

**AVA: AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS XXII MEETING  
CONCOURSE HOTEL  
MADISON, WISCONSIN  
JUNE 29, 2021**

1. **Call to Order**: The final meeting of the AVA: America's Walking Club Board of Directors (BOD) XXII was called to order June 29, 2021, at 2:05pm CDT, by Board Chair Dr. David Bonewitz at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin.

2. **Introductions**

a. **Board of Directors members present**: David Bonewitz (Board Chair), Nancy Wittenberg (Board Vice Chair), Cecilia Miner (Board Secretary), Henry Rosales (Corporation President, CEO), Mike Green (Atlantic RD), Robert (Bob) Buzolich (Mid-America RD), Butch Spaulding (North Central RD), Chris Mellen (Northeast RD), Tom Baltes (Northwest RD), Carl Cordes (Pacific RD), Sherry Sayers (Rocky Mountain RD), Lucy Yother (South Central RD), John McClellan (Southeast RD), Sammy Hunnicutt (Southwest RD). A quorum existed.

b. **Guests signed in**: Todd Oberlander, Port Hadlock, WA; Dawn Gruber, Fairborn, OH (MA DRD); Ellen Ott, San Antonio, TX; Cindy Hilling, Columbus, OH; David and Ann Doerffel, Warminster, PA; Jim Medzuleca, Miamisburg, OH; Susan Medlin, San Antonio, TX (SW DRD); Kathy Mack, Schenectady, NY; Wayne Knapp, Schenectady, NY (incoming NE RD); Pauline Mellen, Tyngsboro, MA; Ed Hainline, Happy Valley, OR (incoming NW DRD); Margie MacLeish, Wyoming, DE; Susan Pinneke, West Des Moines, IA (incoming NC RD); Kathy Szczesiak, Wilmington, DE; Timothy Miner, Woodbridge, VA (AVA Program Chair); John Ives, San Antonio, TX; Judy Gordon, Sparks, NV; Karen Kaufman, Wyoming, DE (incoming AT DRD); Lesly Villanueva, AVA National Office.

3. **Approval of agenda**: (Attachment 1)

a. Changes:

- Board Finance Chair report will come from Convention program
- Governance Committee report in unfinished business
- Report on Crazy Horse

b. Agenda approved with changes.

4. **Approval of May 18, 2021, Electronic Board Meeting (EBM) Minutes:**  
Approved.

5. **Reminder of Standing Meeting Rules.** The central part is Robert's Rules of Order. No one speaks twice till all have spoken and speak only twice.

6. **Announcement of results of At-Large Board Member Election:** In a special called vote after the May EBM, the Board approved Dr. Kathleen Connell to be the second at-large member based on rules established for approval of such members. Dr. Connell was not able to attend this meeting.

7. **Reports of Officers:**

a. Board Chair (verbal, submitted by David Bonewitz):

This will not be the usual kind of report (that is in my Convention Report); instead this is more of a series of challenges.

We got the Bylaws updated, but there are some elements that were missed—e.g., definition of a quorum (filled in by definition provided under Texas law), timing of terms for National Officers (following the guidance provided for Regional Directors), etc. So, there is some cleanup work to be done here.

Also, frankly, I have come to realize that I don't like the titles of Board Chair and Board Vice Chair. While this was driven by Texas law terminology (giving specific duties based on position titles), I recommend revisiting to evolve into something like National President to distinguish from Corporation President, who is the CEO. Honestly, the title Board Chair just doesn't roll off the tongue quite like National President. This is especially true when talking to people outside of AVA.

We managed to get the NEC Handbook redrafted into the Board Handbook (draft), principally thru Butch's hard work. (Thank you, Butch). The next Board needs to pare it down to the real essentials. Too much in there that may belong in a Policy Manual, but not the Board Handbook. While talking about paring things down, I'd challenge the next Board to cut back on the rules—there are just way too many rules impacting the clubs. Now the Board shouldn't be doing the cutting; that's what committees are for. However, the Board directs the action to be taken and approves the final result.

Two elephants in the room for the near future must always be Olympiad and a Walking App. These two elements can make a world of difference for AVA.

Four years ago, it seemed that the NEC spent most of its time down in the weeds. We now have a Board that (most of the time) thinks and acts strategically. This change in culture takes time and can be frustrating. The challenge is to continue the process. Maybe it's a different way to hold meetings, or maybe it's a way to further define the roles of the RD and DRD. Whatever it is, AVA must continue to evolve.

We have been very successful in obtaining two of the potential three At-Large Board Members. This was a big step for AVA, and I believe it will pay big dividends.

AVA must continue to promote change with such things as a new business model, moving everything to digital, and strongly promoting our mission and vision in our local communities.

Most of you are rolling off the Board, but you can still make a difference. Get on one or more committees and provide the benefit of your experience to those who follow. Energize those around you. Promote change! Stay positive! And stay involved!

b. Board Vice Chair (Attachment 2): In addition to the written report, Vice Chair Nancy Wittenberg added the next two years will be a time of transition, and strategic thinking is key. Nancy has a passion for keeping walks when clubs go away and for making life easier for clubs. She applauded the AVA move into San Antonio in two neighborhoods that allows the CEO to get out into the community. She looks forward to the Olympiad in 2023, as this big event will bring AVA much visibility. Finally, the upcoming retreat is important for coalescing the new Board into a strategic-thinking organization.

c. Board Secretary (Attachment 3). The Board Secretary job is about details, and Cecilia has enjoyed keeping the minutes and engaging in committee work.

d. Board Treasurer. Written report from Convention Program:

The AVA BOD approved a balanced budget for calendar year 2021. Budget revenues were helped by a new revenue source from our partner Element3 Health (E3H). Also boosting revenues this year are the 22<sup>nd</sup> Biennial Convention in Madison, Wisconsin and the amazingly generous contributions through the Big Give fundraiser.

Thank you to all those walkers who got out there and walked during the general COVID-19 lockdowns. Revenues from traditional events suffered from government orders that limited group events. However, revenues from year-round and seasonal walks significantly increased over the budgeted amount!

