



VOLUME 29, NUMBER 5



AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

May 2020

www.ava.org

CHECKPOINT



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Fun, Fitness, and Friendship!

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David Bonewitz, Ph.D.—AVA National President

Message from President. – April 24, 2020

Dear AVA Club Presidents and Officers,

At the March 17, 2020, Electronic Board Meeting the AVA Board of Directors unanimously agreed to immediately suspend all AVA Traditional events through April 30th, 2020, due to COVID-19. In addition, the Board recommended that all club related events to include group walks, meetings, social gatherings, etc. be postponed through April 30th, 2020.

As the Nation begins looking to a return to normal, at the Electronic Board Meeting on April 21, 2020, [the Board of Directors unanimously agreed to rescind this suspension effective May 1, 2020 with stipulations.](#) Based on the recommendations of the National Coronavirus Recovery Commission, the Board sees the return to normal AVA activities to be approved on a Regional basis. Each Regional Director will advise their Region when they are prepared to begin approving sanction requests. However, clubs should recognize that even within Regions there may be different timelines with regard to returning to some form of business as usual. **Clubs should listen to and follow the directions of State, Local and Federal authorities on local circumstances surrounding rules and guidelines for returning to normal as we continue to battle the COVID-19 virus. We expect that social distancing, wearing of masks and gloves, and limitations on the size of gatherings will continue on a regional, state, and local level. Regional Directors will be asking clubs if they are following those guidelines as they look to approve sanction requests.**

While this has been a very disruptive time in the life of our clubs and AVA, as we return to some form of "normal," this may present us with an excellent opportunity to make a positive impact on our communities. There is every indication that COVID-19 has caused many people to seek ways to improve the quality of their health. Clubs should look at this as an opportunity for attracting new participants as we know the mental and physical benefits of walking, biking, and swimming are just what people need.

The Board had previously determined that Traditional events that were rescheduled during the 2020 calendar year would not require an additional sanctioning fee. We recommend that all clubs try and reschedule postponed Traditional events, already sanctioned and paid for, within this calendar year. There is no waiver of a processing fee for YRE and Seasonal events because the processing fees make up fifty percent of the forty-dollar (\$40) sanction fee. The National Office will delay billing of the processing fees (sanction fees) for YRE's and Seasonals if requested. Please contact Marian at the National Office should you have any concerns.

From left to right, Doug Eide with Dolly, Gayle Weinraub, and Martin Callahan with Rudy stop for a picture in front of the Gazebo on the trail along W. San Antonio Ave. through Main Plaza. —Photo submitted by Martin Callahan.



If a Traditional event was CANCELLED or cannot be rescheduled for whatever reason, clubs should submit a request to their RD indicating why they could not reschedule the event this year or why it was cancelled. The RD will present this to the National Office who would make the call whether or not to grant a credit for a 2021 sanctioned Traditional event. Just to be clear the National Office is giving a credit for Traditional events already sanctioned and paid for but did not happen in 2020.

In addition, there is some discussion over asking sponsors of Special Programs to extend their end of program dates by 6 months to allow participants time to make up for missed opportunities to participate in qualifying events. A decision on this will be made at the next Electronic Board Meeting on May 19.

COVID-19 has had a significant adverse impact on the budget of AVA as it has with so many small and large businesses. We have taken and will continue to take actions to keep AVA afloat. An example of this was the cancellation of the in-person Board Meeting that was to have been held in July which will save AVA \$10,000. In place of that in-person meeting will be an extend Electronic Board Meeting. Another example was the decision to close the National Office on Fridays to cut back on personnel expenses. In addition to cost-saving efforts, the National Office has taken action to apply for various grants and forgivable loan programs for which AVA may be eligible. All of this is to ensure that you know that at the national level we are doing everything we can to weather the COVID-19 storm. You can help by contributing to The Big Give which is on-going until September.

It is important that we continue to take action to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Your club members are the most valuable part of AVA: America's Walking Club and many are in one of the very vulnerable populations for COVID-19. It is critical that we do what we can to keep everyone healthy.

Stay Safe and Healthy So You Can Keep Walking.

David Bonewitz, PhD

President



Board and Committee Deadlines

Important Deadlines - July 2020 AVA National Board Meeting Update

Due to the adverse impact on AVA finances as a result of the COVID-19 virus, the AVA President has decided to **change** the scheduled "in person" meeting this July to an electronic meeting on the Microsoft TEAMS platform. Although the times have not been confirmed he has asked that board members keep the current dates and times blocked until the April board meeting when this can be discussed with all board members.

