



Fun, Fitness, Friendship

September 2019

www.ava.org

CHECKPOINT



IN THIS ISSUE!

Fun, Fitness, and Friendship!

World Heritage Festival	1
Accounting	1
Communications	3
Starting Point Book	3
Changes in Website	3
OptOutside	4
Publicity Update	4
Special Programs	5
Our Start Boxes	5
Club Tip of the Month	6
A Historic Perspective	6
Online Startbox Help	6

AVA National Office News

World Heritage Festival

Join us for the 4th Annual World Heritage Festival! The Tour de las Misiones 5K/10K walk will be held Saturday, September 7, 2019. If you're in the San Antonio Area, we invite you to come and walk through our San Antonio Missions, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The walk is being facilitated by the Selma Pathfinders club and it is part of the 4th Annual World Heritage Festival. Come and join the fun!

Please visit <https://www.worldheritagefestival.org/> for more information.



Accounting Specialist—Marian DeVaul

Free Walker Coupons

Effective 9-1-19, clubs no longer need to mail/scan coupons to the National office. Please continue to enter the number of free walker coupons when reporting quarterly participation; however, mailing of the physical coupon(s) is no longer required. Instead, please use the information from the coupons to reach out to the new/repeat walkers for membership recruitment.

FINANCIAL

It is time to file your 990 E-Postcard, Annual Financial Report (AFR), and update your club officers in the ESR. An IRS user guide, and the AVA Retention policy for financial and event records have been posted on the AVA website under "Clubs Only". Marian will now be processing annual club reports; please submit a copy of your filings to marian@ava.org. Thank you.

Invoices / Statements

In an effort to “Go Green” we are asking AVA club Treasurers to send an email letting us know if you would like to begin receiving your invoices and statements via email. The obvious advantage to emailing invoices and statements is the money saved on paper, print, envelopes, postage and employee costs. Further, an email eliminates the lost mail issue, provides an opportunity to store electronic files versus paper, and provides a timelier receipt of the invoice. If you would like to start receiving your invoices and statements electronically, please send an email to Marian DeVaul at marian@ava.org. If you are already receiving the documents electronically – Thank You!!

Communications— Samanta Sanchez

Become A Monthly Donor!

Our mission as America's Walking Club is to promote health and wellness through noncompetitive physical fitness activities for people of all ages and abilities. As America's Walking Club, it is important to us to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our nation. We want to be the preferred walking organization to help lower the risk of obesity in the United States. We want to reduce the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure. Through our social events, we want to reduce isolation, treat depression and enhance mental wellbeing. When you join our **Friends of America's Walking Club Sustained Giving Program**, you're joining a special group of people dedicated to helping others live a longer healthier life. Be part of the change and become a monthly donor by visiting <https://ava.charityproud.org/Donate/?cid=2471>.

Share Your Adventures with Us!

Ever hiked the Appalachian Trail or walked the trail leading to the Crazy Horse monument? We are asking our AVA family to submit video footage of their adventures during any AVA event. We are looking for the adventure in nature element. With your consent, we would like to use this type of video footage in future marketing materials. Please submit your video files to the Dropbox link provided. <https://www.dropbox.com/request/Ok4wQlgiuHmxj3sPzhGX?oref=e>

By submitting your video files to Dropbox, you have given the AVA consent to use your content for marketing purposes.



Last Call!

Remember clubs have until September 15, 2019 to enter events. Regional Director's have until September 30 to review their region's events. If your club sanctions a YRE or seasonal after September 30, it will not appear in the 2020 Starting Point Book.

⬇ ⬇ ⬇ **Important Deadline** ⬇ ⬇ ⬇

Starting Point Pre-Order Form

The deadline to pre-order Starting Point Books is September 30, 2019. No book orders will be accepted after deadline.

[Click here for form.](#)

Changes in the Website

Since we have moved to a new server there have been some changes. Please note the link change from ava.org to clubs.ava.org.

Old

http://ava.org/gen3/data/year_round_events_listings.asp?StShortName=TX

New

http://clubs.ava.org/gen3/data/year_round_events_listings.asp?StShortName=TX

Changes in Events

Now that we have updated the event listing, we have received emails on not being able to print full page. I believe you can get a nice print out using landscape with a scale of 100%. Linked below is a pdf created by printing from a Chrome browser with these settings. I have also linked a landscape printout but with scale setting of "Shrink to Fit" so that you may see the difference.