During 2020, the AVA received \$50,700 from the federal government through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). As you may know, the PPP is a loan designed to provide an incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on payroll. The PPP loan can be used to help fund payroll costs, including benefits, and may be used to pay for mortgage interest, rent, and utilities. In order for the PPP loan to be forgiven, the AVA was required to maintain employees and pay levels and spend at least 60% of the loan on payroll costs. Thanks to the incredible efforts of the AVA National Office, the full amount of the \$50,700 PPP loan and interest were forgiven!

You may have heard there was a second round of PPP loans offered. In 2021, the AVA applied for an additional \$50,700 in the second round. The requirements for loan forgiveness are essentially the same as the first round, so the AVA expects that its second loan and interest will also be forgiven.

8. **CEO Report** (Attachments 4 and 5):

a. Attachment 4 of the CEO report covers administrative issues, such as personnel, partnerships, special programs, and club status; financial data; and an updated incident report. In his report, CEO Henry Rosales urged clubs to visit the Element 3 Health booth at the Convention.

b. Attachment 5 is a report on Acceptance of New, Reactivated, and Deactivated Clubs. The Board voted to accept the report. Discussion focused on how to keep walks from clubs that deactivate. To avoid placing extra burden on clubs, state associations, and regional directors, several members suggested putting active walks on the Online Start Box and archiving inactive walks to preserve the trails for future use.

## 9. **Awards Committee Reports** (Attachment 6)

Carl Cordes, PA RD and Awards Committee Chair, stated a major accomplishment was preparation of a policy revision to make Section 3 on awards clearer. The Awards Committee moves that the Board accept the policy rewrite. Coming from a committee, the motion did not require a second.

**Motion:** Approve changes to the Policy Manual under Awards.

Discussion: Carl noted that the changes include new Board titles, which brings an issue for the President's Award and what it should be called in the future. No awards were changed in the rewrite.

**Passed on voice vote**

## 10. **Unfinished Business:**

a. Motion on 2023 membership meeting, presented by Governance Committee member Butch Spaulding (NC RD)

**Title:** Split General Membership Meeting for 2023

**Motion:** We move that the General Membership Meeting for 2023 be held as a split meeting. Session 1 to be held during the week of the Olympiad and the IML Texas Trail Roundup. Session 2 to be held online during the month of June, 2023. Exact dates and times to be determined at a later date.

**Summary of Proposed Action:** The Board has previously voted to not have a regular Convention in 2023 due to Olympiad being held that year in San Antonio. However, the Bylaws require that we hold a General Membership Meeting on the odd years. This motion would allow the General Membership Meeting to be held with the in-person portion during the week of Olympiad and the online portion in June. Everything else (exact timing, what is on the agenda for each session, etc.) is detail that does not need to be decided by the Board. All the Board must do is direct those who are doing the planning to conduct a split General Membership Meeting as stated.

**Submitted By:** Governance Committee

**Seconded By:** Committee Action/No Second Required

**Name of person submitting proposed motion:** Governance Committee

**Board Action:** Passed on voice vote

b. Crazy Horse. National leadership was represented by David Bonewitz, Butch Spaulding, Carl Cordes, and Jerry Wilson. In the past, canned food was accepted for entry. This year, the organization charged half the normal entry fee instead of accepting food. About 3000 walkers participated on day one, 2000 on day two. The Black Hills Volkssport Association sold at least 30 new walker packets to people from 11 states. David encouraged the next Board to support major events such as Crazy Horse, the U.S. FreedomWalk Festival, and the Texas Trail Roundup as a means to meet new people and spread the word. There will be a second Crazy Horse event in September. Volunteers are always needed.

c. RD reports

- Southeast (John McClellan): A member of his region had a serious heart surgery and is doing well in recovery. His full report is at Attachment 7. In addition, John added an excerpt from a social media post on survival of AVA (Attachment 8).
- Northwest (Tom Baltes): The region is seeing increased activity for hosted events. Attendance is light but gaining momentum. There have been a number of memorial events, unfortunately.
- Mid America (Bob Buzolich): Mid America is also picking up activity. There will be Save-the-Date cards at the MA table announcing the MA 2022 conference.
- Rocky Mountain: Down to 6 clubs.
- Southwest (Sammy Hunnicutt): Continuing to open up. New Mexico postponed one event till next year. The Texas Trail Roundup is on the books for 2022, and there will be registration forms at the exhibits.
- North Central (Butch Spaulding): Long time president of the Lincoln club passed away recently. Event activities are increasing.
- Northeast (Chris Mellen): The Albany Convention committee members are still recovering. That said, Wayne Knapp stepped up to take on the RD job. The Albany team can provide good advice for future conventions.

- Pacific (Carl Cordes): The YRE on Coronado Island is once again open after being closed for a year. He hopes the San Francisco walks will reopen soon. The California Convention will be October 1-3 hosted by the Sacramento Walking Sticks in a suburb of Sacramento.
- South Central (Lucy Yother): The following report was submitted in writing. The South Central Region was the only Region to hold our Roundup/Conference in 2020; attendees came from five of the ten Regions. We have been walking Arkansas, Kansas and Missouri counties, and Louisiana parishes - thanks to the East TX Trekkers and Helen Hull. The 77 Oklahoma counties have been completed but counties are being offered again, as requests are received. Multiday events and three kickoff weekends for new Missouri and Kansas counties were offered in 2021. Eight new Kansas counties were offered the first weekend in May, and walkers attended from eight of the ten regions - only the NE and NW Regions were not represented. Seven Missouri counties were offered over Memorial Day weekend by the five Missouri clubs.
- Atlantic (Mike Green): Atlantic Region had to cancel the region conference in 2020. The hope is that there will be a 2022 conference. The new RD will be Jeff Giddings, who handled the conference registration. The new DRD will be Karen Kaufman.

#### 11. **New Business:**

a. The Governance Committee received a motion from a region regarding a bylaws change extending the length of terms for national officers and regional directors from two years to four years. The Governance Committee presented the motion to the Board. The Board's role is to recommend to the membership whether a bylaws change should be made or not. The Board does not recommend the change be made. The motion will be presented to the membership during the General Membership Meeting with the Board's recommendation.

b. John McClellan (SE RD) submitted a writeup based on a social media post on Reddit (Attachment 8).

12. **Next Meeting:** In person (New Board Orientation and Meeting) July 22-24, 2021, in San Antonio, Texas.

