funding streams, what ones would you suggest, and/or which services do you want eliminated?

Please be sure that reformatted Waiver Sheets (Event Registration Log) include the option for Non IVV credit that is in the spirit of the 1989 changes in sanctioning fees where they were dropped for \$85./walk down to \$30. per walk, with the proviso of a participant fee as well. As you know, AVA is undertaking a 2-yr study of an additional sanctioning method for potentially low attendance events, “Per Participant Sanction Fee (PPSF) to try to assist, particularly small clubs, to take risks of putting on events that will not break their club’s bank if it is not financially successful. Its impact on budgeting is not yet known. With the loss of revenues with the traditional methods of generating income, and with allowances to clubs to modify sanctioning fees, and participant fees, those more able clubs need to help pick up the shortfalls, if we are to stay financially strong as a national Association.

Reaching Across Borders: Three Region’s clubs (South Maine; Twin State (VT/NH); & Walk’n Mass) cooperated to reinstitute a Tri-State Weekend of Walks, a program that had been latent for over a decade. The location selected was where the three states’ “territorial” boundaries meet, so that all three walks were within

less than an hour's drive from the designated hotel. It provided participants a great opportunity to get in three walks in three states, in two days (four or five walks in three days, if arrival was bit earlier to do a YR/SE). The average attendance per walk was just over 100 walkers, making the effort to put together the event well worth it. Saturday evening was reserved for a group dinner at a waterfront seafood restaurant that was delightful for extending the fellowship. The success of gathering as multiple clubs had stimulated conversations across our clubs to continue such gathering, even Bi-State events.

Many of the clubs in the NE Region have spread their wings to administer walks in neighboring states, or to establish an event whose route crosses a border, the later helping to fulfil the requirements of the new AVA Special Program – “Border Crossings”. The extra effort to conduct either of these styles brings an added dimension to our clubs’ offerings. They are:

Fingers Lakes VC (in PA – TE at Montrose; and at Franklin Forks)

Niagara Frontier VC (Niagara Falls NYS to Niagara Falls, Ontario)

Southern Maine VA (South Berwick, ME to Rollinsford, NH)

Twin State VA (Chimney Pt, VT to Crown Pt., NY; Derby Line, VT to Quebec; Wells River, VT to Woodsville, NH; Bellows Falls, VT to North Walpole, NH; in NH - Portsmouth; Exeter; Hancock; Concord; Lincoln; Littleton; TE at Keene)

VC West Point (TE NYS to Lackawaxen, PA in coordination with Liberty Bell Walkers)

Walk’n Mass (in RI - Cumberland -2; Providence; Bristol; Newport; TE Middletown)

Empire State Capital V. (in Bennington, VT; in Williamstown, MA; TE at Taconic, NY to Bask Bish Falls, MA In addition, established satellite in FL that conducts 15 weekly Wed. Walk Series, & annually creates and conducts one event for those Volks South participants, locals clubs, & visitors.)

Dorothy Socie: While there are so many individuals across the NE Region I would like to lift up for special recognition in this Biennial Report, due to limited space, I feel that one individual who deserves overdue acknowledgement for achievements in Volkssporting is Dorothy Socie. Until the Niagara Escarpment club became inactive this past year, she was still driving around her territory to monitor eight of the club’s walk boxes, and proud to share her age as 92 so others can see what being an active walker can do for you. She was a charter member of the Escarpment club and President for the duration of the club’s 21 years. Two years ago, Dorothy led Jackie and me on the sanctioned walk of Buffalo, with the understanding that we’d take a break at mid-point for some lunch & a wee bit of a rest, before finishing the 10K route. She is still active, now serving as Vice President of Niagara Frontier Volkssport Club. Dorothy is a model for all volkssporters.

In the spring of 2011, the Region acquired a new club, Great Lakes Seaway Trail, located predominately at the eastern end of Lake Ontario and west of the Adirondacks Mountains, centered in Sackets Harbor, NY helping to fill in one of our major gaps in our territory. There had been an AVA sanctioned club located in that area, Watertown, for many years, but it became inactive a decade ago. During this reporting period, the leadership of Seaway Trails has done a wonderful job of reconstituting walks in cooperation with other clubs along the length of the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Besides encouragement and support from our region’s AVA clubs that adjoin them, we are deeply appreciative of the same from those clubs and persons just north of our international border from the Province of Ontario. Of particular note is Graham Fawcett, Vice-President- IVV, and his wife, Jane, who have gone out of their way to attend Seaway’s events, and scheduling bus trips for their Canadian colleagues that have been done, or are in the planning stage for upcoming multiple stops for walking experiences in this new club’s area.

Regional Director’s Travel to Clubs: During the Reporting Period, the RD, Doug Reynolds, has attended walking events in nine of the eleven clubs. The remaining two clubs are to be visited in spring 2013, Niagara Frontier, and Niagara Escarpment. Single walks were attended with S. Maine, Two Towns, Walk’Mass, Connecticut Valley, and West Point. Multiple walks were attended with Twin State/Striders, Empire State

Capital, Finger Lakes, and Great Lakes Seaway. In addition, the RD attended meetings with Twin State, Empire State Capital, and West Point.

Regional Director's Special Projects: Web Site - Reviving work started about a decade ago by a previous RD-NE, Leslie Penton, and with current technical assistance from Eileen Skinner (Empire State Capital), and Mike Green (West Point), a Regional Director's web site has been reconstituted and is functional. The site provides information on numerous activities within the Region for club members and leaders, as well as those coming into the Region from other areas. It provides "one-stop" shopping for information, either directly, or through links to the NE clubs. We have been moving towards immediate updating of current events in the Region, including updated approved Traditional Events, some of the AVA business, and filling in the Google Calendar with club events and its purpose, and directions to the event from the member's current location. You are invited to visit the site www.ava.org/clubs/reg_northeast.

Volks South: In cooperation with the Empire State Capital Volkssporters, the RD continues a leadership role in its satellite program, Volks South, in collaboration with four Florida AVA organizations: Suncoast Sandpipers, Meandering Manatees, Mid Florida Milers, and Florida Volkssport Association. Originally, Volks South provided a winter walking experience every Wednesday from mid-January through April to those who were spending part, or all, of the winter season in the Greater Tampa Bay area. However, from a group of six walkers, others have asked permission to join the group, where walks are held in different communities each week along the mid Gulf Coast. The majority of new walkers had never heard of the word "Volkssporting", nor any derivation of the word. As a result of the wonderful experiences in walking, and lunch for extended fellowship that these first time walkers obtain from Volks South, they are most interested in returning to their northern homes and becoming involved in a local club. As was posted in a weekly E-mail announcement to the participants under the heading – "**TIP:** Snowbirds who are getting ready to go back north, (and those who are already there), don't forget to use the AVA web site (www.ava.org) to find self-guided walks along your routes, & walking clubs in your area of the country. The web site is a wonderful resource to continue racking up distances throughout the summer, and making new friends. Join a club and, if they don't have a Wednesday Walk Program, help start one. Volks South started with six persons, and now we have 141 E-mail addresses on the Listservs, and have distributed 119 name tags to persons from 18 states, DC, & Ontario). What a wonderful contribution you could help make in spreading your new found sport. Help available here at Volks South."

Northwest Region

Director Nancy Wittenberg

Accomplishments:

1. One new club has been started in the NW region – The Pathfinder Club of the Northwest. The Oregon Trail State Volkssport Association (OTSVA) especially, has been successful retaining clubs who were about to go under. We did lose one club in Washington and one in Oregon during my term.
2. I have put out 31 newsletters during my term to club officers and other individuals called "News from N.E.W." with information important to clubs in my region, including reminders from AVA.
3. I have attended meetings of OTSVA, Evergreen State Volkssport Association (ESVA) and dinner meetings of both Treasure Valley Volkssport Association in Boise, ID and the Anchorage Volkssport Club, both the only Volkssport clubs in their states.
4. I have walked at least one Volkssport traditional event put on by each club in my region. I have published a schedule of clubs' walks that I will be at.
5. Supported the Pathways to Excellence program by putting on a workshop at the NW Regional Conference in Portland in June, 2014 and by talking with some clubs about the program.
6. I presented a proposal for "Per Participant Sanctioning" as an alternative to our normal flat fee sanctioning to the NEC in January 2015. The NEC passed this on a two year trial with details to be worked out with our Executive Director.
7. I have sent in a proposal for a policy change to allow a linear boating course, and for a Traveling Guided Walk Stamp, similar to the Traveling Guided Bike Stamp passed at the last NEC meeting in Sacramento. These will come up at this June's NEC meeting.
8. Our region continues to have the most participation and the most YRE and Traditional events.

Activities:

1. I attended the Middle America Regional Conferences in 2013 and 2014 and the 2014 Atlantic Regional Conferences. It is great to see other parts of the country and enjoy their region's walks.
2. I gave a presentation on volkssporting to a financial planning group and went on a walk with them.
3. I have helped staff a booth at the Washington State Fair to inform attendees of volkssporting and hand out information and supported OTSVA's activities with a Girl Scout Girl Fest booth in Portland, OR
4. I have responded daily to many questions and problems of clubs in my region.
5. I have kept up with sanctioning of traditional events in my region. Currently there are 68 traditional events scheduled through the end of 2015 and 8 in 2016 NOT counting the AVA convention events.

