





AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —



LET'S WALK AT THE TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP

A 3-day International Walkfest for Everyone!

Each year, walkers from around the world come together to explore the historic and culturally rich city of San Antonio on foot. Whether you are an experienced walker or just starting out, you will discover San Antonio in a way few people ever do!

You can join us for one,
two, or all three days!

 **Friday, February 19, 2027** - Opening Ceremony with 5k, 10k, and Taco Fun Walk Trail

 **Saturday, February 20, 2027** - 5k, 10k, 21k, & 42k

 **Sunday, February 21, 2027** - 5k, 10k, & 21k, plus closing ceremony

Kids 12 and under are free!

Receive an exclusive commemorative pin with your walk.



FEBRUARY 19 - 21, 2027



SAN ANTONIO, TX

Stay up-to-date with location,
maps, etc on our website -
Texastrailroundup.org



bitly

Sign-up for TTR Updates!

Fun, Fitness, Friendship INSIDE THIS ISSUE



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DON'T FORGET TO USE YOUR MEMBERDEALS PERKS THIS FALL!

BY AMANDA JAUREGUI

America's Walking Club has partnered with MemberDeals to bring all of our AVA members an easy way to save on travel, tickets, and more! MemberDeals offers up to 60% discounts on theme parks, attractions, events, hotels, concerts, and so much more! Whether you're looking for something local or something out of town, check your MemberDeals account to see if there's a deal for you.

To access MemberDeals, you will login into your [my.ava account](#), click on "My Awards," and you will see it under your awards. You will click on the button, and a whole plethora of deals is at your fingertips! This is our newest AVA Member perk, and we are happy to help you save big when you're looking for something fun to do.

Keep in mind, you must have an AVA Membership to access this perk. If you are not an AVA Member or need to renew, you can do so [here](#).

MemberDeals
EXCLUSIVE MEMBER ONLY OFFERS



Special Discounts
for AVA Members!

BECOME A MEMBER OF
AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB

MEMBERSHIP

Your membership supports
the work of AVA in our quest
of Fun - Fitness - Friendship

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

\$25 / YEAR

[ava.org](#)



GRAB YOUR HEATED WALKING GEAR WITH VENUSTAS

BY AMANDA JAUREGUI

Venustas is an online merchandise store that sells heated (and now some cooling) apparel. Venustas has been featured by leading media outlets worldwide, earning recognition for continuous innovation, trusted performance, and a strong commitment to bringing warmth and comfort to everyday life. AVA Members can purchase apparel from Venustas and enjoy \$30 off on their first purchase plus a \$10 gift card.

Use our affiliate link here:

https://venustas.com/collections/partner-community-exclusive/?ref=AVA&utm_medium=affiliate&utm_source=goaf
f and use code AVA07.



AVA BOARD CHAIRMAN MESSAGE

The Big Give is a critical alternate revenue source for AVA – America's Walking Club to fill the operational income gap left by lower participation numbers. Our goal of \$100,000 is the minimum needed to maintain operations status quo. It does not give us extra money for marketing to increase participation nationwide. It does not give us extra money for new club support programs. And it does not give us the ability to grow our necessary reserves.

Thank you to the consistent club and individual Big Give donors that have helped us reach our minimum goals. I implore you to give a bit more this year. Celebrate our 50th Anniversary with a 50% increase of your normal donation. Ask your family and friends to donate as well to support your walking passion. Help lead AVA into the next 50 years by giving more and encouraging more to give. Our repeat Big Give donor pool continues to be a very small portion of our AVA family. If you have just been an observer of the Big Give in the past it is time to take the plunge and donate this year. I challenge you to make that leap with a donation of \$50 or more in honor of the American Volkssport Association's 50th Anniversary. Encourage family and friends to join you and donate also. YOU can help us surpass our goal by 50% or more!

Fellow members, please join the Board of Directors by giving generously to the Big Give. You can donate online, mail a check or make a Qualified Charitable Distribution. Look for information elsewhere in this issue and the recent Checkpoint news bulletins to see how your donation can have the most impact. Take advantage of online match minutes and other matching programs by your employer or others. Every non-profit organization relies heavily on donations by those inspired by their mission and purpose. Be inspired and give!

YOUR BIG GIVE GIFT CAN GO TWICE AS FAR

Every day, AVA members take steps that lead to better health, stronger friendships, and new adventures. Together, we are building vibrant communities grounded in our guiding principles of **Fun, Fitness, and Friendship** through the simple power of walking.

Today, we're asking you to take one more step with us.

On **September 23-24, 2026**, America's Walking Club (AVA) will participate in **The Big Give**, the one annual fundraising campaign through which we ask our members and supporters to invest in our future. We make this request only once each year because we deeply value your membership, your volunteer service, and your commitment to our organization.

This year's campaign is especially meaningful as we celebrate **AVA's 50th Anniversary**.

To mark this milestone, we are thrilled to announce a **50th Anniversary/\$50,000 Matching Gift Challenge** generously provided by our **AVA Board Chairman Carl Cordes**, whose dedication to America's Walking Club reflects his belief in the power of walking to connect people and strengthen communities.

Carl's **50th Anniversary/\$50,000 challenge** gift will match every donation of **\$50 or more**, dollar for dollar, during The Big Give. This extraordinary opportunity means your gift will have twice the impact, helping us accelerate and exceed our **\$100,000 fundraising goal**.

As an additional thank-you, everyone who contributes **\$75 or more** will receive a commemorative **50th Anniversary coin**.

Thanks to Carl's generosity, there has never been a better time to support America's Walking Club.

As we celebrate our golden anniversary, your gift is more than a donation. It is an investment in the next 50 years of Fun, Fitness, and Friendship. Your support helps us:

- **Expand access to health, wellness, and community engagement opportunities in underserved areas**
- **Create meaningful opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to improve their health and well-being**
- **Support the volunteers who bring Fun, Fitness, and Friendship to communities across the nation**
- **Share the life-changing benefits of volkssporting with more individuals and families**
- **Develop innovative digital tools that connect, motivate, and inspire healthier lifestyles nationwide**

Whether you give **\$25, \$50, \$100, or more**, every contribution makes a difference. And thanks to Carl's matching gift challenge, donations of **\$50 or more** can go twice as far in advancing our mission.

If America's Walking Club has helped you stay active, discover new places, build lasting friendships, or experience the joy of walking, we hope you'll consider making a gift during The Big Give.

Together, we can maximize this matching opportunity, celebrate 50 remarkable years, and ensure that America's Walking Club continues to thrive for generations to come.

Thank you for being part of America's Walking Club and for helping us keep Fun, Fitness, and Friendship moving forward, one step at a time.

PRESIDENT'S UPDATES



YOUR DONATION IS A SMALL STEP WITH A GIANT IMPACT!

BY SAMANTA SANCHEZ

Something big is coming soon! Our annual fundraiser, the Big Give, is just a few weeks away. Kicking off at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, September 23, and running until 6:00 PM on Thursday, September 24, you will have the opportunity to build a healthier tomorrow by making a gift to our Big Give 2026 individual donor campaign.

Since our first walk in Fredericksburg, TX, in 1976, our club members have made a significant impact on lives by dedicating their passion and energy to promoting and organizing physical fitness events. These activities don't just bring people of all ages and abilities together, but they also encourage them to embrace healthier lifestyles. Without our clubs and without generous supporters like you, the AVA would not be here today, celebrating 50 years of fun, fitness, and friendship.

Last year, your incredible support helped us raise **\$91,619!** Your gift to the Big Give was crucial to continue to support our clubs, programs, and our special 50th Anniversary events. This year's goal is to raise **\$100,000.** Your contribution to this year's campaign will be instrumental in our mission to continue offering preventive health programs and exciting new initiatives, such as our walking app. This year we aim to raise both funds and awareness. Unfortunately, we are gradually losing clubs as participation declines, and with every loss, we lose cherished members of our community. We need new and younger walkers to carry the AVA legacy forward for another 50 years. So we ask you to please take a moment to give during the Big Give and help us spread the word to family and friends about the work we do and why it's important to you. Can we count on you?

To donate to the Big Give 2026, please visit www.ava.org and click the donate button. Online donations will be accepted from **6:00 PM CT on September 23 through 6:00 PM CT on September 24.** This year, the Big Give organizers will also be hosting early and late giving. Any donation made from **September 16 through September 27** will count towards the 2026 Big Give campaign.

We encourage our donors to give during the main 24 hours of online giving, as the AVA can leverage additional donations through the Big Give's sponsored Match Minutes. However, we understand life can be unpredictable, and any donation made online during this time frame is genuinely appreciated. If you prefer not to donate online, you are welcome to mail a check to the AVA National Office anytime between now and **October 31st, 2026.** Join us in making a difference. Thank you.

How You Can Participate during #BigGive2026



1. Mail your donation check to the AVA National Office: 1032 S. Alamo St, San Antonio, TX, 78210. Send checks prior to **October 31st, 2026.**



2. Make an early or late online contribution anytime from **September 16th through September 27th, 2026.**

3. Make an online contribution on **September 23-24, 2026,** to help us secure additional matching donations.



4. Fundraise on behalf of the AVA by creating a **Peer-to-Peer** page.

5. Ask your employer to match your donation.



6. Donate during the 6 Match Minutes & double your impact.

7. Share our Big Give social media posts using the hashtags **#BigGive2026** **#StepForward**



SILVERSNEAKERS PARTNERSHIP OPENS NEW DOORS FOR AVA CLUBS

BY SUZANNE DELLE, AVA SILVERSNEAKERS PROJECT MANAGER & VICE PRESIDENT, YORK WHITE ROSE WANDERERS

One of the questions I hear most often from clubs is, "How do we attract new walkers?"

I'm excited to share one answer: AVA's new partnership with SilverSneakers.

This collaboration will introduce AVA clubs to thousands of active adults who are already looking for local fitness opportunities. By listing your club's guided walks on both the AVA and SilverSneakers websites, you'll have the opportunity to welcome new participants while showcasing what makes your community special.

Guided walks are one of our greatest strengths. They offer more than exercise. They provide fellowship, introduce visitors to local history, public art, parks, scenic trails, and hidden gems, and allow members to share the stories that make their hometown unique. That's something individual exercise can't replicate.

Program Highlights

- Participation is **completely optional**.
- There is **no cost** for clubs to participate.
- Clubs receive **\$1.25 for every SilverSneakers participant** who attends a qualifying walk.
- A **simple online form** makes it easy to submit guided walks for listing on both the AVA and SilverSneakers websites.
- Participating walks must be **guided** by club volunteers.
- Each participating club must have guides who are **CPR certified**, complete a short **online training program**, and **successfully pass an Office of Inspector General Exclusion check for Social Security Fraud** before leading SilverSneakers walks.
- **AVA will pay for CPR certification** for one member from each participating club.
- Participants check in using either a **QR code** (preferred) or a paper sign-in sheet.

I believe this partnership is an exciting opportunity for every AVA club. Beyond increasing participation and generating additional revenue, it gives us the chance to introduce new people to volkssporting, build lasting friendships, and grow our membership by sharing what we do best: creating community through walking.

The first round of participating clubs has now been selected, but we're already planning a second round of expansion. If your club is interested in joining the program, we'd love to add your name to our next group of participating clubs. I'll continue sharing training resources, enrollment information, and implementation updates over the coming months. If you'd like your club to be considered for the next round or have questions about the program, please contact me at suzanne@ava.org. Together, we can introduce even more people to the joy of walking with AVA.



The **Big Give**

MATCH MINUTES

MAKE A DONATION ON

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 23 @ 6PM

THROUGH

THURSDAY, SEPT. 24 @ 6PM

DURING THE MATCH MINUTES DEPICTED BELOW



Pacific Time

Sept. 23 | 4:13 PM
Sept. 23 | 5:13 PM

Sept. 24 | 8:13 AM
Sept. 24 | 11:13 AM
Sept. 24 | 1:13 PM
Sept. 24 | 3:13 PM

Mountain Time

Sept. 23 | 5:13 PM
Sept. 23 | 6:13 PM

Sept. 24 | 9:13 AM
Sept. 24 | 12:13 PM
Sept. 24 | 2:13 PM
Sept. 24 | 4:13 PM

Central Time

Sept. 23 | 6:13 PM
Sept. 23 | 7:13 PM

Sept. 24 | 10:13 AM
Sept. 24 | 1:13 PM
Sept. 24 | 3:13 PM
Sept. 24 | 5:13 PM

Eastern Time

Sept. 23 | 7:13 PM
Sept. 23 | 8:13 PM

Sept. 24 | 11:13 AM
Sept. 24 | 2:13 PM
Sept. 24 | 4:13 PM
Sept. 24 | 6:13 PM

YOUR DONATION WILL BE MATCHED DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR, UP TO \$100!



REMEMBERING REGINA OVERHOLT: A LIFE OF WALKING, FRIENDSHIP, AND SERVICE

DOLORES GRENIER, CHAIR, US FREEDOMWALK FESTIVAL



The walking community lost a dear friend and dedicated volunteer with the passing of Regina Overholt on July 28, 2026, while in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Fittingly, Regina was spending her final days doing what she loved most—walking. She had traveled to Colorado Springs with friends to participate in one of AVA's 50th Anniversary celebrations while continuing her remarkable personal goal of completing walks in every county in the United States. Regina had already completed approximately two-thirds of the nation's counties and, while in Colorado, was adding several counties she still needed through AVA/IVV-sanctioned walks.

Regina's love of walking extended far beyond the United States. She was also an enthusiastic participant in the International Marching League (IML), traveling the world to experience new cultures, make lifelong friendships, and participate in IML events. Over the years, she completed numerous international walks, including South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, and many others. Whether close to home or halfway around the world, Regina embraced every opportunity to walk, explore, and connect with fellow walkers.



Regina's connection to the U.S. FreedomWalk Festival began with its inaugural event in 2002. For 25 years, she was a constant, dedicated, and valued member of the FreedomWalk family, helping shape the event into what it has become today. From 2009 through 2023, Regina served as the U.S. FreedomWalk Festival's Trailmaster, taking on the enormous responsibility of developing, marking, and overseeing routes that introduced walkers from across the United States and around the world to the history and beauty of Washington, D.C., and Arlington, Virginia. Her knowledge, attention to detail, and countless hours of volunteer service created memorable experiences for thousands of participants over the years.

But Regina's contributions cannot simply be measured by the trails she created, the events she attended, the counties she completed, or the miles she walked. They are measured by the friendships she built. Regina traveled with us, walked beside us, volunteered alongside us, and inspired so many through her quiet dedication, generosity, and love of the walking community. She was a familiar face at AVA and IML events, and it often seemed as though everyone knew Regina—or had a Regina story to share.

This October, the U.S. FreedomWalk Festival will celebrate its 25th Anniversary. Regina should have been with us to celebrate this milestone she helped build from the very beginning. Instead, during our anniversary celebration, we will proudly recognize and honor Regina for her 25 years of dedication and service to the U.S. FreedomWalk Festival and for the lasting legacy she leaves behind.