#### 13. **Audience Comments:**

- Susan Medlin, SW DRD and TTR President, thanked the RDs for all they do for AVA. The Olympiad Committee has stood up and is looking for committee chairs.
- Susan Pinneke (NC DRD and incoming NC RD) thanked the RDs and the Convention Committee.
- Margie MacLeish, First State Webfooters, Delaware, thanked Atlantic Region RD Mike Green and his wife Betty for an awesome job.
- Kathy Mack, Empire State Capital Volkssporters (ESCV), thanked the Board for their service.
- Wayne Knapp, ESCV and incoming NE RD, looks forward to joining the Board and thanked the outgoing Board.
- Ed Hainline, Columbia River Volkssport Club and incoming NW DRD, thanked the Board for dedicated service.
- Dawn Gruber, Ohio Wanderfreunde, offered for purchase the commemorative coin from the canceled Mid America conference.
- Karen Kaufman, First State Webfooters and incoming AT DRD, thanked the outgoing Board and is ready to go to work.

#### 14. **Board Comments:**

- Nancy Wittenberg, Vice Chair, thanked David for his leadership.
- John McClellan, SE RD. Katherine King from the East Tennessee Wanderers will be the new SE RD. John recommends the new Board focus on membership. AVA is a national membership organization, though we have issues defining what membership is. Most funding comes from members. He suggests we look at different models and mentioned the VFW, which is a successful membership organization that recruits and retains its members. We should find a way to wrap club members into national members.
- Tom Baltes, NW RD, echoed appreciation of David's and Nancy's leadership and of the National Office headed up by Henry. Also, thanks to the IT Committee for great work. Sharon Moats will become the new NW RD and Ed Hainline the new NW DRD. Tom talked about the issue of homelessness. In Oregon, there is legislation that will allow the homeless to populate any public space, which is an issue for walk organizers to consider.
- Bob Buzolich will return as MA RD. Roberta Allen will take Dawn Gruber's place as DRD. Currently the Mackinac Bridge walk is still on for Labor Day.



- Sherry Sayers, RM RD, acknowledged the hard work that has gone into putting on the 2021 Convention during all the challenges.
- Sammy Hunnicutt, SW RD, recognized Susan Medlin as the SW DRD. He enjoyed working with Henry on a number of issues. As Training Committee Chair, he has handled all workshop details for the Convention and recommends there be a separate committee just for workshops.
- Butch Spaulding, NC RD, expressed thanks to all for their hard work.
- Chris Mellen, NE RD, thanked Henry and his staff for his work pulling the organization through a pandemic and thanked David Bonewitz. Chris recognized Donna Seline for her work on *The American Wanderer*. Finally, he thanked all the volunteers at all levels in the AVA Nation.
- Carl Cordes, PA RD, showed the traveling trophy for small groups for the Virtual Online Program. Thanks to Frank Sayers, there is an Arizona Counties program. Walking Adventures took a tour there and completed the program. Carl thanked David for his leadership on the strategic plan. Carl will stay involved on the Olympiad organizing committee and fired up the audience to volunteer.
- Lucy Yother, SC RD, said it has been an honor to serve on the board for the last four years and will help any way she can in the future.
- Mike Green, AT RD, read his report from the Convention program:  
It is my strong opinion that the most successful clubs in the Atlantic region (and the AVA) are those who schedule group walks at the **same** time and day of the week. This regularity inspires prospective walkers to plan their future appointments and other activities, to avoid conflicting with the club's weekly "walk day."

In this day and age, there are many ways to find walking opportunities. The value that AVA adds to walking is through its clubs. It is AVA clubs who create, monitor, and maintain routes who, by following AVA standards, policies, and traditions/culture, create a uniform event expectation with a quality and social experience for walks *throughout the US*. Clubs should rightfully be proud of their important role in creating this uniform event expectation. It is this expectation that permits participants to confidently find/discover and do the walks, in an otherwise unfamiliar location. AVA walks have a precise start/end point, driving direction and addresses to the start/end point, predetermined walk lengths, a well-defined walk difficulty rating, and step-by-step walk

directions and/or maps that are designed and maintained by a **local** club that often pass by points of historical/cultural interest.

The current club officers need to regularly point out the unique value of AVA events to their membership to help them realize the honor of serving as an AVA club leader with the hope of attracting future club leaders to continue the AVA legacy of Fun, Fitness, and Fellowship.

- Henry Rosales, CEO, briefing on Convention logistics
- David Bonewitz thanked all the Board members for changing the Board culture to more of a strategic focus, but there is more to do, because change is tough. Also, thanks to Henry for his continued hard work. It has been an honor to serve as President/Board Chair.

15. **Adjournment:** 4:17pm CDT

Respectfully submitted,

Cecilia Miner  
AVA Secretary



**AVA Board of Directors Meeting Agenda**  
**Tuesday, June 29, 2021 / 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Madison Concourse Hotel - Capitol Ballroom B**  
**1 West Dayton Street**  
**Madison, WI 53703**  
**(608) 257-6000**

1. Welcome & Call to Order
2. Secretary Calls Roll/Introduction of Board
3. Introduction of Guests
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of May EBM Minutes
6. Reminder of Standing Meeting Rules
7. Announcement of results of At-Large Board Member Election
8. Reports of Officers
  - a. President – David Bonewitz
  - b. Vice President – Nancy Wittenberg
  - c. Secretary – Cecilia Miner
  - d. Treasurer – Chase Davis
9. CEO Report
10. Committee Reports
  - a. Awards Committee on revision to Awards Section of the Policy Manual
  - b. Other Committee Reports
11. Unfinished Business
  - a. Governance Committee proposed approach to the 2023 General Membership Meeting with Olympiad
  - b. RD Region Status Reports
12. New Business
13. Next Meeting - In Person (New Board Orientation and Meeting)  
July 22-24, 2021 (San Antonio, TX)
14. Audience Comments
15. Board Comments
16. Adjournment



**AMERICAN VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION  
OFFICER REPORT**

FOR THE OFFICE OF \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

FOR THE \_\_\_\_\_ June 29, 2021 \_\_\_\_\_ **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING**

FROM (Name): \_\_\_\_\_ Cecilia Miner \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

The last two years have been quite a ride. I've worked hard to capture the facts, the flow, and the intent of discussions in monthly Board of Directors meetings and in the recent AVA Special Membership Meeting held to vote on AVA's updated governing documents. Meeting minutes are available on the AVA website, and I welcome feedback.

