

Subject Area	Comments on question 54:
App	I wonder about the necessity of an expensive stand-alone walking app these days. It could be easier to just Google America's Walking Club and hopefully get to the my.ava.org website.
App	An app would be great!
App	It would Be Cost prohibitive for AVA to create their own app. talk to Pacer App or Pedometer++ or one like it about white labeling. Plus all our smart phones are tracking steps & distance. All trails Already has maps of about all trails in whole world with lifeline etc. just use theirs. Stop reinventing the wheel. Q at if AVA would adopt modern technology you wouldn't need so many staff.
App	I don't like being forced to use the osb feature. I don't find it easy to use and I don't like having to pay other than cash. I certainly don't want to use a phone to do a walk. 2. Volkssporting is losing its social feature by not having as many traditional events. You do not have people stopping to ask what is going on when people do year rounds or osb walks. Therefore, missing a recruiting possibility. 3. I also think that the Traveling walks are being misused and take money away from AVA with only paying for one sanction a year. They are being used in heavily populated areas such as the Philly area where there are already a lot of year rounds.
App	I do not like the online box. Has completely limited my participation in AVA events.
App	I hate, hate, hate how other volkssporters try to make me feel that I am an old-fashioned relic, destined to be phased out because I don't use the Online Start Box. I find OSB confusing, and think it sounds very inconvenient. Hate how many walks are getting rid of their physical start boxes and going to OSB only. (Though I understand how hard it may be getting for clubs to find POCs willing to make long drives to PSBs.) I am a POC, and I HATE how if I don't put a walk on OSB some people criticize me as not being sensitive to the wishes or needs of other walkers, but if I lament that a walk I loved is now OSB only, those same people basically tell me to suck it up because I could still walk it if I really wanted to. Couple months ago heard someone say how great it would be if all walks were on OSB and all the PSBs were eliminated, to which my response was that when that happened I would quit volkssport. (I am also a club president. And I suspect that if I quit volkssport, the club would have to disband because no one else wants the job.)
App	Miss having more local events; trying to get used to the OSB - don't like it much yet.
App	Please get things on mobile devices as soon as possible. Love the OSB.
App	really do not like having to look at my phone when walking because of lighting changes, the probability tripping and falling is much greater, your phone doesn't always know which direction you are facing and you can't see what is around you if you're eyes are always focused on your phone

App	The list of OLSB walks has continued to grow making scrolling to a state near the end of the alphabet onerous. Could the current scrolling system be replaced with state buttons?
App	The online start box for the national swim is very confusing to me. I may not use it after I have used up the money I currently have in my account.
App	Would like online start available for all year round events.
Awards	I prefer taking tour company trips and not traveling myself long distances. I enjoy the physical books and the stamps that show all the countries I've been to. I don't want to give those up.
Awards	I think the top priority should be maintaining the IVV event and distance awards program.
Awards	I would love if AVA was modernized. The walks are great but the stamps and books is so old-school
Awards	The IVV awards max out at 3,000 events (pin)/3,500 events (patch) and 50,000K distance. Volkssporting has been around for 45+ years and people are exceeding those amounts. We need to provide awards for additional events and distances.
Bureaucracy	I didn't see any questions relating to being an officer. Officers know how their club members perceive AVA, etc. On the whole, many feel there are too many rules, procedures. They just want to walk & not interested in special programs, keeping books, etc. They are there for socialization/fitness. E3H type of programs is VERY unsuccessful.
Bureaucracy	I think the AVA should work to make participation simpler. 100% of my fellow club members do not stamp books because they think it's too much trouble. We encourage them to pay for their walks, which they (mostly) do.
Bureaucracy	I view AVA/IVV as recreational - not political or bureaucratic. Don't want more obligations.
Bureaucracy	I wish at times there was an email or phone number to contact AVA with questions that the local club may not be able to answer. No contact at AVA is not good. No customer service is not good.
Bureaucracy	Membership in the local club is an enjoyable experience both physically and socially. Want to keep it that way. By that I mean minimizing the structure and reporting activities.
Bureaucracy	So many rules
Bureaucracy	Too many meetings, rules, officials, and paperwork...should be promoting walks and fun
Club Support	AVA is too focused on the national office and not on helping clubs and walkers. They have lost site of their mission.
Club Support	AVA needs to listen to walkers
Club Support	Don't think AVA seems to care about individual clubs staying alive and well
Club Support	I hope this helps leaders who want to lead the local clubs.
Club Support	I know that clubs pay alot to the AVA in fees and it makes it hard for clubs to earn money from the walk events which is disappointing. Volunteers put alot of work into an event and the return to the club is not very much.

Club Support

It seems to me that the AVA's (national office's) only goal is trying to increase its revenue stream. I think that the main goal of the AVA is to support the clubs. New revenue streams will not increase walking and will not save the sport. It might save your jobs for a little while, but if clubs aren't walking then there really is not need for the AVA. Support the clubs. Make things easier for them. Always remember that Walking clubs can exist without the AVA National Office, but the National Office cannot exist without the clubs.

Communication

for example at the last IVV Olympiad in Texas you were asking for volunteers, I emailed and filled out the information but it indicated that you would contact me but no body ever did. At the Olympiad I went to the table and told them which days and times I could assist but instead of looking at those days the person just said I need someone in the next hour to do such and such. That position was something I wasn't trained for I did not feel comfortable doing it because I wasn't trained and didn't know the information. She refused to look at what openings you had on other days for positions I had suggested I could volunteer for. She really didn't seem to care even though the people working the events said they could use more help. Communication, communication and more communication, not just telling people to use the internet!"

Convention

Each of AVA's 10 regions should be responsible for holding a biennial convention on a rotating basis. That way, each region would be covered every 20 years. A spreadsheet could show which region is responsible in what year, so there would be plenty of time for advance planning."

Convention

Before investing a lot into the 2025 convention, find out if there is any interest. It is a little late. Many folks may already have plans. We're already booked thru Jun 2025.

