

General Membership Meeting Minutes
Convention Center, Las Cruces, New Mexico
Wednesday, April 30, 2025, and Friday, May 2, 2025

Part 1, Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 3:45 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

- 1. Opening Ceremony – Color Guard:** The Colors were presented by the Las Cruces Fire Department Color Guard.
- 2. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair, Nancy Wittenberg at 3:46 P.M. MDST.
- 3. Credentials Report:** Secretary Leslie Stone reported that there were 107 delegates present, 108 Delegates registered, 133 Clubs with delegate forms, and 169 clubs. There is a quorum.
- 4. Welcome and Introductions:**
 - a. Chair, Nancy Wittenberg welcomed the attendees.
 - b. IVV President, Dr. Giuseppe Colantonio, welcomed us to our convention by electronic means.
- 5. Welcome from the Mayor of Las Cruces:** Eric Enriquez, Mayor of the City of Las Cruces welcomed the AVA Biennial Convention and attendees to the City of Las Cruces. Chair, Nancy Wittenberg presented the mayor with a gift.
- 6. Approval of Meeting Rules:** Ron Jones moved to approve the meeting rules. No second was necessary. The meeting rules were approved.
- 7. Approval of Agenda:** Cecilia Minor moved to approve the agenda. No second was necessary. The agenda was approved.
- 8. Announcement of Official Slate of Officer Candidates:** Nominations Committee Chair, Robert Buzolich announced the slate of officer candidates for the 2025/2027 AVA Board of Directors.
 - a. Chair: Carl Cordes
 - b. Vice-Chair: Ed McCabe
 - c. Secretary: Leslie Stone
 - d. Finance Chair: Position is vacant and will be open to nominations after the convention.

9. Officer Candidate Comments:

- a. Secretary-Leslie Stone:** Have been serving two years and enjoyed it. Have represented the AVA at the 2024 IVV Congress in Canberra, Australia. I hope to be able to help the AVA with whatever I can do to help.
- b. Vice Chair-Ed McCabe:** Currently I have served as Finance Chair for 4 years. I am a CPA and CFO of an independent school in San Antonio. I love the organization and look forward to continuing working with it.
- c. Chair-Carl Cordes:** I began walking in 1982 at Patrick AFB in Florida. I have served clubs in the Atlantic, Southeast & Pacific Regions, and the state organizations in Florida & Maryland. I have served on the AVA Board as Pacific Deputy Regional Director, Pacific Regional Director and Vice-Chair. I have seen good times and challenging times. Now is the time to revitalize the AVA beginning with you. We must walk together, with one vision for the AVA. Carl believes in and is committed to the program of the AVA. Carl will emphasize the many aspects of participation.
 - i.** Increase participation at events,
 - ii.** financial participation from dues, event fees and donations.
 - iii.** outreach participation through publicity & community involvement.
 - iv.** participation standardizing walk directions and maps.
 - v.** participation putting all events into the On-line Start Box-and maybe a walk app in the future.
 - vi.** Leadership participation at local, regional and national levels.
 - vii.** Active membership participation & recruitment for the future of the AVA.
 - viii.** It is you, at the grassroots, that are the key to growth. Unlock your local potentials and help me put America's Walking Club back in the path of success as the premier walking organization in the United States.

10. Board Chair's Report: Chair, Nancy Wittenberg:

- a.** Chair, Nancy Wittenberg noted changes since she became Chair –
 - i.** such as a change in the organization's bylaws,
 - ii.** Covid and the convention following in Madison. Madison provided the convention center, gratis, we had a good time, good weather, and good walks.
 - iii.** We moved our offices from Universal City to the King William District.

- iv. In 2023, the USA hosted the IVV Olympiad/IML Texas Trail Roundup in San Antonio. Shout outs to John McClellan, Susan Medlin, Susan Pinneke, and Susan Fine and all the volunteers that made it possible.
- v. Nancy supported the Crazy Horse Walk, cleaning pens to keep germs from spreading during Covid.
- vi. Updates were made to my.ava.org. and we are working on the development of an AVA app.
- vii. There has been a lot of support for the Big Give from the Clubs and members friends & family.
- viii. ***The American Wanderer*** (TAW) has been digitized. The printed version was costly; the digitized TAW is a cost saver.
- ix. The AVA has lost many clubs and participants. Our mission is to provide walks. We should be philanthropists, giving to clubs and the AVA, as we receive the benefits of the organization.
- x. I have found out that Las Cruces and southern New Mexico is not hot and terrible. There are the beautiful Organ Mountains and other vistas. Thank you.

11. Finance Chair's Report – (2025/2026 Budget): Finance Chair Ed McCabe reported that the organization is holding steady, but there is room for growth. Our expense budget is bare bones. We are operating the AVA while being good stewards of the money. Our focus needs to be increasing membership. The Big Give was successful. It brought in \$96,000.00. It could be more if we tapped into our organization and their families. End of report.

