



# CHECKPOINT

The official voice of the American Volkssport Association  
*America's premier noncompetitive sports organization*

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**Starting Point 2016 Cover Contest :** ([click here for pre-order form](#))

AVA Headquarters is searching for photos to be placed on the front and back covers of the Starting Point book. Color photos only please.

Photographers must attempt to incorporate in their photo submissions the AVA logo and walkers in action (preferably frontal shots with faces showing). Images should, in some way, express our core values of “fun, fitness, and friendship.”

**Starting Point 2016:**

Here are a few recommendations to enhance your photo selection chances. (1) When using your digital camera, adjust for the highest resolution available and set the frame/picture size for the largest possible frame. (2) Submit your image as an attachment to your email or send us an electronic file on a PC formatted CD ROM. Image resolution should be a minimum of 5.2 megapixels (2560x2048). (3) Don't format the photo in your camera for size or lighten/darken the image. Do not crop it. The more the image is changed, the more the detail and quality is lost. (4) Finally, avoid downloading photos from the internet. They are low resolution and do not reproduce well.

Deadline for submission is August 14, 2015. Entries will become the property of AVAHQ, will not be returned and may be used for AVA marketing and promotional purposes. Judges will select winners based on technical quality, originality, creativity, interest and AVA related themes. First place entry earns the front cover with second selected image appearing on the back. The two winning photographers each will receive an official AVA jacket.

Email your submission to [avawebmaster@ava.org](mailto:avawebmaster@ava.org) or mail your CD to: American Volkssport Association, 1001 Pat Booker Road, Suite 101, Universal City, Texas 78148.

**Starting Point Tips – Joanne Forinash:**

The purpose of this publication is to give instruction and clarification to the club representatives who enter the information on the ESR (event sanction request) for the sanctioning and renewing of Year Rounds and Seasonals (Feb.1 – Dec.31.)

Some have said the Starting Point is too big. If these guidelines are followed by ALL clubs, we could reduce the size of the Starting Point book by approximately 150 pages. In addition, the pertinent information any walker would need to find the location of the start point, get registered

and enjoy the walk will be in a short, but concise narrative, fitting the information for three walks on one page.

You need to check your Year Round information in the Starting Point for 2015 to determine if you need to change the information printed there before renewing each walk.

The Tips and Guidelines below will only address the areas of concern and those that take the most space in the Starting Point. These areas will be addressed in the order they appear on the ESR form.

### **1. Start Point Address and Driving Directions:**

- a. Do not give directions from every city with roads coming into the Start Point City. Pick the major road closest to the Start Point and give simple right/left turns from that road to the Start Point.
- b. Use abbreviations such as: street—st, avenue—ave, road—rd, terrace—ter, circle—cir, highway—hwy.
- c. DO NOT use bold or all caps lettering. This takes more space.
- d. When there is more than one YRE starting at the same location, put the directions to the “Start Point” on the 1<sup>st</sup> YRE listed. On sequence YREs just put one sentence. (Example: Comfort Inn & Suites, 35000 I-10 W., Boerne, TX. 78006. Refer to the Boerne-Downtown (Y1857) for directions to start location.) This will save a lot of space in the book and help reduce the cost of publication.
- e. This section should be kept to eight (8) lines in the input box.

### **2. Extended Description:**

- a. Make sure the hours of operation of the Start Point are clearly stated. It is not necessary to state “From dawn to 3 hours before dusk.” There will be a guide of general directions and instructions in the front of the book that do not need to be repeated on each walk entry.
- b. Do not assume all Visitors centers are open 9 to 5. If the Start Point location is open all the time then simply state “open 24/7.” Keep the hours of operation brief and simple, but clear. It is not necessary to enter each holiday the location is closed. Simply state “closed most holidays.”
- c. If the walker needs to drive to the start of the walk, state here “After registering you must drive to the start. Directions will be in the box.” Do not put driving directions here.
- d. INCLUDE in this section a brief summary of the most important and interesting things to be seen or experienced on this walk. DO NOT give the history of the city/area or expand extensively on the highlights. There just is not enough space to put that in the book. Just wet their appetite and make them interested in doing the walk.
- e. DO NOT put an advertisement for the Start Location business. Just putting their name and location in the book is sufficient.
- f. Keep this section to six (8)\* lines in the input section the ESR form.  
\*The “Start Point Address and Driving Directions” and the “Extended Description” should have no more than 16 lines (in the input boxes) combined.