Convention

Having a biennial convention in April or May is pandering to those who don't have children in school or who can take vacations at any time. AVA is becoming a geriatric society that caters to those who are relatively well-off. This proposal, as with the proposal to do a convention cruise, WILL NOT attract the still working/still in school population that is needed for AVA to grow and rejuvenate itself. The German model that so many service members and their families brought back to the US upon the end of their tours is broken in the modern USA. Your on-line and mobile device applications will only exacerbate the trend of volkssporting being an individual or very-small group activity. What ever you do for the 50th anniversary in 2026, don't make it a single event in one state. If that happens, the downward trend in clubs and participants over the last 20 years will accelerate.

Convention

I love the AVA conventions, would like more regional conventions. Do the AVA officers ever travel to state events? Does Hector?

Convention

Is there ever going to be a convention again?

Convention

You might take a look at how CVF prices/conducts conventions. Also, most of their Permanent Trails (YREs) are available online, maps and directions included.

Costs	Instead of increased fees how about cutting expenses. Canadian walks are 2.00 Canadian. They do not have the cost of stamps & mailing them. Instead they use stickers. More events in OSB. How about if you register using the OSB, fee is \$3. That might encourage electronic participation. I belong to a walking group Women Outdoors. Annual dues \$5 & no charge for group walks.
Costs	It is getting more and more difficult to hold traditional events on public lands because of the cost of permits. The parks base their fees on whether any money is collected. If no fees are collected then the permits are free or low cost. Because AVA requires the collection of money for credit walkers the fees are sometimes too much for a club to pay. Some clubs are trying to say "donations only" to avoid these fees yet still pay AVA for the credit walker. This sounds like fraud to me and I would personally not put myself nor my club in that position. In 2023 we were hit with a huge permit fee for a three day hiking event. It was too late to cancel the event because shelter, printed maps, etc. had already been paid. The club paid out of its reserves but I was very stressed as point of contact. I have decided not to be point of contact at any other traditional events. Please fund AVA differently!
Costs	Stop the pins and patches....certificates are fine...cut back on cost.
Costs	Work with a balanced budget based on real money in hand. Staff according to the number of clubs that are still active. In other words, don't be hiring more staff to support a reduced membership. In business when a product is not selling, you don't raise the price of the product and expect solvency.
Events	as I age now i prefer shorter walks but interersting ones and birdwatching. I am not a fan of group walks for many reasons.
Events	Both myself and husband are Life members and he is a Vietnam Veteran of Navy for 4 years. Unfortunately our closest club is 2and 1/2 hours away and we do participate with walking Veterans special program. Our club does Wed evening walks & Sun morning which we canâ€™t join because of distance. Also we are slower walkers than most club members perhaps due to age but still love the walks. San Antonio IVV in 2023 was our last event.
Events	Delaying the 5k group walks by 1/2 hour after 10K group leaves is not acceptable
Events	Have Clubs do more scheduled and multiday events
Events	Have nice meeting points where you can socialize with a beer. Make the walks cheaper for members (while it's free for non-members now). Always have signs for the walks instead of a printed description.
Events	I like annotated directions that highlight special/historical things on the walks.
Events	I like YREs because I can do them anytime, there is no pressure to walk fast or keep up with others.
Events	I prefer actual stamps when that is an option, but appreciate using the OSB when traveling. The OSB allows you to get the walk route and instructions ahead of time, and you don't have to worry about the start point being closed or the ""walk box"" being lost.
Events	I REALLY like having a 5K option when we don't have time or energy to do a full

Events	I really wish that the walking maps (such as the YRE) were available online (or app). I DO NOT go to a drop box to pick up maps. I don't want people to see me (an older woman) knowing where I'm going and that I'll be alone. Therefore I rarely do the YREs. Having the walking maps available EASILY and accessible would significantly increase my participation in AVA. Otherwise, currently, I don't bother. It's not safe for me.
Events	I walk about 20 miles a week, and only once in a while use the volkswalk because it is not convenient for daily walks. I go pretty fast and that doesn't lend to most weekend walks.
Events	I would like to be able to access historical data about sanctioned events back to the beginning of AVA.
Events	I've shared a limiting factor with the AVA before, which I'll mention again- and that is the suitability of some of the walks for families. Just for ex, recently we started out on a walk on a college campus that was very quiet and peaceful, but a couple of miles in, we were crossing a highway access road, walking by a homeless shelter, walking on a sidewalk near very heavy traffic, cars honking, people hooting/hollering/whistling at us as they drove by, causing an uncomfortable situation when with children. If we had known about those conditions beforehand, we would not have chosen that walk. Another example would be a beautiful walk in one of our nearby towns, but in the last km, there was a surprise 200 yd section with no sidewalk with cars whizzing by 50 MPH, causing us to have to abandon the route. Another walk in a different town had us crossing the busiest 12 lane intersection in town a couple of times- a feeling of hold your breath, walk fast and pray. When we saw that, we just had to turn around and go back rather than risk it. For the past 15 years since having children, we have tried to choose walks in quiet country settings. I don't ever recommend volksmarching to other families with children because I worry where they may have to end up walking! I think maybe a disclaimer in the event description would be helpful.
Events	Is it possible to have a category for create your own volkswalk where you pay a fee to the local club and walk 5K or 10K and record your walk with a simple description and comments?
Events	It is my hope you can continue to work diligently in the effort to improve while providing a wonderful opportunity for everyone to enjoy the original purpose of the AVA. Simplicity is nice. Some costs are necessary. Are all the additional "opportunities" necessary?
Events	Loop trails are great, but out-and-back are ok too.
Events	More walks within National Parks, please."
Events	Our one big walk each year is the one in which we meet for lunch afterwards. This seems like a great idea for ALL events as it fulfills the ""friendship"" part of our slogan.
Events	So much hype and focus on the events overshadows the joy of walking. The roots are getting lost. I went on many walks previously. No longer. Ease of finding local walks is not there.

