

The official voice of the American Volkssport Association

America's premier noncompetitive sports organization

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www.ava.org

August 2016

WIN A FREE STARTING POINT

Submit your photo for the front or back cover of the starting point and win. For more information and rules see pg. 5.



NEC News

Awards - Linda Neu, Chair

Recognition Awards Program

Now is the time you should start thinking about people, that are deserving of awards. The Recognition Awards Program has changed since the last convention.

The Award of service no longer exists. The new award is the Commendable Service award. This award can be given at any time to a person, providing excellent service, to our organization.

This does not require any amount of service time.

Click on images for Awards form

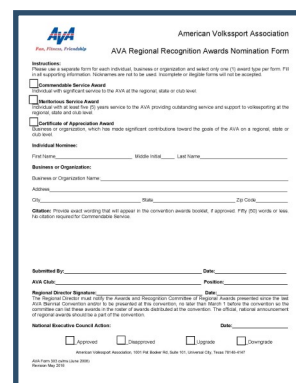
American Volkssport Association
Billings, Montana
June 7-9, 2017
20th Biennial Convention

Let's prepare for our next Convention. [Click here](#) for more info and to visit the official 20th Biennial Convention website.

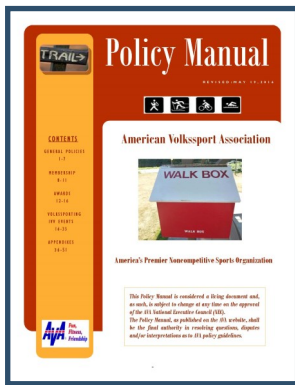
NEC Meeting Updates

Approved

The minutes of the June 2016 NEC meeting have been posted on the AVA website [click here](#) to view them.



The form is titled "AVA Regional Recognition Awards Nomination Form" and includes sections for "Individual Information", "Business or Organization Information", "Awards", and "Signatures". It contains checkboxes for "Commendable Service Award", "Certificate of Appreciation Award", and "National Recognition Award". The form also includes a section for "Regional Director Signature" and "Date".



All the information you will need to submit these forms can be found in the Administration part of the AVA web site. You can find this in the Policy manual on page 17 section 3.03 Procedures for National Level Awards, and AVA Recognition Awards Program - guide for Nominations. The forms to submit these awards can be found in the under Clubs, form section.

Click on images for Policy Manual

Programs Committee—Debra Kruep, Chair

Congratulations to Sailor Amburn the winner in the first AVA and Navigators USA Walk Together Patch Contest! There are approximately one hundred Navigator USA chapters in the United States. The AVA Program Committee will be asking you to partner with your local Navigators USA Chapter to host a Walk Together. Please say “yes” if you receive a phone call from one of our Program committee members. We will be contacting those AVA clubs closest to a Navigators USA Chapter. We are here to help you connect, plan and build a relationship with your local chapter. This is a great way to introduce AVA to a new generation. Navigators USA is a coed scout organization whose “mission is to help boys and girls and their parents spend more time outdoors, getting to know what nature has to offer while getting to know each other.” What a perfect partner for AVA!

The Navigator USA 2016-2017 patch, along with the Girl Scout 2016-2017 will be available from AVA Headquarters starting September 1. There will be more information in next checkpoint on how to order these patches for your events. We will be updating the youth pages on the AVA website in the next few months so if you can't find the answers to your questions please contact the Programs Chair at avayouth@ava.org or debmarkkruep1@yahoo.com



Standards and Evaluations—Suzi Glass, Chair

Best Practice:

Membership/Publicity

From numerous clubs the advice is to walk and walk often. Rather than relying on Traditional Events, frequently held on weekends, clubs offer weekly walks. Using Year Round Event (YRE) routes, groups meet on a specified day and time (10:00 am Wednesday or 6:00 pm Thursday—the latter to accommodate those working full-time) to walk and socialize. The Sacramento Walking Sticks even have walks on evenings when the moon is full! The Freestate Happy Wanderers encourage each Point of Contact (POC) to sponsor a group walk of their YRE when regular events are not scheduled. During summer, The Tahoe Trail Trekkers have two walks a week that bring in vacationers. Each walk is hosted and led by a different club member.

We are walking clubs, so do more of what we do best: Walk!