Concerns and Recommendations:

1. I support the bylaws amendment to allow regions to elect Deputy Regional Directors. There is a lot of work to be done in a region my size, and it would be good to have someone to share some work.
2. The NEC must think more about what will help clubs draw new walkers, especially clubs in remote areas. We are viewed as too rule bound. I hope strategic planning can help us think in new directions.
3. We need to be flexible in dealing with clubs. Clubs are interested in putting on walks. The simpler the deadlines and rules, the better.

Pacific Region

Director Wayne Holloway

The geographical area of the American Volkssport Association's Pacific Region includes the states of Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada and the United States territories in the Pacific, including Guam, Northern Marinas and American Samoa. Twenty-four Pacific Region clubs provide Volkssport services in this area; three in Arizona (Saguaro Sun Striders, Thunder Mountain Trekkers & Tucson Volkssport Klub), one each in Hawaii (Menehune Marchers) and Nevada (Las Vegas High Rollers & Strollers), and 19 in California (California Volkssport Association, Bay Bandits, Coronado Beachcombers, Central Coast Peregrine Pathfinders, Davis Dynamos, Delta Tule Trekkers, Green Valley Gaiters, Low Desert Roadrunners, Laguna Turf 'N Surf Walkers, Placer Pacers, South Bay Roadrunners, South Bay Striders, Sonoma County Stompers, San Diego County Rockhoppers, Sierra Gold Striders, Shasta Sundial Strollers, Sacramento Walking Sticks, Tahoe Trail Trekkers & the Vaca Valley Volks).

During calendar year 2013, all 24 clubs participated in providing a total of 252 Year Round and Seasonal Events for a combined attendance of 14,464; an average of over 57 participants per event. Eighteen Pacific Region clubs hosted a total of 66 Traditional Events during 2013, with a combined attendance of 5,391, an average of almost 82 participants per event. Six Pacific Region clubs did not host a traditional event in 2013.

During calendar year 2014, the 24 clubs hosted 253 Year Round and Seasonal Events, an increase of one over 2013. However, the total participation dropped to 13,847, an average of just under 55 per event. Seventeen Pacific Region clubs hosted a total of 68 Traditional Events during 2014, an increase of two over 2013. However, the combined attendance of 4,830 was a drop of 561, with an average of 71 participants per event. Seven Pacific Region clubs did not host a traditional event in 2014.

The BIG event in 2014 was the national Time To Walk, that saw 86 clubs in 41 states host events that brought 3116 walkers onto trails at 10:11, 12/13/14, a date time sequence that won't happen again until 2067. The idea for this event originated with former California Volkssport Association President Jay LaCroix, who happened upon the uniqueness of the date while calculating his retirement from state service. Fourteen Pacific Region clubs were among the 86; Low Desert Roadrunners, Sacramento Walking Sticks, Las Vegas High Rollers & Strollers, South Bay Striders, Vaca Valley Volks, Delta Tule Trekkers, Menehune Marchers, Tahoe Trail Trekkers, Davis Dynamos, Placer Pacers, Sonoma County Stompers, Thunder Mountain Trekkers, Central Coast Peregrine Pathfinders, and Saguaro Sun Striders.

The singular most important accomplishment of Executive Council XVIII was development and implementation of the Pathway to Excellence program to promote club health. The backbone of the development effort was led by the chair and 14 members of the committee from the Pacific Region, along with nine Pacific Region Clubs (Davis Dynamos, Delta Tule Trekkers, Low Desert Roadrunners, Menehune Marchers, Saguaro Sun Striders, Tahoe Trail Trekkers, Thunder Mountain Trekkers, Tucson Volkssport Klub, and Vaca Valley Volks) that performed multiple tests during the development.

Twelve Volkssporters from seven clubs received Trailmaster Certification. Twenty-eight Pacific Region Volkssporters received Meritorious Service Awards for providing outstanding service to the American Volkssport Association, and 101 Volkssporters received Certificates of Service for providing significant service to the AVA.

The California Volkssport Association held its 2015 annual meeting/convention at the Black Oak Casino in Tuolumne, with Traditional walks in Columbia State Park, Sonora and Train Harte. One hundred and sixty-four registered for the convention and events. Notable guests included AVA's Executive Director Henry Rosales, AVA President Dennis Michele, AVA Presidential Candidate Chris Mellen, who travelled to the convention from Massachusetts at his own expense, the incumbent Pacific Regional Director, and RD Elect, Suzi Glass, who will assume Regional Director responsibilities on July First. Development of on-line registration is being hosted on the CVA website with work by Chris Zegelin, President of the South Bay Striders.

Kathy Bundy, California Volkssport Association Vice President-South reports that she has aggressively promoted Volkssporting for the past two years; has experimented with Meetup, and started Volkwalking in Southern California Open to Everyone. She decided to treat our sport like a business for getting Volkssport awareness and joined several networking groups. She is targeting business owners to commit to time off to come walk with her. Because of our computer technology age she feels strongly about getting our sign-ups for YR walks and bike events to have the ability to sign up online. Gone are the days of getting dedicated people to keep a start boxes updated with maps and all the information necessary. She reports that she loves Volkssports and is very concerned about our future.

The Low Desert Road Runners hosts a Traditional walk every month and a group walk every week and has realized an increase in membership and increased achievement award participation. The Green Valley Gaiters hosts six Year Round Events and two to three Traditional Events. The San Diego County Rockhoppers hosts 19 YREs and a TE. The South Bay Roadrunners and Coronado Beachcombers hosts one YRE each and no Traditional events. The Central Coast Peregrine Pathfinders hosts nine YREs and an occasional TE. The Menehune Marchers has 12 YREs, hosts TEs, has group walks and participated in Time To Walk. The Thunder Mountain Trekkers has nine YREs, hosts TEs and participated in Time To Walk. The Shasta Sundial Strollers has 10 YREs, conducts group walks and hosts an extravaganza weekend, and are noted for carpooling four to five hours to distant events. The Tahoe Trail Trekkers host one TE and 10 YREs. The Sonoma County Stompers hosts three to four TEs and 14 YREs has group walks and carpools to distant events. The Davis Dynamos hosts three TEs and five YREs, including a bike event. The Delta Tule Trekkers, one of the Regions most dynamic and fast growing clubs has 10 YREs and hosts three to four TEs. The Sierra Gold Striders have seven YREs, including four in Yosemite National Park and hosted the 2015 California Volkssport Association convention in fine fashion. The South Bay Striders participated in Time To Walk with a Traditional Event, has 14 YREs, including four in beta testing of on-line registration.

The Vaca Valley Volks continues to schedule three walks per year, participated in the national 'Time To Walk', updated their logo, and arranged for members to buy clothing through Land's End with logo embroidered. They have lost a couple of members, but have also gained a couple, so are not concerned about membership. Business cards were printed with club info and many have been passed out, with no firm analysis to say this has paid large dividends. Their concerns are: closure of one YRE because the start point business closed, but

also because of low participation, but plan to use the site as a future Traditional walk. They report that the Friendship Walks are great; that using YREs for these walks could help their club and others to boost the participation for particular walks, keeping them from going under.

Club Secretary Wendy Breen reports the Thunder Mountain Trekkers, Inc. in southeastern Arizona managed to pick the only day in the first three months of 2014 that had rain for our guided walk of Willcox, AZ. It didn't just rain, it poured, and the wind blew like crazy. We had 18 walkers do the walk and most of them had to drive for over an hour to get there. The club took advantage of the new sections of multi-use paths that Sierra Vista, AZ, has added over the past two years and did weekend walks for Oktoberfest and to inaugurate the Path to Higher Education. We also use the Fitness Path for one of our year round walks. Four or five of our club members walk three or more events each week and normally walk together on Saturdays at our Benson year round. The club continued to sponsor eight year round events—seven in Cochise County, plus one in the tourist town of Sedona. With the recession our participation numbers for the Sedona walk dropped dramatically, but have shown great improvement during the last quarter of 2014 and the first quarter of 2015.