The July AVA Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for July 10-12, 2020. (Exact dates and times to be determined.)

Call to Clubs for Agenda Items

May 11, 2020 (60 days prior to meeting)

Agenda items from Clubs, NEC Officers and Regional Directors are due to the AVA President, please email to president@ava.org and copy henry@ava.org

[Click here for Agenda Items Form](#)

May 26, 2020 (45 days prior to meeting)

NEC meeting agenda is sent out to the Regional Directors.

June 10, 2020 (30 days prior to meeting)

All reports, with support documents, from Officers, Regional Directors, and Committee Chairs are due to the National Office. Email reports to henry@ava.org



SAY CHEESE!



22ND AVA BIENNIAL CONVENTION
MADISON, WI | JUNE 26 - JULY 3, 2021

Please be sure to take the survey in link below to better your Convention experience. Click image to view our new 2021 AVA Convention page for all you news, updates on events and registration information.

[Click here](#) for Convention survey.

C-19 Walking Masks



Cotton and Poly-Cotton Blend

2 Layers Non-Medical

1 Mask for \$9.75 or 2 Masks for \$17.50

(You save \$2.00)

Limited Supply

To order and prepay contact Marian at the National Office

marian@ava.org (210) 659-2112

[Click here](#) for order form.

[Click here for Officer Report Form](#)

[Click here for Committee Report Form](#)

June 19, 2020 (21 days prior to meeting)

NEC meeting packet with Agenda and all support documents are sent out to Officers and Regional Directors.

Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales



Safe Practice Recommendations for AVA Events



The AVA Board of Directors has approved the reopening of AVA events effective May 1, 2020. This means clubs may conduct events but only if they are following all Federal, State, and Local restrictions and guidelines AND the Regional Direction has approved of the event(s). In addition, the AVA recommends the following event guidelines to ensure the safety of everyone. Clubs may decide to incorporate additional guidelines and best practices as they see fit or as recommended by their Regional Director.

The AVA has put together the following as a set of safe practice recommendations for clubs hosting AVA events:

- The club or state organization hosting an event should continue to implement social distancing (6 ft apart) and health safety practices consistent with state / county / local guidelines in your area and where the walks will take place
- Advise members who feel sick or display flu-like symptoms NOT to attend events
- Organizers should coordinate the start/finish points ahead of time
- Have a plan in place if more than the limit of participants (based on restrictions of your area) show up to walk
 - A suggestion could be to establish a RSVP process and a maximum attendance limit for the event or for each group
- Modify registration procedures; suggestions for this:
 - Volunteer workers wear masks/gloves (at start point & checkpoint)
 - Limit the number of volunteers in one area to two people
 - Spacing participants in lines as they wait to register
 - Having one or two volunteers dedicated to directing social distancing
 - Participants bring their own pens
 - Sanitizing all surfaces (rubbing alcohol 70%-90% could be used for this if there are no other sanitizers available for purchase)
- Have participants wear face masks and/or gloves (at checkpoints & finish area)
 - If possible, have a supply of gloves on-site and/or encourage participants to bring their own
- Stagger participants at the start point
- Have participants practice social distancing on their walk as much as possible
- If possible, provide hand sanitizer (at start point & checkpoint) and/or make participants aware of restrooms for hand washing near the walk
- Let participants know ahead of time how safety practices will be handled for each walk
 - Suggestions for this can be to include information on how you will operate regarding COVID-19 into your event brochure
 - Use your club newsletters, event flyers, event brochures, website, e-mail blasts and/or social media to reinforce new guideline expectations for your volunteers and your participants.
- If possible, have individual bottles of water available for participants and/or advise participants to bring their own water bottles
- Advise the participants to bring exact change as another way to minimize contact

Publicity Committee Update-NEW Event Marketing Flyers!

All club POC's should have received an envelope containing AVA stickers with the new logo. Fee free to use these stickers on walk boxes and anywhere else needed. If you did not receive your stickers or you would like additional ones please contact Hector at hector@ava.org.

The Publicity Committee has completed design work on **New** event flyer templates clubs can easily download and use to personalize with event information. On some of the templates the picture is editable so you can customize it with one of your own. Also, all information fields are editable so clubs can enter specific event information. The one filed that is Not editable is the AVA logo and the footer. This is intentional to help us create a National brand for the AVA. The new location for all new marketing tools will be on the AVA website clubs only tab/New Publicity Toolkit. As we develop new marketing tools they will be deleted from the legacy website and added to the new AVA website.

