



## NEC News

## Important NEC Meeting Deadlines for the June 2017 Convention

### ***Call to Clubs for Agenda Items***

**April 08, 2017** (60 days before meeting): Clubs email Agenda Items to Regional Directors.

**April 18, 2017** (50 days before meeting): Agenda Items from Regional Directors due to AVA National Headquarters.

**April 23, 2017** (45 days before meeting): Final list of official Agenda Items sent to AVA Clubs and Regional Directors.

**April 23, 2017** (45 days before meeting): All submissions for the Awards Book should be submitted

**May 8, 2017** (30 days before meeting): Officer's, Regional Director's and Committee written reports are due at AVA National Headquarters, will also appear in Biennial Report (500 word limit please).

**May 17, 2017** (21 days before meeting): Meeting information package emailed to NEC members.

#### **AVA NEC Officer's Reports and Committee Reports:**

[Click here for Agenda Items Form](#)

[Click here for Officer Report Form](#)

[Click here for Committee Report Form](#)

## **AVA's Annual Fundraising Campaign – The Big Give, May 4**

Again this year on May 4, the American Volkssport Association will join San Antonio and surrounding counties in The Big Give S.A., a 24-hour day of giving, bringing donors and nonprofits together to create a shared region-wide experience and connect people to the causes that matter to them the most. In the case of AVA this is a nation-wide experience and fundraising campaign to support the continued mission of the AVA. Last year individuals, clubs and state associations came together to raise \$50,068. In addition we received \$3500 in prizes from the Big Give S.A. for a number of contests during the day. Support from the National Executive Council and our partner organizations created a \$10,000 match fund to start the campaign. This year our goal is to raise \$60,000.

Because of your support these past two years, we have completed the strategic planning process; formed committees on membership, program, fund development and publicity to begin the implementation of the plan; continued work on the new database to support clubs, individuals, and the event sanctioning process; purchased new computers for office staff so they could run the new Office 365 system; and started the transition to a new accounting system which will go live in July. All of this is a basis for truly becoming “America’s Walking Club” in the 21st century.

I’m sure all of you know the number of participants, clubs and events continues to decline. With the exception of 2015 we have finished six years out of seven with a deficit. The Big Give has helped us diversify our revenue stream.

Because I believe in AVA’s mission and have seen the results in my own life and health, I am contributing \$10,000 towards a match to begin the Big Give. I ask you to join with me and our National Executive Council on May 4, by giving online at [TheBigGiveSA.org](http://TheBigGiveSA.org) and making a contribution of at least \$25, or as much as you can afford to support AVA’s mission. Of course, if you would like to send a check to AVA that also is very much appreciated and will count toward our goal of \$60,000. Please read the *Checkpoint* and future mailings about the Big Give S.A. to explain how we can earn special prizes by going online at certain times.

With your support we can raise the money we need to show potential funders we can be successful and continue our mission to promote and organize noncompetitive physical fitness activities that encourage life-long fun, fitness and friendship for all ages and abilities.

## **Convention Chairperson—Sherry Sayers**

***You still have time to register!***

Go to <http://2017AVAConvention.org> and select the new ‘Registration’ tab. You may have to refresh the page to see it. This will take you to the information you need to register successfully for



the upcoming convention in Billings. Please read the page carefully. When ready, select to register for the full convention, or to select individual items.

Please read everything carefully. It can be a bit complicated, as I have attempted to save you some money with the registration process. Please email [Chairperson@2017AVAConvention.org](mailto:Chairperson@2017AVAConvention.org) if you encounter any issues, or have questions.

## 20<sup>th</sup> AVA Convention in Billings 2017 -- Update

Things have been settling in here on the home front. New convention activities have slowed down, but everything is coming together nicely. For example, we ordered the first batch of gAVAn, our Stepping Out of Bounds plush bear. He was just delivered to our door, and I just had to show him off. He comes with either blue or yellow writing on his red bandana, and is just as cute as we had hoped. We will put the pictures on the Registration Tab of the Convention Web Site as well (<http://2017AVAConvention.org>).