Loralie Cruz, President of the Saguaro Sun Striders reports that membership hasn't grown a lot—we have added a few regulars and each year have others who come and go—assuming it's mostly because so many are retirees who are deciding where to root themselves. I hope that those who join us and then move elsewhere are joining Volkssporters in other parts of the country. We're made up mostly of 'snowbirds' who spend anywhere from 3 to 7 months a year in Arizona. It would be easier for me as Club President/Trail Master if I did not go away for the summer as that time could be used planning events for the upcoming fall—but so far am not willing to live my whole life for Volkssports. The club is still able to maintain a fairly healthy treasury due mainly to the many tourists/travelers to the area who participate in our YREs. Participation at traditional events is usually low—those who come are 'real' Volksmarchers and enjoy the events. Our new website is up and running—I'm getting better at remembering to keep it updated. We only hosted one traditional event in 2013—this wasn't a plan; it somehow just happened due to the seasonal split in our calendar year. In November 2013 we held a 10-year anniversary event, replicating the club's inaugural walk from 2003. On April 13 we kicked off a new YRE in Fountain Hills. I was contacted by city officials requesting we hold an event in conjunction with a Cyclovia event they were planning for that date. We decided it made sense to make a 2013 seasonal event and then continue on in 2014 as a YRE. We had very few participants on April 13, but this route has already proven to be one of our most popular YREs. We started the year with 18 YRE events available and ended with 19 after Fountain Hills was added. We set up 8 Group YRE walks during 2013. Attendance varied from just a few to 25 or so walkers. Unofficial records indicate a total of 749 YRE walkers for 2013. We hosted five traditional events (4 were guided walks) in 2014. Guided walks seem to make more sense with a small club so we're not spending all day staffing registration/checkpoints when walkers all start during the first hour of an event. We had 20 YREs available for 2014—the new one is a desert hike in Deem Hills Recreation Area of Phoenix. We set up 21 Group YRE walks during 2013. Attendance varied from just a few to 25 or so. Unofficial records indicate a total of 876 YRE walkers for 2014 including participation in Time To Walk. I began talking with City of Holbrook officials to set up a seasonal walk there for 2015 and will continue as a YRE for 2016. This, like our Fountain Hills YRE, was a request from the city. It should be a good YRE addition for Arizona.

Lui Yakas reports that the Bay Bandits did a few traditional events, about 2 a year. Our YREs have been busy, we have four of them. We've had the Tater Tours do our Hi Lites walk and a couple of Friendship Walks brought a good group of people out. We have people come from different places in the world, as well as far reaching States. Sometimes we get comments on the start cards sent with the credit fees that tell us how much they really enjoyed our walks. We hope to get another YRE in place by the end of this year. I was very appreciative of all the help and understanding when we lost the stamps from the Musee box (and the box itself that one time!). There really is a nice support from Headquarters. My biggest frustration is to have to pay \$5 above the participation fee when doing the quarterly reports. There were times we didn't have big turnouts and

had to pay AVA more than we took in. Especially if we have no turn outs, such as the Presidio one quarter. Fortunately, that doesn't happen too often. Another issue is those who sign the registration log for credit, but we don't receive their credit fees. I try to keep on top of it and only report participation of credit I receive rather than going by the registration log itself (is this O.K.?). If we receive it later down the line (one person sent their fees a year later!), I report it for the quarter I received it. If my calculations are right, this is our 30th year as a club. I think it was 1985 when we started at the Presidio. I think we've had some very low times and some very good times. I am very confident of our club continuing, thanks to the support of everyone outside our club.

Judy Stroud, President of the Placer Pacers, reports: I would say the biggest frustration is getting members to come to the meetings to participate in the running of the club. There is such a small number of members who make all the decisions. It would be nice to get new "blood" in the officer ranks. And of course, getting members to participate in putting on the Traditional Walks - it's always the same people! On the plus side, we have some dedicated members who are the POCs for our YREs.

The Las Vegas High Rollers and Strollers welcomed over 1350 walkers to their walks in the Las Vegas Valley as well as to remote locations for traditional events. They developed a new traditional event which has become very popular; re-wrote directions for seven of their walks to provide a fresh perspective; hosted and sponsored the China Ranch Date Farm walk in Death Valley as a traditional event, welcoming walkers from several states as well as new walkers. They participated in the Time To Walk national event and the Pi Day event; developed a new YRE for Las Vegas starting in 2016, and started walk planning and hotel liaison for Tri-State 2016 in Laughlin, NV in April.

Fred Barton, President of the Tucson Volkssport Club, reports: Our club adopted a tree as part of the "Tucson Clean and Beautiful" program. A linear park has been developed along a wash (dry river bed) here in Tucson. Our club made a donation to pay for the planting and care of a tree in the park. Our club name is on a plaque identifying the tree. We have a traditional walk in December that goes past the tree. For a dozen years our club has adopted a 1.5 mile section of road on the outskirts of Tucson. At least twice a year we meet at a nearby restaurant for breakfast, then pick up trash along each side of "our" road. There is a big sign at each end of our section that recognizes our club. Beginning January 2015, our club established its own Facebook page. One of our club members researched the best way to set it up, and then established it. Now we have a way to show our schedules, photos of our walking activities, and other club information. We continue to maintain 15 Year Round Events in or near seven Arizona cities plus Grand Canyon National Park. We schedule five traditional events each year. Four are held in the cooler, winter months and one is held in the summer atop our 9,000 foot mountain. In 2014 we had 1,268 walkers on our 14 YRE walks. We had 64 riders on our one YRE bicycle. In 2013 we had 1,244 walkers on our YRE walks and 51 bike riders. In 2014 we had 312 walkers participate in 6 traditional events. In 2013 we had 239 people join us on five traditional events – one of which had 21 dedicated walkers come out in pouring rain. The club is concerned about Aging of membership and an increase in 5k walkers.

Barbara Nuss, President of the Sacramento Walking Sticks, reports: Our development and growth over the years started with baby steps and has matured to being a very well-run club. Our membership continues to hover around 550-plus. While we know our membership numbers might grow more, we are happy and content with where we are today; we're ready to continue to grow but alright if we stay as is. Each year we lose members and gain new ones, but it's rewarding to know that the members who stay are happy and getting the most out of their Volkssport experience. As President, I'm asked to speak to various groups or to write about the Club, and these days I say, we're so much more than just a walking club. People join us for all kinds of different reasons. Those who walk with us often gain so much by the friendships they make, their health improves, and their emotional outlook becomes happier. Some have started reading again because of our Walking Book Club, and others have taken to join in the Tater Tours, now that they're retired. When people

can't come out to walk, they miss it. And when someone is ill, their fellow members and friends watch over them." The Sticks are active in the community. We go out each year to participate in at least twelve Health Fairs. We have a Coordinator who has volunteers join her when needed. Names and email addresses are always being added to our Walk Alert list. We currently send the weekly Walk Alert out to 3,275 people via Mail Chimp. What a tremendous help it has been this past year to use Mail Chimp to send these alerts out—well worth the money spent. The Sticks currently hosts four to five Traditional events per year. We also have quite a stash of YREs that are used extensively throughout any given year—three bikes, five remote registration walks, and 32 walks. We host Tuesday- and Thursday-morning group walks using a good portion of the Sticks walks as well as including YREs within a 50 mile radius that other local clubs host. Groups can range from 5 to 25 depending on the weather or where the walk is located. The variety is good for those walking often; sadly the members of the local clubs rarely come join in the walks when our walks are in their hometowns. There is a group walk every Wednesday night using only Sticks walks, and these are always a 5K with dinner afterwards for anyone wanting to join in. During the summer months of June-August, these Wednesday nights take on the name of Hot Walkin' Nights, and to take advantage of our delta breezes, we change the start time to a bit later for the cooler weather. One of our members likes to host Friday morning group walks at various times of the year, and these attract yet another group of people—I always say that we could offer a group walk every morning and night, and there'd be at least a small group attending each one. People LOVE to walk together—for camaraderie, for safety, and for fun. Throughout the year, I like to use our YREs for special outings. For example, we have Full Moon walks which start later so that we can watch the moon rise as we walk. I always buy Moon Pies and pass them out to everyone. Also, we always celebrate the Harvest Moon in September or October by having dinner at a favorite barbecue place and then driving out to the tiny town of Zamora for the walk. Zamora is literally out in the country, so there are no streetlights, car lights, or house lights—only the moonlight. YREs are also used for at least four to five Christmas-lights night walks during the month of December. Large candy canes are purchased and handed out to everyone before we leave, and there is a group dinner after each walk. Sticks members and their friends have many opportunities to socialize in different ways. There is the annual Christmas party, of course. But we also plan fun outings such as a recent one where we received a special docent tour at the Sacramento Aerospace Museum and afterwards lunched at the Officers' Club there. We celebrated the Perseids Meteor Shower in August by walking the Auburn YRE with the Placer Pacers, dining at a local barbecue place, and then camping out at the Auburn Dam Overlook to watch the showers. In recent years, the Sticks took docent-led hikes at the Deer Creek Preserve near Rancho Murieta, and later we were asked to go again--but this time for a full moon hike which turned out to be amazing. One of our YREs is located at a McDonald's that supports our local Ronald McDonald House. We arranged to have a full tour of the House and walked one of our YREs to and from. Since that tour, our Club has a campaign to save as many aluminum pull tabs as we can so that we can give them to the Ronald McDonald House. They recycle them and use the money for the House. There have been minor changes to note—our newsletter editor changed, and what a fresh, new look and feel she's brought with her. Kris Ericson-Cano has incorporated a new style and has a bi-monthly feature showcasing our YRE POCs. To aid in the writing of the articles she has a Features Editor named John McLaughlin who does incredible work. It's good to grow, but with growth comes a downside—like having to send out walk alerts in an easier, more efficient way. Kris helped with the transition to Mail Chimp, and we couldn't have done it without her expertise. We also outgrew our location of many years for our annual New Year's Eve and Day events. The Club provides a light supper and breakfast, but it was embarrassing that there weren't enough seats for everyone to stay to eat! Nancy Alex spent many days canvassing Sacramento until she found a Church that would allow us to keep our things overnight and had a recreation room and kitchen that were large enough to house the hundreds who would show up to our events. Our next problem will occur in another year when New Year's Day will fall on a Sunday. One of the best moves the Sticks ever made was to set up our logo with Land's End Business Outfitters. Club members can choose any clothing from the catalog (print or online) and decide what color they like or look best in, short or long-sleeve, big/tall/women's/petite sizes, and for a nominal fee, have our logo put

on. Land's End has many sales throughout the year—the prices are excellent and so is the clothing. No longer does the club have to order and keep track of shirts. Members order their own clothing and can even have their name stitched on if they like. So, we are very proud of our Walking Sticks club and all of our members. We are thriving, and we look forward to a bright future full of camaraderie and limitless, rewarding, and healthful walking miles.