**ACTIVITIES:**

As is expected of Board members, I have served on a committees. The Governance Committee was a good fit with my skill set, and I supported our efforts to finalize recommended legal text in the Restated and Amended Bylaws and the Restated and Amended Certificate of Formation. I have signed the documents for the National Office, and they are now in effect. Also, I served on the Awards Committee for this term under Carl Cordes's leadership, reviewing nominations and providing recommendations for rewarding hard work and innovation by members.

**CONCERNS:**

A major concern is the need to update the NEC Handbook and the Policy Manual as soon as possible, and I look forward to volunteering for those efforts.

A second concern is recruiting a replacement for the follow-on Board. As Sam Korff mentored me prior to assuming this position, I want to mentor the next Secretary.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

A continuity record is important for all positions. I plan to develop a continuity plan for the Secretary position.

Attachment 3-2

***Please attach any additional material that is part of your report.***

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Submit AVA Officer Report to AVA Headquarters by Email



**AMERICAN VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

June 29, 2021/2:00p.m.-5:00p.m.  
Madison Concourse Hotel  
Madison, WI

**I. ADMINISTRATION/OPERATIONS**

**Personnel**

All hourly employees are currently at a 32-hour work week, Monday-Thursday and some Fridays as needed. After the board retreat, all employee hours and work responsibilities will be reevaluated based on changes made to the strategic plan that impact operations.

**New Board Member Orientation-July 22-24, 2021**

Board orientation and training for all incoming board members and deputy directors is scheduled for Thursday, July 22 – Saturday, July 24, 2021. Everyone should arrive Thursday before 6pm so they can attend the welcome reception and plan to stay through Saturday night because most likely we will be working late Saturday. Some members may want to arrive early Thursday to attend a special training on event sanctioning and other IT related topics. More information on the training and orientation will be sent directly to all new members.

*Community Walk During the Board Orientation*

A community walk will be sponsored by the AVA on Saturday, July 24, 2021. This event is being held in conjunction with the board orientation so everyone can attend and get involved with community partners and residents. Hopefully, this event will also bring good exposure to the AVA!

**Virtual Online Program (VOP)**

VOP numbers are holding steady at 289, no increase the past two months. Total revenue generated from this program is **\$11,147**.

**New, Reactivated, Deactivated Clubs.**

No activity since March 2021.

The total number of clubs we currently have is 187 clubs and 10 State Associations.

**National Partnerships**

***Element3 Health, Inc.***

Marketing efforts with Element3 Health are slowly generating more walk participants to club events. This pilot program started in January and like most pilots, it is still too early to determine how successful it will be. The good news is it looks like 20 participants have returned for more walks or events. These are our potential club members!

Total participation to date: 137

Total unique participants to date: 114

Total clubs with participants to date: 57

There are 20 participants out of the 114 total that have participated in 2+ AVA events.

## **2021 AVA Convention, Madison, WI**

The Mayor of Madison has confirmed to speak at the start of the Presidents walk on Thursday, July 1, 2021, at 8:00a.m. Please encourage all walkers to meet in front of the Monona Terrace Convention Center (on MLK street) at 7:45a.m. The city of Madison has expressed how excited to have us in their city because we are the first big event since the pandemic started. We should anticipate plenty of media and press coverage!

Full Registrants = 204

Other Registrants = 132

Total Revenues = \$80,557 (\$10,650 from sponsors and grants)

## **II. FINANCE (Unaudited Preliminary P/L Statement)**

Preliminary May 2020 Profit Loss statement reflects a net loss of (\$35,434). After adjustments of \$29,000 for 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter projected revenues, and \$50,700 for wages from the PPP loan, and approximately \$80,000 for convention expenses have been made, we are looking at an approximate net loss of \$37,000. This is the net loss we anticipated covering by the convention surplus which no longer exists because our convention numbers dropped. Modifications to the budget will be made in July.

### **Account Balances as of 02.08.2021:**

Savings Account	\$25,925.00
Credit Card Account	\$13,544.00
Operational Account	\$ 1,476.00
Online Start Box	\$35,044.00
Convention Accounts	\$80,557.00 (Natl)
	\$ 2,100.00 (WI)
Accounts Receivables	\$ 4,31.00

**AVA Investments Account = \$450,830.25**

### **Paycheck Protection Program Loans (PPP)**

The AVA has been awarded a second round of PPP stimulus funds in the amount of **\$50,700**. The loan forgiveness application for the first PPP loan of **\$50,700** has already been submitted and forgiven.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

**Henry J. Rosales**  
**AVA Executive Director**

June 10, 2021



JAN - MAY 2021 INCIDENT REPORT

AVA Club	Incident Date	Reported to FIA	Type of Injury	Injured Member
Liberty Bell Wanderers	1/17/2021	1/12/2021	possible R rotator cuff injury from fall	
1st Quarter # of incidents reported: 1				
Columbia River Volkssport Club	4/30/2021	5/25/2021	broken arm	
2nd Quarter # of incidents reported: 1				
3rd Quarter # of incidents reported: 0				
4th Quarter # of incidents reported: 0				



**American Volkssport Association  
Acceptance of New, Reactivated, and Deactivated Clubs**

**March 2021**

**New**

\*SW Region Southeast Texas Volkssport Club (pending documents)

**Reactivated**

None

**Deactivated**

NW Region 06-AVA-0679 Turnaround Trekkers (6 members; 10 YREs; 0 SE; 0 Trad )	3/3/2021
NC Region 04-AVA-0102 Lincoln Volkssport Club, Inc. (30 members; 4 YREs; 0 SE; 2 Trad)	3/3/2021
NC Region 04-AVA-0032 Red River Volkssport Association (12 members; 2 YREs, 1 SE, 0 Trad)	3/23/2021
RM Region 08-AVA-0436 Golden Spike Striders (5 members; 1 YRS; 0 SE; 0 Trad)	
*MA Region 03-AVA-0397 Lebanon Cedar Cruisers (12 members; 6 YREs, 2 SE, 0 Trad)	
RM Region 08-AVA-0859 Northern Front Range Wanderers (5 members; 3 YREs; 2 SE; 0 Trad)	
*SW Region 11-AVA-0106 Kerrville Trailblazers (43 members, 6 YRES, 1 Trad)	

\*Deactivation status is pending receipt of all required documents.