Events	The 10K walking goal for walks is too ambitious for those without sufficient time or energy to participate. Shorter distances should be an option more frequently. The whole AVA model seems too focused on achievements rather than the social and health aspects of walking together.
Events	There is a desperate need in the US for "third spaces." AVA could create these, in a sense, by offering more frequent and geographically distributed walks. However, to be successful it is imperative that they recruit and retain younger generations. It is disheartening when I show up and I am the youngest person by several decades. It's great to socialize with these folks, but that's not really what I am looking for. Organizations like the AVA (VFW, American Legion, Rotary, Lions Club, Masons, etc., etc., etc.) really need to figure out what value they can offer to younger generations if they want to survive.
Events	Time consuming to drive to same places on weekends and I have other interests. Frequent AVA participation is best suited to people with a walking buddy.
Events	Too many walks are the same from year to year. I get tired of the same old traditions and YTE's. I'd like to see some variety and coinciding with local festivals. Too many walks lately are not even publicized on the AVA website. I have to hunt around on club websites. Clubs should advertise on Meet Ups to bring in new members. All clubs should be encouraged to put their events on the on line start box. The AVA needs to get a faster website. Leadership needs to adopt a positive attitude toward change. An AVA app was needed for a long time and is the only way to attract new members.
Events	Truly enjoy the freedom to participate in the Traditional walk events, with friends and family, as time allows them. Would like to see a discounted participant walk fee for independent small groups of family/friends. Example \$4/individual; \$8 for two or more in same group.
Events	We need a lot more walks. We need more special programs. I really enjoy the County Seat program being offered in Arizona, Nevada and Utah. We had interesting special programs in the past. I think they we should revisit some of those. Has a partnership with an app like AllTrails been considered.
Events	When traveling, sometimes directions are unclear and/or haven't been updated with construction or other issues. It feels like local clubs don't remember that people from other cities/states may have never been to the area and very unfamiliar with the area
Fees	I recognize that AVA has expenses that are high, but it is pricing clubs out of existence

Fees I will continue to be involved with the AVA but I may donate and not pay the IVV \$4.00 fee. The person who pushed for this increase is not even someone who does alot of volkswalking and really doesn't understand how expensive it is to walk with the AVA on a weekly basis. And expecting clubs to support the AVA is not sustainable. We need the people in clubs to also become AVA members. Maybe give them a discount to join the AVA when they join a club. Ever Walk is quickly growing and may even surpass us now in members. They are a younger organization but they do some things that are interesting. It would be worth studying that club and discovering how they operate and what they offer. They use ambassadors to lead walks using Meetup across the US. I think the AVA is fun and I certainly have benefitted from volkswalking since 2003. I want this organization to continue and experience growth. "

Fees Maybe if we do go more electronic, there could be a method to Venmo payments. Or even purchase a multi-walk passcard and deduct the fees as we walk. Kind of like a mass transit pass.

Fees Need to revisit the new fee structure cost to the clubs for free walkers as I noted above. Guest walkers s/b free walkers to the club as we are trying to entice them to join up but still need to be able to attract them to our events. Need the mobile app to attract younger folks. They don't use paper - they use their phones. Need to make the OSB user friendly. My 30 something aged daughter who is very computer and program literate finds the OSB not user friendly at all. Lastly, AVA needs to get their budgeting and spending under control. AVA spending versus income is totally out of control.

Fees Now that the manditory \$2.00 fee is in place for all walks, I tend to skip walks when I don't have cash. If I didn't have the \$3 to stamp my books, I knew it was ok to still show up to walk. And if I had a buck, I'd contribute the donation.

Fees Our club lost almost \$1,000 last year and will probably lose more every year under the new fee structure.

Fees The cost of new walker packets is too high. You are trying to get people started not deter them.

Fees The outrageous new fees are ridiculous

Fees You are going to price yourself out of a good sport . Members are angry and are dropping out. The only thing that keeps people in the club is being with friends not the AVA rules and skyrocketing prices. Itâ€™s all about money money money and the clubs get very little support.

Fees Your demanding money from every walker does not help us in Washington. We plan eventts that local people come to but do not support AVA. Just happy to have such a very special even planned in their neighborhood.

Fees As a Canadian walking in the US, I find the online sign-ups hard to use. The increase in price to \$4 for individual walks with our exchange is becoming very expensive. Will have to choose walks carefully. Would like to see you go to stickers rather than stamps. Makes the book keeping much neater and easier.

Fundraising	We need significantly better fund raising capabilities within the AVA organization and its' ranks.
General	All six AVA employees have been with AVA more than six/seven years. I hope AVA Nation
General	Begin to roll out changes in 2025. Don't wait any longer.
General	Change is hard, but to survive we MUST.
General	Do not enter me in any drawings.
General	During the AVA/IML event in San Antonio I hardly ever saw Henry Rosales. AVA hosted this National/International event. He should have been "out there" making his presence known...walking with and meeting people. He should have been "politicking" and meeting the event visitors - not just the heads of IVV/IML. He should be going to regional events - and not on AVA's dime. We pay him enough.
General	Good club, good friends, good walks. I'd hate to see clubs dissolve because of lack of membership. Don't take advantage of the walkers you have left.
General	I acquired Covid in 2020 and developed a serious related heart condition in 2021. I have not participated in any AVA events or serious exercise since that time. I have gained a lot of weight. I did walk the 10K race with my son in the Air Force Marathon at Wright Patterson AFB in September, 2023. I am seriously trying to get more fit and lose weight this year before I reach age 80 in June, 2024.
General	I am sorry that I am not active since moving to Florida. I had many more opportunities for day walks in St Louis - and sometimes here it is just too hot and too far for me to want to make the effort to find a walk. We especially enjoyed walking in St Louis when my friend's dog Brandy was alive - she was featured in TAW Tails on the Trails one issue.
General	I began AVA when a late friend showed me his record books.
General	I don't do many special programs as I found it stressful when I was still working, may re-consider now that I'm retired. I love volkswalking!
General	I feel the "Big Give" program is very overdone.
General	I hope that AVA can get into the 21st century, and find a path that works. I do like to be able to travel and find walking routes wherever I go. But with so many options available now, it's hard to know how AVA can become relevant again.
General	I love using Volksmarching as a way to explore new places. Whenever I travel, I look up events & routes in advance, even though Volksmarching is not the reason for my travel. So the website is very helpful (although often has not been updated and I have to reach out to the POC for clarification). I do, however, miss the print version of TAW, which I would read completely. I do not go to the website, just to read it.
General	I regret that due to age and health that I am no longer actively participating. Have applied to become a life member.