Suzi Glass will pick up the reigns of the Pacific Region effective July First, having been duly elected Pacific Region Director by email ballot. Good fortune and good cheer, Suzi, and to the best Region in the entire American Volkssport Association. As Barbara so eloquently said, "We...look forward to a bright future full of camaraderie and limitless, rewarding, and healthful walking miles." Don't forget the ice cream.

Rocky Mountain Region

Director Frank Sayers

The Rocky Mountain Region is comprised of Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming. Our clubs range in size from just a few members to one club of 300 plus members.

We support the National Get Outdoors Day event each year as well as events held on Military Bases, City, County, State and National Parks.

A new club has joined the region. Seeley ROCKS in Seeley, Montana

The participation figures for the region have remained steady.

It was my privilege to be elected to the position of Rocky Mountain Regional Director and have enjoyed working with all the clubs in the region. I was able to physically visit some of the clubs in Utah and Montana in addition to my home state of Colorado. I will continue to strive to visit the clubs during my next term.

I hope to see many of you out enjoying events in our region soon.

South Central Region

Director Glen Conyers

The South Central Region is most proud of its newest club, The Rolla Roadrunners. Rolla Roadrunners formed this last year in the central part of Missouri filling a need for a club in a university setting that we think will foster growth and achievement for years to come. The region appreciates the enthusiasm and energy demonstrated by Elizabeth McCartney and Paul Scheubing, but specifically Victor McAllister who saw the need and worked very hard to accomplish this task.

As happy as we are with the addition of the Rolla Roadrunners, we were sad to lose a long standing club in Wichita Kansas. Wichita Skywalker club made the decision to cease operation in 2014. This club provided walks in the central part of Kansas that will be missed. We are appreciative of the Pace Setters and the Leavenworth Jaywalkers who both stepped in from great distances to save three of the walks so that we now have two "freshened" YREs in Wichita and the Z-Bar Ranch walk at Strong City, Kansas.

The 14 clubs making up the South Central region provide 100 YREs to the AVA over the five states of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. Walkers from across the country can count on places to walk as they travel across our great country through our South Central Region.

Every club but one provided traditional walks the last two years. Many of the clubs offered far more than a single event and the region appreciates the time and effort it takes to provide traditional events. Seventy-two were held in 2014.

The South Central Regional Roundup was held in September 2014 in Joplin Missouri. The Dogwood Trailblazers, World Wide Walkers and Ozark Hill Hiker clubs spent over a year preparing for the regional get-together. The effort and planning paid off with a very successful event that was attended by many from across the country and most notably, AVA President Dennis Michele and AVA Secretary Bonnie Johnson. Dogwood Trailblazers applied for and received a grant from the Joplin Convention and Visitors Bureau which helped offset the roundup expenses. These funds are available and we urge other clubs to seek them as well.

The region will continue to look for other states to start new clubs. Our greatest need at this time is in Louisiana. We have one club in Slidell that sponsors the New Orleans and Baton Rouge walks. Hurricane Katrina was devastating to New Orleans, as we all know, but AVA participation in this great city also took a hit. The region is most appreciative of the Crescent City Volkssport Club for picking up the responsibility for the capital walk in Baton Rouge and also to the Virginia Vagabonds who stepped in prior to that and kept the capital walk in tact when the Baton Rouge club folded.

The South Central Region has enjoyed great success the past two years and will achieve much in the next two years as the leadership in all of our clubs are cognizant of the fact that good events in both traditional and YREs have to be provided or our customers will look elsewhere for entertainment. We can and will work diligently to meet that commitment.

Southeast Region

Director David Bonewitz

The Southeast Region is made up of the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Unfortunately, we lost one club (Gumtree Walkers of Tupelo, Mississippi) at the end of 2014. However, that leaves us with 20 active clubs and two state associations (Tarheel State Walkers Volkssport Association and Florida Volkssport Association).

One of our clubs, formerly the Magnolia State Volkssport Club, did a remarkable job of reinventing themselves as the Mississippi Gulf Coast Volkswalking Club. In doing so, they passed a number of YREs to other clubs to allow their club to focus on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Unfortunately, one of the YREs was the Jackson Capital YRE which was taken on by the Gumtree Walkers. When the Gumtree Walkers closed their doors, as RD I took over the walk as we can't lose a "Capital Walk." Fortunately, I have the help of David Neilson, formerly of the Gumtree Walkers, to keep this walk going.

I travelled twice to Georgia to participate with Duncan Brantley (Georgia Walkers) in presentations to two groups who had expressed interest in forming clubs. While no clubs have yet to come from those efforts, we were well received and planted some seeds which hopefully will sprout in time. I managed to visit a number of clubs to recognize them for achieving a significant anniversary milestone. I also was able to participate in a number of single-day and multi-day events in the Southeast. Notable was Presidents' Day weekend put on by the Georgia Walkers and Capital City Wanderers, and on the same weekend, FloraBama put on by the Pensacola Volksmarch Club. These were both very successful with, I believe, record attendance. Unfortunately, the noteworthy point was not the record attendance, but that this was the last year for both of these long-lasting events. Both events proved over the years how multi-day events could be successful; now, it is time for new folks to pick up the measuring wheel and map out some new destination events.

I had set a goal to visit all the clubs in the Southeast Region during my 2-year tenure, but in spite of my best efforts, I didn't get to visit with everyone. Being a new Regional Director, I was a bit surprised at the amount of work the job involved and the time and dollar cost of traveling around the Southeast. These 2 years have been

quite a learning experience, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. The walks have been good, but meeting the walkers has been great.

Southwest Region

Director Joanne Forinash

The Southwest Region of the US consists of the states of Texas and New Mexico. There are currently 31 active clubs, 3 in New Mexico and 28 in Texas with 1593 members (after last Officers updates). These clubs together sponsor 78 traditional events and 146 year rounds a year. At the beginning of this term there were 33 active clubs. Four have become inactive and two new clubs have been added. Of the four that became inactive, the reasons given were decline in membership and participation and the lack of interested persons to take the leadership when the long time leaders were unable to continue. Two clubs added that the extra \$50 to the dues for not sponsoring a Traditional Event was the deciding factor.

Among the four clubs that became inactive there were nine year rounds that could have gone away but, due to the diligence and generosity of other clubs in the nearby areas, six of these year rounds are still very active to this date. We are very proud of those clubs who step up to the plate to do what it takes to keep our year rounds going and supporting Volkssporting.

In 2012 the City of McAllen Parks & Recreation Club, very graciously took the sponsorship of two year rounds from the club in Mission, TX, when it concluded it was no longer financially able to continue. The club has done it again. They have taken the sponsorship of the year round that had been sponsored for years by the Weslaco City Municipal Club. The Weslaco club had one active Volkssporter who was retiring and moving away so the city decided it was time to give up the club. In addition, the McAllen Club has added another year round in 2015 featuring the Historic Downtown of McAllen. This gives the club five year rounds in the "Valley" of South Texas which they feel will draw walkers to come for three or four days to enjoy the fun, fitness and friendship of volkssporting in the Valley. The club has formed what they call their "Senior Olympics Group" that is walking the five year rounds, one each month.

The two new clubs are off to a good start even though they are both in outlying areas of Texas. The Rockport City Trailways, which is a City Parks and Recreation club, has sponsored two traditional events along with their city-wide "Tropical Christmas" festival and is planning a traditional event this September during their Butterfly festival. The Whatsoever of Texas Sports Club sponsored a four day/four event weekend in January which drew people from all over the state and neighboring states to their "way out of the way border towns." This club has also sanctioned numerous biking events for the coming months, under the "Traveling Stamp" pilot biking program. In addition this club sponsors a Year Round Walk and Bike in another "out by itself city." It is exciting to observe and encourage these new clubs as they endeavor to support and promote Volkssporting in their corner of the Southwest Region.