**Reasons for Closing**

- Lack of interest & participation
- Decline in membership
- Unable to recruit new members and officers
- Aging members
- Lack of activity, RD and State Association requested club closure

Total clubs to date: 197 clubs (includes State Associations). As of March 23, 2021.

**AMERICAN VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION  
COMMITTEE REPORT**

**FOR THE** \_\_\_\_\_ Awards and Recognition \_\_\_\_\_ **COMMITTEE**

**FOR THE** \_\_\_\_\_ June 29, 2021 \_\_\_\_\_ **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING**

**FROM (Name):** \_\_\_\_\_ Carl Cordes, Chair \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

1. The committee vetted the nominations for national awards in the categories of Hall of Fame, Distinguished Achievement, Ted Ballman Youth and Trailblazer.
2. Chair Carl Cordes presented "virtual" nominations and the committee's recommendations to the BOD at the January 2021 Electronic Board Meeting (EBM) and nominees approved by the BOD were forwarded to HQ for award processing.
3. The 2021 Convention Awards book was prepared/published with input from each Regional Director.

**ACTIVITIES:**

The committee prepared a revision of the Section 3 Awards in the Operations Policy Manual. The result is proposed for adoption in our recommendations.

**CONCERNS:**

With the revised bylaws changing officer title of President to Board Chair, the BOD may wish to consider an alternate name for the President's Award. In recommendation below the policy is rewritten to say the Board Chair reviews and approves nominations for the President's Award.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Awards section of the Operations Policy Manual was rewritten (see atch PROPOSED Sec 3 Awards Policy June 2021) to clarify standard practice and information that enables nominators and reviewers to better understand and follow the process and requirements for each award. Also attached for reference is CURRENT Sec 3 Awards Policy.

The Awards and Recognition Committee moves that the proposed Sec 3 Awards Policy rewrite be approved and replace the existing section 3 in the Operations Policy Manual

Attachment 6-2

***Please attach any additional material that is part of your report.***

Print Form

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## **SECTION 3: RECOGNITION AWARDS**

### **3.01 RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATION SERVICE**

#### **I. GENERAL**

The AVA Recognition Awards Program honors individuals and organizations, both within and outside the AVA, for service, deeds, and accomplishments that have advanced the ideals and aspirations of volkssporting in the United States.

#### **II. POLICY**

Awards for national service may be presented at the AVA Biennial Convention. Regional recognition awards are presented by the Regional Director at regional, state or club events. Paid employees of the AVA do not qualify for the AVA Recognition Awards Program unless they are being recognized for serving in a volunteer capacity. AVA Board Officers, Directors and Deputy Directors are not eligible for the national recognition awards while serving in those positions.

### **3.02 AWARDS CRITERIA**

- A. **AVA Hall of Fame Award:** The AVA may induct individuals into the AVA Hall of Fame who have given at least ten years of service to the AVA at the national, state, and local level and have made exceptional contributions to volkssporting that have affected several AVA regions. This is the AVA's highest award typically given to recognize a lifetime of service and might not be given at each convention. An individual should have previously received the Distinguished Achievement Award to be eligible for Hall of Fame. An individual can only be named to the Hall of Fame once. The award will be recognized by plaque, certificate, pin and patch.
- B. **AVA Distinguished Achievement Award:** The AVA may bestow the AVA Distinguished Achievement Award upon individuals who have given at least eight years of service to the AVA. Personal contributions must have been made at an exemplary level at several stages of service, including national level. Nominated individuals should have previously received the Meritorious Service Award. An individual is eligible to receive this award more than once for different 8 year service periods. The award will be recognized by a framed certificate, pin, and patch.
- C. **AVA Meritorious Service Award:** The Regional Director may bestow the AVA Meritorious Service award upon individuals who have given at least five years of outstanding service to the AVA. The Meritorious Service Award will be awarded by the Regional Director of the region in which the majority of service was performed. An individual is eligible to receive this award more than once for different 5 year service periods. The award will be recognized by a certificate, pin, and patch.
- D. **AVA Commendable Service Award:** The Regional Director may bestow the AVA Commendable Service award upon individuals who have given significant service to the AVA. The award can be given regardless of the amount of time, before an individual is again eligible. An individual is eligible to receive this award more than once. The award will be recognized by a certificate, pin, and patch.
- E. **AVA President's Award:** The AVA Board Chair, at their sole discretion, may bestow the President's Award upon individuals, clubs or groups who, through their exemplary display of volkssporting spirit, are worthy of national recognition. The award is recognized by a plaque or other memento.
- F. **Ted Ballman Memorial Youth Award:** The AVA may bestow the Ted Ballman Memorial Youth

Award on an individual or organization inside or outside AVA who has been instrumental in the creation of AVA Youth Programs or who has worked to enhance or promote volkssporting programs for youth around the world. The award will be recognized by a plaque or other memento.

- G. **AVA Trailblazer Award:** The AVA may bestow the AVA Trailblazer Award on AVA Member Clubs that have made significant contributions to the development, maintenance or improvement of walking trails or to the support of trail related issues. The award will be recognized by a plaque or other memento.
- H. **AVA Certificate of Appreciation Award:** The Regional Director may bestow the AVA Certificate of Appreciation Award on individuals, organizations, or businesses for service to AVA on a national, regional, state or club level. The award will be recognized by a certificate.
- I. **IVV Honors:** The AVA may nominate individuals within the American Volkssport Association for services, deeds, and accomplishments concerning the international aspect of the AVA for applicable IVV Honors. Form of award is determined by IVV.