[100% Landscape](#)

[Shrink to fit landscape](#)

Awards & Membership—Karen Winkle

PROCESSING BOOKS

Just a quick reminder for everyone. I am to process a book for each level of Events and Distances. The insert cards are for when you may have forgotten your book to be stamped. You should write in your book "see insert card".

The Distance books were designed with 10k walks in mind. If you do mostly 5k's now, you will need to attach the inserts to the book to reach your level.

If you have questions, always feel free to give me a call about your books.



Photo submitted by Kathy Nash for 2018 Starting Point book photo contest .—Elkmont Group

AVA Process for Submitting Event/Distance Books Electronically

Walkers need to scan books and submit to Karen Winkle via email: karen@ava.org

All books must meet following guidelines in order to be processed electronically:

- Front of the book must be complete to include name, address, phone number and email.
- Member should indicate in the email whether they wish to receive patches, pins or certificates.
- The entire book must be scanned
- Green and Purple books will scan properly on an 8.5"x11" page.
- Rose books must be copied front and back and only two columns per page. (If the copy is reduced it is often too small to read.)
- Pins, patches and Certificates will be mailed as usual.

NOTE: This electronic process of scanning & processing books does not include the Achievement Record Books. These books must be mailed to the AVA at 1001 Pat Booker Rd Ste. 101, Universal City, TX 78132 Attention: Karen Winkle.

AVA's Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales



#OptOutside - November 29, 2019 (Year #4)

The OptOutside campaign was an initiative created by REI four years ago. The goal was to get people engaged in outdoors exercise the day after Thanksgiving instead of spending time indoors shopping (Black Friday). The AVA has participated in this campaign the past 3 years by asking clubs to host a group walk or traditional event on this date. In return for our participation, REI has helped market all events on their website and Twitter and allowed us to use their hashtag, #OptOutside. I have been informed REI will no longer run this campaign. However, they still encourage people to stay active outside and will allow us to use their hashtag (#OptOutside) should we still want to host walking events the day after Thanksgiving.

This year in spite of no involvement from REI we are encouraging clubs to continue with this initiative because of the success our clubs have had over the past 3 years getting people to come walk with us as well as the awareness it generates for the AVA. Last year we had 47 clubs host events that attracted 573 participants. Of these participants 31 were first timers!

If your club has never participated, we invite you to host a traditional event or a group walk at your favorite YRE the day after Thanksgiving. A group walk only takes one person willing to lead a group. If you are a club returning to host an event, welcome back and thank you!

Please send your information to Hector at hector@ava.org by October 7th to be included on the #OptOutside section of the AVA website and do not forget to advertise your event in your local area! OptOutside club events will also be featured on the AVA Facebook page. Anyone searching Facebook looking for #OptOutside events will find the AVA Facebook page and learn about our events. Lastly, the AVA will waive the sanction fee for all Traditional events hosted on November 29th, 2019. It's that easy to contribute! [Click here](#) for #OptOutside event form.

Publicity Committee Update

The Publicity Committee has been working with Mass Media, our marketing consultant on three objectives: brand awareness, event participation, and national partnerships. Brand awareness includes the development of new unified event marketing collateral to include the creation of a new AVA logo and a marketing video. Event participation will include marketing support, primarily through social media, for the following three events: 18th Annual US Freedom Walk Festival, October 2019, Way of Lights Walk, November 2019 and Texas Trail Roundup, February 2020. More events may be added to this list as funding allows. National partnerships will include the development of value proposition and identification of 5 national partners that align with the mission of the AVA. All work is expected to be completed by December 2020.

2019 Convention a Huge Success!

I am honored to announce the 2019 Convention generated over \$46,000 in net profit for the AVA! This could not have been possible without the leadership of the Co-Chairs Teresa Kennedy and Lea Darling and the support of all club members, volunteers and the AVA Board of Directors. Thank you! The stage has been set for Madison, Wisconsin in 2021!

AVA New Website is Coming!

Work is underway on the development of a new AVA website! The goal is to have the new website fully functional by the end of the year. More details to follow by the IT committee in the October Checkpoint.

AVA Special Programs Has a New POC

If you are interested in submitting an AVA Special Program to the Board for approval the new point of contact is Tim Miner. Please contact him for submission requirements and deadlines. Congratulations Tim for chairing the AVA Programs Committee.

She can be reached at programs@ava.org.

Special thanks to Bonnie Johnson for her many years of service to the AVA coordinating our Special Programs. We wish her and her “football team” the best!