We, like other Regions, have our clubs who are struggling to keep their clubs going. One club, the Midland Walkabouts, decided in August of 2013 they would disband. They did not renew the sanctions for their eight year rounds for 2014 in time to get them in the Starting Point. In talking with one of the leaders who is an avid Volkssporter and did not want the club to disband, we discovered the meeting where the vote was taken to disband did not have a quorum and so the vote was not legal and could not stand. This one person set up another meeting, notifying all clubs members of what would transpire at the meeting, urging them to attend if they were interested in maintaining the club as an active AVA club. At this meeting the club voted to continue as an active AVA club. They elected new Officers, sanctioned their eight year rounds for 2014 and is now an active club with many new members. To give the club a financial boost and encourage the club in their efforts to continue, the Texas State Association (TVA) asked them to host their semi-annual meeting in August of

2014. The TVA paid the sanction fee and other expenses involved in sponsoring the walk and the TVA meeting and the Club received the profits. This event drew people from all over the state to the meeting and to do the clubs eight year rounds in the area. You should note their eight year rounds are in the 2015 Starting Point and the club does a club/group walk on one of their year rounds every month.

The Texas State Association continues the policy (since August 2013) of asking clubs that are in remote areas and are struggling to host their semi-annual meetings. The TVA pays the expenses and the host club receives the profit. This gives the struggling club one traditional event for the year, draws participants to do their year rounds while in the area for the meeting, and gives the club financial support and encouragement they need to keep going.

Other good news is the Sun Country Striders from Las Cruces, New Mexico, who was on the list to become inactive and cancelled their one year round for 2015, is no longer on that list. The club called a special meeting, as required by their bylaws, and the membership voted to remain active. They have now held an organizational membership meeting. Several members have stepped up to take leadership positions that were being vacated by long time officers (who felt they could no longer carry the load) and the club plans to sanction their one year round for the remainder of 2015 and add an additional two year rounds for 2016. They are also working on a traditional event for the fall of 2015.

The decline of participation has stopped and the Southwest Region had an increase in participation both in Traditional Events and Year Rounds in 2014. Not a huge increase, but the great news is no decrease in participation. Contributing to this increase is the "Summer Sunrise Program" that provides a place for people to walk every week end. In Texas it is hot in the summer and clubs traditionally have not sanctioned very many Traditional events because they didn't draw enough attendance to financially support the event. The Summer Sunrise Program encourages clubs to choose a Saturday in June, July or August and feature one of their year rounds, and have a start window from 6:30 or 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. Treat it just like a year round, where the participants register themselves, stamps their own books, pays their fees, get the directions and walk in a group or on their own. They also use this as an opportunity to teach new walkers how to use the "Walk Box" and do our Year Rounds on their own. We have noted we have many of our spring time new Walkers returning in the fall, since they had a place to walk all summer and didn't leave us for other activities they found during our typical absence of walks in the summer.

Also contributing to the increase in participation are the weekly group walks by the clubs in North Texas. The Plano Walking club has a group walk on one of their year rounds every Tuesday with lunch somewhere afterwards. It makes me jealous that I am so far away and cannot join them. The Dallas Trekkers and Tarrant County walkers do the same on Saturday and Sunday when there is not a Traditional walk in the area.

We still have clubs who hold their traditional events in the summer; they just start them at Sunrise and get the walkers out on the trail early before it gets too hot. The Randolph Roadrunners sponsors two of these Sunrise Walks (fund raising for the AVA) at different Taco Cabanas each summer. The attendance is good and the AVA gets a little financial support from the sales at the hosting Taco Cabana. Just proving the point: "If you sponsor the walk, give them a time and place to walk, they will come and walk."

The Texas County Walkers continue to work on their goal to have sanctioned events in all 254 counties in Texas. This is quite an ambitious goal, but other clubs have joined in the call and are choosing to sanction walks in counties that have not been walked in before. So far there have been 55 counties that there has been special sanctioned walks just to give walkers a new county to walk in. Since many of these counties are in faraway places that are not expected to entice walkers to make multiple visits, they are sanctioned as three or six month seasonal walks. This allows them to sanction a number of walks a year and hopefully speed up

the completion of their goal. We welcome those from other states who make the journey to Texas to walk our county walks. A couple of them leading the pack in the number of counties already walked.

The West Texas Trail Walkers have earned the reputation of not letting their events be cancelled. In October of 2013, after over a year of planning, scheduling, researching & mapping out trails, with several hundred people with non-refundable reservations; just 13 days before the event, the government closed Big Bend National Park where the event was to be held and the event looked doomed. Immediately, several members of this club drove the several hundred miles to the area and in three days moved the event from the National Park to the State Park. This meant new trails, new lodging facilities, and new venues for activities, banquet and 101 other details to work out, then getting the word out. With the help of the Park Rangers and a lodging facility close to the State Park, it all came together and the event went on without a hitch and was a success. This club is to be highly commended for all their hard work, diligence, and perseverance in making this event happen.

A notable achievement in the Southwest Region has been the reduction of non-paying walkers (free walkers.) Since the beginning of this NEC term 10 clubs (that previously allowed noncredit walkers to walk for free) have begun charging all walkers the nominal fee of \$3.00. There has been no evidence of walkers not walking because of the fee. It has been noted that a number of previous "free walkers" are now for credit walkers and others that don't keep records are still enjoying the fun, fitness and friendship of Volkssporting, but are paying the fee and are considered "Non IVV Credit" walkers.

I have, as RD, traveled extensively throughout the region during my term. Doing walks with almost every club, either a Traditional or Year Round. Visiting the club meetings and working at their events. I have met and come to know many of the Volkssporters in the Southwest Region and know we have some of the most loyal, hardworking, dedicated Volkssporters in the Nation. I appreciate all the support and friendship I have received while serving as RD. This I will miss very much as I have elected not to seek another term. Due to responsibilities for a multi-handicapped brother it has become very difficult for to me devote the time to the duties and responsibilities of the position of Rd that I feel it requires or that I want to give. The region has elected Susan Medlin as their Regional Director for the upcoming term. I have confidence in Susan and her desire and capabilities to fill this position. She will have my full support.

The Southwest Region continues to actively support Volkssporting throughout the region and does everything it can to promote the activities of the AVA.

National Executive Council Meetings

NEC Special Telephonic Conference Meeting 5/11/2015

NEC Meeting 1/30-31/2015 Sacramento, CA

NEC Meeting 6/13-14/2014 Plainfield, IN

NEC Meeting 1/10-11/2014 Tucson, AZ

NEC Meeting 10/17-18/2014 Albany, NY

NEC Meeting 8/23-24/2013 Schertz, TX

AVA Standing Committees

Audit Liaison David Bonewitz Chair Fred Sheets

Fiscal Year does not end until June 30, 2015.

Bylaws Chair Phyllis Olson

The Bylaws Committee is responsible for reviewing the AVA Bylaws and recommending changes to the Executive Council and Members. After reviewing and debating several issues the committee submitted six changes to the Executive Council for their recommendation to the Membership. These six proposed bylaw amendments are on the General Membership Meeting agenda of the 19th Biennial Meeting.

The amendments are: Affiliating with Other Organizations; Call for Voice Vote; Deputy Regional Directors; RD Election Procedures; Modify Vote Required for Amendment of the AVA Bylaws; and Mail Definition.

Thank you to all the members of the Bylaws Committee for their thoughtful consideration of the subjects: Sam Korff, Loren Little, Lee Moisant; Daryl Pulley, and Bob Wright.

Information and Technology Chair Frank Sayers

Accomplishments: Mike Young of Young Consulting Service has been building our new database, using the existing data to define an appropriate relational schema. The development is being performed in the cloud. Testing has begun on the back-end access to the Participants table, with the child tables of Awards and Clubs. Access is via and SSL protected web site, with login and specific roles applied.

Data load has begun, with identification of those field that will need some form of correction. That which can be handled as part of the load will be so scripted, however there will probably be some manual massage of the data required.

The process of loading legacy data into new structures also brings to the forefront questions of necessity of the data, and thoughts about new data to be added. Some will require some type of decision, either policy or legal, etc.

Activities: Database is running with limited data so some initial testing can be performed. Underway now.

A demo will be presented at the NEC meeting in Oregon.

Concerns: We need to insure the work can be authorized to completion.

Recommendations: Approve the next contract for Mike Young to continue this work.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Chris Mellen, Northeast Region
Linda Neu, Mid-America Region
Ellen Ott, Southwest Region

Procedures: The role of the S&E Committee is to review all Motions and their amendments passed by the National Executive Council (NEC) that will be placed in the AVA's Policy Manual. The Committee followed a similar protocol as had been established by previous Committees. During NEC meetings, motions brought to the floor were discussed, and all motions with sometimes many additional amendments, both successful and failed, are recorded by the Secretary for entry into the Official Minutes of the meeting. When the Minutes were approved by the whole NEC, the S&E Chair retrieved just those Motions that had "Passed", not dealing with those that had been "Withdrawn", or "Failed".

The Chair took each passed Motion and crafted the language in the Motion(s), with all the passed amendments to create appropriate statements for inclusion into the Policy Manual. (This Committee is not charged to deal with Motions that relate to Bylaws, as that task rests with the Bylaws Committee.) In some cases, the more complicated Motions with amendments, it was essential that the draft product be returned to the person who submitted the Motion (with all the amendments) to be sure that the draft policy statements captured the essence of what was passed by the NEC.