12. Introduction of 23rd AVA Biennial Convention Committee: Convention Committee Chair, Jerry Wilson, introduced the Convention Committee members to the attendees.

13. Necrology: A video was played naming all those walkers who have left us since our last meeting. (The list of walkers may be found in the Convention Awards Book)

14. Recess: The meeting recessed at 4:42 P.M.

Part 2, Friday, May 2, 2025, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

1. Reading of IVV Presidents Greeting from 4-30-2025: Due to the poor quality of the greeting from the IVV President on Wednesday, 4-30-2025, the greeting was read to the convention attendees.

2. **Credentials Report:** Secretary, Leslie Stone reported that there were 111 Delegates present in the room, 7 delegates present on-line for a total of 118 delegates. There were 134 clubs with delegates registered. There are 169 clubs. There is a quorum.

3. **Election of Officers:** Chair, Nancy Wittenberg announced that since there was only one candidate for each position, there would be a vote by acclamation to elect the new officers. The following officers of AVA: America's Walking Club were elected by acclamation:

- a. Chair: Carl Cordes
- b. Vice-Chair: Ed McCabe
- c. Secretary: Leslie Stone

4. **Bylaws Amendments:**

a. **Administrative and Efficiency changes numbers 01-06:** Chair, Nancy Wittenberg introduced the amendments.

b. **Delegate Comments:** There were no delegate comments.

c. **Vote to approve Administrative Efficiency Changes numbers 01-06:** The amendments were voted on with the following results:

- i. **Approve: 122**
- ii. **Don't Approve: 7**
- iii. **Abstain: 3**

d. **Membership changes numbers 07-11:** Chair, Nancy Wittenberg introduced the amendments.

e. **Delegate Comments:**

- i. **Tess Sutton AVA 115 Evergreen Wanderers: Question:** related to Bylaws page 2, section 3, .01c – where associate members would be given the right to vote. When would it be appropriate to address this? I would like to make a motion to waive the requirement of motions to be submitted 6 months in advance. **Answer:** You can make a motion to the Secretary to give to the Board of Directors (BOD), but the requirement is that the motion must be reviewed by the BOD and cannot be voted on for 60 days. Any motion for amendments placed today would have no impact on the vote today.
- ii. **Frank Sayers AVA 915 Woodland Wanderers:** Several clubs got together to review the proposed amendments. They were confusing. Suggests that the rights of membership be included in the Rules &

Obligations of Membership to make it easy to find. Also, the Bylaws Committee should consider what a quorum is if the membership explodes with individual members.

- iii. **Susan Budd AAAIN Indiana Volkssport Assn.:** **Question:** Could an individual member, carrying a delegate credential and an individual member credential get two votes? **Answer:** Yes, if properly credentialed.
- iv. **Mike Green VP of AAAPA Keystone State Volkssport Assn.:** Today, 35 clubs failed to submit voting credentials, even though they would be able to vote remotely. In my opinion, if you are a member and care enough to vote, you should be able to vote.
- v. **Kathleen Cockrell AVA 786 Triangle Trailblazers:** question regarding the 2027 convention vote, what happened to the commitment from local clubs to support the convention? The vote today is just a survey. Since no local clubs sent in a proposal for the convention, the AVA is stepping up to try to sponsor a convention. The presentations yesterday were from cities who paid to make their presentation. The AVA will use due diligence to determine an appropriate convention location.
- f. **Vote to approve Membership changes numbers 07-11:** The amendments were voted on with the following results:
 - i. **Approve: 93**
 - ii. **Don't Approve: 37**
 - iii. **Abstain: 2**
- g. **The 2027 Convention Destination Preference was:**
 - i. **Destination Rogers, Arkansas: 34**
 - ii. **Visit Norman, Oklahoma: 39**
 - iii. **Visit Springfield, Missouri: 52**
 - iv. **None of the Above: 7**

5. Audience Comments: Comments as follows:

- a. **Linda Ellingboe AVA 249 FS Family Wanderers:** Would like to see a survey sent to all the attendees of this convention. Strive to always improve.

6. Presentation of new Board: The new AVA Board of Directors members present were presented to the convention delegates & attendees.

7. Closing Remarks - Nancy Wittenberg:

- a. There is a lot to learn and a lot to review about the process of voting and any comments, please put them in the surveys that will be sent out.
- b. I appreciate everyone for coming to the convention. It is a beautiful area with beautiful walks. Thanks to Helen Hull for the walks.
- c. We have had great support from the City of Las Cruces and the convention center staff.
- d. Thank you very much. The meeting is closed.

8. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 P.M. MDST

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Stone
Secretary,
AVA America's Walking Club