### 3.03 PROCEDURE FOR NATIONAL LEVEL AWARDS

#### A. Nominations

1. Any person wishing to nominate an individual or organization for a National Level AVA Award or IVV Honors must submit the nomination to the Regional Director in the region in which the nominee resides. Nominations for Hall of Fame, Distinguished Achievement, Trailblazer, and Ted Ballman Memorial Youth Awards must be on AVA Form 302 and received by November 1 of the year prior to the AVA Biennial Convention. Nominations for the President's Award must be on AVA Form 304 and submitted directly to the AVA Board Chair by December 1 of the year prior to the AVA Biennial Convention. To nominate an individual for IVV recognition, submit a detailed list of accomplishments to the Regional Director by November 1 of the year prior to the AVA biennial convention. IVV nominations approved by the Board of Directors will be submitted by the AVA Board Chair, on the appropriate IVV form, to the IVV for final approval. Nominations for all National awards, recognitions, and honors may be submitted by US Postal Service, delivery service, or internet (email) provided they are received by the applicable deadline. Late submissions subject to disqualification without consideration.
2. The Regional Director reviews nominations for completeness and adherence to citation word limits. After adding recommendation and signing form, Regional Director will forward National Level Award nomination form(s) via internet (email) to the AVA Awards and Recognition Committee Chair no later than December 1 of the year prior to the AVA Biennial Convention.
3. The AVA Awards and Recognition Committee Chair will review all nominations to determine if they are complete and then forward the information to the committee members as soon as possible after the December 1 deadline. All incomplete or unsigned forms will be returned to the respective Regional Director for correction. The Regional Director will obtain corrections from the nominator, if necessary. The Regional Director will be allowed ten calendar days to resolve the problem and resubmit to the Awards and Recognition Committee Chair. If the problem is not resolved within that time frame, the nomination will be considered withdrawn by the Regional Director.
4. The AVA Awards and Recognition Committee Chair will submit the nominations and committee recommendations to the Board of Directors at the first meeting of the Board after January 1 of the year of the AVA Biennial Convention.

#### B. Selection and Presentation

1. The Awards and Recognition Committee Chair and/or the Board Liaison will present each nomination and Committee recommendation for the Board of Directors to review. Submitted nomination forms are confidential and will be presented in Executive Session.
2. The AVA Board Chair or presiding officer will moderate any discussion of each nomination.
3. The Board will vote by secret ballot on each nomination before considering other nominations.
4. Approval of the nomination will be by majority affirmative vote of the Board members present and voting. Approved nominations are forwarded by the Awards Committee Chair to AVA HQ for award preparation and convention presentation planning.
5. Nominations not approved may be downgraded, considered for a different award or referred to the Regional Director for Regional Award consideration.

The Regional Director and/or Nominator for each Hall of Fame, Trailblazer, Ted Ballman and President's Award level awardee will provide and/or procure photo(s) and video testimonial(s) to accompany award presentation as directed by AVA HQ and Awards Committee. Only photos are required for Distinguished Achievement awardees. Every effort should be made to provide requested photos and videos without the awardees' knowledge they will be receiving the respective awards. National Level Awards will be presented during the AVA Convention that follows approval. An alternate public presentation may be considered if AVA Convention is cancelled or rescheduled for a subsequent year.

### **3.04 PROCEDURE FOR REGIONAL AWARDS**

#### **A. Nominations**

1. Regional level awards shall include the Meritorious Service, Commendable Service, and the Certificate of Appreciation Awards.
2. Any person wishing to nominate an individual or business for a regional level AVA award must submit the nomination to the Regional Director of the region in which the nominee resides, by the date designated by the Regional Director. Nominations for Meritorious Service, Commendable Service, and Certificate of Appreciation Awards must be on AVA Form 303. Nominations may be submitted by US Postal Service, delivery service, or internet (email) provided they are received by the Regional Director's designated deadline, if any.
3. The Regional Director must notify the Awards and Recognition Committee Chair of Regional Awards as well as Trailmaster Certifications presented since the last convention, no later than 120 days before the next convention to be listed in the awards in the Biennial Awards Booklet distributed at the convention. Submit Name, City and State for each awardee. Only submit citations, must be 50 words or less, for Meritorious Service awards. The official, national announcement of regional awards should be a part of the convention. The booklet may serve as the announcement. Award notifications not received by deadline will not be included in awards booklet.

#### **B. Selection and Presentation**

1. The Regional Director may enlist the Deputy Director or appoint a regional awards committee to assist in review of regional level award nominations.
2. The Regional Director should consider the recommendations of the regional awards committee (if appointed) prior to approving or disapproving nominations.

3. The Regional Director will notify nominators if nominees for Region Level Awards are referred for different awards before awards are announced.
4. Where possible the Regional Director should personally award Meritorious and Commendable Service awards at an appropriate club, state or regional occasion. The Regional Director may delegate the awarding of Certificate of Appreciation Awards to State Organization or Club Presidents.

### **3.05 APPROVAL AUTHORITY FOR AWARDS**

- A. Authority to approve AVA Awards and Recognitions and IVV Honors is given to the AVA Board Chair, the Board of Directors (BOD), the Regional Directors or the IVV.
  1. The AVA Board Chair is the Approval Authority for the President's Award.
  2. The BOD is the Approval Authority for the Hall of Fame, Distinguished Achievement, Trailblazer, and Ted Ballman Youth Awards. The BOD is also Approval Authority for IVV Honors nominations.
  3. The Regional Directors are the Approval Authorities for Meritorious Service, Commendable Service, and Certificate of Appreciation Awards.
  4. The IVV Presidium is the Approval Authority for IVV Honors.
- B. The BOD may make special presentations in addition to those established in policy.
- C. The BOD may recall any AVA Award, Special Award, or Recognition if the recipient is determined to have committed serious violations of bylaws or policy, or acts that bring discredit to the Association. IVV Honors can be recalled by the Presidium or by the Congress of Delegates for similar indiscretions.



## Awards Committee Report Attch 2 – Current wording in Policy Manual

### SECTION 3: RECOGNITION AWARDS

#### 3.01 RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATION SERVICE

##### I. GENERAL

The AVA Recognition Awards Program honors individuals and organizations, both within and outside the AVA, for service, deeds, and accomplishments that have advanced the ideals and aspirations of volkssporting in the United States. National Recognition Awards Program not available to those serving on NEC.

##### II. POLICY

Awards for national service may be presented at the AVA Biennial Convention. Regional recognition awards are presented by the Regional Director at regional, state or club events. Paid employees of the AVA do not qualify for the AVA Recognition Awards Program unless they are being recognized for serving in a volunteer capacity. National Recognition Awards Program not available to those serving on NEC.