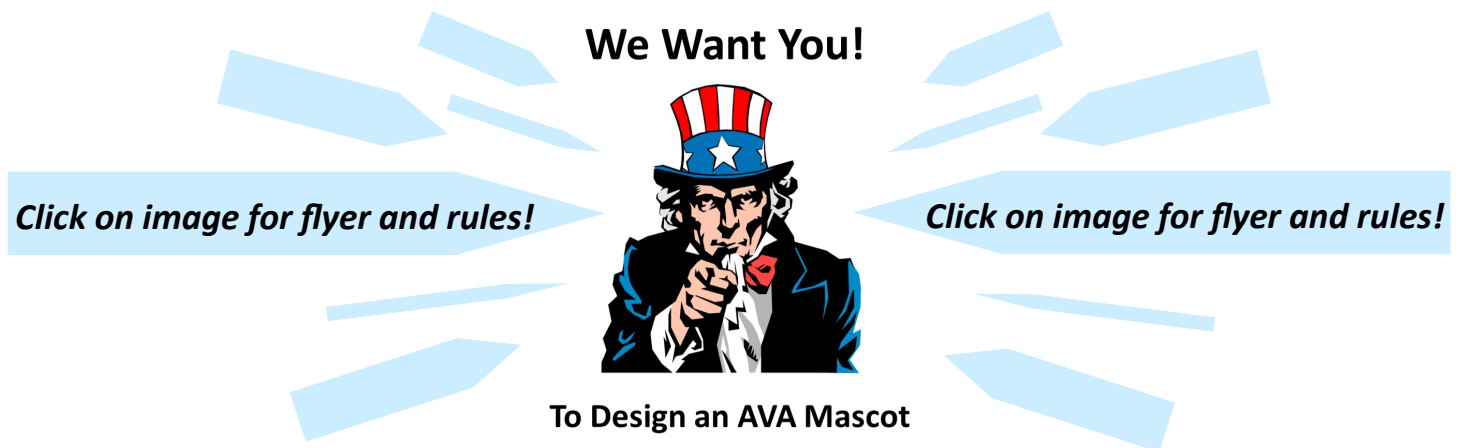
Special Programs —Bonnie Johnson, Chair

Special Programs -- 2018

At each January NEC Meeting, new Special Programs are introduced for review and approval by the NEC to begin in the following year. In January 2017, the Special Programs will be introduced which, if approved, would start up on January 1, 2018

Any club considering a new Special Program must have all the documentation sent to your Regional Director and to the Special Program Committee Chair, Bonnie Johnson by November 1, 2016. The documents must include a colored copy of the patch and its dimensions, a mock up booklet with your particular Special Program rules and qualifiers. An expense report with a minimum order of 100 patches, postage and printing for a cost estimation to support your program must also be attached. Please check the AVA website under: Administration, Publications-Policies, AVA Policy Manual 4.05 for the information and procedures in hosting an AVA Special Program.

Send the documentation for your proposed Special Program to Bonnie Johnson, Special Program Committee Chair, 25 – 66th Way NE, Fridley, MN 55432 or as a pdf file to bonjohn@comcast.net followed by the original copy format.



NEC Membership Committee —Jeanne Miller, Chair

As a result of the work of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), the NEC has approved the formation of a Membership Committee, of which I am the chairman. I've been walking as a Volkssporter for 25 years, am from the North Central Region, and volunteer with my local club. My husband and I will reach retirement age in another decade and then we really plan to get busy!

I've put together a really great team of people to help me work out how to implement some ideas generated during our time together as the SPC. That doesn't mean that our ideas are the sole engine driving this committee. I was the one who read and compiled all the surveys, so I have a good idea of what people and clubs are thinking - from those who responded. If you have an idea that you want to bring up that pertains to how the AVA and its clubs can partner together or what membership as an individual in the AVA should look like, please email me at nec.membership@gmail.com. I've created a special email account just to keep all the responses organized. I worked hard to preserve anonymity in the survey process, so if you want your comments or thoughts kept confidential or anonymous, please be sure to indicate so in your email and I will honor those requests. Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you and to "Keep Moving Forward"!