Watch the web site for the Convention Event Brochure on the Events Tab. It will be available this weekend. We will email a link to download it to those that have already registered for the convention (up over 100 so far) or are on our convention mailing list. We will work with Headquarters for some additional email lists and get them out that way. We are trying to minimize the actual number of printed copies, so we save money and help the environment. That being said, if you read this and actually **need** a printed copy, let Headquarters know and we will get one to you.

Also, watch this space and the convention web site. We are putting the final details on a surprise party on Sunday after the walk in Buffalo you will not want to miss. I know, telling you about it makes it a bit less of a surprise, but hey. This whole thing is going to be **so** worth it. Don't forget there are also three Seasonal events in Buffalo.

We still need volunteers in all categories. Anyone can do it, and you will get a 'free' T-Shirt, so make sure and go to the Volunteer Tab and check it out. That also has a link to sign up for your T-Shirt so we get the correct sizes for you.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns drop us an email at [info@2017AVAConvention.org](mailto:info@2017AVAConvention.org), or complete the Contact form on the Contact Tab of the web site. See you in June.

## Radisson Hotel Still Has Rooms For The Convention

A second block of rooms for the 2017 AVA Convention was reserved with the Radisson Hotel Billings. We have blocked room nights for June 6-9 at a discounted group rate of \$89.95++ per night. For those arriving early or departing late, the discounted rate will be honored three days prior and three days post-convention. Rooms are still available. Don't miss out!

To make your reservations: please dial 1-800-333-3333 or 406-248-7701. Make sure to mention the group block code 0606AVASSO to get your discounted rate. Stay tuned for hotel updates on Facebook

and the Convention Website.

Radisson Hotel Billings

5500 Midland Road

Billings, MT 5910

## Standards and Evaluations—Suzi Glass, Chair

### AVA Best Practices – Benefits of Club Membership

In many clubs, membership means paying dues annually, attending meetings, working at Traditional events, and adding responsibilities to already busy lives. Hmmm...doesn't make club membership such a big seller. Below are benefits clubs offer their members:

- The Tahoe Trail Trekkers hold a drawing for walking items at club meetings.
- The Freestate Happy Wanderers give an anniversary patch to members who bring a new walker to an event.
- The South Bay Striders offer coupons for reduced rates at club events.
- Kilometers from the Canadian Volkssport Federation's "Personal Walking Challenge" can be credited to IVV Distances when a person becomes a club member.
- With each New Walker Packet, the Randolph Roadrunners add free club membership for a year. The new walker/club member receives all club notices.
- State Executive Council members can receive up to \$100 reimbursement for expenses for the California Volkssport Association's annual convention.

Several clubs provide transportation to walks such as carpools from specific locations or bus transportation.

## Bike Committee—Tom Jackson, Chair

These changes to the AVA Policy Manual, affecting Volksbiking, were made at the January NEC meeting:

- a. Minimum distance for a Volksbike (10 km vice 25 km): The last IVV Congress reduced the minimum distance to 10 km and the AVA policy manual was changed to match IVV policy. Page 21 of the AVA policy manual will be changed to state "A minimum of 10 km trail is required. Clubs are encouraged to offer longer distances (recommended distance is 25 km). A shorter trail may be offered in conjunction with a longer distance trail..."



b. Extended Distance Bike Events: For the last two years, there has been a pilot program to test the concept of Extended Distance Bike Events. This is now fully approved. The sponsoring club just needs to sanction the entire

Photo submitted by Tom Jackson— "Liberty Bell Wanderers and Chester County Red Rovers at the Downingtown, PA Year Round Walk – January 28, 2017."

round trip distance of a rail trail, canal towpath, or bike path; identify a start point and provide directions for at least a 10 km route (highly recommended that the route be about 25 km with a shorter option of about 13 km); and provide the web site that provides directions to the other trail heads. Participants may take IVV credit for the distance actually biked and must pay the \$3 fee for IVV event credit for each day they ride.

The trail must be completed and off-road. If parts of the trail are under construction and it is possible to do at least a 10 km ride on a completed section, it qualifies. If the trail was constructed with a short section of the trail on-road, it qualifies. If multiple trails converge at a single point (i.e. the train station in Xenia, OH), they may be sanctioned as one event. If bike trails are in an area where there is a network of connecting trails giving the possibility of a loop ride(s) or using spurs, they may be sanctioned as one event.

c. Guided Bike Events: For the last two years, there has been a pilot program to test the concept of Guided Bike Events. This is now fully approved. "Guided Bike" events allow a club to have multiple traditional bike events when they do not expect to have enough participation to cover the sanctioning costs of normal traditional bike events. The events may be offered with the conditions explained on pages 21-22 of the AVA Policy Manual.