There will be an emptiness without her, but there will also be countless reminders of her. They are found in the trails she helped create, the events she supported, the friendships she formed, and the many miles she shared with fellow walkers across the United States and around the world. For those of us fortunate enough to have walked with Regina, traveled with her, volunteered beside her, and called her our friend, those memories will remain among our greatest treasures.

Every trail tells a story. Regina's story was one of friendship, service, adventure, and a lifelong love of walking. Though her final walk has ended, her legacy will continue to guide and inspire walkers for generations to come.

Rest easy, Regina. You will be deeply missed, fondly remembered, and forever a part of the walking family.

AVA WALKING FESTIVAL AND CONVENTION SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI JUNE 29 – JULY 2, 2027 WITH PRE- AND POST-WALKS JUNE 26 – JULY 4

BY SUSAN FINE

Join us in Springfield, Missouri for the AVA Biennial Walking Festival and Convention, June 29 – July 2, 2027. Springfield is known as the “Birthplace of Route 66”, because the famous highway was officially named in Springfield. The city is also known as the “Queen City of the Ozarks” since it was the primary economic, transportation, and cultural hub in Southwest Missouri.

The host hotel is the University Plaza Hotel in downtown Springfield, a beautiful hotel that will accommodate registration, convention workshops, membership meetings, and awards ceremony. AVA has a special room rate of \$120 single/double, or \$130 for a triple, and \$140 for a quad. The prices include breakfast for two people, with additional breakfast passes of \$10 per person. Parking is free. We encourage you to book your rooms now using the hotel link, or call 417-864-7333 and ask for the special rate for American Volkssport Association. NOTE: if you are told there are no rooms available, call AVA office – they will ask for more rooms with the special rate.

Walks in beautiful downtown Springfield, the Springfield Botanical Gardens, campus of Missouri State, and more are almost completed, and we will have details in the December TAW. Swimming and biking events are also planned, with more details to come.

Pre-walks will occur in Bentonville, Arkansas June 26-28. Bentonville is best known as the birthplace and global headquarters of Walmart. Walks will include the beautiful downtown square, and the original five and dime Walmart store that Sam Walton opened. Another walk is the world-renowned Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and its many acres of outdoor trails, all founded by Alice Walton.

Regina’s love of walking extended far beyond the United States. She was also an enthusiastic participant in the International Marching League (IML), traveling the world to experience new cultures, make lifelong friendships, and participate in IML events. Over the years, she completed numerous international walks, including South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia,

Taiwan, Indonesia, and many others. Whether close to home or halfway around the world, Regina embraced every opportunity to walk, explore, and connect with fellow walkers.

Driving from Bentonville toward Springfield, we will also have walks in Branson, Missouri, a popular family entertainment location. We’ll confirm the details to give you plenty of time to walk downtown and/or a local state park. From there, you drive about 45 miles to Springfield.

Post-walks are being planned now. Look for details on AVA Facebook, and in the December TAW.

Registration for the AVA Biennial Walking Festival and Convention will open in October/November. Get updated information on the convention website.

We hope you SAVE THE DATE and plan to join us for as many days as you can June 29 – July 2, 2027 in Springfield, Missouri for Fun – Fitness – Friendship!



Email us at convention@ava.org



Come Walk **WITH US!**

Save the Date!

**America's Walking Club
2027 Biennial Convention
and Walkfest**

June 29 – July 2, 2027

Springfield, MO, USA

Pre-walks June 26-28, 2027

Post-walks July 3-4, 2027



**AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB**
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

**For more information and
registration visit AVA.org
or call (210) 659-2112**



50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS RECAP



EMPIRE STATE CAPITOL VOLKSSPORTERS WEEKEND RECAP

BY D. J. MOORE

15-20 MAY 2026

What a fabulous weekend of Revolutionary War Historical walks! Yes, USA is celebrating 250 years of American Freedom, and this was the 4th of 17 scheduled 50th Anniversary walks.

The first walk (Johnstown) was unbelievably fantastic; complete with incredible reenactments, many right alongside the walk route. We completed the 10K route in 5 hours, 50 minutes, normally a 2 – 3-hour accomplishment. We took time to absorb what we could of the history and action, and were richly rewarded! We saw colonials dragged thru the streets and flogged, a march to the great Johnson Hall, interviewed Indians and militia, and saw battlefield locations. Also included along the route were houses, a cemetery, the Elizabeth Cady Stanton residence (actual, along with the museum), the Rose Knox mansion (which we suddenly found ourselves invited into). We learned a wealth of info on Rose Knox taking over her deceased husband's business, her generosity in town, and finally passed Fort Johnstown, which was initially built as a jail.



Day 2's morning event took us to Crown Point, a British and French battlefield. The British were victorious. The area was finally captured by Americans. A toll house sat on the river bank next to the bridge connecting the area that eventually became NY and VT. My favorite part was the quite distinct lighthouse, open for climbing. There was a choice of Day 2 afternoon events. We chose the Ticonderoga Hamlet 5K walk. Many did it AND the Ft Ticonderoga event and tour. The humidity and sun got to my walking companion, so I finished the hamlet on my own. Quite a bit of this route took me along the La Chute River, a site occupied by the French army. The area became an industrial site with the energy harnessed from the river's flow. One notable product was graphite used in pencils. Lumber was a competing industry. An adorable "kissing" covered bridge spanned the river.

Day 3 was not spent walking historical Schuylerville as scheduled. I felt the need to visit the Glens Falls Urgent Care due to ankle pain/issues. This found me on elevated foot status with doses of ice, Voltaren, and Aleve – not fun, especially when I missed out on a walk.

Day 4 started off resorting to my seldom-used walking sticks and cell phone, rather than my beloved camera, a sad substitution. The walk was another great one mixing history and tourism. A highlight was the Repose for Freedom memorial site, soon to be home to the remains of 44 First Pennsylvania Battalion revolutionary soldiers discovered in hastily dug graves at a local battlefield during a 2019 construction dig, lost to history for over two centuries. Diane and I were briefly allowed into a Visitor's Center which filled me in on troop and artillery transportation on Lake Champlain during the war. Additionally, we also wandered the village of Lake George and its tourist shops, where I was able to secure a sweatshirt. After the walk, I once again resorted to elevation, ice, and medication to relieve any stress my foot experienced during the walk. Many availed themselves of the lake boat excursion.

Day 5 was the culmination of this great walk weekend in Round Lake. This walk took us on Rails to Trails paths, neighborhood sidewalks and roads thru an interesting village. Very noticeable were the number of turreted houses on all but the Crown Point walk. This final day we finished the 5K in time to see the procession of the 44 military remains being escorted up Route 9 enroute to their final resting place in Lake George, mentioned on Day 4.

Thank you Empire State Capitol Volkssporters!



50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS RECAP

40TH ANNUAL CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL®

BY SUSAN FINE

6-7 JUNE 2026

People of all ages walked to the top of the Crazy Horse Memorial® June 6th, hosted by the Black Hills Volkssport Association, to celebrate the 40th annual Crazy Horse Volkswalk, and AVA's 50th Anniversary. Almost 5,500 people participated representing 47 states and 6 countries. In lieu of admission, approximately 12,000 pounds of food was collected for local families in need. [KOTA-TV ran this story](#) highlighting the event. We thank Memorial CEO Whitney A. Rencountre, his staff, and the hard work of Black Hills Volkssport Assoc. for another wonderful event.

The next day June 7th, BHVA hosted an additional walk in the Black Hills at Outlaw Ranch, with lunch and 50th cupcakes afterward.

A reminder, AVA will be hosting the first Americaspiad at Crazy Horse in June 9-11, 2028 – so Save the Date!!



50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS RECAP

MID-AMERICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

BY SUSAN FINE

19-21 JUNE 2026

Congratulations to Mid-America region for a great event in Illinois and Indiana June 19-21. When the tornado hit Charleston, IL, a few days before visitors were to walk there, the clubs immediately changed the location to Mattoon, IL, to be sure everyone had a great experience during the weekend. It's what we do: we're flexible and we care that everyone has a great time during our walks. Walkers bragged about the great walks and volunteers. Again, thank you the Mid-America Region.



50 WORKS OF ART FOR 50 YEARS OF WALKING

BY SUSAN FINE

24-25 JULY 2026

The San Francisco Bay Bandits were praised by 70 walkers from 17 states for their 50th Anniversary walk "50 Works of Art for 50 Years of Walking", July 24-25. People said a normal 5K walk took over 3 hours, while a 10K walk took 5 hours, so everyone could look and admire the art throughout the city. Special thank you to Mary Bond, for creating and researching the walk.



50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS RECAP

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RENDEZVOUS

BY SUSAN FINE

28 JULY - 2 AUGUST 2026

A huge thank you to the five Colorado clubs who hosted the Rocky Mountain Rendezvous July 28 – August 2, for AVA's 50th anniversary celebration. 6 featured walks over the week, based in Colorado Springs, showcased the beauty of the area, plus meet and greet, and a German group dinner, were enjoyed by all. Special thanks to Frank and Sherry Sayers, and Terry Lunghofer, for their hard work making this an excellent event for all who attended.





20^e IVV OLYMPIADE

LUXEMBOURG 16.-19.06.2027



TOGETHER IN MOTION

HIKING ■ CYCLING ■ SWIMMING

OLYMPIAD EXTRA: DANCING - COME AND JOIN IN

LUXEMBOURG: OLD QUARTERS AND FORTIFICATIONS ■ UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

WED. 16 JUNE

NATIONS DAY

Flag parade &
opening ceremony

THU. 17 JUNE

YOUTH & MOVEMENT

Junior Olympiad

FRI. 18 JUNE

HEALTH & JOY OF LIFE

Presented by Päiperléck

SAT. 19 JUNE

CMCM FAMILY DAY

Marathon & Closing ceremony
Night of the Nations

COQUE ■ KIRCHBERG ■ LUXEMBOURG

Certificate and Olympic medal for every participant

REGISTER NOW!

PROGRAMME ■ PRICES ■ REGISTRATION

SCAN THE QR CODE or visit <http://www.IVV-Olympiade2027.lu>

FOR ALL AGES ■ FREE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 18 AND UNDER



25th US FreedomWalk FESTIVAL

17~19 October 2026



**AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB**
— From 1976 to 2026 —



Celebrating 40 years



An IML International Event

27 walks in 29 countries worldwide

www.usfreedomwalk.org

— ★ Celebrating the United States 250th Anniversary (1776-2026) —

EUROPIADE, BELGIUM

BY SUSAN FINE

Thank you to Carl Cordes and Brenda Harris, and John and Sheila McClellan, for representing AVA at the Europiade in Belgium in June. Carl also met with the IVV Board, and received approval for AVA to hold the first Americapiad June 9-11, 2028 in Rapid City, SD during the Crazy Horse Memorial® Volksmarch.



Carl Cordes and Brenda Harris are presented their World Cup patches and certificates by IVV President Giuseppe Colantonio following the IVV Congress of Delegates meeting in Butgenbach, Belgium.

IVV SPECIAL AWARDS PROGRAM

BY CARL CORDES

We are all familiar with the IVV stamps for events and distance. But IVV Headquarters also offers additional passport books to collect stamps for international walker recognition awards.

IVV Europa Cup requires stamps from at least one IVV event in at least ten European member countries plus one Europiad event. Upon completion and redemption with IVV you will receive the Europa Cup patch and certificate.

IVV Pacific Cup requires stamps from at least one IVV event in at least six Pacific countries plus one Asia-, Oceania-, or Americapiad. Upon completion and redemption with IVV you will receive the Pacific Cup patch and certificate.

IVV World Cup requires stamps from at least two different events in three continents (6 different countries) plus one IVV Olympiad. Upon completion and redemption with IVV you will receive the World Cup patch and certificate.

For more information or to purchase books contact headoffice@ivv-web.org.

Big Give

FUNDRAISING

Campaign

SEPTEMBER 23-24
6 PM - 6 PM

Your donation to the Big Give paves the path to a healthier tomorrow.

RAILS TO TRAILS CONSERVANCY

BY SUZANNE MATYAS

From taking trails to walk and roll to watch World Cup games, enjoy fireworks and festive events, visit iconic destinations and historic sites for the nation's semiquincentennial, get together with friends and family, and go on everyday outings, this year has helped reveal how fundamental trails are to the American landscape and experience.

As we continue to celebrate a year of big milestones—including 50 years of the AVA and 40 years of Rails to Trails Conservancy—this fall is the perfect time to keep walking, being active outside, experiencing nature, and building bonds along the nation's trails. That's why our team is extra excited to be taking part in another one of the AVA's special anniversary events, the US FreedomWalk Festival in the D.C. area, and hope to see many of you there in October and out walking the country's trails all year long. Spending time on trails, especially with others, is a great way to connect with people and places; plus, it's a powerful way to show that having safe pathways to walk and bike is important to you. As the new federal transportation bill moves forward and influences decisions for trails and active transportation for years to come, RTC is working to protect these essential community spaces for everyone, everywhere, so we can all enjoy more walks, rides, adventures together, and fun all across the country.

Check out our resources to find places to walk, plan your outdoor outings, and join us in standing up for America's trails: railstotrails.org.

The Rails to Trails Conservancy team celebrated America 250 with veterans and local communities in Nebraska, including with a ride along the Cowboy Trail segment of the Great American Rail-Trail



The Rails to Trails Conservancy team joined the AVA's 50th anniversary event with the Nebraska Trailblazers, which included walking along the First Ave Trail segment of the Great American Rail-Trail | Photo courtesy RTC, Eduardo Coyotzi Zarate



AMERICA'S
WALKING
CLUB

ONLINE ORDERS ONLY

OFFICIAL
MERCH



You Choose the Style - Color - Logo

Short/Long Sleeve - Caps - Sweats

ava.org

WASHINGTON ROCHAMBEAU

During the recent European Union Open House event on May 9th in Washington, D.C., former commanding general of the Continental Army and President of the United States, General George Washington visited the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail booth. While there he took the time to support the efforts of the VVA-Virginia Volkssport Association of America's Walking Club to walk and cycle the sanctioned



popular-sport trail. His estate is on the first sanctioned linear route that currently goes from the French Embassy in the U.S. to the estate at George Washington's Mount Vernon and down to Visit Prince William, Virginia. More lengths towards the #YorktownBattlefield will be added this year with some sections currently available in all nine states and Washington, D.C.

Walkers/cyclists interested in events along the Rochambeau National Historic Trail, a 680-mile trail, can get more [information here](#). Hosted by the Virginia Volkssport Association, the special program runs through 2031.

HISTORIC PLACES OF WORSHIP SPECIAL PROGRAM

BY KAY SHOEMAKER



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND - Fredericksburg Walking Club, Fredericksburg, Virginia, is bringing back its very popular Special Program - "Historic Places of Worship". The program will begin January 1, 2027, and runs through December 31, 2029. Completed books can be redeemed by December 31, 2030. Your reward for finishing will be a multi-colored patch depicting a stained-glass window.