General I would love the opportunity to get more involved with AVA and I don't wish to downplay my local club as I know they have spent considerable time. Our walks are SO well organized and I wish to acknowledge the yearly email which includes the download/printable walk schedule our president puts out - it is awesome! - I am just frustrated that anything other than registering and attending the physical walk is not promoted. I purchased the New Member Kit and was excited about the opportunity for patches, the 10% discounts, :) , but when I wished to use these, redeem them, the contact was indifferent and said we don't participate, etc. etc., go online, check with this person. It turned into a big deal and a little bit of time on my part and constant emailing just to get the patch, follow-thru on the perks the kit included. So I asked the club contact why they sold the kit if they don't promote them or follow-thru with them? After one gets to know the club officers and their personalities they are enjoyable, but for an outsider coming in or attending a walk for the first time, they might appear as unapproachable. Anyway, I am grateful for the time they put in and as I have gotten to know the seasoned members, they are a wealth of information! :)

General It was better some years ago. A lot of clubs, two day events, awards, etc. Not sure how to turn things around.

General Keep Walking Local

General My responses may be a bit wonky as I used to be (and would like to be) active but now am unable to. I would walk more if I could.

General My work schedule includes rotating days and shifts. This has somewhat put a limit in my walking events participation.

General Would like to see employees from AVA Headquarters at our local events and participate or show their support.

General You probably won't want to base the future of AVA on my answers as I'm getting into the senior citizen category and remember the Volkssport good old days of the 1980's. I don't participate as much as I used to because of my elderly mother, but I look forward to traveling to more events upon retirement from work and less caretaking responsibilities.

Kudos Because of my very busy lifestyle, I participate and enjoy walking with the group as much as possible and am proud to be a Volkssport member. I also belong to a hiking group which takes a lot of my time. I love being active, especially at my age.

Kudos I have been participating in AVA walks for most of my life. I enjoy them and have many fond memories of walks thru the years with my parents, siblings, friends, and now my children. I hope the AVA continues for many years to come! I appreciate all the hard work and thoughtfulness members put into hosting the events.

Kudos I like seeing new places. I like nature/hiking, my husband likes history.

Kudos I love the AVA and my local club's walking events. Keep up the good work!

Kudos I love volksmarching for so many reasons. The health benefits, visiting new places, the camaraderie. Thanks to the AVA for continuing and striving! "

Kudos Love the walks.

Kudos recognizes their dedication to AVA at large and they are compensated fairly."

Kudos All the people I have talked to at AVA headquarters have been friendly and helpful.
Thank you

Kudos everyone should walk in the shoes of the folks who work in the AVA office because
they do a tremendous amount of thankless work.

Kudos Have enjoyed AVA walks immensely!! Has enriched my husband and my life as we
walk together. We have seen so many beautiful places we might otherwise never
have seen! Thank you!!

Kudos I am enjoying the webinars

Kudos I am grateful for all of the wonderful experiences I have had with AVA

Kudos I enjoy all of the cities I have had the opportunity to explore in CA that I never
really gave much mind to before joining the Sticks. And I have met some
wonderful people along the way. I have even become a penpal to the POC of a
Frederick MD walk. (I was scoping out the area for possible retirement and then
had to call her to get mailing info to pay the club)."

Kudos I enjoy walking events that are clearly documented.

Kudos I have had health problems for the last couple of years. Having varied
route/difficulty levels is essential to providing something for us all. Keep up the good
work.

Kudos I have thoroughly enjoyed my 30+ years of volkssporting. I was President of the
local club in Surprise AZ for 17 years--finally giving it up just over a year ago. It was
hard work and there weren't enough members to support holding events. We had
a lot of YREs and 1-2 traditional events per year--lots of work for very few walkers.
I hate to say it, but I believe the volkssporting trend has run its course. I dislike the
notion of registering online--I would never have gotten so involved without the
personal approach that used to be volkssporting.

Kudos I have volkswalked for over 30 years in every state and every capital and in many
countries. I have served in many leadership positions at the state and local level. I
am the POC for several YRES, and the organizer for many traditional events over
the years (three this year). My fervor for the AVA has been dying as I see the
organization dying with no serious attempt to revive it. Raising fees for clubs sends
the wrong message. It means business as usual for the AVA headquarters and the
hell with the clubs. With this trend I see little hope for the AVA in the future and
just hope it lasts long enough for my walking career.

Kudos I love AVA! Our group leader is the best! I've made so many friends and seen so
many places since I've joined this group.

Kudos I LOVE AVA. Have made lifelong friends from all over the country. Have visited and
seen places I would otherwise not have known about or seen.

Kudos I love that we are moving toward the future ... can't stay Old School Volksmarching
forever!

Kudos I love volkswalking. I hope we can get the next generation interested.

Kudos I love what my membership has created for me...friends, travel, new places to experience!

Kudos I think the IVV/AVA programs are fantastic. I've enjoyed multiple IVV events!

Kudos Iâ€™m so glad I was introduced to Volksmarching! It has become an important part of my life!

Kudos Iâ€™ve seen the USA up close and personal because of the AVA walks. My life is full of beautiful memories of this wonderful country and friends I have found along the trails. Iâ€™m totally grateful I have and continue to walk and travel at advancing age. If I didnâ€™t walk, I would be immobile by now. Thank you for this opportunity to have a place to find some of the most interesting and unknown American towns, cities , parks, lakes, rivers, historical sites, and the wonders of the earth.

Kudos I'm very grateful to AVA. Doing the walks has been great for me, my wife, and my 6 kids.

Kudos i've enjoyed belonging to AVA for many years.

Kudos Just want to commend AVA for working to improve the interaction with the local clubs and providing support.

Kudos Keep up the good work!

Kudos KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, SPREAD THE WORD, ADVERTISE.

Kudos Keep up the good work. Thanks.

Kudos Keep up the good work. I am very concerned about whether or not AVA will be able to continue into the future. In Colorado many clubs have failed.

Kudos Keep up the great work.!!!

Kudos Love OSB. Should be promoted and used more

Kudos Love the AVA organization and all it does for me.