National Special Programs—Susan Medlin, Chair

National Distance Program Update:

First the good news. I went to Wisconsin, and tagged along with their RD, Jerry Wilson, as he investigated possible trails for the new Ice Age Trail National Program which will start in 2017 (walking will start when the snow melts in the spring). They are getting a ton of help from the Ice Age Trail Alliance, who have done a fabulous job mapping their 1,000 mile plus trail. Along with a good friend and avid walker, Susan Weston, Jerry and I walked the Devil's Lake State Park trail (gorgeous views of the lake), and parts of the Kettle Moraine State Forest Northern Unit. They have over 30 miles of well marked trails. Next we walked the Merrimac Ferry to Gibraltar Point trail. A very nice walk in the woods, followed by an uphill trail to the top of Gibraltar Point. The views were incredible. We also saw a flock of wild turkeys using the trail!

Next, I am reporting a one year delay of the launch of the Pacific Crest Trail, originally scheduled to open on 1 Jan 2017. Turns out it's easier to build a program in a single state; taking on the entire west coast of America is a much more demanding task. But we will have some Pacific Crest Trails available for you to walk in 2017 once the snow melts, and you will be able to receive credit for them in the Online Walk Box under the Pacific Crest Trail program.

AVA National Office Team

Awards and Membership Coordinator—Karen Winkle

To view the Monthly Comparison Chart for the Total Number of Awards processed [click here](#).

Girl Scout, Oct. Patches and Navigator Patches have been ordered and will be in by the end of August. The Girl Scout Patches will be on consignment only with a limit of 50 per order. If more are needed please contact Karen at karen@ava.org for further information.

Events Coordinator—Marie Bebley

- Annual Financial Report and e-postcard filing confirmation. Deadline November 16, 2016.
Please submit these reports to events@ava.org.
- Update Officer information online. Deadline November 16, 2016.
- 2nd Quarterly Report were due Sunday, July 31, 2016. All reports submitted after this date are Past Due and a subject to a late fees. [Click here](#) to view missing reports.

- YRE and Seasonal Renewal Important Dates:
August 31, 2016 by midnight – deadline to renew YREs and Seasonal
September 15, 2016 – All YREs and Seasonal must be approved by your Regional Director.
October 1, 2016 – All YREs and Seasonal must be ready for the printing of 2017 Start Point Book.
 Make sure all events information are correct.

Information and Technology Specialist—Hector Hernandez

Starting Point Photo Contest Ends August 31, 2016

AVA is still looking for those two photos that capture the essence of Volkssporting in the USA! The first and second place winners will get their photo printed on the front side (1st place) and backside (2nd place) cover of the 2017 Starting Point book. Winners will also get a complimentary copy of the Starting Point!



Where are all the photographers at? Your phone is a perfect camera. With modern technology you can take a great photo with just your phone.

Entries are due to AVA National office no later than August 31, 2016. Rules, guidelines and the official entry form are [attached here](#). Participation in the nationwide contest is open to AVA members, clubs and state organizations. All entries must have been created or occurred during the time period from June 30, 2016 – August 31, 2016. For more information contact Hector at hector@ava.org

You can find the starting point pre order form by [clicking here](#). Please remember that all orders need to be in before the 16th of October and all event submissions need to be in by October 1st.

Starting Point Changes

The National Office currently receives anywhere from 5 to 10 different Starting Point changes a month. It was brought to my attention that many people may not see these changes. So as requested here is a list of the Starting Point changes for this month.

[Starting Point Changes](#)

Communications—Samanta Sanchez, Intern

AVA National Office is Seeking Volunteers

AVA's National Volunteer Program is still in need of volunteers. The national office is currently seeking volunteers who would like to support us in the following areas:

Data Analysts to write queries to mine the AVA's database for information to learn about and understand our members and programs. Also will gather related data to facilitate decision-making. Experience analyzing data, presenting results graphically, and SQL certification are all pluses. Hector Hernandez, the national office IT professional, leads this team.

Fund Developers to create and implement AVA fund development programs. Need good communication and interpersonal skills. Experience with nonprofit fund development, including legacy giving, major gifts, and recurring donations, donor engagement and communication, Donor Management Systems, and CFRE are all pluses. Samanta Sanchez, the national office intern, leads this team.

Convention Planners to help plan and support AVA biennial conventions. Need to be detail oriented and well organized. Experience with meeting and convention planning, willingness to travel for site visits and convention conduct, and CMP are pluses. The team lead is TBD.

As of now, we have members willing to support AVA through Data Analysis and Convention Planning. We are still in need of Software Developers and Fund Developers. However, you are more than welcome to support us in any area of your preference.

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering with the National Office, request an interest form and application from me at Samanta@ava.org. Tell us about how you would like to help and contribute to AVA's mission. Please share this with your clubs!