This program challenges participants to find Historic Places of Worship (church, mission, synagogue, temple, mosque, etc.) at least 100 years old or has some historical significance. Historical structures which were once Places of Worship but are now used for some other purpose qualify also (for example, a museum, library, school or restaurant, etc.).

You will need to find 24 different qualifiers to complete the challenge. Only one use of the stamp is allowed for each qualifier per book per year. If an event includes 2 or more Historic Places of Worship, a stamp may be awarded for each qualifier provided the event is paid and walked at a separate time for each stamp. Please add the name of the Historic Place of Worship in your event book. This should be an easy program to complete. For example, our club has a YRE - Find the Love in Historic Fredericksburg - which has 10 qualifiers.

The books will become available on November 1, 2026. Mail your book request and a check for \$14, made payable to FWC, to the POC - Kay Shoemaker, 115 River Acres Lane, Fredericksburg, VA 22406. Please include your mailing address and email address with your request. For more information, you can contact Kay at sydnakay@yahoo.com

AVA PROGRAMS COMMITTEE - SPECIAL PROGRAMS INFORMATION



REDEMPTION DATE - The last date to redeem a challenge book for the AVA Special Program "Par for the Course" is **12/31/2026**.

EXTENSION of REDEMPTION DATE - The redemption date for the AVA Special Program "Lighthouses II" has been extended to **12/31/2027**.



PURCHASE DATE - The last date to purchase a challenge book for the following AVA Special Programs: A-MAZE-ing Labyrinths; Anniversaries Hurrah; Rails-to-Trails and Step to the Beat is **12/31/2026**.



Remember to check the AVA Special Programs webpage for information on redeeming or purchasing the Special Program challenge books listed above. cb.ava.org/specprog.php.

NEW for 2027 - Three new Special Programs begin on January 1, 2027. Challenge books for each should be available shortly. For more information check out the Special Program articles from each of the Special Program POCs in this issue of The American Wanderer or visit the Future Special Program webpage at: <https://cb.ava.org/futureprog.php>.



2028 Special Program Proposals - Does your club have an idea for a new AVA Special Program they would like to sponsor beginning in 2028? Do you know of a theme that would generate interest from a historical, cultural, educational, or scenic beauty perspective that has not previously been a Special Program? Are there major or intriguing American anniversaries occurring in 2028? Now would be the time to put your creative ideas and imagination to work. Talk with club members on walks as some have additional interests outside walking (yes, it does happen) and those other activities may generate ideas. Check your community calendars for local celebrations that are applicable across all states. Add "Brain-storming Special Programs" to the club's meeting agenda and solicit ideas at the meetings.

The deadline for new 2028 Special Program proposals is **November 1, 2026**. For a copy of the information required in the new Special Program proposal package, please contact Diane Howell Evans at Programs@ava.org.

NEW 2027 SPECIAL PROGRAM - CRAFT BEER!

BY RON JONES

This new Special Program for 2027-2029 is intended to challenge participants to find breweries, taverns, tap rooms and restaurants - establishments that serve food and craft beers. Qualifiers are 12 (two "Six-Packs") AVA sanctioned events (YRE, seasonal or traditional) where the trail passes an establishment offering a craft beer. It is not necessary to go into the establishment or buy or drink a craft beer. Simply view a menu posted outside the establishment, signage on the building or the unique name of the establishment indicating they offer craft beers. Each IVV event stamp may only be used once a year. Make note of the establishment's name and type of craft beer if known (lager, dark/stouts, amber/red beer, IPA). The award is a colorful bierdeckel (coaster). The target (or estimated) cost of the book is \$12 but procurement of the coaster is ongoing, and the final design and cost are subject to change. Booklets can be ordered after November 1, 2026. Qualifying craft beers and more details are at <https://smlwalkingclub.org>.

AVA SPECIAL PROGRAMS

For information on these Special Programs, as well as all the other current programs, please review the Special Programs website at: cb.ava.org/specprog.php



AVA'S WALKING WAVES III: WHERE WALKING MEETS CRUISING

BY ROB MCDANIEL

What happens when you combine a love of walking, travel, friendship, and giving back?

You get AVA's Walking Waves.

Created for members of America's Walking Club (AVA) and their family and friends, AVA's Walking Waves brings people together from across the country to explore exciting destinations while supporting the organization we all enjoy. It's more than a cruise—it's an opportunity to discover new places, build lifelong friendships, and create unforgettable memories both on land and at sea.

Our inaugural AVA's Walking Waves Fundraising Cruise exceeded all expectations, raising more than \$10,000 for America's Walking Club while introducing participants to a new way of combining walking and cruising. This August, our second fundraising cruise sails from Boston as part of the Walk 'n Mass Volkssport Club's celebration of the 50th Anniversary of America's Walking Club.

Now we're looking ahead to our next adventure.

AVA's Walking Waves III will sail aboard Norwegian Prima on a seven-night Southern Caribbean cruise departing January 24, 2027, roundtrip from beautiful San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The experience begins before we even board the ship. Guests have the opportunity to spend three nights together in San Juan, exploring historic Old San Juan, enjoying Puerto Rican culture and cuisine, and participating in two AVA/IVV-sanctioned walks before embarkation. Throughout the cruise, AVA/IVV-sanctioned walks are available in each destination, allowing participants to continue enjoying the activity they love while discovering some of the Caribbean's most beautiful islands.

We're also planning a special cultural experience with Purple Heart recipient, U.S. Army veteran, author, and San Juan resident Aurita Maldonado, who plans to join us for an introductory Salsa lesson, giving our group an authentic taste of Puerto Rican culture before we sail.

Today, 45 AVA's Walking Waves members have already reserved their place, and we would love to welcome more walkers, family members, and friends to join us.

Group rates remain available with just a \$125 per person deposit and include exclusive group amenities. Final payment is due September 18, 2026.

To learn more, view the complete itinerary, current pricing, and reservation information by scanning the accompanying QR code.

Website Password: AVAPR

Questions? I'd be happy to help.

Rob McDaniel
AVA's Walking Wave Coordinator

One Family ■ One Journey ■ Endless Memories

WHERE WALKING MEETS CRUISING...

Join 45 Fellow Walkers Already Onboard!

WALKING WAVES III

3rd Annual Fundraising Cruise
Benefiting America's Walking Club

45 MEMBERS ALREADY BOOKED!



 JANUARY 24-31, 2027	 ROUNDTRIP SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO	 AVA/IVV WALKS INCLUDED AT EVERY PORT	 OPTIONAL 3-NIGHT PRE-CRUISE STAY IN SAN JUAN	 SPECIAL SALSA EXPERIENCE with AURITA MALDONADO Purple Heart Recipient, Veteran, Author & San Juan Resident
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WALKING TOGETHER
Making Waves



AVA's Walking Waves

Scan to Learn More!



50th Anniversary



AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB
FROM 1976 TO 2026

OUR INAUGURAL WALKING WAVES FUNDRAISING CRUISE RAISED OVER \$10,000 FOR AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB!

 AVA WALKS IN SAN JUAN	 EXPLORE BEAUTIFUL DESTINATIONS	 BUILD LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS	 SUPPORT AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB	 JUST \$125 PER PERSON DEPOSIT
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One Family • One Journey • Endless Memories

Password: AVAPR | rob@nwztravel.com



HELP US STRIDE TOWARD A HEALTHIER FUTURE

**SUPPORT
AMERICA'S WALKING AND
GIVE ONLINE ON
SEPTEMBER 23-24, 2026
| 6PM - 6PM.**



GO TO AVA.ORG OR SCAN THE
QR CODE TO GIVE ONLINE.



FUN



FITNESS



FRIENDSHIP



**Donate by Mail, now through October 31,
2026. Mail your contribution to the
American Volkssport Association:
1032 S Alamo St, San Antonio, TX 78210.**



REGIONAL TALES FROM THE TRAILS



ATLANTIC REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



FUN, FITNESS AND FRIENDSHIP

BY RITA GOERLING

AVA is Fun, Fitness and Friendship; summarizing our recent trip nicely. Dana, Dianne, Claire, Don, my husband Mike and I named our group 'The Maryland 6'. Fall 2024 we decided to attend Canadian Volkssport Federation (CVF) June 2026 Convention in Yellowknife and visit Alaska with a YRE (or Canada's Permanent Trails) at each stop. Sign-up for CVF pre-tour bus, January 18, 2025. Yes 16.5 months before convention and four buses filled in 20 minutes. Our itinerary was driven by flight, ferry, and train schedules. As we booked our assorted transport and hotels, Claire introduced us to "Splitwise - a free app for tracking shared expenses, so everyone gets paid back." Highly recommend.



We meet in Juneau, Alaska 1 June. First morning The Maryland 6 hit the Juneau, AK - Capitol Y0863. This walk has town, neighborhoods, State Capital, and views of forests, river, mountains. Then lunch at Red Dog Saloon. Next morning Alaska Marine Ferry to Skagway, AK. One gorgeous view after another, including a whale! Skagway is famous as start of the Yukon Gold Rush Trail. After checking in we hit Skagway Historic Town and Lower Reid Falls Y2403 8K exploring town, Gold Rush Cemetery, and Falls. Y2403's remaining 3K to Yakutania Point and Smugglers Cove we squeezed in the next morning. All aboard White Pass & Yukon Route Railway! This train travels the route of gold hunters with breath-taking views of interior Alaska. The terminus was Fraser BC, then a tour bus to finish this journey to Whitehorse YK.

CVF Permanent Trails:

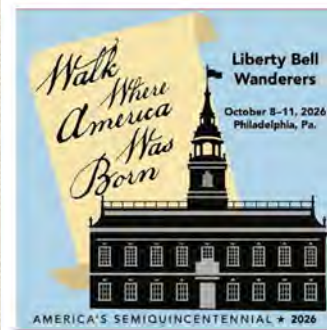
<https://walks.ca/permanent-trails-sentiers-permanents/>. Whitehorse - PT283 is a trail passing many murals before heading along the Yukon River to the Whitehorse Rapids Fishway (aka the Fishladder). On the move again, we caught a flight to Edmonton AB then Uber to St. Albert Inn & Suites. This hotel, start point for CVF Bus Trip and many Permanent Trails. The St Albert Trekkers club, kindly setup to assist with the Permanent Trails. St Albert is a vibrant historical city. My husband and I enjoyed St Albert Historical Walk PT131 10k along Sturgeon River, into the older section, passed Father Lacombe Chapel, before returning to the hotel.

Monday 8 June, we boarded CVF bus and met wonderful guides David Hall and Gerry Vercammen. The trip St Albert to Yellowknife is over 1400K. They planned walks enroute to break the trip up and experience more of Canada. The first, Whitecourt PT111, 6km through bush and residential and afternoon Fox Creek PT116 5km in bush along a creek. After an evening in Peace River AB, we had Peace River PT368 5K. The afternoon break was at 60th Parallel Visitor Center. By evening we're in the Town of Hay River with a 5k stretch south along Hay River PT208. Next morning, a 5k north also Hay River PT208.

The plan was to hike Twin Falls Gorge, but the trail was closed. Our guides alternate walk ended with a catered lunch and view of the falls! Enterprise NT-Twin Falls Gorge PT376. We ended the day in Fort Providence NT with celebration dinner. The morning Fort Providence-Bison Sanctuary PT375 5k, included bison sightings. We continued north, a picnic on Great Slave Lake then our last bus hike was our first convention hike 5k Yellowknife-Cameron Falls PT15501. This walk challenged, but the falls were worth it. On to the Convention Headquarters!



In addition to Cameron Falls, the CVF Convention had 6 walks 5k/10k and a "Midnight" 5k highlighting the land of the midnight sun. Yellowknife isn't large, but is interesting. CVF Trail Masters did an excellent job with unique walks all starting from the hotel. At the closing, CVF announced 2028 Convention on Prince Edward Island. Since we have t-shirts, The Maryland 6 will attend!



Celebrate America's Semiquincentennial with a walking weekend in Philadelphia!

Walk Where America Was Born
Philadelphia, PA
October 8-11, 2026

5 Walks and 1 Bike over 4 Days

Meet and Greet at Historic Arch Street Quaker Meeting House with special appearance!

Sponsored by Liberty Bell Wanderers
(Click ad for more info)

SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE WALKABOUT - OCTOBER 2-4

BY RON JONES



Behind on your Centurion Challenge? Join the Smith Mountain Lake Walking Club for the 1st Annual Lake Walkabout October 2-4. The club is offering 4 guided walks Friday through Sunday. There are 6 additional YREs within an hour drive of the event if you are really behind!! If you are working on your Virginia "Find the Love" Special Program, three of these ten walks qualify. We are trying to finalize sanctioning for a fourth "Find the Love" walk before the event. All of these walks are near the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Roanoke Valley and surrounding area and feature beautiful sights and small towns with wonderful food. The AVA Fest page has the registration form and more info. <https://my.ava.org/find-a-fest.php>. More info on the Find the Love state program is at <https://www.walkvirginia.org/loveworks-challenge>.

JOIN US IN HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND, ALONG THE SHORE OF THE BEAUTIFUL CHESAPEAKE BAY IN SEPTEMBER FOR THE MIKE CAPP MEMORIAL WALK!

BY SUE CAPP

The Baltimore Walking Club will sponsor a one-day traditional event in Havre de Grace, Maryland, on September 19, 2026, in memory of Mike Capp (he passed away in November 2025 while vacationing overseas). Mike and his wife, Sue, joined the Baltimore Walking Club (and the York White Rose Wanderers) not long after their return in 2012 from a civilian tour with the Department of Army in Heidelberg, Germany. After arriving in Germany in 2008, they attended an on-base informational event at Patrick Henry Village. It was there that Mike took notice of the table that had information about the American Red Cross on one half and information about the Heidelberg International Wandering Club on the other. He was struck by the club's motto "The Drinking Club with a Walking Problem." He bought a T-shirt on the spot, saying he thought that was just the type of club he wanted to join. Little did he know then that he would one day become president of the club. The club had such wonderful staff leaders that it made his job easy. The activities directors (of which there were two in the course of his tenure with the club) planned wonderful monthly trips that took the club all over Europe (lots of times by bus, but sometimes by train—travelling on the bullet train you can be to Paris in three hours!). What a wonderful way to see the world. Mike liked to think that with belonging to the club you had your very own travel agency with benefits.

Walking brought many adventures and opportunities to meet folks from all over and to go places that you might not have gone to otherwise. There were times when he and Sue would travel over two hours to do a walk just to get that coveted 10k stamp in the book or offered award. And let's not forget the eclairs at start halls over the border in France (from their home in Wilhelmsfeld, it was about an hour and a half drive to the Alsace area). You ate an éclair before you started the walk because they were sure to be all sold out upon return. Mike took great pride in wearing his club t-shirts.