### **3. Event Comments:**

- a. This section WILL NOT print in the Starting Point. You should **not** put information in this section that is pertinent to the walker being able to complete this walk.

- b. You may put additional information, **that will show up on the AVA website only, in this section.** Such as Historical or special photo areas.

**Point of Contact:**

Tip for "Phone": Do not put two separate phone numbers (home & cell). The system is designed for only one number and it will combine the two numbers and give an incorrect number. ONLY ONE PHONE NUMBER HERE.

**More Details:**

Tip for "Event Rating": The system defaults to 1A. Please double check your entry here and make sure the system has recorded the correct rating that you entered.

Tip for "Start Time (s)": This does NOT print in the Starting Point. You must include hours of operation of the Start Point in the Extended Description (event info) section of the form.

**SPECIAL PROGRAMS:**

Do your research and list as accurately as you can ALL the Special Programs that each walk qualifies for. Keep in mind that even though a program ends (example Dec. 31, 2015) the walkers have a year after that date to complete the program. So you need to include those programs in your listing along with all current programs and the six new (future) ones beginning Jan. 1, 2016. You will find them on the AVA website under Events – Special Programs—Future. Also listed there are the current programs and those that have ended. It is important that you enter these whether you are an avid supporter of Special Programs or not. You never know when a Special Program listed on your walk is just the one some walker is trying to complete. This also tells the walker a lot about what they will see or experience on your walk. It is worth the effort.

There is not a space provided on the ESR form to enter the Special Programs. You will have to exit the ESR, go back to the Club Events navigation page and select the "Special Programs" line and then enter the Special Programs for that particular walk. Be sure to submit so the system will take your selections.

I hope this information makes it easy for you to enter your ESR and helps you let the AVA walking family know what they need to know to enjoy your walk.

Compiled by Joanne Forinash,  
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**National Events – David Bonewitz:**

Much has happened on the National Event front since the last issue of TAW. We saw World Walking Day (May 8<sup>th</sup> and the weekends on either side), National Trails Day (June 6<sup>th</sup>), and National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. All of these gave clubs opportunities to participate in events that were shared by other clubs across the nation. Some clubs submitted pictures which can be seen elsewhere in this issue.

Still to come this year is National Volkssport Month in October. Here is a month-long opportunity to share our love of Volkssports with those who haven't been lucky enough to find out about us yet. Consider a Traditional Event with the special patch available from AVA headquarters. Or do a group walk of a YRE but use the National Volkssport Month link to garner some additional publicity. Consider other opportunities to get some public exposure. The East Tennessee Wanderers secure space in two glass cases in the Blount County Library to display record books, patches, medals, and more. Display title cards, like "Family Friendly Adventures" and "Fun, Fitness, and Friendship," to try to build interest. The top of the cases are a great place for

grabber cards and brochures for future events. Over the month, many thousands of folks will have had a chance to learn about Volkssporting and the AVA.

At the most recent NEC meeting, the Council discussed National Events. There was a consensus that none of the events since Time to Walk could really have been expected to generate the kind of excitement that 10-11-12-13-14 did. It is also obvious that attempting to manufacture interest with smaller events just dilutes the energy and excitement. Clearly, we need to find a truly national-scale event and get our planning out ahead of the clubs as they set up their annual schedules.