For additional information, contact Tom Jackson, Chairman, AVA Bike Committee, at [thomasjackson@embarqmail.com](mailto:thomasjackson@embarqmail.com).

## Programs Committee—Debra Kruep, Chair

The Program committee is looking for 5 AVA clubs who would like to participate in a pilot program for grade schools during the 2017-2018 school year. Would you like to spread walking into your favorite grade school? We are looking for clubs who have a couple of retired members who would enjoy walking with school children on school property in a before or after school program once a week. The host club would possibly host a 5K event at the end of the school year. If your club would like to take part in this pilot program, please contact the Program Committee Chair, Deb Kruep at [avayouth@ava.org](mailto:avayouth@ava.org).

Clubs, please keep in mind #optoutside (Black Friday) as you finalize your events for the year, a traditional or YRE on the Friday after Thanksgiving. Let's build on the momentum of 2016.

## South Bay Striders, President—Chris Zegelin

## The Online Start Box

This is the second of a series of articles that will help you understand the capabilities of the OLSB (Online Start Box). This article will talk about insert cards and how to handle special programs. The OLSB does not use generic AVA insert cards. The cards and stamps are computer generated.

The insert cards are pictures. This makes it easy for the computer to save and print the cards. A beautiful result can be achieved by sending the picture to any photo service (Walgreens, Costco) and printing a 4 by 6 photo. You can also download the insert card as a PDF document. This is compatible with every computer system without the need for photo handling tools. The following card has a single entry. You can collect up to 8 events on a card.

There are several features on the card that are there to maintain the integrity of the IVV awards program. Most of these features just help you avoid confusion if you are handling cards for several people. Note that each card is personalized, and is specific to a set of books. This is very important when creating cards for special programs where the stamps on the card for any one program will differ from another.

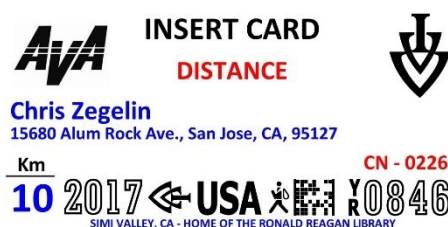
A point to note, once a card has been printed, its contents are locked and no more events can be added to that specific card. This prevents the confusion of having duplicate stamps for an event. To fill up a card with 8 events requires that you wait until the card is full before downloading and printing it.

Most people keep IVV distance and event books and the default is that those insert cards are automatically issued when you complete an event. You have the ability to set the date and the distance in the completion form, and those values are printed on the card for you. This way you do not have to remember the information, the OLSB system keeps it for you.

Special programs are separate for the IVV distance and event books. The OLSB has the ability to create cards for any special program, be it from AVA, a club, or any Volkssport organization. There are two standard lists (AVA, and existing programs), with the ability for a user to add a special program if it is not on one of the lists.

As a user, it is advisable to setup your personal list of special programs in advance of completing an event on the OLSB. This is done under 'My Account' while logged into the web site (cva4u.org). The advantage is that the completion form is much easier to fill out. Your personal list of special programs are presented first instead of having to search a list that is much larger.

The OLSB is comprehensive when dealing with insert cards. The results look good with information about the event in small type below the event stamp. We welcome ideas about how to improve the OLSB insert cards, but for now the bases are covered.



CUT OFF TO MATCH BOOKS

## ***National Special Programs—Susan Medlin, Chair***

### **The 2017 Texas Trail Roundup**

We had a wonderful weekend in San Antonio at the Texas Trail Roundup. Friday was a warm afternoon,



perfect for evening dining on the River Walk. Saturday was sunny, with a steady cold breeze that kept the walkers comfortable as they walked the Mission Reach to the World Heritage Site Spanish Missions. We had 11 walkers who completed the Marathon! On Sunday rain threatened, but the skies cleared and walkers enjoyed the Pearl Farmers Market, Breckenridge Park, Trinity University and El Mercado. Our local clubs manned 12 checkpoints and provided an endless stream of delicious food and drink. We sold 399 Start Cards, and had walkers from England, Germany, and Mexico. 13 States were represented at the event, including a group from the Freedom Festival IML event in Arlington. They are mentoring us as we work toward IML Status. It was a great start. Thanks to all for a fun weekend.