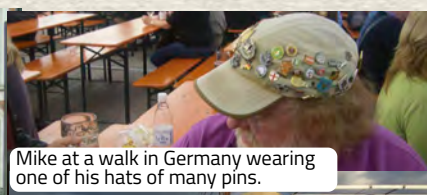
When he returned stateside, he made sure he had a club shirt packed in his suitcase when traveling. Always a conversation starter. And speaking of conversation, as club president he would write monthly musings in the newsletter. Always good for a laugh and tied into the walking or traveling theme somehow. Extra copies of the newsletter made it back home to his dad from time to time. His dad took great pleasure in reading them and was also amazed that his son held such a lofty position. Never in a hurry, Mike ambled along the trails and took in the wonders that surrounded him. Before failing knees and hips, Mike had walked a total of 325 events and just shy of 2500 km. He always said, "Someone has to be last, and it might as well be me." Boots on the Trail



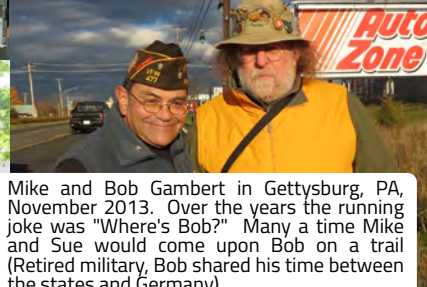
Mike in Scotland wearing a Life is Good t-shirt with the words "Not All Who Wander Are Lost" written in the boots



Mike and Bob again, this time in New Freedom, PA June 2014. Many times their paths crossed until Bob's death.



Mike at a walk in Germany wearing one of his hats of many pins.



Mike and Bob Gambert in Gettysburg, PA, November 2013. Over the years the running joke was "Where's Bob?" Many a time Mike and Sue would come upon Bob on a trail (Retired military, Bob shared his time between the states and Germany).

So come join us in Mike's memory for a delightful walk about town that will include qualifiers for the following special programs: Anniversaries Hurrah; Grain Elevators; Monarch of the Plains; Lighthouses II; Par for the Course; Step to the Beat; Walking With America's Veterans; Walking With the Wild Things; and Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail. Rich in history and charm, Havre de Grace is located where the Susquehanna River completes its 444-mile journey and joins with the Chesapeake Bay. The walk will begin at the Lock House Museum and features 6k and 10k trails. An added bonus is that the city will be hosting a wine and seafood festival that day in the vicinity of Concord Point Park near the Lighthouse. We look forward to seeing you then!

TWO VIPS -- SETH WERNER AND SUZANNE DELLE

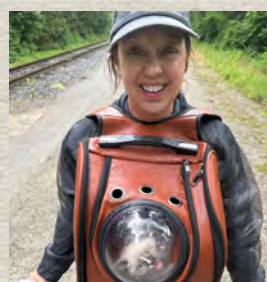
BY RON JONES, ATLANTIC DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR

One of the great things about volksmarching (VM) is the ability to make good friends on the trail not only in the United States, but in other countries. I thought it might be fun to share occasional short stories about my new friends -- whom I consider to be "Very Interesting People." Last year I met an interesting couple - Seth Werner, our AVA Finance Chair and his wife Suzanne Delle, the AVA Silver Sneakers Program Manager. Both got into VM in an unusual way.

As a boy growing up in York PA, Seth was taken on volksmarches by his grandparents. He has fond memories of those good times with his grandparents. Seth ended up purchasing his grandparent's home and by happenstance, the old neighbors from his youth still lived next door (Pat and Joe Strasbaugh)! It wasn't long before they invited Seth and Suzanne to join them on club events, and soon after they became members and later officers in the York White Rose Wanderers (AVA-0236). Eventually they were invited to assume volunteer positions at the National level.



"In his youth, Seth was in a Fife and Drum Corps."



"Suzanne on the trail with Bertha the AVA Walking Cat"

Seth has an MBA and works for a non-profit as a Senior Project Manager. He is also a volunteer with the Red Cross and can be called up to help with disasters and other emergency missions. Suzanne is a theater professor with Masters degrees in Digital Marketing, Directing, and Arts Administration. They met while both working in a theatre program at a college (Suzanne was his supervisor, but don't tell anyone). Both are very talented and creative. While she was teaching at Washington and Lee in Lexington VA, I went to See The Play That Goes Wrong, which she directed. They designed the logo and other materials for the March Atlantic Regional Conference in Williamsburg VA. That was a big success, so they recently formed a design company called DW Collaborative. They enjoy helping clubs with any type of publicity and design work.

Seth and Suzanne consider VM to be a family affair, so they take their cat Bertha along in a special backpack. Bertha enjoys the walks so much she has her own Facebook page, Bertha the AVA Walking Cat. I got a chance to meet Bertha and walk with her in Williamsburg. I have had fun walking with them, and look forward to many more good times on the trail!

AUTUMN ADVENTURES WITH WALK 'N MASS

BY JOSEPH LAPOINTE

Autumn is a magical time in New England. Apples, pumpkins, stunning foliage, hayrides and beautiful crisp days with bright blue skies. Grab a cup of apple cider, a warm cider donut and join us as Walk 'n Mass enjoys this wonderful season.

Walk 'n Mass will be running a number of group walks across Massachusetts during the autumn months and would love for you to join us. Start times, directions to the start, and updates to the walk schedules can all be found at our website walknmass.org or on Facebook at AVA Walk 'n Mass Volkssport Club ([m.facebook.com/WalknMass](https://www.facebook.com/WalknMass)). These resources are updated frequently so please check in often to see what new adventures await.



MID-AMERICA REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



THE HOOSIER HIKERS CELEBRATE THEIR 35TH ANNIVERSARY IN SHIPSEWANA, INDIANA, ON OCTOBER 31

BY BOB BUZOLICH, MID AMERICA REGIONAL DIRECTOR



The Hoosier Hikers on Saturday, October 31, will host a Volksmarch (walk) in Shipshewana, Indiana, to celebrate their 35th Anniversary.



This event offers a 5-, 6- or 11-kilometer walk along the existing sidewalks in Shipshewana and along the Pumpkinvine Trail, which is an improved Rail-Trail. The 5-kilometer route will take walkers from the Pumpkinvine Trailhead at the Town Park along the Pumpkinvine Trail to the Chief Shipshewana Memorial and back. The 6-kilometer route will direct you from the Town Park along sidewalks, through the town's commercial areas to observe the town's many murals depicting the history and culture of Shipshewana. The two primary routes may be combined to achieve a distance of 11 kilometers.

Registration and start time for the event is open from 8:30 a.m., Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) through 10:30 a.m. For this event, the registration process will include some procedures normally handled at a Finish Point. After registration, participants may complete their walk using a map and directions or join the Group Guide Walk, which departs at 10:30 am to do the 6-k route. It will take approximately 60 to 75 minutes to traverse the 5-kilometer walk route, and approximately 75 to 90 minutes to traverse the 6-kilometer walk route. The Start/Finish Point will close when the Group Guided Walk begins.

The Start/Finish Point for this event will be in the vicinity of, if not at, the Gazebo at the Shipshewana Community Park on North Morton Street. There will be signage identifying the actual Start/Finish Point.

All event participants must register at the start point and will be assessed a registration fee of \$4. No awards are available for this event. Detailed information about this event may be found at the following link: <https://my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=132470>.

For additional information regarding this event please contact Bob Buzolich via email at sonofbuzz@prodigy.net. For information regarding Volkssporting in the United States please visit the American Volkssport Association website at <http://www.ava.org> or the Hoosier Hiker Facebook page at (2) [Hoosier Hikers, Affiliate of the American Volkssport Association | Facebook](#).

HONORING VETERANS AND CELEBRATING AVA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

BY DAWN GRUBER

Ohio Wander Freunde, AVA-002 and Ohio's first club, will be celebrating America's Walking Club's 50th Anniversary on Saturday, November 14th by honoring those original volkssporting pioneers, the military men and women who founded our organization. OWF has a long and rich tradition involving both active duty and retired military members who have belonged to the club over its 48 years, and this is one reason we love honoring our Veterans.



Our feature event will have a 5K and 10K route, with both trails incorporating the National Museum of the United States Air Force. The museum is hosting a special Star Wars display during the time of the walk. OWF will revisit our inaugural walk held in 1978, covering some of the same trails. And trails. And as a club founded by members of the military, we enjoy honoring our Veterans, and what better way to do so than walk through the Memorial Garden at the USAF Museum and the wonderful four hangers of displays and artifacts. We will also celebrate the AVA's 50th Anniversary with cake at the finish area.

The start location will be the Comfort Suites Dayton-Wright Patterson, which is situated across the street from the museum. They have provided a special room rate for anyone coming from out of the area of \$109 per night (+tax). And while this is a one-day event, there is a preregistration form available on the AVA website, which is part of the table flyer on the ESR. All the contact information for the hotel is also included on the brochure.

For our out-of-town visitors, you can also do several other Ohio YRE walks and can secure the last 8 letters of the alphabet for the A-Z Program, with X-enia and Y-ellow Springs less than 15 miles from the hotel. Z-anesville is a 2-hour drive, but right on I-70, if you are driving to the event.

"Ohio's First and Finest" - Ohio Wander Freunde - is excited to be participating in AVA's Anniversary celebration and we hope you come to help us Honor Our Veterans. For any additional information regarding this event, please contact Dawn Gruber, OWF President at 937-409-6975 or dgruber333@aol.com.

MAUMEE VALLEY VOLKSSPORTERS

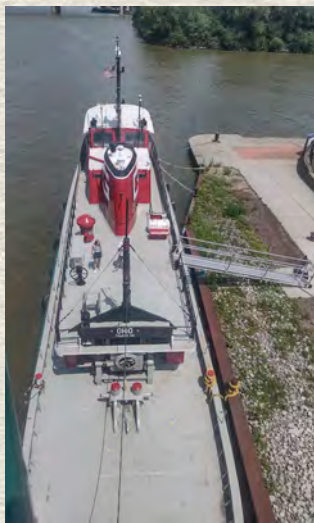
BY CRAIG GAUGER

Maumee Valley Volkssporters (MVV) are continuing our Toledo Metroparks traveling stamp series for 2026 with walks in September, October, November, and December. These walks are in varied locations in and near Toledo: rail trails, towpath trails along Maumee River, and at Lake Erie. Look them up on ava.org.

We have a lot of history here in northwest Ohio. While here walking, you can visit the National Museum of the Great Lakes, ride in a packet boat and see a working lumber mill, watch a Mud Hens or Walleye game, wildlife galore, birding at Lake Erie and local parks, and of course many ice cream locations!

We have YREs in Maumee and Sandusky (OSB only) too.

Also, in January 2027, MVV are setting up all of the cruise port walks and the two San Juan pre-cruise walks for "AVA's Walking the Waves - San Juan cruise"; 8 walks in 6 ports and San Juan. The IVV Americas walk book can get a healthy bunch of stamps on the cruise. See the Walking the Waves FB page and/or contact Rob McDaniels to get more info on that venture.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

Ken Johnson, NC RD



NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL UPDATE

BY KEN JOHNSON, NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Kudos to all the North Central walkers who participated in the anniversary 2026 Crazy Horse walk. We didn't set a record for the event, but as always, it's the most attended AVA event of the year. It's so nice to see folks from across the Region and country at this (or any) event.

In other examples: NorthStar Trail Travelers welcomed folks from Wisconsin and Maryland at their Crow Wing/Lindberg State Park weekend. A group of Minnesotans is planning to reciprocate with a trip to Lacrosse later this season. Another group heard good things from Iowa and visited Madrid High Trestle Bridge. There are a great many worthy attractions throughout North Central. Special occasions bring opportunities to schedule group walks at seasonals to take advantage of some of the more ephemeral features. An evening fireflies walk was held at Springbrook Nature Center mid-June. The timing was perfect with weather and fireflies obliging plus we got a rare relief from the mosquitoes. The fireflies were lighting up the park like the 4th of July. The walk was such a success that it has the making of a tradition.

Another special occasion celebrated the blooming of Minnesota's state flower: the showy lady slipper along the Lake Wobegon Trail in Albany. A recent Friday evening walk featured the North St Paul History Cruzers car show down the main drag following a loop through a local nature preserve. It was further enhanced by a display of a local guild's quilt work. We have many quilters among

I also displayed for the first time my recently restored 1931 Model A Ford and offered rides to those interested. I found this car in Iowa while attending GDMVA's Regional Adventure in 2023. No telling what you may come across on a Volksmarch.

Another special occasion was Twin Cities Volkssport's invitation by the Germanic American Institute to their annual Deutsche Tage celebration. The entry fee is \$250, but since this event honors all things German, we were welcomed without cost due to our organization's German roots. Thank you, GAI, for your kind gift. During our visit we talked to nearly 100 people.

Many thanks to those who participated in the surveys conducted by our GoWalk Maps developers. In addition to the online survey, they talked directly to walkers, club leaders, and AVA employees yielding over 300 responses across 46 states. The administrator has rarely seen such a great response. The board was presented with the latest developments at our meeting preceding Crazy Horse. I'm very excited about this in a good way. I know some are excited in a worrisome way. Be assured that everything you know and love about the AVA and our events will stay the same. The app is optional. We'll still have books, physical start boxes, OSB and so on. By taking advantage of the app, we'll have online as well as off-line turn-by-turn directions and many other features. It's anticipated that mobile advertising sales on the app will provide a new revenue stream for both the AVA and the clubs and to compensate for the loss of sanctioning and participation income.

No other app does what ours will do. None provide route guidance through the kind of environments our walks typically cover. Walking in urban and suburban areas as well as parks and other places of interest. We don't take the shortest distance between two points. We take the scenic route.

Research confirms GoWalkMaps appeal across all segments of the population, including members who are less tech-forward. An app gives AVA a modern, visible presence in a space currently dominated by competitive fitness apps that don't serve the organized walking community. I've already browsed the prototype of the map input tool. It takes our pdf directions and inputs them into the app.

We're working on specific funding exclusively for the app independent of the general fund. I ask North Central members to help in this regard... but not at the expense of the Big Give which supports Headquarters operations. Costs of development has declined recently due to the rapid expansion of AI. If you are willing to get involved in even the smallest way or the most modest of contribution, please contact me. The App Committee is looking for interested parties to participate in further interviews. Each board member has also committed to providing financial support.

I hope to see you at Twin Cities Volkssports and NorthStar Trail Travelers Minnesota Meander weekend September 11-13, 2026. Join folks from around the region for three days of walking scenic Minnesota trails in Mantorville, Northfield, St Paul, Eagan, and Nerstrand Big Woods State Park. Camping, lodging, social events and dining opportunities will be available. See TCV's Facebook page for more information and registration: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2039870106313616>.

The Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitor's Bureau notified me that they would no longer be able to support the North Dakota Capital Walk. We have to keep this walk, so I'm in the process of transferring the event to OSB. If a North Central club would be willing to inherit it, let me know. Otherwise, I will make it an RD event. In any case, let me know if you encounter anything on the trail that needs to be addressed as I'm 440 miles and 6-1/2 hours away. Sincere thanks to the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitor's Bureau for their many years of service to the AVA. You did us proud!