Kudos Love the club, but need to advertise more.

Kudos My wife and I love this sport. We both have walked over 30,000KM and walked in 42 states and 27 foreign countries. We have traveled with Volkssport tours and attended an IVV olympiad in Pilsen Czech Republic. We also created and chaired the Columbia River Gorge walks for 20 years. the last 3, 2012, 2014, and 2016 had over 600 participants that logged 2500 walks. No other ongoing AVA event has been so successful. You would think that the AVA would do everything they could to find out why we were so successful. Sadly, no one from AVA headquarters has ever attended this event and only 2 AVA Presidents ever attended. these were 4 day events with 13 walks 1 bike and 1 swim a meet & greet and a Sternwheeler cruise/dinner on the Columbia River. So please excuse my negativity but I don't have a very warm and fuzzy feeling toward what the AVA does for the Clubs.

Kudos No thank you and thanks for asking

Kudos Oh, the wonderful places I've seen and the great people I've met in the past 35 years. I can't imagine how empty my life would have been without volkswalking.

Kudos Thank you all for keeping AVA moving forward! I look forward to becoming a member.

Kudos	Thank you for All you do
Kudos	Thank you for all you do to support the clubs!
Kudos	Thank you for asking for input from members.
Kudos	Thank you for listening! I have done several Online Walks & loved being able to plan ahead and not fear that the walk box may have gone missing, after traveling some distance to reach the town! CVS threw away 2 of our walk boxes at different stores in Sonoma County, California! They were clearly marked with our contact info.
Kudos	Thank you for making volkssporting great.
Kudos	Thank you for supporting this fun and healthy way to maintain life-long activity. I am recently retired and walk daily. I look forward to greater participation locally and while traveling.
Kudos	Thank you for your hard work. Thank you for your passion.
Kudos	Thank you to everyone in the national office and to the website creators and updaters
Kudos	Thanks again; great job.
Kudos	Thank-you for letting membership give their opinions. Look forward to the results as this is a different time for AVA.
Kudos	The national office staff are fantastic. Marian is efficient and so helpful!!
Kudos	Volkssporting was a like saver for me. I met new friends at a time of my life that I was going through a rough spot. It was a healthy sport for someone who is not athletic. Thanks for being there back in the late 1980s when I first got involved.
Kudos	We have enjoyed many walks at home and look for walks when traveling as a way to explore new areas. Always fun but reduced physical strength is making it harder to participate in events
Kudos	We love our walking club - Fredericksburg Walking Club. It's really growing in membership and many of the new walkers want a new walker packet. We're a very friendly group and started eating lunch together after walks, which people really enjoy. Plus we have a social director who plans different activities every two months (bowling, FredNats games, a cookie exchange). There's a lot of folks who are hungry for more social interaction.
Kudos	We loved it in the 90's and 2000's. Just not able any more.
Membership	All AVA members should be assigned to a club, and all club members should automatically be members of AVA National. All clubs should charge an annual dues fee, with a portion of the receipts, say \$5, going to AVA National. Actually, AVA national could do annual billing from the national office and attribute a portion to the local clubs. The above measures would ferret out the true membership status of the clubs and AVA as a whole. From there, both national and local databases could be established as a baseline for future data needs.
Membership	Active local groups (i.e. MN) that walk together regularly provide the most value and attract more people. Having moved to Arizona where the club only has two one-day events per year, my interest in AVA has significantly diminished except when I'm working to finish a Special Program.

Membership

Also, in all these years, I have never known there were AVA "members" until fairly recently. What does being a member mean?

Membership

AVA are in danger of folding if they don't reverse the loss of clubs and participation, and that starts with treating dedicated volunteers and clubs, better. A recent example - there were meetings in Arlington in the Fall of '23 where major (long- needed) decisions were made, but clubs did not receive any notice in advance of national motions - such that they could communicate to their elected RD their stance / input on things like a fee-increase. Information at National is not processed accurately or timely. Many opportunities are missed due to a continued lack of understanding of how grass-roots clubs actually operate week to week. Life Associates are not engaged in providing advice based on years of actual volkssporting knowledge and experience. Input is not sought. Some current RDs rarely communicate with Club Presidents, let alone members. Clubs continue to fold and need assistance. Few new clubs are started due to (a) lack of knowledge or understanding of our secret society (b) high barriers to entry in this 21st century world. Some committees are not operating at all, while others usurp authority not in their charters. The headquarters has become too parochial, more concerned about one neighborhood in San Antonio than in the national posture of their members (clubs) where, we now have at least 7 states without a single club at all, more than half of the remaining states with 2 clubs or less, and more than half of the remaining clubs with fewer than 25 members. Meanwhile other national non-competitive fitness groups like Team RWB, Everwalk, Walk-w/a Doc, and Walk2Connect are growing or thriving. These are the facts. A change in leadership at the top is needed.

Membership

Enjoyed AVA when I was actively walking. Since wife can no longer walk events, I don't participate.

Membership

Finally, I was just at the IML event in San Antonio. There were many more younger people than I ever see at AVA events. We need to figure out what the difference is between these 2 groups."

Membership

Friends and I have debated at length what needs to happen to keep this organization alive. First, it needs to be run like a business, and not like a socialist organization: "The problem with socialism," said Margaret Thatcher, is that eventually you run out of other people's money." Neither a club nor an organization can be run at a loss. I see a lot of bad economics at play with the organization and club; both need revenue to survive. Second, invest in the future by investing in youth. Many of the core volksmarch leaders are dead, dying, or in poor health; unfortunately, there aren't young people to replace the ranks. Your focus should be on recruiting and incentivizing young people to involve themselves with volksmarching through scholarships, recognition, etc. Young people want to chart their own courses; let them chart new courses for our members. Conduct outreach to college students; they are the future. Everyone else is doing this...Why not AVA? the organization is currently set to founder on bad economic policies and old age. These, therefore, are the issues that need to be addressed. AVA was such a robust and amazing experience when I got involved some 15-20 years ago: There were walks every weekend, on both Saturdays and Sundays. Hundreds attended the walks! Now, there are fewer clubs, walks, and members. What was once robust has become a trickle. In exchange for incentives, enlist the youth to carry this organization to the next generation.