[Click here](#) to check out which template works best for your event needs!

Note: These are templates of event flyers clubs can use to market their events in public places like grocery stores, coffee shops and retail stores. We recommend clubs use these flyers to promote their events instead of club brochures because they are more appealing to the public and easier to understand. These marketing flyers do not replace the event brochure. We are currently working on a new version of the event brochure. It should be released this summer.

Finance Director—Erin Grosso

Club Treasurers - 1st Quarter Participation Reporting

Due to COVID-19 and the lack of access to many of our walk boxes, we will need to adjust our quarterly reporting requirements for the 1st Quarter 2020. With requests “to stay in place”, “maintain social distance”, and restrictions put on non-essential businesses, I believe that we are all doing the very best that we can do. While we absolutely appreciate clubs that can file their reports doing so as quickly as possible; we certainly understand that there will be some clubs that simply cannot get access to their walk boxes. Our solution is to have clubs report based on checks or payments that they have already received and/or estimate the number of participants. It may be helpful to look at last year’s number of event participants to come up with an estimate for this year. These estimated numbers can then be adjusted to actual numbers as we are able to get out to walk boxes. Any credits or additional charges will be processed as quickly as we are notified by clubs. There will be no late fees charged for first quarter reporting. The goal is to work together to maintain the success of the AVA and all our clubs, to support one another, and hope that we can get back to our business of walking and maintaining our health.

Communications— Samanta Sanchez

Today We Are Grateful For...

Practicing gratitude is a simple skill with many benefits. Studies have shown that practicing gratitude can help increase your health. A study conducted by Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at University of California-Davis concludes that, “Gratitude is good medicine. Clinical trials indicate that the practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person’s life. It can lower blood pressure and improve immune function ... grateful people engage in more exercise, have better dietary behaviors, are less likely to smoke and abuse alcohol, and have higher rates of medication adherence.” Not only can gratitude help improve your health, but it can

help you cope during these difficult times. Take a minute today to think of three things you are grateful for. Today, the AVA National Office is grateful for: another day of life and health, our volkssporting community, and our Big Give supporters. Thanks to our generous donors, the AVA has raised \$50,886.95! #keepAVAonitsfeet #spreadkindnessnotthevirus

Have You Made Your Reservations Yet?

We still have a little over year to go, but rooms are already being booked at the beautiful Madison Concourse Hotel, located in the heart of downtown Madison. The AVA has blocked room nights for June 29 – July 3 at a discounted group rate of \$129 + tax per night (limit 2 people per room). Rates increase to \$139 for three guests per room night and \$149 for four guests per room night. Breakfast will be complimentary for AVA guests staying at this hotel Wednesday through Saturday only (limit of two complimentary breakfast per room). Additional breakfast can be purchased for \$8.00 per person. Parking for overnight guests is discounted at \$8 per night and will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Complimentary airport shuttle is included with your stay, along with a spectacular view of downtown Madison. To make your reservations please dial (800) 356-8293 and ask for the AVA 2021 Biennial Convention block to get the discounted rate or make your reservations online by visiting <https://reservations.travelclick.com/6388?groupID=2812872>. The Madison

Monona Terrace Community Convention Center From Lake



Check out our latest video on our YouTube Channel. Click image above to view.



Concourse Hotel is the place to stay when visiting Wisconsin, don't miss out on this great rate!

The Madison Concourse Hotel
One West Dayton St.
Madison, WI 53703

Convention workshops and the General Membership meeting will be hosted in the Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center located at One John Nolen Drive, Madison, WI 53703, just a short walk from the convention hotel.

A Call to All Bus Tours Attending the 2021 AVA Convention

As you know, our 2021 AVA Convention is nearing, and we want to make sure we have ample rooms reserved for everyone. In previous conventions, we've had tour companies reserve a block of rooms in the host hotel for their tour groups. Tour companies are welcome to do the same this upcoming convention. If you are interested in reserving a block of rooms for your group, please send an email to samanta@ava.org for more information.

AVA Convention Committee —Jerry Wilson, Chair

2021 AVA Biennial Convention - Tentative Schedule

Please [click here](#) for a tentative schedule of events leading up to and through the 2021 AVA Biennial Convention slated for Madison Wisconsin. There may be changes, but things are firming up the more we talk through the process.