NEC and Committee Updates

Club Development & Support Committee—John McClellan, Chair

Our Start Boxes

In America’s Walking Club, we have 1,517 start point locations for 1,893 YRE/SE with either walk boxes, remote or OSB registration. [2019 Starting Point book] There are 144 events in the OSB and 45 “remote” start events (mail-in).

All these events start/finish at some local business, national or regional chain, county or municipal facilities, state and national parks and even 18 events that are hosted at someone’s private residence. The take-away: *We have partners that we don’t realize.*

TYPE	#
Hotels / Motels / Resorts	457
Misc. local businesses	204
Grocery / Market	177
Gas / Convenience Store	129
Fast Food / Restaurants	127
Gym / Fitness	104
Coffee Shops	95
Drug Store / Pharmacy	41
Nature P / Arboretums	29
Sports Venues / Golf Course	18
Apts/Condo or Asst Lv	12
Malls (in general)	9
Parking Facilities	7
RV Parks	4

TYPE	#
State Parks, inc. trails	90
National Parks, inc. AT/PCT	53
Visitor’s B / Chamber of C	93
Parks & Recreation	60
Community Centers	32
Gov/Municipal (Fire, Pol)	20
Airport / Train	4
Museums / Hist or cultural	40
Libraries	35
Hospitals / Medical	33
Nature P / Arboretums	29
Private Residences	18
Military Bases	2

After looking more closely at this summary and some of the underlying data about specific corporate businesses or non-profit / government associations, there are some real possibilities to develop these existing partners into a fuller relationship.

- ✓ YMCA. Top choice from this analysis for a national relationship. We have 64 events hosted in 45 locations in their system, in 21 state and all 10 AVA regions.
- ✓ The National Parks System – 53 event start locations that also include major trail networks such as the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails. Parks have many programs we can partner on, and, these major trails are directly supported by a network of clubs, not too different than ours. Their members could be future AVA participants!
- ✓ State Parks – 93 locations including some regions trail networks.
- ✓ CHOICE, Best Western, Holiday Inn, Wyndham, Hilton and Marriott hotels. One/more of these major hoteliers could be a good partner to approach with a sponsorship offer.

How can we use this information?

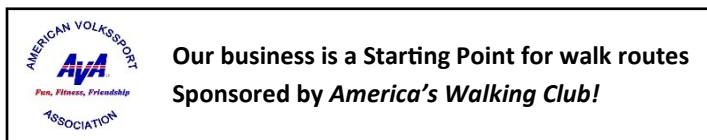
- In our advertising and literature
- In our elevator speeches and as an entre' to potential partners
- When deciding on who to seek as a sponsor/partner or vendor
- When deciding on a new start point, or a change of start point location

Your Start Boxes ...a club multiplier!

How many of our 1,517 start point locations have a visible sign that they are associated with *America's Walking Club*?? Fortunately, the AVA has just the thing for any club to solve this:

The clings are the “old school” solution and a great solution for some locations, but here’s the **21st century version**: how many of our 1,517 start point locations have a link on their host’s website / FB, etc. that promotes *America's Walking Club* by linking back to the AVA??

Try this!



Window Cling—\$1

Triangle on clear background, white with red trim



Try proposing to one/more of your hosting businesses to establish a “hotlink” back to your club or the AVA, using this graphic, or, one of your own design.

Club Tip of the Month

Pictures are worth a thousand words... post a picture of an attractive part of your upcoming event on your google page (yes, you can google your club, take ownership of it and add pictures, website, etc.). Post pictures on your meetup page, facebook page, website.....

Make sure your Facebook page and website are up to date. If someone finds you and your website hasn't been updated in months, they will never find your walks.

For more info on google pages, contact Sandy Spaulding, spldngs@aol.com

See you on the trails!

Training Development Committee—Tom Baltes, Chair

A Historic Perspective

For a little over 43 years America's Walking Club (AVA) has been making history, starting with the first walk in Fredericksburg, TX on 12-13 June 1976. Many of our community's challenges today stem from decisions made during our past; some good and some that