Stay Connected on Facebook: Open Discussions with the Executive Director

Stay connected to AVA by joining our open discussions with the Executive Director on our Facebook page. This is a great way to share your thoughts and suggestions to keep improving our beloved organization. We rotate our two monthly discussions – one during the day and one in the evening. Join us on our next open discussion being held on Tuesday, August 9 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. CT. Dennis Michele, AVA President will be joining us as our special guest. Stay tuned and don't miss out!



Help us improve our Open Discussions. If you have any suggestions as to how we can improve them or what can we do differently, please send them to Samanta@ava.org. Thank you!

Finance Manager—Erin Grosso

I would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome and all the support that I have received. I am enjoying this opportunity to support such a unique community. I met so many wonderful people at the 40th Anniversary in Fredricksburg. Thank you for sharing your beautiful stories, teaching me the history of the AVA, and for offering me the friendship that is such an important part of volkssporting.

I am working on the year-end close and preparing for the audit. I offer a special thank you to my co-workers for their support.

I'm looking forward to working and walking with the AVA!

Strategic Planning - Next Steps

The Strategic Plan was approved by the National Executive Council on June 11, 2016. The next step will be the implementation of key strategies outlined in the plan based on prioritization of organizational needs and the availability of resources.

The tasks associated with implementation of the plan have been assigned to existing committees and members of the NEC with the exception of the formation of two new ad hoc committees, the membership committee and the fund development committee. The membership committee will be Chaired by Jeanne Miller who also served as the North Central representative on the Strategic Planning Committee. The fund development committee will be Chaired by Nancy Wittenberg, Northwest Regional Director.

The Youth Committee was also renamed and restructured as the “programs committee” which will now encompass the development and enhancement of *all* AVA domestic programs to include youth and not to be confused with AVA's International and Nationwide programs which is Chaired by Susan Medlin or AVA's Special Programs which is Chaired by Bonnie Johnson. The emphasis of the programs committee will be to look at new programs for the AVA.

All AVA employees will be assigned to work with these committees throughout the implementation process.

Chairpersons of key areas of implementation of the plan include the following:

Strategic Goal 1: Mission Advancement – Key responsibilities have been assigned to the Executive Committee Chaired by Dennis Michele, the National Programs Committee Chaired by Susan Medlin, the newly formed Membership Committee Chaired by Jeanne Miller, the Programs Committee Chaired by Debbie Kruep, and the Training Committee Chaired by Sam Korff.

Strategic Goal 2: Financial Sustainability – Key responsibilities have been assigned to Nancy Wittenberg who is Chair of the Fund Development Committee and the Executive Director. Susan Medlin will also be supporting this committee.

Strategic Goal 3: Internal Operations – Key responsibilities have been assigned to the Internet Technology Committee Chaired by Frank Sayers, the Executive Committee Chaired by Dennis Michele and the Executive Director.

Strategic Goal 4: Governance & Leadership – Key responsibilities have been assigned to the Bylaws Committee Chaired by Jerry Wilson, the Standards and Evaluation Committee Chaired by Suzi Glass and the Executive Committee Chaired by Dennis Michele.

I encourage everyone to support with the implementation of our future by volunteering on one of these committees. If you are interested in volunteering or would like additional information please contact henry@ava.org.

To view the strategic plan [click here](#).



Final Number = \$53,471!

FINANCE (Unaudited Report)

At this time, we are still working on final financial statements and fiscal year end close of 2015-2016. Look for a full report in the September issue of the Checkpoint.

Support Our National and International Friends!

**Attention
Volkssporters**

You have been invited to attend and participate
in the 22nd Korea International Walking Festival



한국국제걷기대회

22nd Korea International Walking Festival

[Brochure](#)

[Invitation](#)



****Click on image to enlarge****

Photo by Ray Harper 2015 Mobile, Alabama

C.Kahl aboard John and Debbie Bright's Model "T"

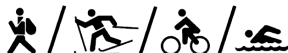
Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send us an email to the attention of Samanta requesting that you be put on our distribution list for the Checkpoint. Please note on the subject line: Request for Checkpoint.

Send your request to Samanta at intern@ava.org.



Fun, Fitness, Friendship



The American Volkssport Association

The Mission of AVA is to promote and organize noncompetitive physical fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness, and friendship for all ages and abilities.