Thank you  
all for coming out to  
The Texas Trail Roundup



#### Publicity Committee—Andy Bacon, Chair

### CASTING A NET – PUBLICITY FOR CLUBS



A public relations strategy is similar to a club casting a net. Effective public relations gains exposure for your club, obtains more leads, generates more walkers and builds a great club brand in your community, it is CASTING A NET. What makes publicity so powerful for your club? CREDIBILITY!

Our communities learn about club walks through brochures or by word of mouth from members but in the context of a news story or a print feature story we achieve public relations credibility. A news report is actually more likely to move new people to walk with us than a brochure, valuable as it is. How can you make this work for you? How can you cast your net?

Here are some simple public relations rules that may help create a club plan to reach out to your community, potential walkers and club members. **First, know your market!** The more specific you become, the easier it is to identify which media you need to utilize. Be narrow in your target: is it families or couples or people over 55 or retirees? Which walking market are you seeking to join you on club trails or at traditional events?

Second, emphasize the **benefits of walking** for your potential walkers and community. Your goal is simple at this point, explain the club walks in terms of beneficial walking and you increase the chance for publication. Show your media walking improves health and expands social networks. Along with walking benefits is, third, your **uniqueness**. It is important to show how your club and AVA have distinctive advantages so that media has concrete evidence to feature your walks. Unique walks, unique events, unique record keeping, unique international relationships, unique special programs, unique social opportunities and unique walkers are just a partial list of why you might convince media that your club's walks are unique.

**Individual stories**, fourth, are an interest "grabber" in any media. The testimonial or story enhances your credibility and focuses on your benefits. Jessie from Columbus tells her story, a walking path shares its benefits, an old water tower explains its history – be creative and engaging when you use stories in your media but above all – have a definable point to make. In one sense, it is casting your net with bait – a story of interest to your target walkers.

The fifth rule is **target the media** used by your target audience. What media do they use? Do they read, do they see posters, do they listen to radio, do they have Face Book, do they use Twitter? In what ways does your target audience receive information? It should be noted stories used should place the reader in the context of the story – "I can see myself doing that!"

In many cases, you will be able to identify specific media you are targeting. Ask your local college communications professor or media experts what they recommend for reaching out to your target group. Then locate and use the key names and contact information you have found. Please, do not assume how your target audience receives its information – it is a trap easily fallen into. Ask, ask, ask your walkers and your contacts how they heard about your walk or club. Where to cast a net has increasing importance as the number of media outlets change and grow rapidly.

Sixth, engage your target audience with a **press release**. Start your release with a headline that creates interest and follows AP style guides so a journalist can (if they so choose) cut and paste your copy for their story needs. Your first paragraph should be no more than 25 words and needs to explain the headline and summarizes the story – who, what, when, where, how. Journalists spend an average of seven seconds "speed reading" the news releases they receive each day, so the first 25 words are critical. Remember, a news release is one page or less. When casting your net with a news release, consider it as an adaptable piece useful in various media contexts when applied to a new media opportunity.

The seventh rule, **marketing your release**, involves a phone call to a media person responsible for stories like yours. Let them know you have a story that may interest them and their readers. Give them the headline and the first paragraph. They'll make a decision then and there whether they like it or not. A "yes" or "maybe" means "send me an email with more information." Then, forward immediately marked clearly to their attention. Earn the right to follow up by asking if you can call back the next day or at some other specific time, depending on publication dates.

The eighth rule is to **follow up**. Call your contact when you said you would to confirm whether or not they received the information you sent and offer to provide more information if necessary. There is a fine line between being a pest or an interested party. Walk that line carefully as there





is always a “tomorrow” in media outreach. This leads to the ninth rule, **keep in contact**. If the story is of value to a media outlet, it will sell itself. All you should do is provide your contact with the convenience of more information. This is also a good way to make sure your media release gets a second look.