FALL IN THIS FALL WITH THE EMPIRE STATE CAPITAL VOLKSSPORTERS

BY LOUISE REMILLARD

There's no better way to enjoy the beauty of fall than on foot! The Empire State Capital Volkssporters (ESCV) have three Traditional walks during the fall months. We invite walkers from near and far to join us for beautiful scenery, delicious food, and the warm fellowship that define Volkssporting. Each of these signature fall traditions will occur for at least the 28th time in 2026.

October 10 – Oktoberfest at Tawasentha Park, Guilderland

Oktoberfest has taken place in a variety of scenic locations including many state parks such as Moreau Lake, Grafton Lakes, Saratoga Spa, John Boyd Thacher, Glimmerglass and Schodack Island as well as town parks in Hadley/Luzerne and Guilderland. Each location has offered walkers the opportunity to discover a different corner of Upstate New York while enjoying a unique autumn walk.



Sharing Side Dishes



Pavilion

Walkers may choose a scenic 5K or 10K route designed by POC John Shaw through 200 acres of rolling woodlands, open meadows, and beautifully landscaped gardens. Along the way, participants can enjoy the brilliant colors of autumn and look for the many birds and wildlife that inhabit the park.

Following the walk, the celebration continues with the traditional Oktoberfest cookout. Beginning at noon, participants will enjoy a choice of knockwurst, bratwurst, or hot dogs prepared by Grill Masters Tad Darling and Larry Godshalk. Sue Grey coordinates the luncheon with the help of many volunteers, who contribute a wonderful assortment of homemade side dishes and desserts.

November 7 – Annual Member Recognition Pizza Party, Albany

Enjoy a 5K or 10K walk designed by POC Deborah D'Arcangelis that passes an A-MAZING Labyrinth, circles a peaceful pond, and winds through Albany city streets before gathering for our annual Member Recognition Pizza Party at St. Andrews Church Hall.



Our Member Recognition tradition began in the 1990s when longtime ESCV member Ron Herch completed his 50 State/51 Capitals walk in New Orleans, Louisiana. Since then, we have celebrated numerous members who achieved these milestones.

Party organizer Chris Yost ensures there's plenty to enjoy after the walk, including pizza, wings, salad, hors d'oeuvres, and a celebratory cake. Whether you're a long-time member or joining for the first time you'll be welcomed with great company and plenty of pizza.



2025 Honoree
Sue Burke,
Traditional Cake



Attendees who have completed 50 States/51 Capitals
All photos by Louise Remillard and Linda Morzillo

December 12 – Annual Holiday Luncheon, Scotia

Celebrate the holiday season with one of Empire State Capital Volkssporters most cherished traditions. The ESCV Holiday Luncheon began in 1995 with a walk in Schenectady followed by a luncheon at the First Unitarian Church on Wendell Avenue. Organized by Ron Hersh, Santa Claus handed out gifts, a festive tradition that continued for 19 years. Over time, the Holiday Party has been hosted at several Schenectady area locations.



Enjoying the Luncheon

At the Cookie House

This year's event begins with a scenic 5K or 10K walk designed by POC Sue LaFountain through the charming Village of Scotia, where festive holiday decorations brighten the streets. Along the route, walkers will enjoy a stop at the famous Cookie House, another beloved ESCV tradition. Club members bake dozens of homemade cookies, volunteers host the Cookie House and transport the treats so everyone can pause, visit with friends, and sample a wonderful variety of holiday favorites. Many members have graciously opened their homes to keep this tradition alive.

Following the walk, join friends for a plated holiday luncheon at the Turf Tavern in Scotia. Whether you're a longtime ESCV member or joining us for the first time, you'll enjoy a day filled with walking, holiday cheer, delicious food, and the warm fellowship that has made this event a favorite.

While registration for each walk is on a walk-up basis, the food-related parts of the festivities require advanced registration. Our website, escvwalks.org, is the place to register by specific cutoff dates for each event.



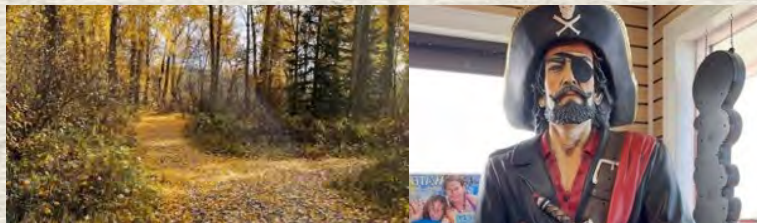
NORTHWEST REGIONAL UPDATE

BY SANDI SEVERTSEN, NORTHWEST REGIONAL DIRECTOR

It's September, and our 50th Anniversary Walkfest is finally here! We hope to see you in Astoria, Oregon from September 23-28 to enjoy this beautiful seaside town. Five new walks and 6 YRE's in the surrounding area, are waiting for you to explore. If you haven't reserved this date, here is the link to do so: www.otsva.org and then click menu.



This year, I was able to visit our most northern state, Alaska, with Emerald City Wanderers club. It was a cruise to Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan. We are lucky to have YRE's in all these ports of call. Alaska has 13 seasonal walks each year, with the exception of the Anchorage Volkssport Club offering 5 YRE walks not to miss.



The fall season in the Northwest is absolutely breathtaking. Many of our clubs offer traditional walks to enjoy: Labor Day weekend in Seattle, WA 9/5; International Talk Like a Pirate (Ahoy, Matey!!) in Vancouver, WA 9/19; Oktoberfest in Mt. Angel, Oregon 9/19; Where the Salmon Run in Vancouver, WA and Vernonia, OR 10/3; Fall Foliage in Lake Easton 10/10 and Preston, WA 10/17; and Halloween Walks (costumes encouraged) in Vancouver and Carnation, WA 10/31; and celebrating Thanksgiving (gobble, gobble) in Edmonds, WA 11/28. For more information: <https://my.ava.org/regional-te-list.php?time=month&rsel=NW>.

Last but definitely not least, congratulations to these clubs that recently celebrated 40 years together: Willamette Wanderers, Interlakken Trailblazers, Daffodil Valley, and Central Washington Sun Striders. We all celebrate your longevity!!



EMERALD CITY WANDERERS

BY MICHAEL NAGAN

Emerald City Wanderers is a very active Northwest Region club, known as the Holiday Club since it hosts traditional events on or near major holidays - New Years Eve and Day, Easter, July 4, Labor Day and Halloween, and this year a Veterans' Day event. ECW also hosts 17 TREs and SYREs in Seattle and Alaska. Weekend group walks at one of Washington's YREs are open to all. For a couple of years, the club also has hosted a popular Alaska walking cruise featuring Alaska YREs. And, the club has led efforts by several area clubs to host 17 YREs that start at Light Rail stations in and around King County. Visit our area and ride the rails!



ASTORIA - WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF LEWIS AND CLARK

BY PAT JEWETT, NW REGION DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR

We are excited for the opportunity to host this AVA 50th Anniversary Event.

We are stepping up to provide a fun event in Astoria with our walking friends and new walkers to the AVA. Come join us Sept 24-27th and explore the rich history of Astoria. Here is a brief run-down on some of the local history.

Fort Astoria was established in 1811 and was the oldest American settlement west of the Rocky Mountains. Named after John Jacob Astor, this was his Pacific Fur Company which grew into the city. He was the first multi-millionaire in the US. (As a side note John Jacob Astor the fourth died on the Titanic in 1912.)

This part of Oregon was originally occupied by Chinook, Clatsop and Tillamook tribes. This area was popular as an indigenous trade network. Tribes traveled from the coast, the Columbia Plateau and Willamette Valley to gather and trade.

The Lewis and Clark expedition reached the Pacific Ocean in November 1805. They were at what is now Cape Disappointment in Ilwaco, WA. We have two 5K walks exploring Cape Disappointment. There is a visitor center and interpretive signs about Lewis and Clark. Later they wintered in Fort Clatsop.



The history of Astoria includes the industry of fishing and logging. Canneries that began with salmon and when the salmon canning slowed down, the canning industry turned to canning tuna under the name of Bumble Bee Tuna.



We have Fort George Brewing which was named for when Astoria was called Fort George during the War of 1812 when the Brits took over Astoria and renamed it. A treaty was signed in 1818 and Fort George was turned over to the US.

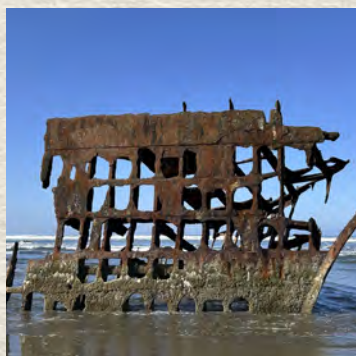
This town has a rich immigrant history. The Chinese arrived in the 1870's and were laborers in the local fish-processing and cannery industries. They established a Chinatown near the riverfront. To celebrate the Chinese history today there is a Chinese garden called the Garden of Surging Waves. There is also the Astoria Nordic Heritage Park to celebrate the Scandinavian and Nordic heritage.

In the late 19th and early 20th century Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish people arrived to work in fishing, logging and salmon canneries.

The Heritage Museum offers a good look at the seedier history of Astoria to include shanghaiing, underground tunnels, opium dens and devastating fires. The exhibit is on the second floor of the museum.



In more recent years the town has become a destination port for cruise ships. Commercial fishing, tourism, and brew pubs are important to the economy of Astoria. Many movies were filmed in Astoria. We have a walk that goes by locations of where movies were filmed.



We also offer a quiet beach walk at Fort Stevens. This walk goes to the Peter Iredale shipwreck on the beach and a walk along one of the quieter beach sections along the Oregon Coast. This is also part of the first section of the Oregon Coast Trail which is a through hike trail from Jetty C at the mouth of the Columbia River to the California Border just past Brookings, OR.

As of Aug. 1, we have 131 people registered for this event and we hope more of you come and join us for this history-rich Walkfest.

Get more information:

<https://www.otsva.org/ava-50th-anniversary--nw-walkfest-2026.html>

See you in September.



PACIFIC REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



PACIFIC REGIONAL UPDATE

BY DIANE CURTIS, SONOMA COUNTY STOMPERS

As a newbie member of the American Volkssport Association's Sonoma County Stompers, I was lucky to be taken under the wing of Marilyn Nasi and Shirley Hightower, who led me on my first free walks (one in Santa Rosa because it was my first walk and two others in Sebastopol and Windsor courtesy of coupons). I hadn't a care in the world. They told me where to meet, presented a waiver for me to sign, stamped my books once I had officially joined and handed me a map that I never used because I could blithely follow and listen to them as they explained noteworthy sites.



But then I went to Austin, Texas, with my friend Jacki to visit my sister Judy and her husband George, and I later realized I should have paid more attention to the housekeeping required at the start of a walk. Top of my itinerary in Austin was to chock up a walk or two and get those motivating stamps. In my three walks with Marilyn and Shirley, I had become a fan. We walked through real neighborhoods at a pace my 79 years appreciated, and I got a feeling for the communities around me, all the while getting some fresh air and exercise with agreeable companions. I wanted to get that feeling in Austin, too.

I thought being on my own for the first time would be a piece of cake. Go to the designated starting point, fill out something, stamp the books, grab a map and pay the fee. I chose Colorado River Walkers' Capital walk, a year-round event. "Enjoy the best of downtown Austin, both old and new. See historic buildings on Congress Avenue and view the scenic State Capitol grounds" A great introduction to Austin, I thought. We'd try the 6k version. Fine directions to the start box on the AVA website, so it was a go. When we got to the starting point and the walk box at Extended Stay America, though, I got a bit rattled. I had forgotten my books, so I was disappointed that I wouldn't get my stamp. I ended up putting the stamp on a piece of paper that I planned to transfer to my book later. I signed the waiver, but I didn't think to register either my sister, who had decided to join us, or my friend Jacki. I knew I owed \$12 for the three of us, and I took one of the envelopes provided, but none of us thought that mailing cash was a good idea, and I vowed to get in touch later with local contact Carol Obianwu to see if I could use PayPal or send a check.

The walk, however, was a piece of cake, even in the humid heat, because of the thoughtful, easily understandable map provided by the Colorado River Walkers. We got a glimpse of happy kayakers as we crossed over Lady Bird Lake and headed for the real downtown whose architecture boasted both historic buildings and gleaming new-age skyscrapers. I loved how detailed the map directions were, including admonitions to walk "very carefully" at certain spots. The map took us by City Hall (we decided not to stop to see the art there, but we should have), gargoyles that we never would

have noticed were it not for the map commentary, a hidden church labyrinth, the Willie Nelson statue, Austin City Limits, a plethora of coffee shops and outdoor cafes. City workers with their cellphones, students from the local dance center, others just going about their business all contributed to the bustling, positive atmosphere. And the visit inside the imposing Capitol was a highlight and a good lesson in Texas history.

My sister Judy, who has lived in Austin or its environs for more than 40 years and even worked in a downtown office for a while, was floored. "The last time I spent any amount of time downtown, it was kind of depressing and run-down with boarded-up storefronts," she said. "Now it's vibrant, alive, welcoming. It's got restaurants and coffee shops. This walk took me to places unknown to me and made me appreciate my city all the more."

After the walk, I sent an email to Carol to arrange for getting payment to her. She tried to reach me immediately, but when I didn't respond, she took the extra, kind step of contacting Marilyn and telling her I had had some problems signing in and paying. She also told Marilyn about an upcoming walk that my group might be interested in. Marilyn relayed the information, and we decided we would like to try the new walk. When we got to the starting point two days later in East Austin, Carol knew who we were right away, and we were greeted like old friends. She signed us all up, we paid all the fees due, and Carol made sure we had water, maps and were headed in the right direction.

The 2k walk was a hit with all of us. We crossed Eastern Lady Bird Lake on the Wishbone Pedestrian Bridge and headed for the Unity Tunnel. It was a revelation: Beautiful mosaic murals (and I'm a sucker for mosaics) with the theme of day on one side and night on the other portrayed life in Austin – bikers riding along a wooded trail, a child blowing bubbles, couples dancing, an owl in full flight, a kid holding a baseball bat. The art, including a ceiling mural inspired by local flora and fauna, is based on 250 resident responses to the question, "What makes Austin special to you?" It was as good or better than going to an art museum.

Both walks offered delightful surprises combined with careful planning, organization and even friendly new acquaintances. I'm so glad I'm an AVA member.