#### 3.02 AWARDS CRITERIA

- A. AVA Hall of Fame Award The AVA may induct individuals into the AVA Hall of Fame who have given at least ten years of service to the AVA at the national, state, and local level and have made exceptional contributions to volkssporting that have affected several AVA regions. This is the AVA's highest award and might not be given at each convention.
- B. AVA Distinguished Achievement Award The AVA may bestow the AVA Distinguished Achievement Award upon individuals who have given at least eight years of service to the AVA. Personal contributions must have been made at an exemplary level at several stages of service, including national level.
- C. AVA Meritorious Service Award The AVA may bestow the AVA Meritorious Service award upon individuals who have given at least five years of outstanding service to the AVA. The Meritorious Service Award will be awarded by the Regional Director of the region in which the majority of service was performed.
- D. Commendable Service Award  

The AVA may bestow an AVA Certificate of Commendable Service Award upon individuals who have given significant service to the AVA. The award can be given regardless of the amount of time, before an individual is again eligible. Commendable Service Award criteria has been modified to eliminate time periods for performing significant service. The award will be recognized by a certificate, a pin, and a rocker patch.
- E. AVA President's Award  

The AVA President may bestow the President's Award upon individuals, clubs or groups who, through their exemplary display of volkssporting spirit, are worthy of national recognition.
- F. Ted Ballman Memorial Award for Youth Volkssporters  

The AVA may bestow the Ted Ballman Memorial Award for Youth Volkssporters on an individual or organization inside or outside AVA who has been instrumental in the creation of AVA Youth Programs or who has worked to enhance or promote volkssporting programs for youth around the world.

G. AVA Trailblazer Award

The AVA may bestow the AVA Trailblazer Award on AVA Member Clubs that have made significant contributions to the development, maintenance or improvement of walking trails or to the support of trail related issues.

H. AVA Certificate of Appreciation Award

The AVA may bestow the AVA Certificate of Appreciation Award on individuals, organizations, and businesses for service to AVA on a national, regional, state or club level.

I. IVV Honors

The AVA may nominate individuals within the American Volkssport Association for services, deeds, and accomplishments concerning the international aspect of the AVA for IVV Honors.

### 3.03 PROCEDURE FOR NATIONAL LEVEL AWARDS

A. Nominations

1. Any person wishing to nominate an individual or organization for a National Level AVA Award, Recognition, or IVV Honors must submit the nomination to the Regional Director in the region in which the nominee resides by November 1 of the year prior to the AVA Biennial Convention. Nominations for Hall of Fame, Distinguished Achievement, Trailblazer, and Ted Ballman Youth Awards must be on AVA Form 302. Nominations for the President's Award must be on AVA Form 303PA and submitted directly to the AVA President. To nominate an individual for IVV recognition, submit a detailed list of accomplishments to the Regional Director by November 1 of the year prior to the AVA biennial convention. Nominations approved by the National Executive Council will be submitted by the AVA President, on the appropriate IVV form, to the IVV for final approval. Nominations for all awards, recognitions, and honors may be submitted by US Postal Service, delivery service, facsimile, or internet (email). National Recognition Awards Program not available to those serving on NEC.
2. The Regional Directors will forward all National Level Award nominations, with their recommendations, to the AVA Awards and Recognition Committee Chair by December 1 of the year prior to the AVA Biennial Convention.
3. The AVA Awards and Recognition Committee Chair will review all nominations to determine if they are complete and then forward the information to the committee members as soon as possible after the December 1 deadline. All incomplete forms will be returned to the respective Regional Directors. The Regional Director will notify the person that submitted the award nomination of the incomplete information. The Regional Director will be allowed ten days to resolve the problem with the nomination and return the nomination to the Awards and Recognition Committee Chair. If the problem is not resolved within that time frame, the nomination will be considered cancelled by the Regional Director.
4. The AVA Awards and Recognition Committee Chair will submit the nominations and committee recommendations to the National Executive Council at the first meeting of the NEC after January 1 of the year of the AVA Biennial Convention.

B. Selection

1. The Awards and Recognition Committee Chair and/or the NEC Liaison will present each nomination and Committee recommendation for the NEC to review.

2. The AVA President or presiding officer will moderate any discussion of each nomination.
3. The NEC will vote by secret ballot on each nomination before considering other nominations.
4. Approval of the nomination will be by majority affirmative vote of the NEC members present and voting.
5. Nominations not approved may be considered for a different award or referred to the Regional Director.

### **3.04 PROCEDURE FOR REGIONAL AWARDS**

#### **A. Nominations**

1. Regional level awards shall include the Meritorious Service Award, the Commendable Service Award, and the Certificate of Appreciation Award.
2. Any person wishing to nominate an individual for a regional level AVA award must submit the nomination to the Regional Director of the region in which the nominee resides, by the date designated by the Regional Director. Nominations for Meritorious Service, Certificate of Service & Commendable Service Award, and Certificate of Appreciation Awards must be on AVA Form 303. Nominations may be submitted by US Postal Service, delivery service, facsimile, or internet (email).
3. The Commendable Service Award will include a Certificate of Commendable Service, rocker, patch and pin.
4. The Regional Director must notify the Awards and Recognition Committee of Regional Awards as well as Trailmaster Certifications presented since the last convention, no later than 120 days before the convention so the committee can list the awards in the Biennial Awards Booklet distributed at the convention. The official, national announcement of regional awards should be a part of the convention. The booklet may serve as the announcement.

#### **B. Selection**

1. The Regional Director may appoint a regional awards committee to assist in review of regional level award nominations.
2. The Regional Director should consider the recommendations of the regional awards committee (if appointed) prior to approving or disapproving nominations.
3. The Regional Director may delegate the awarding of Certificate of Appreciation Awards to State Organization or Club Presidents.
4. The Regional Director will notify nominators if nominees for Region Level Awards are referred for different awards before awards are announced.

### **3.05 APPROVAL AUTHORITY FOR AWARDS**

- #### **A. Authority to approve AVA Awards and Recognitions and IVV Honors is given to the AVA President, the National Executive Council (NEC), the Regional Directors or the IVV.**
1. The AVA President is the Approval Authority for the President's Award.
  2. The NEC is the Approval Authority for the Hall of Fame, Distinguished Achievement, Trailblazer, and Ted Ballman Youth Awards. The NEC is also Approval Authority for IVV Honors nominations.
  3. The Regional Directors are the Approval Authorities for Meritorious Service,

Commendable Service Award, and Certificate of Appreciation Awards.

