

# INTRODUCTION and HISTORY

Welcome to the American Volkssporting Association (AVA), also doing business as *America's Walking Club!*

This publication is a compendium of the policy documents that govern our national organization and its members.

Listed here in the Contents are the current policies and guidelines for all AVA members (clubs) and Associates (individuals). These components are also found on our website at: [my.ava.org](http://my.ava.org).

## **International History**

In January 1968, six sports clubs from Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Austria banded together to form the Internationaler Volkssportverband E.V. (IVV). Translated, it means International Federation of Popular Sports.

The objective of this new organization, referred to as the IVV, was to provide outdoor sports free of competitive pressures and time clocks. The hallmark: Out-of-doors, non-competitive events where "Everyone's A Winner!"

## **National History**

Volkssporting made its United States debut as the direct result of efforts of Rev. Mr. Kenn Knopp, a Catholic Deacon living in Fredericksburg, Texas. He was instrumental in organizing the International Peoples' Sports-United States of America (IPS-USA) organization to govern American volkssporting. It was chartered and incorporated in the state of Texas on 28 April 1976 and accepted as an IVV Associate Member two days later on 30 April.

The first volksmarch was held at Fredericksburg, Texas, on 12-13 June 1976 as part of the American Independence Bicentennial celebration. About 230 people took part in this historic first volkssport event on American soil.

The first American Volkssport national convention was held in Yellow Springs, Ohio (Dayton area) 15-17 June 1979. Eighteen of 21 clubs attended and Dr. David Toth was elected as the first president. During the convention, the organization's founding name (IPS-AVA) was changed to the American Volkssport Association (AVA) to better reflect the United States and avoid any confusion with the name of the parent organization, the International Federation of Popular Sports.

The return of military members and their families to the United States from Europe were the catalysts in establishing and promoting volkssporting nationwide.

The American Volkssport Association (AVA) became the 12th member country of the IVV on 7 July 1979.