Finally, use a **photograph** – real people doing real walking on real trails. These photograph can literally speak a thousand words. Daily media are more photo-conscious than ever, and are more interested in photos so tell your story with relevant pictures. Electronic media easily utilizes photos sent to them with a story.

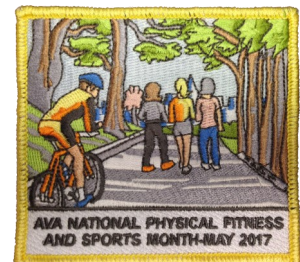
Are these rules or steps going to guarantee success with media? No. At some point casting the net is about acquiring more visibility for your club and AVA. Casting the net wide immediately increases the chance of success and builds future media relationships. So if you're looking to “jump start” your club's public relations program, consider these steps. Then, you can work to apply your "off-line" efforts to the online internet/media space--a strategy that can leverage your message in a number of ways conventional media simply cannot.

## ***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](#).

Patches are in. Please click on image to get the order form.



Deadline for the 2017 World Walking Day Certificate is April 3, 2017.

Deadline for 2017 National Physical Fitness & Sports Month Patch is April 16, 2017.

Please make sure to send in names of walkers who may have passed away since the last convention, so that they may be honored in the June convention. [karen@ava.org](mailto:karen@ava.org)

## **Special Programs**

[Click here](#) to see a list of all current and past special programs.

*Fun fact: A 20-minute walk, or about 2,000 steps, equals a mile.*

## Event Logo Update

As everyone knows our new DBA is AVA: America's Walking Club. I have added this to the Sanctioned Event logo on the website so if you do not have the updated version please go and download it.

If you do not know where it is located you can [click here](#) or you can log onto [www.ava.org](http://www.ava.org). Once you have entered the website hover over the Administrative tab, move the cursor down to General Admin, then move the cursor over to AVA Graphics/Logos and click. There you will find this logo and others.

The Brochure Templates that are listed under the Clubs tab/Clubs Only were also updated as well. You can [click here](#) to take you directly to the templates.



## Starting Point Changes

Please remember to make all changes within your ESR and then send to Hector. The website will be updated weekly. Email changes to [hector@ava.org](mailto:hector@ava.org).

*Click here for this months [Starting Point Changes](#)*

**Reminder: Please update all Club and contact info in your ESR asap to make sure you get all your important updates.**

## Communications—Samanta Sanchez

### Save the Date for the Big Give 2017!

Our annual fundraiser, the Big Give, will be taking place May 4<sup>th</sup> this year. We are super excited to participate once again in this nationwide, 24-hour day of giving! Last year, thanks to your generous donations, we surpassed our \$50,000 goal!! Your helping hand has made many new implementations possible and we couldn't be more grateful. This year, with your support, we are hoping to raise \$60,000. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, you have the opportunity to help us reach our goal by donating online through the [Big Give 2017](#).



The AVA is dedicated to make a difference in your health and wellness, help us make a difference in others by donating to the AVA: America's Walking Club. Don't forget to Save the Date!

## **Finance Manager—Erin Grosso**

### **CONVENTION 2017 – DELEGATE SELECTION AND PROXY DESIGNATION**

#### ***Credentialing:***

The 2017 Delegate Selection and Proxy Designation Forms have been mailed out to every person listed in the data base as the official POC for every club and state association. Please read this form carefully. **If you have not received this form please contact Headquarters.**

#### **Some things to keep in mind:**

1. Clubs must be in good standing to vote by April 24, 2017 which is 45 days prior to be the first membership meeting. In Good Standing means that all reports received on time including participation reports, stamps that should be returned are returned on time, and no past due amounts on club accounts owed to AVA.
2. Section D. Certification is where the club officer signs not Section E. Verification. Verification is for the Executive Director's signature.
3. A person running for a National officer or Regional Director cannot be a delegate, alternate or carry proxies.
4. The form consists of a white, yellow, and pink self-carbon form. All three must be returned to the AVA with a post mark date no later than May 8, 2017 to the address on the form. If the deadline is missed, the three copies need to be brought to the credentialing booth at the convention by the delegate, alternate, or proxy. However, the club must be in good standing as of April 24, 2017.
5. This credentialing process is required for all voting whether at the convention or by paper ballot.