The next big event that appeared could be a large-scale national event was in the last issue of TAW as “AVA’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.” However, when one looks at the history of AVA, things aren’t as clear and obvious with regard to an anniversary date. The date suggested is actually the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Volkssporting event in the United States, not the birthday of AVA. A big weekend event is being planned for June 10-12, 2016 in Richardson, TX, by the local Texas clubs to replicate that first Volksmarch. Watch for more information as everyone will be invited to come down and celebrate. Since we are looking for ways to get clubs involved across the nation, one of the audience members at the June 2015 NEC meeting, Judy Gordon (Tahoe Trail Trekkers), suggested that we encourage clubs to celebrate their “firsts” throughout the year. To avoid appearing old and stogy with a “40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” Chris Zegelin subsequently suggested a slogan of “Celebrating our first steps toward fun, fitness, and friendship.” Taking that as our guide, our big National Event for 2016 will be a year of celebrations.

Clubs are encouraged to go back into their club history and replicate their first Traditional Event. We will develop a boilerplate news release that will tie the club’s “celebrating our first steps toward fun, fitness, and friendship” with the celebration of the first Volksmarch in the United States. For those clubs who register their event as part of this celebration, there will be a special slug in their event stamp. We will also look at developing a patch and t-shirt to go along with this theme and our national celebration. While we will work to give clubs good exposure throughout the year, at the end of this year of celebration we will run a special feature highlighting all the celebrations across the nation.

Now it’s time to stop and research your club’s history. Make a plan to join clubs across the U.S. celebrating in 2016 the beginning of Volkssporting in the U.S. by “celebrating our first steps toward fun, fitness, and friendship.”

### **National Volkssport Month – October 2015:**

October is National Volkssport Month. Clubs hosting events during the month of October can order patches by filling out and returning this form to AVA national headquarters at least 30 days prior to the event(s). Supplies are limited, so orders will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Clubs may place preorders until supply is exhausted. Don’t miss the chance to offer this collectible patch to walk participants. ([click here](#))

### **Guide to The American Wanderer:**

The American Wanderer (TAW) welcomes your submission and wants to help promote events throughout all AVA regions. So to help you help us, please check out the attached pdf for a helpful list of guidelines. ([click here](#)) You can also find advertising rates and deadlines for TAW on the AVA website under the Administrative tab > Clubs Only > AVA Club Forms and search for The American Wanderer advertising packet.

**HQ Awards and Membership Coordinator – Karen Winkle:**

Due to the Convention in June, Karen was not at Headquarters, some books were processed after her return from Convention.

The charts for [AVA Processing](#) and [Ten Events](#) are included as attachments.

**HQ Events Coordinator – Marie Bebley:**

It's Renewal time again. The *2016 YRE and Seasonal Renewal* is happening now, deadline is midnight 30th August, 2015.

Please renew your walks at your earliest convenience. Contact Marie at [events@ava.org](mailto:events@ava.org) or 210-659-2112 for any ESR renewal issues.

The *2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Report* is now due, deadline is 30<sup>th</sup> July. Please submit your report online to avoid late fees.

Annual Financial Reports, e-postcards, and Officer Updates are being submitted. Please process and submit yours at your earliest convenience, thank you.

**AVA is seeking candidates to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee – Executive Director, Henry Rosales**

1. Job Title: **Volunteer, AVA Strategic Planning Committee Member**

2. Duties:

- Represent the Region at the Strategy Meetings--one in San Antonio, TX, and the other location to be decided (Some funding will be available to support this travel and lodging.)
- Work closely with the Regional Director to develop the strategic input from the Region
- Weekly contact (email, text, phone) with the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee (SERD David Bonewitz), the Executive Director (Henry Rosales), and all Strategic Planning Committee members
- Spend time researching, collecting, and analyzing data from volkssporters in the Region and other key stakeholder groups

3. Skills and Competencies:

- Experienced with and enthusiastic about volksmarching and other noncompetitive sports
- Comfortable communicating via social media and by teleconference
- Able to combine knowledge, experience, and provide a fresh, objective perspective
- Can be candid, conduct an objective evaluation, make recommendations, help plan and implement change
- Should have available time and resources to attend meetings and travel as necessary.
- Must be a good listener
- Must be able to think outside the box

4. Relationships: The ideal candidate enjoys and works well with others and in group settings and must be able to compromise and find common ground.

5. Commitment: This job will require a monthly time commitment of 4-8 hours (minimum) a month for 12 months. Note: This is a 12 month commitment!

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