4. The IVV Presidium is the Approval Authority for IVV Honors.
  - B. The NEC may make special presentations in addition to those established in policy.
  - C. The NEC may recall any AVA Award, Special Award, or Recognition if the recipient is determined to have committed serious violations of bylaws or policy, or acts that bring discredit to the Association. IVV Honors can be recalled by the Presidium or by the Congress of Delegates for similar discretions.

**AMERICAN VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION  
OFFICER REPORT**

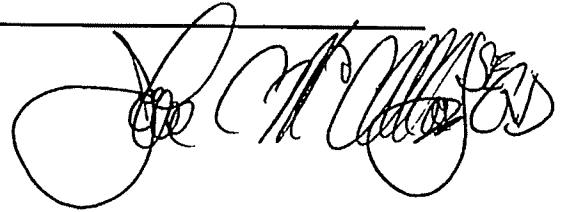
FOR THE OFFICE OF \_\_\_\_\_ SERD \_\_\_\_\_

FOR THE \_\_\_\_\_ June 2021 \_\_\_\_\_ **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING**

FROM (Name): \_\_\_\_\_ John McClellan \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

Completed 2d term as Director, Southeast Region.



Final report and recommendations.

Attached separate .doc with AAR comments on the Board, vis-a-via Strategic Planning

**ACTIVITIES:**

1. New SE RD: Kathryn King of the East Tennessee Wanderers nominated and elected (unopposed) in April 2021. No new DRD appointed as yet.
2. Submitted national-level awards - one (1) Hall of Fame, two (2) Distinguished Service, and one (1) Ted Ballman Youth award from SE Region.
3. Provided SE Region summary for the Biennial publication.
4. Attended a multi-event weekend in the Memphis, TN area in March. Culmination of 2+ years effort to get volkssporting back in Memphis. 5 events held, 289 participants. Two (2) OSB YRE events now available in Memphis.
5. New club application in the Ft. Myers (Estero, FL) area put on hold. Organizer could not scure the support of enough core volunteers to form a board.
6. E3H through 1Q -- 20 participants across 6 clubs in SE Region.

## **CONCERNS:**

1. Overall participation in volkssporting in the USA continues to decline at an unsustainable pace for AVA National to be able to survive.
2. # of clubs continues to decline and national geographic coverage is threatened. 5 states w/o clubs now, 15 states with only one (1) club. Half our clubs have 25 members or less, 25% have less than 10 members reported.
3. Until a major change in our revenue model, AVA remains a national membership organization but we don't behave that way. Our membership scheme is fragmented unintelligible to even most members. No organized retention program exists. We continue to lose members every year.
4. AVA remains the "best kept secret in America" with few major partners/sponsors nationally or regionally - despite laudable efforts in the last 3-5 years.
5. Many clubs continue to view National with suspicion or apathy. Too many "taxes" (such as delegate fees at Conventions) and administrative burdens tend to make many clubs reluctant partners in our business operations & promotions.
6. The "bars to entry" for new club formation are troublesome. We want clubs with some structure that can resource quality events, but need a faster way to create them.
7. Transition to my.ava.org and other 21st Century digital realities continue to lag. Needs more emphasis. At the same time, we must take care not to alienate "analog" walkers that still provide the bulk of our repeat participation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Spend more leadership time (Board) on budget planning. Start budget cycle in AUG and complete in NOV.
2. Improve our ability to "see ourselves" through strategic plan. Review SP 2x year, minimum. Train National staff on data analysis and strategic objectives. Further discussion on Board Transition & SP in separate attached document.
3. Re-vamp membership - make all club members = basic associates and track all members and membership retention. Get everyone in clubs on my.ava.org
4. Consider RDs "part of National" - don't "opt-out" from AVA data, inc. membership. Start providing regular reports to RDs on participation, membership (associates), etc. > any/all strategic objectives. Give RDs "read-access" to national database.
5. Restore in-person board meetings to 2x year minimum, as soon as it's feasible.
6. Seek national/regional relationships with:
  - Surgeon General of the United States (Step It Up program)
  - President's Council on Physical Fitness
  - AARP, YMCA, USAA; or some (one) other "big fish" as a national partner

***Please attach any additional material that is part of your report.***



## Can Volkspport and Volksmarching survive/adapt

POSTED ON REDDIT, by *Brian Derm*

These are from the AVA (American Volkspport Association) website:

**Mission Statement:** Promote and organize noncompetitive fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness and friendship for all ages and abilities.

**Vision Statement:** Increasingly engage Americans in lifelong walking and other noncompetitive physical fitness activities.

Yet events held in the Dallas/Ft Worth area, a metroplex of over 7,000,000 people, draw very few people on the best days/most interesting walk events. The typical program member seems to be retired or close to retirement. There's a glaring discrepancy between the mission statement/vision statement and reality, and I just have never seen any effort to deal with that.

I'll be brief, but I could write pages about what I believe could have helped the organization grow instead of decline. As "America's Walking Club", this organization was perfectly poised to take advantage of America's interest in fitness and walking. When Fitbit sales began to take off, the program should have changed to incorporate encouraging and rewarding the 10,000 steps crowd. Today, there is a growing participation by the public in medal programs for completing personal distance goals such as [theconqueror.com](http://theconqueror.com) and similar "vital events". On any given day in just the north Dallas portion of the DFW metroplex, I can join a group of walkers via MEETUP that walks 4-6 miles on hike/bike trails in this area.

Yet the Volkspport organization is tied to only rewarding distance credit via sanctioned events. Perhaps they should have kept their pins and books for these sanctioned events but also created a program within the program that recognized and rewarded self-reported fitness efforts/distance accomplishments. That could have grown their membership. The thought that they've limited "America's Walking Club" to only give credit from events that actually require DRIVING or FLYING to attend to earn a credit reward just doesn't make sense in today's world.

I wouldn't really be posting this if I didn't care. I own the books, I have a few event pins, but haven't taken part in over 15 years. I truly wish the Volkspport program was more successful. As a person actually pursuing "lifelong walking and other noncompetitive physical fitness activities" (see vision statement), I wish the program could find a way that rewards those things better, while still hosting events and volunteer opportunities to promote and reward socialization at the local and global level.