could have been better. As in all endeavors, much can be learned from our history to improve the decisions we make moving forward. One of our enterprising alumni, Dr. Charlene Agne-Traub wrote a comprehensive history chronicling our activities from 1976 to 1989. You can review that history under the “About Us” tab on the AVA website (www.ava.org) and I encourage all our board members, club and state leaders, and all who want to shape our future to refresh yourselves on that history. For example, below are some interesting bits of information you can find in our early history. The first year round event (YRE) started in 1979 in Fredericksburg, TX as a pilgrimage event for those who wanted to reprise the course of our first walk. Traditional Events were the bedrock of AVA activity and key activity for clubs in the early years. Early on YREs were limited and even by 1988 our national leadership limited our program to only 1 per state. The large scale use of YREs, leading up to our nearly 1900 YREs today, didn’t occur until much later in our history. Club growth was rapid in the early years, with 17 by 1979, 72 in 1981, 328 in 1985 and the Tough Trail Trompers of OR became #600 in 1988. By comparison, we’re at 216 clubs today. AVA moved to Universal City, TX in 1981 and the first full-time employee was hired in 1983, but I couldn’t discern the staff development beyond that from the history. One of our most distinguished Americans to walk with us was Lady Bird Johnson with her daughter during the 1979 event in Fredericksburg. Our region structure evolved from 4 to 9 and then 10 regions by 1989 and has apparently not changed since then. Fees have changed over the years and one interesting turning point I noted was in 1989 when clubs were no longer assessed a \$.05 participation fees for those who weren’t paid participants (free walkers); only IVV credit and Award participant were to pay the new \$.25 fee to AVA. Interestingly, like all Volkssporting countries, AVA started by requiring payment from all registrants or participants. The notion that the participation fee was associated with stamping books for credit was a divergence from the early history, which would be an interesting decision to better understand. It occurs to me that it would be exceptionally useful to have our history brought forward from 1989 to the present, as it is all waiting to be uncovered in our national records and we have a lot of history to make yet. Are you able to help or know someone who could help update our history? Contact our Executive Director if this is a project you’d consider.

OSB HelpDesk and Customer Support – Darrell Neily

Welcome to My.AVA.org, new home of the On-line Start Box (OSB)

My.AVA Fun, Fitness, and Friendship Login

[Home page](#) [AR code](#) [Login](#) [New Account](#) [Find a ...](#)

Welcome to myAVA

Welcome to 'MyAVA'; your personal access to the operations side of the AVA. This web site is dedicated to helping you get the most out your experience as we add features and give you access to more information. This site will start out fairly light as volunteers work to improve it and add functionality.

If you are active in Volkssporting, we encourage you to create an account. It is free. If you manage a club, or an event, you will need an account. If you intend to participate in an event that is hosted on the Online Start Box (OSB) then an individual account and digitally signed waiver is required.

If you are viewing this on a mobile device in portrait mode, the information is displayed as a single long column. Navigate with the usual three-bar menu icon in the banner at the top right.

To learn how to use this site, help is just a click away. Most pages have a Help button in the upper right corner. Click on the "Find a ..." tab, then click the "FAQ" tab for frequently asked questions and their answers. For some screens, there are pop-up guidance and warnings. You can click on the "Contact Us" button in the lower right corner of any page to comment or ask questions about the features of this site.

There will be other features added as time permits. We will announce those through the available channels.

A note about pictures. All pictures are cropped and resized to fit on this web site. The size is 450px by 450px. This is a reasonable size without taking too long to load, but the crop often will drop detail or people from the original.

American Volkssport Association © 2019 Aug 22nd, 2019 - 5:21pm GMT [Privacy Policy](#) [Legal](#) [Contact us](#)

As of July 2019, the On-line Start Box has moved to the new My.AVA.org website. We are working to make it as user friendly as we’re able. Many screens have a HELP button that provides context-sensitive guidance for the page you are on. Frequently Asked Questions and Answers are available from any place on the site. All screens have a Contact Us button for users to ask questions or provide comments, to which the HelpDesk will respond usually the same day. The site has pop-up screens and warnings which are especially helpful for new users. Try us out soon at my.ava.org. You can always contact the HelpDesk at osbhelp@ava.org.

Support Our National and International Friends

National



*Thank you
to our sponsors!*



Albany County Convention and
Visitors Bureau Fund

the
**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
FOR THE GREATER CAPITAL REGION

The AVA appreciates the support of The Michele L. Vennard Hospitality Grant Program of the Albany County Convention and Visitor's Bureau Fund, a fund of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region.



TATER TOURS
<https://taterstours.blogspot.com>



20 years strong
**AMERICA
WALKS**



Click on image for more information

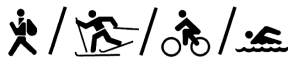


Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send your request to Hector at hector@ava.org. Please note on the subject line: Request for Checkpoint.

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.



1001 Pat Booker Road, Suite 101 · Universal City, TX 78148, Phone 210.659.2112 · Fax 210.659.1212 avahq@ava.org / ava.org