Awards and Recognition Committee—Carl Cordes, Chair

Nominations

With my recent appointment as Chair of this committee, I am seeking volunteers from across the AVA nation that would like to serve with me. We are responsible for coordinating and implementing procedures that facilitate the nomination and distribution of awards for clubs, individuals and organizations through the National Executive Council and Executive Director. The committee works in partnership using email and electronic meeting sessions, if needed. Please email me at pa_rd@ava.org if interested and include a brief summary of positions you may have held at club, state or national level.

The awards program is designed to recognize and honor those that have made significant contributions to furthering the AVA mission. The AVA Policy Manual, section 3, details national and regional awards, procedures, and approvals. Now is the time to consider who deserves to be nominated for national awards that will be presented during the AVA Biennial Convention in Madison, Wisconsin, June 26-July 3, 2021. Nominations must be received by your Regional Director no later than November 1, 2020 to be considered in this cycle. Review the [Guide for Nominations](#) for help with the nomination process. Regional level awards include the Meritorious Service Award, the Commendable Service Award, and the Certificate of Appreciation Award. For additional help with awards and nomination requirements contact your Regional Director.

IT Committee—Mike Green, Ph.D., Board Liason

Creating a my.ava.org "Club Connection"

In general folks who enter/edit the clubs event info should have a personal my.ava.org account and use the Club Connection feature to access club specific features on my.ava.org since the use of direct login to my.ava.org using club credentials will soon be abandoned in 2021.

In particular, the new my.ava.org Stamp Image PDF feature can only be accessed via, my.ava.org "Club Connection" feature after logging into a my.ava.org personal account. Here are the steps to add a "Club Connection" to a personal my.ava.org account:

1. You need to have previously created a personal account on my.ava.org.
2. Login to your personal account.
3. Click on the "My Profile" tab. This will display the "My Connections" page.
4. Enter your club's ESR login credentials in the "MANAGE A CLUB / CLUB EVENTS" section of this page. Below is an image of this section on the My Connections page.

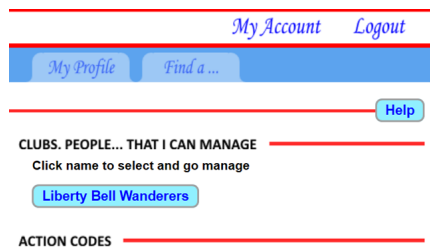
MANAGE A CLUB / CLUB EVENTS

Use this form to gain access to a club account and club events. Enter the legacy club ESR login and password. You need only do this once. The club name will appear under 'CLUBS, PEOPLE... THAT I CAN MANAGE' on your 'My Account' home page as a clickable link to the club home page. A club login is then no longer required.

club login ID

Password

[Give me club management access](#)



5. After entering the club login ID (username) and password, click "Give me club access". A pop-up message will appear indicating success or failure.
6. Notice a new button has been created under "CLUBS. PEOPLE... THAT I CAN MANAGE" on the account Status page (displayed after logging in).
7. Here is what such a button looks like after doing the above procedure for a particular club (Liberty Bell Wanderers)

8. This new button will remain part of your personal account configuration and thus be available for use upon subsequent logins.
9. Clicking on a "Club Connection" button takes the user to the club's home page on my.ava.org. Feel free to click on any of the tabs on club's my.ava.org interface to explore the features available to clubs.

my.AVA.org developer—Chris Zegelin



Development continues with a set of new features. Some you may be familiar with the Online Start Box (OSB) but others are very new. The IT team is trying to balance new features against the need to retire the legacy ESR system. These new features are leading us in that direction, but there is a tremendous amount of work still to be done.

The legacy ESR is now over 15 years old and has served us well. It continues to function while we develop a replacement on "my.AVA.org". The new features are additions to your event sanctions, just as the OSB is an addition to your sanction. Please explore what is there; we are open to suggestions, and certainly want to know about anything that you find confusing.

We are slowly moving away from a club login to a personal login. Club logins have poor security. Please take the time to create a personal account and add a link to your club account on the system. From your personal home page, "My Account", click "My Profile", then "My Connections". Scroll down to "LEGACY CONNECTION" and enter a club login (ID and password). If it matches, a club link button will appear on your "My Account" home page. This link is permanent and clicking it will take you to the club home page. You can manage as many clubs as you need; there is not a limit.