Following the draft work of the Chair (plus maybe reviews by the author of the Motion), one-by-one, the original Motion, with all the amendments are forwarded to each S&E Committee members, with the statements that would be inserted into the Policy Manual. Without having been involved in the crafting of the first draft, there is a set of three pairs of eyes to review the Policy statement without having been encumbered with a lot of "noise" from the debates that resulted in the final passed Motion. The charge to the Committee members: Are the resulting policy statements clear, and user friendly within the context of the Policy Manual? Although some Motions to Policy takes considerable time, many are quick and clean. If, in the creation of the policy statement with changes suggested by the committee members and/or original author(s) deviated too greatly from the Motion, it is returned for review by the NEC and re voted. If the modifications are minor, the finished product is sent to the President for approval and inclusion into the Manual.

Policy Manual Location & Changes: Motions that are introduced, only some would survive to alter the Policy Manual by becoming new additions, or modifications of existing Policy statements. Others are still pending as they go through the final steps for approval. The following list of brief statements are of those Motions that were passed during the 2013-2015 term, and have been entered into the Policy Manual, or are still going through the process to get there.

The Policy Manual is available to all, electronically, at the AVA website (www.ava.org; Administrative; Gen Admin; Publications/Policies; AVA Policy Manual). Do keep in mind that this document is always a "work in progress", a feature of electronics that is not available to us once a hard copy is printed. The electronic version is the official Policy Manual.

The (citation) at the end of each sentence is where the results of the Motion ended up, or will end up, in the Policy Manual:

1. New club membership applications processed through State Organizations. (2.01 II. B.)
2. Use electronic communication network for NEC members' discussions; Rallyhood as one option. (1.06 II. E.)

3. Event brochure's directions to Start Point allows a map to be optional. (4.06 II. E. 1. & 4.07 II. B. 9.)
4. Trail Rating System for Incline/Elevation has deleted cumulative elevation gain from Start Pt. (4.10 II. C.)
5. Walk Achievement Award options after 22,000km: either every 5,000km, or every 1,000km (1.04 II.A. 2.)
6. Biker Achievement Award after 10,000km for every 5,000km. (1.04 II.A. 3.)
7. Limit spending to approved budget, or only with NEC specific approval to exceed budget. (1.05 II. D.)
8. Commendable Service Award based on significant service to replace Service Award based on time. (3.02 D.)
9. All contracts & agreements exceeding \$5,000 must be approved by NEC. (1.05 II. E.)
10. TAW in both hard copy & electronic formats for AVA Associate members after cost study. (1.06 II.F.)
11. Two-year pilot program for Bike events of extended distances. (4.02 II. B. 2. a)
12. Two-year Bike pilot using multiple events to increase participation with "Travelling Stamp".(4.02 II B.2.b.)
13. Two-year pilot for using Per Participant Sanction Fee option for events with low attendance. (4.07 II. C.)
14. Special Programs date change when distribution of books can commence. (Sp. Progs. Management book 3.)
15. National Recognition Awards Program not available to those serving on NEC. (3.01 I, II, & 3.03 A. 1.)

AVA Special Committees

Ad Hoc: Time To Walk

Chair David Bonewitz

This ad hoc committee was formed to take advantage of a unique combination of date and time that would occur at 10:11 on December 13, 2014 (10-11-12-13-14). This unique opportunity was initially identified by a sharp-eyed Volksmarcher, Jay LaCroix, and brought to the NEC by Wayne Holloway, Pacific Region Director. This Ad Hoc Committee was formed, and from that point it was the goal to get as many walkers as possible on the trail at 10:11 (local time) on December 13. A special clock face slug was acquired for clubs to use with either a Traditional Event or a group walk of a YRE. A unique patch was developed by Martin Britton (UpState Pathfinders) and made available for clubs to purchase and use as an A-award for their event.

With the help of Holly Pelking, a boilerplate news release was developed and made available for clubs to use to promote their part in this national event. Joanne Forinash led the effort to make use of Café Press for the sale of Time-to-Walk t-shirts and helped the AVA staff with unique Participation Certificates (also developed by Martin Britton) for each club that ordered patches or reported its participation.

This was truly a national event with 86 clubs in 41 states putting 3116 walkers on the trail at 10:11 on December 13. While AVA showed approximately \$3,000 in profit for this event, the goal was not profit, but fun and an opportunity for clubs to gain local exposure. Clearly there was fun, but in addition, a number of clubs had print media and television coverage. The Governors in Tennessee and Maryland, and the Knox County TN Mayor issued proclamations declaring 12/13/14 "Time to Walk Day."

Time to Walk closed out with a final front page article in The American Wanderer along with six pages of color photos of clubs participating in this national event. A final report was made to the NEC at their January 2015 meeting.

Awards and Recognition

Chair Linda Neu

The AVA Awards and Recognition Program honors both individuals and organizations within and outside the AVA, for service, deeds and accomplishments that have advanced the ideals of Volkssporting in the United States.

The Awards and Recognition Committee completed this goal by following the AVA policy. The committee solicited award nominations by placing articles in the Checkpoint and the American Wanderer. Articles outlined the qualifications for each award and the time to submit them. Included in the article was how to obtain a copy of the "Guide for Nominations", with the suggestion to read and follow this guide.

Nominations from members were requested to be sent to the Regional Director, for all national level awards (Hall of Fame Award, Distinguished Achievement Award, Ted Ballman Memorial Award for Youth Volkssporters, and Trailblazer Award). Regional Directors then sent the awards to the Awards Committee for review. The Committee's recommendations were then presented to the NEC at their January 2015 meeting for final approval. The 2013-2015 award recipients can be found in the Awards booklet distributed at the 19th Biennial Convention. This booklet was prepared by the Committee and AVA National Headquarters Staff.

Members of the Awards and Recognition Committee are as follows: Duncan Brantley, Southeast; Loralie Cruz, Pacific; Wayne Holloway, Pacific; Nancy Stenger, North Central; and Linda Neu, Mid-America, Chair.

National Events

Chair David Bonewitz

Following the final report on the success of the Time to Walk national event, the AVA President requested that we continue to foster similar national events. Thus, as the Time to Walk Committee closed, the National Events Committee began with a goal to provide support and encouragement to local clubs with other national events. A “national event” gives us an opportunity to be a part of something larger than ourselves. As a national association of clubs, other than our Biennial Convention, what else can give us that feeling of being a part of this larger thing we call the American Volkssport Association than having an event along with other clubs around the nation?

Following “Time to Walk,” the first opportunity for a National Event was March 14th, known as Pi Day with the date (3/14/15) corresponding to the mathematical term Pi (3.141592653. . .) which is the ratio of a circle’s circumference to its diameter. Nine clubs reported holding events on this day focusing on walking and eating pie. Not quite at the level of Time to Walk, but they had fun which was documented by a nice spread of pictures in TAW.

The following are additional opportunities that have been suggested as national events.

- IVV World Walking Day (May 8th or between weekends on either side of May 8th)
- National Physical Fitness and Sports Month (Traditional Events any time in May)
- National Trails Day (June 6th) (suggested by a posting by Missy McBride)
- National Grandparents Day (September 13) (suggested by Chris Mellen)
- National Volkssport Month (Traditional Events any time in October)

What we believe can be the biggest national event since “Time to Walk” will be AVA’s 40th Birthday celebration in 2016.

Our goal will be to encourage clubs to host events that have a national connection and provide assistance where we can with boilerplate new releases, patches, unique stamp slugs, and t-shirts. Volkssporters across the nation are encouraged to submit other ideas for a National Event that we might be able to use to enhance our pursuit of fitness, friendship, and fun.

National Nominating

Chair Doug Reynolds

Nominating Committee

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The Nominating Committee developed a slate of nominees for national office to be presented to the member clubs’ representatives at the AVA Convention on Friday, June 19, 2015 in Salem, OR. Those elected from the slate or nominated from the floor will serve on the XIX National Executive Council (NEC) from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017. The slate of nominees is:

President – Chris Mellon, Tyngsboro, MA, NE Region; Dennis Michele, Fairview, NC, SE Region

Vice President - Holly Pelking, San Jose, CA, PA Region

Secretary - Sam Korff, Clatskanie, OR, NW Region

Treasurer - Lawrence Lehman, Branson, MO, SC Region

To undertake the task of developing the slate, a list of candidates for the national Nominating Committee was created, and then approved by the NEC. The Nominating Committee consists of:

Glen Conyers, Joplin, MO, SC Region

John McClellan, Port Orange, FL, SE Region

Ellen Ott, San Antonio, TX, SW Region

Leonard Wojtysiak, O'Fallon, IL, MA Region
Bob Wright, Leesburg, VA, AT Region
Doug Reynolds, Rensselaer, NY, NE Region, Chair

ACTIVITIES: At the October 2014 NEC meeting in Albany, NY, President Michele asked Doug Reynolds, Northeast Regional Director, to Chair the Nominating Committee and select at least five others. All names would be submitted to the NEC for approval; each was approved. Except for Mr. Conyers, who was Chair of the last Nominating Committee, none of these appointees had served on the previous Committee; four of the six members were from regions not having a person from it on the Committee the last time. During the process, one Committee member decided to become a candidate for national office, and so was replaced as required by Bylaws. The replacement, recommended by his Region's RD, was also approved by the NEC.