Membership

I do admit that at almost 62, I am still old-school mentality, but am trying to stay up with and embrace the electronic age and all its changes. I do see that this is also the future of AVA if we are going to continue to grow. I hope it doesn't fade with the baby boomers.

Membership

I do Volkswalks, but I am not currently a member of a local club.

Membership

I enjoy Volkssporting. I hope that it doesn't change too much. It should be simple, enjoyable, a time spent in nature, no stress and the less technology the better.

Membership

I hope the new programs helps the AVA to grow

Membership

I really wish AVA could figure out how to attract a younger population of walkers and how to advertise our mission to them, as most people I try to tell about AVA have never heard of it. Also, a lot of the "old-school" walkers are still stuck on so many rules/regulations that AVA started out with, that those ideas are never going to go away. Now, people just want to walk together for the fun, fitness, and fellowship, not to be told you can't do this, you can't do that. Get rid of the outdated mandates!

Membership

I teach at a community college. One year there was a walk that started at the college and several students participated. Young people want something and are willing to pay for it. I suggested medals or pins at a club meeting once and was told, "We have enough of those." Do you want new blood or not? I have medals too, but when I finish a race it's a mark of my achievement. Appeal to younger people.

Membership I worry that most local club members do not know that there is a separate AVA membership or why that would be important. There is little knowledge or understanding of what national AVA does or how to get involved. Why aren't we told, for example, of standing committees and encouraged to serve according to our interests and strengths?

Membership I would love to think that the AVA would be around when I retire in 8 - 10 years. However, if HHH is any indication, it won't be around in a year. Our club is dying, and there is no intervention from AVA. I have suggested potential walks and ended up with the president refusing to give simple information required by the town such as a copy of our insurance. I have offered to assist doing specific tasks for an event and had the president send out an email blast that I will be doing something that I cannot do due to my work schedule or the distance from my home. I have worked on fixing walk directions and had them ignored. All of the walks are ridiculously far from my home, but I was POC on a YRE that was 90 miles from our house (we were the closest members). I requested that we have an online start box because of the drive and the fact that the location did not open until 10 am - too hot in the summer. Again, our president refused until WAI convinced her to do so for a bus trip. After the work I did, I heard second-hand that the walk was considered abandoned. Some members of HHH have left because their voices were not heard. I don't know if anyone remaining would volunteer to take over because so many of us are frustrated. Also, without SOP's somewhere, how do we even know what is expected of a club? There is no list of members, and the treasurer could not even get a count. There has not been a meeting in years, and the last time there was supposed to be a meeting, the president did not show up on time. I would love to create a walk in our town, but until there is some help on what I need to do, I will not try setting this up again.

Membership I would suggest being able to join AVA and not a specific club; as not all clubs are created equal and close to residence of all members

Membership I'm not sure what can be done to increase membership and involvement. Many clubs are not very inclusive.

Membership I'm sad that the AVA membership is getting smaller and smaller and that the majority of the members are older. However, this sport is a hard sell for families, as it requires a lot of travel and planning to do regularly. I'm interested in supporting the AVA, but even I have a difficult time participating regularly. I wish I had some solutions or better ideas for you.

Membership I'm confused when you asked about AVA membership. I receive your emails so I assume I am a member. But I'm not paying anything yearly. I just go online to the website and register for walks. So I'm not sure if there are different things that official (paid?) membership gets you. This is unclear. Thank you for everything you are doing!

Membership It is hard to make everyone happy. Concentrate on getting people out walking and enjoying each other's company. "Come walk with us." Don't spend energy and money on things that don't truly support this basic vision. Try to keep it light-hearted and fun.

Membership	Many of the older members in leadership roles are unresponsive and bristle at suggestions for making AVA more attractive to younger walkers with families. The attitude has driven away many potential new members.
Membership	Modernize. For example, drop rubber stamping in favor of on-line books. pdf 'stamps' are OK for those who want a physical book. But recognize that younger participants simply aren't interested in any of that...books, pins, challenges...they just want to find a walk, do it and get on to something else. So, take a look to the geocache system as an excellent, extremely low-overhead model. All records are electronic, data entry is pushed onto the user, with very little human interaction other than exception handling (bad cache reports, etc.) The automation also allows saleable features: One cannot sort a paper book by walk name, or distance, or city or state, etc. Total cost of such a structure is a server and a contract IT code-writer hired on a per-job basis (not payrolled). It makes the annual fee system work instead of per-walk fees.
Membership	My health has deteriorated this past year and I no longer can walk long distances. I fear this is happening to much of our membership.
Membership	My perception is this is an ageing group. More walkers/new club members are needed if VW is to survive. More local walks. Low cost for families to encourage children being included.
Membership	Need more walkers at the club level. Maybe more paid positions to increase structure at corporate level that would filter down to state and club level--Paid positions for RD and DRD
Membership	Need to recruit new/younger members
Membership	Our club does not need help attracting new members. We've gone from 6-8 members just a few years ago to now more than 80 paying members. We have over 1,000 Facebook "members". Not only do our club members love to walk, we also love to get together for social activities - barbecues, cookie exchanges, local baseball games, bowling, etc. We've talked about this and feel there is a real need in this day and age for social interaction. We've filled a need, at least in our area. For example, we recently had 30 members go bowling. I, and others, like to bowl but haven't in years because we have no one to bowl with. I'm wondering if emphasis should be placed not only on walking but on social events as well. Right now, we have scheduled walks every other Saturday, some YRE's, some traditional walks, some just fun walks in the area. There is a lot of laughter not only on our walks but at our social events also. Our new club members can't believe how much fun we have and how friendly we are.
Membership	Our club members are loyal to the club. They have want to walk. They don't have any connection to the AVA and could care less as long as walks as available.