**Voting Privileges:** Each National Officer, Regional Director, State Organization and Regular Member club in good standing forty-five (45) days (April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017) before the opening general session is entitled to one vote in each election and on each matter submitted to a vote of the members. The Executive Director shall have no vote.

**Delegates:** A delegate normally represents each State Organization and Regular Member Club at the General Sessions. Each State Organization and Regular Member Club designates its delegate by completing AVA Form 500, Delegate Selection and Proxy Designation, and ensures the designated delegate registers for the Biennial Convention. The AVA National Headquarters will mail the AVA Form 500 to State Organizations and Regular Member Clubs.

**Alternates:** State Organizations and Regular Member Clubs in good standing may designate an alternate to the Delegate by completing AVA Form 500 and ensuring the designated alternate registers for the Biennial Convention.

**Proxies:** State Organizations and Regular Member Clubs in good standing may vote by proxy by designating a proxy on AVA Form 500. A proxy can only be given to a person certified as a delegate for the Biennial Convention. **Candidates for AVA National Office or candidates for Regional Director may not carry proxies.**

**Responsibilities:** Delegates, alternates and proxies will present their copy of AVA Form 500 to the Credentials Committee at the convention, attend the convention participate in all general sessions and attend workshops. A club may transfer voting privileges to an alternate only in an emergency. The club should advise the delegate, alternate or proxy on voting positions for elections and other business upon which the membership might vote. Delegates should report back to the club they represent on the general sessions and workshops. **Delegates, Alternates,**

## **NOTICE OF AVA'S NEW PRIVACY POLICY ON THE COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Last June the NEC approved the creation of a Privacy Policy so that certain personal data collected by the AVA could be shared with club presidents, state association presidents and Regional Directors and used only for dissemination of information related to AVA services and activities. It is important to note this information does not include any personal financial information and anyone can opt out at any time should they not want their information shared by contacting Karen at the AVA National office or by sending an email notice that you do not want your information shared to [optout@ava.org](mailto:optout@ava.org)

It is equally important to note that if this information is misused by clubs it could result in termination of membership. AVA procedures on the release of this information will be in April Checkpoint and on our website. A copy of this policy will be mailed to all AVA Associate and Lifetime members as well as posted on the AVA website.

Please see the AVA Privacy Policy for our information sharing practices located on our website, [www.ava.org](http://www.ava.org) or you may [click here](#) to review it.

## **REMINDER - 2019 AVA Convention Application Due April 15<sup>th</sup>!**

The application for the 2019 AVA convention has been released. Any AVA club or group of clubs or state association is eligible to apply to host the 2019 convention. The deadline to submit a proposal is April 15, 2017 at midnight Central time zone. For full details [click here](#).

## **Don't forget to vote for the AVA Mascot!**

At the NEC Meeting in Arkansas January 20-21, the Regional Directors asked for additional time to circulate the nominations and receive feedback. Instead of the NEC members selecting the AVA Mascot, the Clubs will vote at the 2017 Convention during the general membership meeting. For more information contact Susan Medlin at [sw\\_rd@ava.org](mailto:sw_rd@ava.org)



AVA IVY



AVA Mills: the millipede



## **Traveling IVV Stamp for Guided Walk Events**

In January, the NEC approved of a traveling IVV stamp for guided walk events for a pilot period of two years commencing this April. The purchase of this stamp at \$75.00 per year would allow for multiple sanctioned walks during the year purchased. Unfortunately, due to the 90 day sanction policy, the ESR set up, and the 6 weeks requirement to publicize traditional events, this program will not start until July 1, 2017. To view the approved motion on the Traveling IVV Stamp for Guided Walks [click here](#).

Special thanks to Southwest Regional Director, Susan Medlin and all the AVA regional clubs for hosting the Texas Trail Round Up (future IML) walking festival in San Antonio, Texas! It was great to catch up with old friends and meet new ones! Great job and thank ya'all for joining us!

## *Support Our National and International Friends!*

### National



Click image for more information.

[Click here the call for proposals.](#)

### International



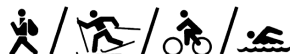
Click image for more information.

### **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 [samanta@ava.org](mailto:samanta@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.**