SONOMA COUNTY STOMPERS **35TH ANNIVERSARY WALK OCTOBER 17, 2026**

BY MARILYN NASH, PRESIDENT
SONOMA COUNTY STOMPERS

The start location for this walk Saturday, October 17, is the patio of the Capo Isetta wine tasting room, 412 1st St. E, in Sonoma. It is situated just across the street from the Bear Flag Monument in the Plaza where the Bear Flag was raised in 1876, and just south of Mission San Francisco Solano, the last and most northerly sites founded in 1823. Sonoma State Historic Park is a collection of sites centered around the Plaza that preserves California history from the Spanish, Mexican and American eras. The photo of Sonoma City Hall, centered in the Plaza shows the seven flags which have flown over the area since 1542 starting with the Cabrillo Expedition. Close by are the Barracks, used as Mexican Troop Headquarters. Next door to that is the Toscano Hotel, built in the mid 1850s, now the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau, open daily 10am-4pm. Free daytime public parking is located behind the Barracks/Toscano Hotel buildings, entering from First St. E. Public restrooms behind the Toscano Hotel as well as behind the Carnegie Library on the east side of the Plaza.



We will have two 5K routes, both flat and mostly paved. One route goes by the Blue Wing Inn, built around 1837. Be sure to look in the windows. It was thought to be the first hotel north of San Francisco. I've read that the hotel register had the names of Ulysses S. Grant, Kit Carson, and William Tecumseh Sherman! Maybe it's the plaque on the outside of the building that mentions that Joaquin Murrieta Carrillo, also known as Robin Hood of the West, visited there. His wife's family lived in Sonoma. There will be some older residential neighborhoods with some modern remodels. Many shops and restaurants. So good that this is a non-competitive walk! Within steps from the Start are cupcake, chocolate and ice cream shops!

I was born and raised in the small town of Sonoma, California and knew Chuck Williams - the founder of Williams-Sonoma when I was a little kid. He established his first shop in 1947 as a hardware store, but after his first trip to France and falling in love with French cookware, he soon transformed his store to a cookware store in 1956. Soon his mail-order business and a series of Kitchen Library Cookbooks came along. As many other stores across the country opened, the Sonoma location closed. Williams-Sonoma restored the original location and reopened in 2014. Chuck Williams celebrated his 99th birthday there. The store is open 10-6pm daily. We will have a door prize drawing for a Williams-Sonoma gift card.

Start 9am to 12noon. Finish by 4pm.

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



Terri Tyler, SC RD

HALLOWEEN KLICKS ON ROUTE 66

BY TERRI TYLER



South Central region is hosting "Halloween Klicks on Route 66" October 28 – November 1, to celebrate AVA's 50th anniversary. US Route 66 is 100 years old this year (founded November 2026), stretching 2,448 miles from Chicago to Santa Monica... and passing through three states in the South Central region: Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Get more info here. Enjoy 10 walks over 6 days. Hotels recommendations are listing in the brochure.

The fun starts Tuesday Oct. 27 with a Meet & Greet in Joplin, MO. Then Wed. Oct. 28, the morning walk is downtown Joplin, where you will walk and see Route 66 murals and 1890's housing. The afternoon event is in Carthage, MO, walking Route 66, passing many of the older homes.



Thursday Oct. 29, the walks move to the southeast corner of Kansas, starting in Riverton, KS in the morning, with the 5K going to Old Route 66 park, and the 10K continuing to the Rainbow Bridge. The afternoon takes place in Baxter Springs, KS, one of the finest small towns with Frontier Military Post, Civil War signage, Texas cattle drive, and Route 66.

Friday Oct. 30 we walk in Oklahoma, starting in the morning in Miami, OK, known for its rich historic Route 66 landmarks and its deep Native American heritage as headquarters for multiple tribes, including the Miami tribe. The afternoon walk will be in Claremore, located in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains and is home of Rogers State University. Fun fact: the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "Oklahoma" is set in Claremore and the surrounding area.

Halloween day, Oct. 31, promises two walks in Tulsa, known as "the oil capital of the world". The morning walk will start in Avery Plaza, named for the Father of Route 66, Cyrus Stevens Avery. The afternoon event will feature a famous cluster of roadside giants along Route 66.



Sunday Nov. 1 we travel west on 66 to Bristow, OK, a historic Route 66 stop, known for its 102-foot-tall Chrysler Plymouth Tower neon sign, and the historic Frisco Train Depot. The last walk is in Chandler, OK, a popular stop for Route 66- themed murals, classic mid-century gas stations, and the famous Route 66 Interpretive Center. Visitors can continue on to Oklahoma City for more YREs along the Route 66 highway. For more information, contact Terri Tyler: tityler50@gmail.com.

TULSA WALKING CLUB PRESENTS FALL WALKING EVENTS

BY TERESA ARNOLD

Join us September 19 for a walk along the Arkansas River starting from the Case Community Center in Sand Springs. The River City Trail, a Rails-to-Trails path, is shaded and very enjoyable, passing by several sport fields; portions of the walk will also include sidewalks and streets. 10K walkers will also explore the Katy Trail, another Rails-to-Trails. There will also be a Food Drive held in conjunction with this walk to benefit our neighbors in need.

Tulsa Walking Club is very excited to host 2 walks for our South Central Regional Roundup which is being held October 28 through November 2. All the walks presented feature Rt 66 in honor of its 100th anniversary; the South Central Regional Roundup has been designated as one of AVA's 50th Anniversary events. Come and get your special Anniversary sticker!

Tulsa's two walks will be held on October 31. Walkers will enjoy Rt 66 features including signage, both on buildings and streets, meet giants, such as Buck Atom (picture), and explore a life-sized sculpture called East Meets West at Cyrus Avery Centennial Plaza where flags from all the states along Rt. 66 are displayed proudly (picture). Cyrus Avery is known as the Father of Rt. 66. 10K walkers will enjoy an opportunity to discover The Gathering Place, a nationally awarded park, and walk across the Williams Crossing Pedestrian Bridge which spans the Arkansas River. It is the longest arch-type pedestrian bridge in the United States and also the first multi-span, plate arch bridge built in the US. The Williams Crossing is designed for both pedestrian and cyclist access and offers opportunities to stop and enjoy the dramatic river views with seating and lookout areas along the bridge deck.



Fall is a great time to walk in Oklahoma! Rt 66 provides lots of photo opportunities – come and be a part of the celebration of Rt 66's 100th Anniversary!! This is your chance to get your kicks on Route 66 – don't miss out!! Questions? Contact Teresa Arnold @ arnoldtea@hotmail.com or 918-630-3206 OR Cynthia Hines @ vetretriedclh@yahoo.com or 918-406-6077.



SOUTHEAST REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



Save the Dates!

WANT TO ENJOY SOME GREAT FOOD, FUN AND FRIENDSHIP?

WE ARE WALKING JEKYLL ISLAND AND ST. SIMONS ISLAND ON A NOVEMBER WEEKEND!

When: Saturday/Sunday - November 21 and 22, 2026
Registration at 8:30 a.m. - walk at 9 a.m.

Where: Jekyll Island - November 21, 2026
St. Simons Island - November 22, 2026

Watch for "Avid Walker" posts for complete information sent out a week before the events.

But wait - Theres More!

I am hosting a no-fee, non-AVA sanctioned bike ride around Jekyll Island Friday afternoon. If you're interested in attending, e-mail me for meet-up information!
william.k.spaulding@gmail.com

We are staying Friday and Saturday night at the Holiday Inn Express on St. Simons Island. If you're interested in not making the trip each day, there are many hotels in Brunswick and on St. Simons and Jekyll Islands. We can meet up for dinner!

We hope to see you there!

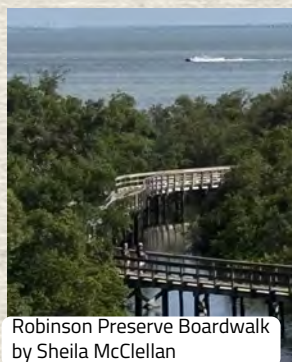


WALK AROUND FLORIDA 35: THE PARK ODYSSEY CONTINUES

BY ALICE LAWRENCE, JOHN MCCLELLAND, CATHY METHERILL

After completing the first leg of the Park Odyssey with a walk in Oscar Scherer State Park on Nov. 6, participants continue on Nov. 7 with walks in national and county parks. Both walks will start at Robinson Preserve Pavilion 1 and run concurrently, with start times from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please finish by 5 p.m.

From the start, the walk to De Soto National Memorial winds through the neighboring Palma Sola Botanical Park, which features rare palms, fruit trees, and a butterfly garden arranged around three lakes. From there, walkers follow a boulevard shaded by estate palms to Riverview Pointe Preserve. Located along the Manatee River, the preserve highlights Florida wildlife and vegetation, includes an optional beach stop, and leads to two historic monuments. The first is the striking Memorial Cross, erected in 1995 to honor the priests and friars who accompanied the 16th-century expedition. The second is the Holy Eucharist Monument, which includes reliefs of a Mass and a Baptism, as well as a 20-foot obelisk carved with symbols of the Holy Trinity. This monument marks the entrance to the trails of De Soto National Memorial, where signs describe Hernando de Soto's 1539 landing and the first extensive European exploration of what is now the southern United States. From there, the Odyssey route returns to the pavilion finish.



Robinson Preserve Boardwalk
by Sheila McClellan

The county walk travels through Robinson Preserve, home to coastal grasslands, marshes, and mangrove habitats. These ecosystems offer opportunities to spot roseate spoonbills, wood storks, white pelicans, bald eagles, and a wide variety of native plants. Both the 5K and 10K routes visit the recently built Mosaic Center for Nature, Exploration, Science, and Technology (NEST), where walkers can try a rope walkway. The longer route continues to a 40-foot observation tower with views of four

counties and five bodies of water. The preserve is a strong example of restoration, transforming land once affected by invasive species, disrupted tidal flows, and fallow farmland into a thriving natural treasure.

On Nov. 8, our Park Odyssey concludes in Bradenton with the Sandpipers' Year Round Event on the Bradenton Riverwalk, a linear city park with a paved trail, public art, and waterfront views of the Manatee River. The route also includes a stop at the Village of the Arts, a vibrant creative community housed in cottages from the 1920s and 1930s. Consider taking home a unique piece of Florida artwork as a memorable souvenir.

WAF35 Hotel and Registration Updates. The Quality Inn Bradenton-Sarasota North no longer has rooms available at the WAF35 rate. Discounted rooms have been set aside at the nearby Super 8, just two blocks away; contact pipers@tampabay.rr.com for details. Only a few A Awards remain, so mail your registration form soon if you want the mug. We recommend signing up for the Saturday ham sub lunch or bringing your own meal in a cooler. Although several restaurants are nearby, leaving could cost you your convenient parking spot. Registration information will be used to create a mailing list for the WAF35 newsletter, which will provide walk updates, restaurant recommendations, and details about social activities. The first edition is expected around Oct. 10. We have not chosen a newsletter name yet, so please send us your ideas!



GARLAND SEASONAL AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER

BY HELEN HULL



Garland, TX, sitting on the northeast corner of Dallas, is a surprise. With a population of over 245,000 people, it is 13th largest city in the state and 93rd largest city in the US, yet it has retained its small town qualities. And now the historic downtown center has undergone a major redo of the city plaza area and several new restaurants and breweries on the square. Sitting just off the town square, Roach Feed & Seed occupies the same site since its founding in 1933 and has witnessed the growth of the town from just 5000 people to its current size. The Dallas Trekkers have just sanctioned a new seasonal walk to explore the changes in our big small town. Come check us out.

WHERE EVERY STEP CARRIES A STORY

BY LEAH MEDADO

Rockport's walking legacy finds a new path as Aransas Pathways carries forward a tradition of community, conservation, and coastal discovery.



The gulls trace their ancient circuits above Aransas Bay, and the live oaks hold their ground for more than a decade, the Rockport Trailways Club offered residents and visitors alike a as they have for centuries. In Rockport, Texas, walking has never been merely exercise. It is way to know this coast on foot. Now, as stewardship passes

to Aransas Pathways, the passage—through salt air and memory, along shorelines shaped by storms, beside fishing tradition deepens—connecting birding, history, kayaking, and trails into a single, walking piers that carry the weight of generations. story.

THE LEGACY AND TRANSITION

A Walking Legacy, Carried Forward

The spirit of walking returned during the 2024 Rockport-Fulton Paradise Walk, a two-day event supported by walking organizations and local partners. Walkers explored coastal scenery, history, and community landmarks, confirming Rockport-Fulton as a natural home for AVA walking.

Stewardship of the Rockport Trailways Club has now transitioned from Rockport Parks and Recreation to Aransas Pathways, preserving the club's roots while opening opportunities for volunteer leadership, partnerships, and broader community participation.

Participants gather at Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary during the 2024 Rockport-Fulton Paradise Walk. The event demonstrated how AVA walking can connect wellness, natural spaces, community partnerships and responsible exploration. Photo by Andy Thomas.



In January 2026, San Antonio Pathfinders Mike and Kathy Schwencke met with Aransas Pathways Steering Committee Co-Chair Pam Wheat Stranahan for an exploratory discussion on the club's history and future.

Aransas Pathways, established in 2011, is built on four pillars: birding, history, kayaking, and trails. As it celebrates its 15th anniversary, the revitalized club becomes part of Pathways in Motion, connecting walking with wellness, conservation, heritage, and responsible travel.

"A thoughtfully designed trail can open a community like a storybook"



PATHWAYS IN MOTION

Where Wellness Meets Stewardship

A single walking route can unite all four Aransas Pathways experiences. Walkers may hear shorebirds calling from coastal habitat, pause at a historic home that survived generations of Gulf storms, follow the bayfront where shrimpers once unloaded their catch, and discover access to paddling trails that wind through protected estuaries.

The landscape becomes something known and therefore worth protecting.

AVA walking is noncompetitive and inclusive, supporting physical and mental well-being for people of different ages, abilities, and fitness levels. There are no winners or losers. There is only the path, the place, and the people who walk it together.

Rockport's revitalization can advance AVA's advocacy by showing how local government, volunteers, tourism partners, historians, and conservation advocates can work together.

ONE ROUTE, FOUR CONNECTIONS

Birding · History · Kayaking · Trails

Walking links wellness, heritage, responsible travel and stewardship across Aransas County.



Volunteers and participants support walkers at a checkpoint during the 2024 Rockport-Fulton Paradise Walk. Photo by Andy Thomas.



The Rockport Trailways Club begins a renewed chapter as its AVA materials are transferred from Rockport Parks and Recreation to Aransas Pathways. From left: Morgan Rodriguez, Leah Medado, Pam Wheat Stranahan, and Mary Ann Pahmeyer. Aransas Pathways photo.



CARRYING THE MISSION FORWARD

The Next Chapter Begins on the Coast

The next chapter begins Oct. 17–18, 2026, with an AVA walking weekend on the Texas coast.

On Oct. 17, walkers will follow Time & Tide: A Rockport Heritage Stroll, with 6K and 11K routes through historic neighborhoods, natural spaces, cultural landmarks, downtown Rockport, and the bayfront.

On Oct. 18, walkers explore Fulton Harbor, where fishing traditions, coastal history, and waterfront views converge.

Future Year-Round Events will invite walkers to return in every season, stay longer, explore more deeply, and become part of the community's continuing story.

The trail began under Rockport Parks and Recreation, but it continues through renewed routes, dedicated volunteers, and the walkers who carry the story forward.