Membership

Our local club the Falcon Wanderers has been run by the same folks for many years. When I first started walking with this organization, over 20 years ago, I did not get a warm fuzzy feeling from the volunteers running the club and events. They seemed to be involved with only themselves (meaning the club members they already knew and were friends with), a clicky group and didn't reach out to welcome new participants/members or encourage them to get involved. They are now paying the price for that, unable to fill vacant leadership positions within the club. Although I have volunteered with many organizations over the years, I never felt compelled to step up with this organization. I do mostly YRE/SEA walks now and rarely join in a Traditional event. The calendar of Traditional events rarely if ever changes. After doing the same walks, every year, for several years I have lost interest in doing them. The YRE/SEA don't often change either, but I can do them when I want and I like the remote registration. We do have two other AVA clubs in town, The Woodland Wanderers and The Colorado Springs Walking Club. Each offers walks, but don't appear to hold meetings and rarely hold Traditional events. When they do, they are a repeat of the previous year's walk. They are mostly in the business of YRE/SEA walks.

Membership

Pull inactive members back in.

Membership

Since we no longer have a decent club in our area we have been walking in BC. I have lost faith in AVA.

Membership

The biggest concern that needs to be addressed is the continuing decline of Clubs, Associate Members and participants at our events.

Membership

The number of clubs and walks is slowly, but steadily, declining. I think AVA needs to develop a strategy to reverse this trend. This is one of the organizations most troublesome problems and deserves a high priority.

Membership

We have to attract some younger walkers and get information to empty nesters to travel with our sport. They can on own not have to use tour companies but that is fun.

Membership

What about allowing for online clubs? I would love for my family who resides all around the country to form a club."

Membership

With the goal of getting new walkers, AVA must retain the ones that are all ready dedicated. Raising the price for those that are retired and walk frequently puts AVA at great risk. We can walk for fitness without getting AVA credit, but some choose to include getting stamps so AVA can continue. Tipping the scale is dangerous. If the clubs are non-existent, or there are not areas close by to participate, that is also a great problem. Gas, traffic, and time also contribute to less participation, and don't overlook how governmental regulation and technology impact us. Most just want to walk and avoid the hassle. The more AVA takes on the less ownership the clubs and walkers have. We are not a commercial business, and it seems like that is what the board is creating.

Partners	Focus AVA website on helping newcomers quickly find walking and cycling events. 2) Partner with national organizations (AARP, National Park Service, ...other) to increase Volkspart participation and AVA financial stability.
Partners	Consider using podcasting to get out the word to a younger audience.
Partners	I began walking Sept. 2006. I have heard countless stories from the old-timers about the glory days when New Balance was a sponsor. Traditional walks included a drawing for new NB shoes. AVA E.D. and staff need to focus almost exclusively on getting another big-name sponsor ASAP!!! Imagine having our events promoted on the website and socials of a national name like REI or Avia or similar. Also, I don't mind the TAW going electronic. But so far I am NOT getting the emails for it and have to call AVA every quarter and beg staff to send it to me. There's no excuse for this - just put me on the email list to receive it every time. TAW is one of the only perks of paid membership so let's make sure paid members DO get it. And finally, why didn't your survey offer a "maybe" option for almost all the yes/no questions??
Partners	Partnerships have not been pursued.. American Public Health Association has 2 multi day walking challenges (Jan - Public Health Week/First week of April) and the week of its annual conference (November). For years, National Parks was looking for partners to get people to the park. Seems you broke up with the Girl Scouts.National Walking Day is mid National Public Health Week. Probably some disability & physical activity groups would be good partners.
Partners	You need a major commercial sponsor. I liked it when SAS was a sponsor. Why cant one of the fitness apps be a sponsor?
Publicity	AVA/ IVV/IML has got to STOP being the best keep secret! HOW CAN WE CHANGE THIS?!?
Publicity	I do not think we advertise enough. People do not know about AVA. I knew nothing until I went to one on a meetup and I wished I had known earlier in life. It is a wonderful program that Noone knows about. Why do we not do national ads? I know they would cost but people need to know.
Publicity	I love the AVA walks and am so happy to have discovered them. I think the AVA would benefit from more marketing as it just so happened I came upon the website accidentally.
Publicity	Marketing and Partnerships are key to growth!
Publicity	more advertising outside IVV channels (almost nobody knows about it, also overseas in Europe. It s a secret everywhere so to speak). May be some non-IVV related hiking magazines. Working with other organizations like American Hiking Society or State or local non IVV hiking clubs, we all have the same interest. Advertising in local newspapers, radio stations where events take place.
Publicity	Move into the digital age, Promote walking. Change name to "Walking Club"; not many young walkers have any concept of what "Volk marching" or "Volkssports" means.
Publicity	National exposure would help attract new participants.

Publicity	See my comments on a previous page about what AVA could do. Publicity is one thing AVA could do. Another is supply "mini-programs" hints for clubs on topics like how to get newcomers involved, how to publicize walks outside the Volkssport community, etc. They wouldn't have to be in person workshops anymore, zoom groups or YouTube videos could be available through the AVA website. Obviously more work to set up, but not much more than setting up a workshop at a national convention, and way more widely available.
Publicity	very glad AVA has done away with free walkers. Try to advertise in AARP publications.
Publicity	Volksmarching is great, but no one knows about it. We need to spread the word.
Publicity	We are not close to a club location and just like to walk. Get information online Am walking all counties in PA, MD, and VA. Have walked in all 50 states and capitols.
Special Programs	Have Special Program Administrators send to the TAW the folks who have completed their books.
Special Programs	If you do NOT participate in any AVA National or Special Programs, why do you choose not to participate? actual answer is I don't have time. Maybe wehn I retire
Special Programs	President Nancy W's PCT special program is THE BEST and a real challenge for us. I know we will complete the challenge with time.
Special Programs	Put Starting Point on-line
Special Programs	The special programs are fun! We always look for walks when we travel.
Special Programs	I think the capital walks should all be online and available year round. I went on a trip to the Northeast in October with the idea to get all the state capitols in that region as I am working on completing the States and Capitols books. Maine was unavailable for walking at the time I went in October. I even emailed the walk sponsor to see if I could walk it for credit even though I was less than a week from the closing of the walk for the year. She said I could walk the walk, but could not get credit. So frustrating. In Albany, New York, the office was closed even though the AVA website stated the hours it was open. So I was unable to get either of these walks completed and don't know if I will ever get back to these states again. In the age of everything online, this should never be a problem for these types of walks.
Special Programs	As for Special Programs, I only do those that appeal to me, which are few. It's super frustrating when applicable walks are available but haven't been sanctioned. I would like to add some of my own! It's also super annoying when sanctioned walks should count for a Special Program, but that designation doesn't show up in an online search."