The protocol used by this 2015 Committee followed a pattern similar to that used by the previous 2013 Committee. In the Dec/Jan issue of The American Wanderer, an announcement called for those who wanted to be candidates for national office, and informed those on how to apply for the four national offices via a procedure outlined in the newspaper, including the deadline dates. After the deadline for submissions had passed, we had received two names for President, one name for Vice President, and no name for Secretary, or for Treasurer. How to handle a situation if there were no candidate for an office was not addressed by the AVA Bylaws. The Committee decided that to be fair to those who had already met the application deadline, it extended the application process only for the Secretary and Treasurer offices, giving a second chance for applications. Committee members "beat the bushes" to find at least one volunteer for each of the remaining two slots, so as to have at least a full slate to present to the delegates (club representatives) at the Convention. By the deadline for the latter two offices, we did have one candidate for each position, so the Committee had met its charge. Information on each of the candidates was published in TAW, Feb/March issue for President and Vice President, and April/May issue for Secretary and Treasurer. Nominations will still be accepted from the floor at the convention. Wednesday, June 17th at the Opening General Session from 3:15pm – 5:30pm, the Announcement of Official Slate of Officer Candidates will occur, followed by presentations by each candidate for office. Following the General Session, from 6:00 pm to 6:45 pm, there is scheduled an Officer Candidates' Open Forum ("Meet the Candidates") for a questions and answers session. At the General Session on Friday, June 19, in the 3:15pm – 5:30pm period, the election will be held.

The responsibility of elections for Regional Directors does not rest with this Nominating Committee, but is handled within the regions following the Bylaws outlined in Sections 6.2, and 6.6.

CONCERNS: During the process of finding, reviewing, and selecting nominees for national offices, the Committee ran into areas of concern on how to proceed as there were no details found in the Bylaws to give it direction. Some questions that arose were:

1. If there is no applicant for a national office, and no nomination from the floor, how should the position be filled? Should the new NEC be empowered to select a qualified person from among themselves, or from the general membership at large, who meets the requirements for the office, and appoint that person to fulfill the remainder of the term? Should the person be able to take on the same role from which he/she just "termed out"?
2. Currently, the application process begins with self-nomination. A candidate need only meet the conditions as stated in the Bylaws 5.2 a-h.; basically: US residency; be in good standing with AVA; hold only one national office; not have just "termed out" from office now being sought. It is not a requirement that a candidate be a club member, nor be an Associate Member/Life of AVA.

As the members of AVA are clubs (not individuals), indicating that the national organization is club based, should the club have a much larger role in the nominating process, as compared to a self-nominated model? Should candidates not be self-nominated, but be nominated by at least one club mindful of the qualifications and experiences of the individual for the specific office being sought, and attest to the accuracy of the information submitted by the club that will be used by the national Nominating Committee?

3. Should the Bylaws and Policy be updated to address the qualifications and experiences for each position (different positions might need different qualifications and experiences), that the candidate must have and be called for in the application?

4. Should there be more to “not in good standing” than what is currently provided in the Bylaws Section 5.2(c) Should fiduciary actions, following the AVA Bylaws and policies, etc. while previously on the NEC be considered? For the latter, at what level is the final judgement made (at the NEC level; at the committee level; or some other body such as an NEC appointed disciplinary board?) What records should exist so clubs and the Nominating Committee know who is “in good standing”; or “not is good standing”?

5. Once an individual has been declared “not in good standing” for those reasons currently listed (“debt, obligation, or liability to the AVA”) and others to be identified, what is the process, if any, for the individual to get “out of the penalty box”, especially if the original issue that caused the problem is no longer able to be corrected?

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Nominating Committee recommends that the above issues, plus others that might be raised, be studied by the Bylaws Committee, or an ad hoc body of it, such that the nominating process has more specific details on how to proceed without having to create a method while the process is underway. Furthermore, this Committee recommends that amendments to the AVA Bylaws be put forward where the above and new issues are concerned.

Special Programs

Chair Bonnie Johnson

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: A total of thirteen (13) new Special Programs were proposed at the January 31, 2015 NEC meeting with a motion to approve each one. All thirteen were approved with a start date of January 1, 2016.

Listed in alphabetical order are the new Special Programs:

Bridges – Spanning the USA

Lady Liberty

Make a Wish – Water Fountains

National Parks Centennial

Points of Reference

State Street Sashay

Take a Walk in a City Park

Treasure Hunt

Vice Presidential Walks

United States Post Offices

Walking America’s Ports of Call

Walking the Path of Inventors

Walk the USA – Street by Street

ACTIVIES: An article was written for TAW to introduce the programs.

All club’s POC’s sponsoring these programs have written an article about their specific programs and completed a box ad for TAW.

A list of qualifiers concerning each program was sent to the Checkpoint for an aid to clubs and trailmasters to determine what will qualify for the upcoming 2016 YRE's and Seasonals events.

A motion passed at the January 31, 2015 NEC meeting allowing Special Program books to be mailed out to the participant upon receipt of payment. See AVA Special Programs Management 5.1.b.

CONCERNS: None

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

Training Development

Chair Nancy Wittenberg

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. As Training Committee chair, I am responsible for workshops for the 2015 AVA Biennial Convention. Fifteen workshops are scheduled for the convention. Information is on the Convention website and information brochures are in the packets participants receive at convention registration. Some handouts are on the Convention website.
2. I distributed "How to Start a Regular Member Volkssport Club" document to NEC members at the June, 2014 NEC meeting. It is a short, practical guide to steps involved in club formation. Work was initially done by Becky Forsythe, Training Committee member.
3. Wrote articles for the TAW on the Pathways to Excellence program.

ACTIVITIES:

1. I have attended all Convention meetings in Wilsonville and Salem, OR.
2. I have worked on updates to the Trail Master Guide to include guidelines for Bike Events from Dave Schull and to correct grammar and other inconsistencies sent to me by Leonard Wojtysiak, but, I have not finished it.
3. I am working on a sample Bylaws for clubs, an assignment at the last NEC special brainstorming session in Sacramento.
4. Discussing with Bob Wright how we can put some training on the AVA website.

CONCERNS: None at this time.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None at this time.

Youth Program

Chair Debra Kruep

2014-2015 Walk Together Patch contest conducted with Ohio Wander Freunde and the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.

2015-2016 Walk Together Patch contest conducted with the River City Ramblers and the Girl Scouts of Southwest Indiana.

The Youth Committee held a workshop in the Mid-America region resulting in the Indy G Walkers volkssport club conducting a Girl Scout Master Program with scouts and leaders walking at least 6 sanctioned walks in a twelve month period. They have approximately 20 scouts enrolled in the program.

The workshop also helped three clubs host a youth Walk Together event. These clubs had never hosted a youth event in the past.

Since 2012 this committee has hosted over 554 scouts and families at three Walk Together events and introduced 180 Girl Scouts and leaders to volkssporting through the Master Program in our home club. One

Hundred and six of these Girl Scouts and adult leaders completed the Master Program by walking six or more events with the host club in a nine month period. In addition, one troop has continued to walk with the club for three years and is working on their second event book.

Changes were sought to enhance the AVA website youth page at the start of 2014. These were put on hold until a new executive director was established. These changes would include more concise directions and "how to's " for AVA clubs to implement and introduce the youth programs in their area.

Treasurer's Message

by Bob Morrison

- GOALS:**
- A. Produce timely, meaningful financial reports for NEC
 - B. Where possible, translate financial information into actionable suggestions for the NEC

ACTIVITIES: Reviewed management financials and prepared a Treasurer's Report

TIMELINES: N/A.

FY 2015 HIGHLIGHTS BASED ON MARCH 31, 2015 INTERNAL REPORTING:

A) Financial Position

AVA is in sound financial shape with Cash and Investment Securities of about \$954,000 and liabilities against this cash of only about \$82,000.

The annual budgeted expenses (excluding conventions) for AVA are approximately \$500,000, or a little more than one-half the cash available, providing a healthy reserve. There is no immediate threat to the solvency of the organization. Continued operating losses, however, will degrade this reserve and over time and AVA's options for adjusting to the changing environment will be more restricted by a lack of resources.

B) Financial Activity

For the first three quarters of fiscal year 2015, after adjusting for non-cash in-kind expenses, the actual expenses reflected in management's statements were about \$304,000.

For the same three quarters of fiscal year 2015, total revenues and profits from sales, after adjusting for the non-cash in-kind revenues, were about \$267,000. This is a \$37,000 year-to-date loss.

Management believes that with 2015 convention income, donations from the "Big Give" and higher participation during the last three months of the fiscal year, this loss can be narrowed considerably.

C) Positive NEC Action

At the last NEC meeting a resolution was adopted directing and empowering the President and the Executive Director to take all necessary action to limit overall expenses in each fiscal year to the lesser of the approved budgeted expenses or the level of actual revenues being recognized in that fiscal year, unless otherwise approved by the NEC. This NEC direction offers hope that the series of annual losses experienced by AVA during the past few years will end.

CONCERNS:

A) Financial and statistical reporting has not been sufficiently timely, regular, frequent or adequately informative to provide the NEC with the ability to consider financial performance in its decision making. Faster, more informative reporting would help the NEC fulfill its governance responsibilities.