Every step tells a story. Come walk this one with us.

Rockport-Fulton, Texas | Oct. 17–18, 2026



Aransas County Commissioner Pat Rousseau joins Paradise Walk volunteers at the History Center for Aransas County. Photo by Andy Thomas.



The 2024 Paradise Walk affirmed Rockport-Fulton's continuing connection to AVA walking. Photo by Andy Thomas.

DALLAS TREKKERS CHRISTKINDL WALKS

BY DEBORAH CARTER

Come join the Dallas Trekkers as we celebrate Christmas at the Arlington, Texas Christkindl Market. The Market and our walks run November 20-23 and November 27-December 23rd. The Market is known for charming, German style Christmas ornaments. The Market will be located next to the Texas Ranger's Globe Life Field and the "Texas Live!" entertainment center.

Our walks pass statues of notable Texas Rangers players, follow paved walks through park settings, and include the National Medal of Honor Museum. This museum has been named by UNESCO as one of the most beautiful museums in the world. AT&T Stadium is just a few blocks away.

So, come explore Arlington's Christkindl Market and the grounds, green spaces, and linear parks around Globe Life Field and AT&T Stadium where the Texas Rangers and Dallas Cowboys play. Pass lagoons and the Medal of Honor Museum.



Group walks will be held for those who want company. Contact Deborah Carter at debwalk@earthlink.net. Registration is OSB only.

Market: 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. daily; 1650 E Randol Mill Rd. Arlington, TX 76011

Parking: Globe Life Field Lot "B", 734 Stadium Dr E, Arlington, TX

THE SAN ANTONIO PATHFINDERS' BOERNE CHRISTMAS WALK

BY MARTIN CALLAHAN

The San Antonio Pathfinders Volkssport club is hosting its popular Christmas walk which will begin on December 5 at St. John's Church at 315 E. Rosewood Avenue, Boerne, Texas 78006. Boerne is about 30 miles northwest of San Antonio. The town was first settled in 1849 by a group of German pioneers and continues to this day to have a distinctive German flavor.



Participants gather at Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary during the 2024 Rockport-Fulton Paradise Walk. The event demonstrated how AVA walking can connect. From left to right, Gayle Weinraub, Frank Ellis with Blanca, Jessica Hill and her son Joshua all pose for a picture at the rest stop made to resemble an old train station along the Old Number 9 Greenway trail. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan), natural spaces, community partnerships and responsible exploration. Photo by Andy Thomas.

Volkssporters will follow a route through residential and historic sections and in a new neighborhood that decorates for the holidays. On the walk you will have the opportunity to visit many fine antique shops, craft shops and restaurants. You can learn about Boerne online at: www.visitboerne.org/.

At around 10:30 am walk participants will begin partaking in the Christmas party which includes food, fun and games which was a tradition for the previous Randolph Roadrunners club that the San Antonio Pathfinders absorbed. There will also be free gifts while they last for Volkssporters who complete the walk such as old Volksmarch medals and other prizes.

From left to right, Frank Ellis, Gayle Weinraub, "Wild Bill" Hickok wearing a Santa Beard, Doug Eide behind "Wild Bill", Joshua Hill and his mom Jessica Hill pose for a picture next to the sculpture of Wild Bill Hickok by Erik Christianson that he created in 2012. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

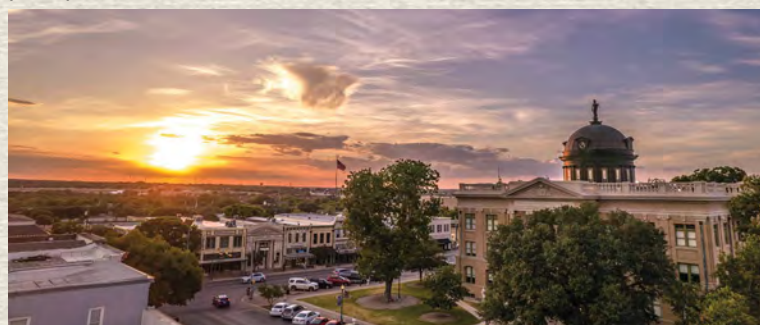


For information on the walk events contact Ellen Ott at 210-723-8574 or email her at: ellenott@sbcglobal.net. You can also visit the club website for more information at <https://sanantonioathfinders.org/>.

COME TO TVA'S SEMI-ANNUAL THREE-DAY WEEKEND IN GEORGETOWN

BY TERRY SULLIVAN

The Colorado River Walkers are excited to welcome walkers to Georgetown, Texas, between Friday, November 13, and Sunday, November 15, 2026, for the Texas Volkssport Association's semi-annual walking weekend and meeting. [The Best Western Plus Georgetown Inn and Suites](#), 600 San Gabriel Village Blvd, will be the host hotel. A block of rooms (both king and two beds) with a discounted rate of \$110/night is being held until midnight, October 27, 2026. A complimentary breakfast is available to guests, and the TVA business meeting will be held here between 1 and 3 pm on Saturday. To reserve, call 512-868-8555 and ask for the TVA2026 rate, or click on the above link. There is a 24-hour cancellation policy.



Three walks are planned. On Friday there will be a Featured YRE in Round Rock (Allen R. Baca Center, 301 W Bagdad, Bldg 2, Round Rock Tx, 78664) about ten miles from the hotel. Saturday morning's Featured YRE starts and finishes at the conference hotel. On Sunday there will be a traditional walk at Berry Springs Park and Preserve, 1801 Co Rd 152, Georgetown. The semi-annual meeting will be held Saturday afternoon at the conference hotel.

Walkers who want extra kilometers will be close to the Colorado River Walkers' eight other YREs. Coming from the south, there are three YREs in Austin and one in Pflugerville. Coming from the north, there are YREs in Belton and Salado. Just to the southwest of Georgetown in Cedar Park, there is both a walk YRE and a bike YRE. For details about these walks, see www.coloradoriverwalkers.org or www.ava.org.

Georgetown, the seat of Williamson County, is located north of Austin on I-35 and has an estimated population of 107 thousand residents. The area offers a variety of restaurants, breweries, and wineries at various price points. Located nearby are Inner Space Cavern, the Georgetown Art Center, and Lake Georgetown. For more, see <https://visit.georgetown.org/>.

SAN PEDRO CREEK CULTURE PARK

BY ELLEN OTT



A mural along the new San Pedro Creek Culture Park trail in San Antonio, Texas. (Photo credit: Mike Schwencke)

In 2015, the San Antonio River Authority and Bexar County embarked on a 10-year project to create a world class linear park. The construction began in 2017 and the last phase opened in May 2025. This park represents the cultural identity of the city with historical displays, art, nature and a walking trail.

Over 15 artists created pieces of art for the park. Lionel and Kathy Sosa will be at the art piece they created called Glorious Story of the San Pedro at 9 am on walk day to explain their creation. It is located across the channel from behind the Spanish Governor's House.



A sculpture of Nelson and Tracy Wolff along the new San Pedro Creek Culture Park trail in San Antonio, Texas. Both Nelson and Tracy Wolff have long been involved in supporting projects like this new San Pedro Creek Culture Park. (Photo credit: Mike Schwencke)

This 2.2 mile stretch of San Pedro Creek downtown has been transformed from a litter strewn, cement drainage ditch to a world class cultural park San Antonio should be very proud of.

On October 3 the San Antonio Pathfinders will have a walk at this beautiful new park with a start time from 8 am until 11 am, finish by 3 pm. The start point is yet to be determined. For information on this new walk call Ellen Ott at (210) 723-8574, email at elleott@sbcglobal.net or view the club website at: <https://sanantoniopathfinders.org/>.

THE SAN ANTONIO PATHFINDERS' SOUTH TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER SCULPTURE WALK

BY MARTIN CALLAHAN

The San Antonio Pathfinders club is hosting a new walking event at the South Texas Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, on October 31. This is a new walk which will include much of the old South Texas Medical Center walk which now includes thirteen sculptures of all types from traditional to modern art. Volkssporters will be provided with an information sheet describing each sculpture along the trail to make the experience more enjoyable.



Doug Eide with Rudy and Gayle Weinraub with Dolly stop for a picture along the walk trail in front of the sculpture titled "Wings of Hope-Hands of Healing" by Kent Ullberg along the trail through the grounds of the Mays Cancer Center along the South Texas Medical Center Sculpture Walk trail in August 2022. (Photo Credit: Martin Callahan)

The San Antonio Medical Foundation was created in 1947 with the purpose of establishing a medical school in South Texas. In 1961 Bexar County votes approved a \$6,500,000 for the construction of a teaching hospital and health care facilities followed. The South Texas Medical Center (STMC) consists of about 900 acres of medical related facilities in northwest San Antonio.

The STMC serves thirty-eight counties and consists of forty-five medical institutions such as dental and nursing schools, a school of allied health, five higher education institutions, twelve hospitals, and five specialty institutions. All of these facilities combined have over 4,200 patient beds.

The walk trail consists of two 5k loops. The first loop includes three sculptures while the second loop includes ten sculptures. There are no restrooms at the Start/Finish, but Volkssporters will pass two public restrooms along the trail or can drive to the start for the second loop where restrooms are available before starting the walk.

The start point for this walk event is at the Jim Reed Walking and Jogging Trail Head parking lot (South Medical Center Foundation), 2889 Babcock Rd., San Antonio, TX 78229. From the north of San Antonio, off of N. Loop 1604, take I10 East to exit for Huebner Rd. Turn Right on Huebner Rd. to Babcock Rd. Turn Left onto Babcock Rd. to Hamilton-Wolf. Turn Left on Hamilton-Wolf and then immediately Right into the trail head parking lot. From South San Antonio, take I10 West to exit for Huebner Rd, turning Left. Follow same route to the trail head as above.

Volkssporters will follow a route on the first loop leading to the 2.2 mile-long South Texas Medical Foundation Walking Trail loop that opened to the public in July 2009. You may spot some of the many deer that populate the area. This walk will also include some of the new buildings and trails of the expanding University of Texas Health Science campus in the South Texas Medical Center before returning to the finish.

Kathy and Mike Schwencke with Blanca pose for a picture next to the sculpture titled "Light the Future" in tribute to Florence Nightingale next to the School of Nursing along the South Texas Medical Center Sculpture Walk trail in May 2026 in San Antonio, Texas. (Photo Credit: Martin Callahan)



For additional information on this upcoming walk contact Martin Callahan at mlctxmil@yahoo.com or visit the club website at: sanantoniopathfinders.org.

THE HILL COUNTRY VOLKSSPORTVEREIN'S CHRISTMAS IN COMFORT WALK

BY MARTIN CALLAHAN

The Hill Country Volkssportverein is hosting its popular Christmas holiday themed-walk in Comfort, Texas on November 28 which is in conjunction with Christmas in Comfort celebration. Comfort is about a 45-minute drive northwest of San Antonio at the junction of State Highway 27, U.S. Highway 87 and Interstate Highway 10.



Harold and Sheri Doss pose for a picture with Blanca and the three Wise Men with the Comfort Community Park building which was the start point visible behind them on the 2025 Christmas in Comfort, Texas Walk. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

Hermann Altgelt established the town in 1854, near the site of an Indian village. German settlers, many of whom had a philosophy opposed to a formal local government settled the town. The town suffered a tragic loss of life in 1862 at the Battle of Nueces when a large number of men from Comfort were killed attempting to cross into Mexico to enlist in the Union Army. After the war the bones of these Unionists were gathered and buried in Comfort, with a monument dedicated in 1866. The Treue der Union (Loyalty to the Union) monument is one of a few in the country that is allowed to fly the flag continually at half-mast.

The walk start point is the Comfort Park, Highway 27, Comfort TX 78013. The start time will be between 8 and 10 a.m., finish by 1 p.m. Volkssporters have the option of doing one of two 5k routes or both for 10k through the historic old town decorated for Christmas. Volkssporters will pass the Treue der Union monument on one of the 5k loops.

Christmas in Comfort is one of the Texas Hill Country's most popular holiday events and draws many visitors to the Texas Hill Country for holiday shopping and family fun every year. The event will have around 130 vendors displaying their arts, crafts, music and delicious food treats in the historic district for a full day of holiday activities you can enjoy from 10 am to 9 pm which includes an illuminated night parade starting at 7 pm.

The Lane Valley Community Center volunteers who sell delicious food to Volkssporters at family prices at all the The Hill Country Volkssportverein's walk events will also have a booth selling tasty treats on the trail along High Street at the Christmas in Comfort event. The money from the food and drinks they sell is a fundraiser for the old Lane Valley School.

For more information on both walks call John Bohnert at: 830-496-1746 or email tinabohnert@gmail.com.



From left to right, Jeanie King, Mike Linnebur, Susan Hennessey, William and John King stop for a picture in front of the Comfort State Bank building along the walk trail at Seventh and High Street. The building was constructed in 1907 and now houses the Comfort Heritage Foundation Museum along the 2025 "Christmas in Comfort," Texas Walk trail. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

THE HILL COUNTRY VOLKSSPORTVEREIN'S WARING, TEXAS HALLOWEEN WALK

BY MARTIN CALLAHAN

The Hill Country Volkssportverein is hosting its 47th annual Halloween Walk in Waring, Texas, on October 24-25. Waring lies along the banks of the Guadalupe River in Kendall County, about 42 miles northwest of San Antonio. R.P.M. Waring founded the town in 1887. The town was originally known as Waringford, in honor of Waring's hometown in Ireland. In 1914 the Waring was a thriving little town of 300 people, but dropped down to 59 in 2000.



Susan and Joe Noonan pose for a picture in front of the two Case Machinery Company Eagles dating from the 1930s-1940s next to the start point for the 2025 Halloween Walk in Waring, Texas. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

The start point for the walk is Waring Hall next to the Waring Volunteer Fire Department at 11 Waring Rd, Waring TX 78074. Next to Waring Hall are displayed two Case Eagles that every Case machinery dealer had at least one of in front of his place of business in the 1930s-1940s. These eagles were first introduced as the logo for the corporation in 1865 and represented Old Abe the legendary war eagle of the 8th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment that served during the Civil War.

The start time for the walk on both days is 8 am till 11 am, finish by 2 pm and the trail is rated 2A. Volkssporters will leave Waring Hall and select one of two 5k county road loop trails to walk on. Volkssporters wishing to do 10k will complete both loops. These lightly traveled roads provides typical scenic Hill Country views with both trails on pavement.

After completing the walk you will want to enjoy the delicious homemade breakfast or lunch served at the start point in Waring Hall at family prices. The food is a fundraiser for preserving the historic Lane Valley School house built in 1900. On Sunday at noon the Waring Volunteer Fire Department will host their annual fish fry next door to the hall. For information on this walk call John Bohnert at 830-995-2421 or email him at tinabohnert@gmail.com.