Survey

Asking the gender besides M & F is a turnoff. It may be something to stop me enjoying the AVA. I was so happy when you didn't mention sex/gender in anything and I didn't see any walks that were for any LGBTQ walks or merchandise. If you started that merchandise would you add Heterosexual Pride merchandise? Please do not start down this road or I may have to quit. I thought this was just walking and enjoying time together (even if just walking alone - to be a part of something that EVERYONE can enjoy together). Should we have Heterosexual walks and LGB+ walks? NO. There should be NO REASON for that. It actually makes me sad to think you are going in this direction. The AVA should not even get into that. You should have had M/F/Prefer not to share as options. Now if I have to see rainbow colors (and pastel colors) everywhere I will be very upset. I thought this is one place we could be that this was not brought up. Now I am sad. Please don't make this into that kind of club. I was enjoying the AVA and it not getting into all that but this may be the point I have to quit if you start that. Now for sure I know I will not buy a Lifetime Membership. Not sure how I will refer people if you start going in that direction. *I was going to suggest I think you should be encouraging Boy Scouts to get a badge & other clubs like that to have walks and to publicize that so they know it is available - send the information to the Boy Scouts. The Girl Scouts I saw already have a badge. Please do not make the AVA about sexual preferences/gender. Also on one of your pages it shows that an adult could walk with a child and it looked like they could get certificates and such and maybe even specific books (not sure about that) but if so it should be publicized so people know about it.*

Survey

Eliminate the ignorant gender categories, indicates a lack of common sense

Survey

For supposedly being anonymous, why name and other personal questions?

Survey

I said at the outset I can't currently walk for medical reasons. With over 30 years of doing events, I chose to answer the survey as if I currently walk; experience should count.

Survey

Inputs on surveys have been ignored, will this be any different?

Survey

Look forward to seeing the tabulation of the results.

Survey

Perhaps share a summary of these results with participants.

Survey

Recommend #30 be multiple choice. You say "anonymous," but the first question is one's name.

Survey

Several of the questions should have been "essay" questions, not "multiple choice"

Survey

Some of the questions were hard to answer. I was pretty active in the past but do not walk much since I have gotten older but still keep my lifetime membership.

Survey

Some of these questions should have a 'may be' answer, e.g. the question about a cruise convention

Survey

Some questions are confusing and vague.

Survey

Survey is too long

Survey	This survey isn't asking the right questions in order to get at why people are disgruntled at present.
Survey	This was a very long survey
Survey	This was way too long!
Survey	You didn't include the 2023 IML/TTR Convention that I attended. Also, under military affiliation, I am a retired Air Force civilian. No retired category provided.
Survey	Your survey asked yes/no questions about my club. I don't have a yes/no answer. For instance, my club hasn't seemed to have any meetings, so how could I attend? Yes, I would attend, if my club had meetings and if I was available for the meetings.
TAW	i have requested the paper copy.
TAW	i miss getting TAW. If there is an eVersion, I would like to get it.
TAW	The TAW focuses on the Eastern US, or larger areas and ignores the Central "flyover" US. It's noticed.
TAW	want to continue to receive print copy of TAW
Transparency	AVA should have shared its detailed budget analysis with us so we could see why you needed to raise rates. Your failure to do so negatively impacted how clubs feel about AVA.
Transparency	It seems like one has to be wealthy to join the AVA board. That is my perception. The requirements to travel to attend meetings is cost prohibitive. Something that would be interesting to examine is the income level of the people in the AVA. My sense based on how many of my AVA friends travel all over the world that they are higher income. Sometimes, as someone on a fixed income I am aware of the income disparity. This club is a very expensive walking club when you add up the costs of the various membership fees to join the AVA, join clubs, pay for walks, pay for the special programs. The one thing the AVA excels at is providing YRE walks across the US. That is our strength.
Transparency	Nit happy with decisions being made without input of clubs or membership.
Transparency	Seems like you make decisions without consulting members - Glad to see this survey as it looks like you are starting to think of members - Can't believe \$4.00 raise would have been approved by members - Still you raised them - Raising Fees discourages participation - I still participate but it gets expensive with travel expense too.
Transparency	We need more transparency about HQ expenses; taking this subject off the table in last year's funding discussions was dictatorial and problematic.
Transparency	When I've written the AVA about problems or concerns I just get a general blanket answer like no body really cares. Many people see problems but never say anything about it to either a club or the AVA because of this type of response that nobody really cares or will take action to correct it ...
Transparency	Your conventions seem to be your priority, not individual walkers. Too much money & time goes to this event. Communication has gotten much worse with AVA making decisions for the local clubs who do all the work.

Website	As a club officer using the myava.org to enter events, I have been very disappointed in the event creation process . You use acronyms without defining them. When setting up an OSB account, I couldn't follow AVAs directions but a Nebraska club had a wonderful step by step powerpoint guide. I find, other clubs provide better guidance than AVA.
Website	Bring back the old logo. The old website was easier to navigate but I am getting used to this one.
Website	I find your web site very difficult to use
Website	I hope the AVA continues. I wish it was a simpler program. We have the new my.ava.org and that is complicated to use. Many of the tabs are obscure. When I am on the site I end up opening tabs that I think are the right ones but are not. It's doable but it takes a long time to get used to how it works.
Website	I would also like to see clubs update their information on the AVA website more often. So many times information is outdated.
Website	IT is not user friendly.
Website	More transparency and a user friendly web and OSB
Website	Our club doesn't offer any online registration for events, but I have heard that some clubs are starting to do that. Would like to see us move in that direction instead of only taking cash and checks.
Website	Why does Frank S. get to have his own parallel registration system for walks in AZ, NV and other western places?
Website	You have to modernize the website. You have to modernize the infrastructure. It is ridiculously out of date, and turns people away sheerly by virtue of it's perceived age.
Website	Your website is not user friendly