From the "Club Home" page, click the "Sanctions" tab to see a list of your club's sanctions. Here you will find 5 additional tabs that enhance your sanctions. Have a look, explore; you can see what is possible before deciding to use a feature.

- ⇒ "Status" – This allows you to add a status message to your sanction without messing with the sanction itself. These messages are bright and very visible emergency messages about the sanction that appear on the sanction lists and the sanction view. Things like a traditional event being postponed, or a start box moving. There is no approval needed to add a message.
- ⇒ "Sell It" – Provides a way to add marketing material to the sanction. An 'elevator' pitch that will appear on all public sanction lists can tell people why they should do your event. A brochure can be added, even for YREs and Seasonal events. Finally you can add up to 4 pictures that are visible as a slide show when someone is looking at your event. Idea: Take a picture of the place for a special program that is a draw for your event.
- ⇒ "Location" – The system will use the web to find a rough location for your event based on the city and state, and perhaps the start point address. Many start points do not resolve well, so the location found can be off by miles. The location tab allows you to correct this so that the map based search provides an accurate location. This page will be enhanced to later provide remote start, multiple start points, and preferred parking information.
- ⇒ "Stamps" – The new stamps are a roaring success, but did you know that you can edit the text that appears on the stamp? Did you know that you can now create a sheet of cut and paste stamps for someone missing a stamp? Both are available on this page. The "Edit" is available up to the time the stamp is queued for the laser cutter, then it is locked. The "Image" button takes you the 'cut and paste' stamps, but you must access the system using a personal login to use this feature. It is perfect for mail in registration or emergency stamps for people missing them. Much better than insert cards.
- ⇒ "OSB" – Many clubs now have one or more events on the OSB. It hosts about 10% of the YRE and Seasonal events. This page allows you to place your sanction into the OSB system. You upload your directions PDF, and request approval. We are working to make the system simple to use. It used to be a bit complicated.

The "event-view" page has been enhanced to provide a better experience for the club webmaster. For those who do not know, this is a web page specifically designed to be added to your club web site to manage how people find your events. It automatically provides the latest information with no scrambling to keep the club web site up to date. There is a tutorial on how to use this at "https://my.ava.org/find-a-tutorial.php?add_sanction".

The next body of work on the system will be on HQ and club management pages. These are not visible to most of you, but without them, many of the next wave of features will not be possible.

Cows Out Volkswalking Inside D'parks – 19 + 1

Hello Walk Buddies!! How's everything with you? I'm fine, happy to have plenty of TP and no Covid-19 so far. I'm enjoying a lovely spring here in Iowa; we've had great weather with warm, sunny days. Perfect for walking. Our 20 state park walks program kicked off May 1 without any special event. The parks are open, but currently the park facilities (think **restrooms**, camp grounds & play grounds) are not. I'm staying in my pasture right now, but understand from the wonderful and super helpful rangers and park managers, the walk boxes are in place and ready for walkers. I've also been told the wildflowers are utterly awesome this year. I hope to maybe see them before too long. I don't know about you, but I'm getting a little claustrophobic in my barn and pasture. I'd love to get out and get moooving. Pretty soon!!



We've postponed all group events for now. We hope to reschedule some of our group activities for later this summer or fall. I hope once it's safe to be out and about, I'll get to catch up with some of you on the trails. However, for the time being, travel is not advised, you should keep your distance and wash your hands often. These are definitely unique times for all of us, but we're all in this together. We are making it through and keeping ourselves and others safe and disease free.

Watch The American Wanderer and The Checkpoint for more information on the Walk 20 Parks in 2020 program. For updated information as the situation changes, visit the Iowa's Walking Club website, iowaswalkingclub.org or the Nebraska Trailblazers website, netrailblazers.club. Also, for the latest information of the parks, check out the Iowa DNR web site, www.iowadnr.gov. Questions – walk20in20@gmail.com.

Support Our National and International Friends



International

October 29—November 2, 2021 17th IVV Olympiad
Seoul, Korea 2021
Click on images to enlarge.
[Click here for more information.](#)

National



The BHVA club has cancelled the Spring Crazy Horse Volksmarch due to Covid-19. The club will make a decision on the Autumn Crazy Horse walk by August 26.

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.

Reminder: The National Office is closed at 1:30pm every first Friday of the month for employee development.



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 [Message US](#)