Joe and Susan Noonan with Blanca stop for a picture in front of the old Waring General Store along the Hill Country Volkssportverein's Waring, Texas Halloween Walk in 2025. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)



HERE IS A LIST OF UPCOMING MULTI-DAY EVENTS FOR YOUR TRAVEL PLANNING. CLICK ON THE LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION. THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THESE CLUBS.

2026 AVA Multiple Event Listing				
Month	Date	Multi-day Event Description	Host Club	Location
September	11 – 13	Meander Minnesota 	Twin Cities Volkssport, NorthStar Trail Travelers, & Lake Country Wanderers	MN
September	24 - 27	Walking in the Footsteps of Lewis & Clark	Oregon Trails State Volkssport Association	OR
October	2 – 4	Smith Mountain Lake Walkabout	Smith Mountain Lake Walking Club	VA
October	11	Philadelphia - Where the Nation Was Born	Liberty Bell Wanderers	PA
October	9 – 11	Hike Guadalupe Mountains	West Texas Trail Walkers	TX
October	16 - 18	U.S. FreedomWalk Festival IML	U.S. FreedomWalk	VA
October	17 – 18	Walking the Texas Gulf Coast	Aransas Pathways & Rockport Trailways Club	TX
October	28 - 1	Halloween Clicks on Route 66	South Central Region	KS, MO, OK
November	8	35th Walk Around Florida 	Suncoast Sandpipers, Mid-Florida Milers, and the Happy Wanderers	FL
November	13 – 15	Texas Volkssport Assoc in	Texas Volkssport	TX
November	14	Honoring Veterans	Ohio Wander Freunde	OH
December	5	Weihnachten Lights Spectacular	Alpine Helen Volksmarch Club	GA
December	31 – 1	Ring Out the Old/Ring In the New	Freestate Happy Wanderers	MD
December	31 – 1	Walk in Fredericksburg, TX	Volkssportverein Friedrichsburg	TX

PARTICIPANTS CORNER

CLICK ICONS TO VIEW ANNIVERSARIES, EVENTS AND AWARDS.



AVA FEATURED EVENTS

Meander Minnesota



Sept 11-13, 2026

5 Walks in 3 Days

**Socials
Special Hotel Rate**

Walk in Mantorville, Northfield, St. Paul,
Eagan, & Nerstrand
[Brochure available here](#)

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Footsteps of Lewis & Clark



**Astoria, Oregon
September 24-27, 2026**

'Signature' AVA 50th Event

Multiple walks, Bike event, a Meet and Greet
and a Dinner are planned.

[See Brochure for Info](#)

[Click here for more information](#)

See all the walks/bike/swim events: ava.org – find a walk

Rocky Mountain Rendezvous



Colorado Springs, CO

July 28 – Aug 1, 2026

**'Signature' AVA 50th Event
5 walks planned**

Walk Garden of the Gods, The Paint Mines, a
gold-mining town, German dinner & more.

[Special hotel rates at Drury Inn Hotel](#)

Sponsored by Falcon Wanderers

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Walk Where Nation Was Born



Philadelphia, PA

Oct 9-11, 2026

**4 walks, 1 bike through history
in Philadelphia**

Socials & Dinner planned
Special rates available at 2 hotels

[Brochure available here](#)

Sponsored by Liberty Bell Wanderers

[Click Here for More Information](#)

See all the walks/bike/swim events: ava.org – find a walk

Hike Guadalupe Mtns in TX



**Carlsbad, NM &
Guadalupe Mtns, TX**

Oct 7 - 10, 2026

Hike to the tallest peak in Texas, or
canyons, or several short flat events

Hotel and [brochure available](#) here

Sponsored by West Texas Trail Walkers

[Click Here for More Information](#)

25th IML US FreedomWalk

**Washington DC &
Arlington, VA**

Oct 16-18, 2026

'Signature' AVA 50th Event

3 Walks plus Bike & Swim events
IML Marathon and Half-Marathon Credit

[Get info on Hotel Rate Walks & Registration](#)

Sponsored by US FreedomWalk

[Click Here for More Information](#)

AVA FEATURED EVENTS

Walking the Texas Gulf Coast



**Oct 17-18
Rockport & Fulton, TX**

Oct 17: "Time & Tide: A Rockport Heritage Stroll"

Oct 18: "Fulton Harbor Nature & Heritage"

Sponsored by Aransas Pathways & Rockport Trailways Club

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Halloween Kicks on Route 66



**Oct 28 – Nov 1
Missouri, Kansas
& Oklahoma on
Route 66**

Signature AVA 50th Event

Celebrating 100 Years of Route 66

10 Walks in 5 Days plus Socials

Sponsored by South Central Region Clubs

[Get brochure here](#)

[Click Here for More Information](#)

See all the walks/bike/swim events: ava.org – find a walk

Walk Around Florida 35



**Brandenton, Florida
November 6-8, 2026**

'Signature' AVA 50th Event

Four Sanctioned Walks plus Swim events
in Manatee and Sarasota Counties
Socials and Special Hotel Rates

[See Brochure for Registration & Events](#)

Sponsored by Suncoast Sandpipers, Happy Wanderers
& Mid-Florida Milers

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Texas Volkssport Assoc.



**Georgetown, TX
November 13-15, 2026
3 Walks**

Featured walks in Round Rock, Georgetown,
and Berry Springs Park & Preserve

Special Hotel Rate at [Best Western Georgetown](#)

Sponsored by Colorado River Walkers & TVA

[Click Here for More Information](#)

See all the walks/bike/swim events: ava.org – find a walk

Honoring Veterans



**Dayton, Ohio
November 14, 2026**

'Signature' AVA 50th Event'

Join the OWF as they honor our Veterans
with special walks, including the
Museum of the U.S. Air Force

Sponsored by Ohio Wander Freunde

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Weihnachten Xmas Lights



**Helen, Georgia
December 5, 2026**

'Signature' AVA 50th Event'

Christmas Lights Evening 5K Walk in this
"Bavarian Alpine Village" in North Georgia.
Lots of prizes after the walk.

Sponsored by the
Alpine Helen Volksmarch Club

[Click Here for More Information](#)

A GUIDE TO BUILDING A TRUSTED WELLNESS INFLUENCE WITH ETHICAL CONTENT

BY PATRICIA SARMIENTO

For aspiring wellness influencers, especially trainers, coaches, clinicians, and creators building a presence alongside a day job, today's social media wellness trends can feel like a wide-open opportunity with a crowded downside. Influencer marketing growth rewards visibility, but online health communities also reward consistency and clarity, and vague "wellness" messaging often gets ignored or doubted. The core challenge is standing out without overpromising, copying what's popular, or drifting into advice that readers can't trust. Wellness niche specialization gives a clear identity, steadier audience fit, and a foundation for credibility that can grow into a real community.

QUICK SUMMARY: BUILDING TRUST AS A WELLNESS INFLUENCER

- Choose a clear wellness niche to attract the right audience and set focused content boundaries.
- Build credibility by sharing transparent experiences and avoiding claims you cannot responsibly support.
- Create a consistent content system to publish reliably without sacrificing quality or trust.
- Share ethical wellness advice by using cautious language and encouraging professional guidance when appropriate.
- Grow community through genuine engagement and monetize carefully so partnerships do not erode trust.

MAKE YOUR PHOTOS LOOK CONSISTENT WITH SIMPLE IMAGE UPSCALING

If your six building blocks are solid, the next trust signal people notice is whether your visuals look clear and cohesive from post to post. AI image optimization tools can help you polish wellness photos and graphics by automatically improving lighting, correcting color balance, increasing clarity, and keeping your overall look more consistent across your chosen platforms. That kind of visual consistency makes your content easier to recognize at a glance, which can strengthen perceived credibility and support engagement.

An AI image upscaler specifically improves resolution and sharpness, so you can enlarge a photo while preserving detail and visual quality instead of ending up with something blurry or pixelated. This is especially useful when you want the same visual asset to work in different formats without looking "off" next to your other posts. Tools such as Adobe Firefly can handle upscaling so your imagery stays crisp and on-brand. With your visuals looking consistent, you're ready to apply that same simplicity and care to the step-by-step process of becoming a wellness influencer responsibly.

BUILD A TRUSTED WELLNESS INFLUENCER WORKFLOW

This workflow helps you pick a clear wellness niche, publish content reliably, and earn trust without overpromising results. For general readers, it turns "posting sometimes" into a simple routine you can stick with while growing a community responsibly.

1. Choose a specific niche you can sustain

Start with one audience and one problem you can speak to consistently, such as "stress-friendly routines for busy beginners" or "strength training basics for women 40+." Confirm you can create 30 days of ideas without forcing it, because consistency beats variety when you are building recognition and trust.

2. Define your trust rules before you post

Write three boundaries you will follow, like "no medical claims," "share what worked for me," and "encourage professional help when appropriate." A simple rule set protects your audience and protects you, and it keeps your messaging steady even when trends shift.

3. Use a beginner-friendly content workflow

Choose 3 content pillars and rotate them weekly: education (how-to), experience (what you tried), and community (questions, polls, check-ins). Batch one short script, one visual, and one caption template at a time so you spend less energy deciding and more energy delivering clear value.

4. Build credibility with proof and conversation

Show your reasoning, your limitations, and your sources in plain language, then invite feedback and respond thoughtfully. Many creators grow faster by staying close to their audience, and micro-influencers achieve engagement rates of 5-8% because the relationship often feels more personal.

5. Monetize ethically and refine using simple metrics

Start with offers that match your niche and stay transparent about sponsorships, affiliate links, and who a product is not for. Track three numbers for each post (saves, shares, and meaningful comments) and repeat what your audience actually uses, since 64% of consumers trust influencer recommendations only when the creator feels reliable over time.

TRUSTED WELLNESS INFLUENCER QUICK-START CHECKLIST

This checklist keeps your wellness content helpful, honest, and easy to maintain. Use it to protect your audience, strengthen your voice, and build a community that knows what you stand for.

- ✓ Confirm a clear niche and audience problem you can serve for 30 days
- ✓ Write a short wellness disclaimer for captions, videos, and your bio
- ✓ Cite reputable health sources when sharing facts, not just personal opinions
- ✓ Set three content pillars and schedule two posting days each week
- ✓ Develop a repeatable brand voice with 5 phrases and 5 words to avoid
- ✓ Engage daily with 10 thoughtful replies and 5 genuine comments on others
- ✓ Disclose partnerships clearly and explain who an offer is not for

Check these off weekly, and your trust will grow alongside your reach.

BUILD TRUST THROUGH CONSISTENT, ETHICAL WELLNESS CONTENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

In wellness, the hardest part is earning attention without overpromising or drifting into advice that can harm. The steady path is a trust-first mindset: consistency in content, clear boundaries, and ethical responsibility in wellness alongside practical community growth strategies. When you do this, your audience learns what to expect, engagement becomes more meaningful, and opportunities align with long-term influencer success rather than short spikes. Trust grows when consistency meets care.

MEMBER PROFILE

HOW I FOUND VOLKSSPORTING DIANE HOWELL EVANS

Back in late 1974, my first husband re-enlisted after graduating from college and was posted to Berlin FRG with Armed Forces Network. After graduating from Northern Michigan University in May of 1975 our son and I joined him in Berlin. As a spouse I found a job working in the Berlin American Dental Clinic where I met many young dental assistants and technicians always looking in the Stars and Stripes for things to do on the weekend. One such weekend a clinic dentist found something called a "volksmarsch" taking place in the Gruenewald. We weren't so sure what we were getting into but one of our fellow co-workers, a local national named "Ruthie", explained the concept and assured us we would have fun. So off we went with our very basic German to experience the Gruenewald. IVV Books were not explained to us but many of us purchased an award as a souvenir. That was in the spring of 1976. The next event a year or so later involved taking the duty train to Frankfurt and finding a German American Volksfest and walk. That was my total volkssporting experience when overseas for 4 years!

I returned to the Washington DC area in December 1979 and got busy with school again, raising a son and full-time employment. Flash forward to 1990 and one weekend, with unexpected free time on my hands, I decided to look at the Weekend section of Friday's Washington Post. I am perusing all the various categories and suddenly I come across the word "Volksmarch." What - here in US, here in Northern Virginia! Is it the same? The info included the club's name and contact information. I instantly called and left a message. The call back resulted in me attending the event, listening to how the program worked, buying books and joining the Northern Virginia Volksmarchers. It was off and running!

I have served as club president, AT Regional Director, Vice Chair, assisted with various East Coast start up IMLs and AVA biennial conventions, edited and published the "Atlantic Trailmaster" as well as several club newsletters since becoming active on the east coast. Now retired to the west coast I have found my new NW walking family and am once again happily involved with volkssporting at the State level, posting walks to Meetup and leading weekday group walks for one club, and responsible for the newsletter for another club. I love Special Programs and it continues to be an honor to Chair the Programs/Special Programs Committee.

Volkssporting keeps me feeling young, healthy, engaged and offers an activity my son and now my grandchildren share with me when we visit them in San Antonio or take them on travels with us. Volkssporting lets me enjoy communities up close and personal on our road trips around the country and the world. Here's to AVA's 50th and many more. To my fellow walkers, wear something or carry something walking related that will invoke questions so you can share information about our sport and invite them to a walk. In Palm Springs this past December I met a woman at the table next to us in a restaurant who turned out to be from a town 7 miles from my local town and loves to walk daily with her dog. We exchanged contact information and when I return home from this year's road trip, we have a date to meet and walk the YRE in her town. Spreading awareness, one step at a time.



**BECOME
A SUSTAINING
MEMBER TODAY!**

Help our communities live a longer,
healthier life, by becoming a monthly
donor.

BECOME A AVA MEMBER



AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

CLICK HERE TO JOIN



AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

Big Give FUNDRAISING Campaign

SEPTEMBER 23-24
6 PM - 6 PM

Your donation to the Big Give paves the path to a healthier tomorrow.



13th Annual Fall Volksmarch
September 27, 2026



Support AVA: America's Walking Club

CHARITABLE
GIFT GIVING
with your IRA



Your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) can help support the American Volkssport Association (AVA) — a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to promoting fun, fitness, and friendship for all ages and abilities. If you are age 70½ or older, you can make a tax-free gift directly from your IRA to AVA. This is known as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

Why Consider a QCD Gift?

- May count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)
- No federal income tax on the transferred amount
- Simple, direct way to give—no itemizing required
- Supports AVA's mission and programs nationwide
- Creates a lasting impact on community wellness

Timing Matters

To count toward your current year's Required Minimum Distribution, your gift must be transferred directly from your IRA by December 31.

How to Make a Gift from Your IRA

Contact your IRA administrator and request a Qualified Charitable Distribution payable to: American Volkssport Association, Inc. (EIN: 74-2164037) 1032 S. Alamo Street, San Antonio, TX 78210

Ask your IRA custodian to include your name and contact information so AVA can acknowledge your gift.

Questions? We're Here to Help

Phone: 210-659-2112 Email: Erin@ava.org Website: www.ava.org

Consult your financial or tax advisor to determine how a Qualified Charitable Distribution applies to your situation.

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