B) During the past year, the Treasurer has not been a part of the internal control processes of the organization and has not been involved in investment policies decisions as provided for in the AVA Investment Policy. High level involvement of the Treasurer in the financial activities of an organization enhances internal control.

APPRECIATION:

I wish to express my appreciation to the membership of AVA for providing me the opportunity to be of service as your Treasurer during the past four year. Thank you.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED: Bob Morrison, 2011-15 AVA Treasurer

AVA STATE ASSOCIATIONS & ACTIVE CLUBS

As updated May 27, 2015

ALABAMA

Capital City Wanderers

ALASKA

Anchorage Volkssport Club

ARIZONA

Saguaro Sun Striders

Thunder Mountain Trekkers

Tucson Volkssport Club

ARKANSAS

Ozark Hills Hikers

CALIFORNIA

California Volkssport Association, Inc.

Bay Bandits Volksmarch Club

Central Coast Peregrine Pathfinders

Coronado Beachcombers

Davis Dynamos

Delta Tule Trekkers

Green Valley Gaiters, Inc,

Laguna Turf 'N Surf Walkers

Low Desert Roadrunners

Placer Pacers

Sacramento Walking Sticks

San Diego County Rockhoppers

Shasta Sundial Strollers

Sierra Gold Striders

Sonoma Country Stompers

South Bay Roadrunners

South Bay Striders

Tahoe Trail Trekkers

Vaca Valley Volks

COLORADO

Colorado High Country Hikers

Colorado Springs Walking Club

Columbine Country Cruisers

Falcon Wanderers

Northern Front Range Wanderers

Rocky Mountain Wanderers

Woodland Wanderers

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Valley Volkssport Club

DELAWARE

First State Webfooters

FLORIDA

Florida Volkssport Association

Emerald Coast Volkssport Club

First Coast Trail Forgers Walking Club

Happy Wanderers

Meandering Manatees

Mid-Florida Milers Walking Club

Pensacola Volksmarch Club

Perdido Key Volksmarch Club

Suncoast Sandpipers Volkssport Club

GEORGIA

Georgia Walkers

HAWAII

Menehune Marchers

IDAHO

Treasure Valley Volkssports

ILLINOIS

Illinois Trekkers Volkssport Club
 Lebanon Cedar Cruisers
 Railsplitter Wanderers
 Ridgewalkers Walking Club
 Windy City Walkers

INDIANA**Indiana Volkssport Association**

Auburn Duesey Walkers
 Bedford Hiking Club
 Bloomington Flying Fish Volkssports
 Goodtime Trailblazers
 Hoosier Hikers
 Indy 'G' Walkers
 Michigan Pathfinders
 River City Ramblers
 Three Rivers Strollers
 Whitewater Valley Walkers

IOWA

Greater Des Moines Volkssport Association
 Hawkeye Hikers
 Tri-State Trekkers

KANSAS

Kansas Jay Walkers
 Sunflower Sod Stompers

KENTUCKY

Derby City Walkers

LOUISIANA

Crescent City Volkssport Club

MAINE

Southern Maine Volkssport Association

MARYLAND**Maryland Volkssport Association**

Annapolis Amblers
 Baltimore Walking Club
 Columbia Volksmarch Club
 Freestate Happy Wanderers
 Great Greenbelt Volksmarchers, Inc.
 Seneca Valley Sugarloafers

MASSACHUSETTS

Two Town Walking Club
 Walk 'N Mass Volkssport Club

MICHIGAN

Washtenaw Wanderers Volkssporting Club

MINNESOTA

Central Minnesota Volkssports
 Lake Country Wanderers
 NorthStar Trail Travelers
 Pelican Rapids CC Walking Club
 Twin Cities Volkssport

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Gulf Coast Volkswalking Club

MISSOURI

Clay-Platte Trackers of Kansas City
 Dogwood Trailblazers
 Global Adventures
 Pace Setters Volkssport Club
 Rolla Roadrunners Volkssport Club
 St. Louis-Stuttgart Volksmarch Club

MONTANA

Madison County Volkssport Club
 Miles City Volksmarch
 Seeley Lake Regional Outdoor Center for Kinetic Sports

NEBRASKA

Lincoln Volkssport Club, Inc.
Nebraska Wanderfreunde Trailblazers
Panhandle Walkers

NEVADA

Las Vegas High Rollers & Strollers

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NH Patriot Pathfinders

NEW JERSEY

Garden State Wanderers
Princeton Area Walkers

NEW MEXICO

Double Eagle Hike & Bike Club
Kiwanis Club of Raton
Sun Country Striders

NEW YORK

Empire State Capital Volkssporters
Finger Lakes Volkssport Club
Niagara Frontier Volkssport Club
Volkssport Club at West Point

NORTH CAROLINA

Tarheel State Walkers Volkssport Association

Asheville Amblers
Metrolina Walkers
Ready Set Walk! Club
Rowan Roamers
Triangle Trailblazers
Winston Wanderers

NORTH DAKOTA

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

OHIO

Ohio Volkssport Association

Bulls Run Ramblers
Gemutlich Wanderers
Germania Volksmarch Gruppe
Heart of Ohio Hikers
Maumee Valley Volkssporters
Ohio Wander Freunde
Olentangy Owls
Purple Penguins
Queen City Skywalkers
Tecumseh Trailblazers
Valley Vagabonds, Inc.
Wandering Wheels Volkssport Club
Xenia Walking Club

OKLAHOMA

Holy Family Walkers dba Lawton Walkers
Tulsa Walking Club
Wandergruppe Walking Club
World Wide Walkers

OREGON

Oregon Trail State Volkssport Association

Albany Fitwalkers
Cedar Milers
Columbia River Volkssport Club
Corvallis Cruisers
East County Windwalkers
Eugene Springfield Mossback Volkssport
Rogue Valley Walkers
Rose City Roamers
Sherwood Merrywalkers
Silverton Walk Abouts
Turnaround Trekkers
Valley Volkswalkers
Willamette Wanderers
Yachats Coastal Gems Volkssport Club

PENNSYLVANIA**Keystone State Volkssport Association**

Cumberland Valley Lead Foot Club
 Liberty Bell Wanderers
 Nittany Nomads
 Penn-Dutch Pacers Volksmarch Club
 Susquehanna Rovers Volksmarch Club
 York White Rose Wanderers

SOUTH CAROLINA

The Upstate Pathfinders

SOUTH DAKOTA

Black Hills Volkssport Association
 Capital City River Ramblers
 Prairie Wanderers Volkssport Club

TENNESSEE

East Tennessee Wanderers
 Tuck-A-See Wanderers

TEXAS**Texas Volkssport Association**

Brazos Valley Trailblazers
 Castroville Chamber of Commerce
 City of McAllen Parks and Rec. Dept.
 Colorado River Walkers
 Dallas Trekkers, Inc.
 East Texas Trekkers
 Hill Country Volkssportverein
 Hood County Hummers
 Houston Happy Hikers
 Kerrville Trailblazers
 LoneStar Walkers
 Midland Walkabout
 NB Marsch-und Wandergruppe
 Plano Walking Club
 Randolph Roadrunners
 Rockport City Trailways
 San Angelo Volkswalkers
 San Marcos River Walkers

TEXAS continued

Selma Pathfinders
 Sparkling City Strollers
 Star Trekkers of Irving
 Tarrant County Walkers
 Texas County Walkers, Inc.
 Texas Wanderers
 Volkssportverein Friedrichsburg
 West Texas Trail Walkers
 Whatever of Texas Sporting Club

UTAH

Gadabout
 Golden Spike Striders

VERMONT

Twin State Volkssport Association

VIRGINIA**Virginia Volkssport Association**

Bad Pennies
 Cavalier Volkssporting Club
 Ft. Belvoir Outdoor Rec/DMWR Special
 Gator Volksmarsch Club
 Germanna Volkssport Association
 Lee Lepus Volksverband
 Loudon Walking & Volkssport Club
 Northern Virginia Volksmarchers
 Peninsula Pathfinders of Virginia
 U.S. Freedom Walk Festival Club
 Virginia Vagabonds
 Washington DC Area Volksmarch Club, Inc.
 Wood and Dale Wanderers

WASHINGTON**Evergreen State Volkssport Association**

All Weather Walkers
Border Crossers
Capitol Volkssport Club
Central Washington Sun Striders
Daffodil Valley Volkssport Association
Emerald City Wanderers
Evergreen Wanderers
Four-Plus Foolhardy Folks
FS Family Wanderers
Interlaken Trailblazers Volkssport Club
International Wanderers
Key Peninsula Volkssport
Kitsap Volkssporters Club
Lilac City Volkssport Association
Northwest Striders
NW Tulip Trekkers
Olympic Peninsula Explorers
Over-The-Hill-Gang Volkssport Club
Sea-Tac Volkssports Club
Sound Steppers Volkssport Club
The Pathfinders Volkssport Club of the NW
Third Planet Volkstours
Vancouver USA Volkssporters
Volkssport USA

WISCONSIN

Madison Area Volkssport Association
Manitowoc City Centre Association
Menominee River Volkssport Club

WYOMING

Buffalo Pathfinders

