



CHECKPOINT ✓

The official voice of the American Volkssport Association

AVA: America's Walking Club

Volume 26, Number 89

www.ava.org

September 2017



In case you missed it!

*The full solar eclipse
on August 28, 2017.
Photo courtesy of
Donald M. Smith.*

David Bonewitz, AVA National President

Building the Future

When I spoke to the National Officers, Regional Directors, Deputy Regional Directors, and others at the recent Orientation and Training, I established what I will call a theme for what we do over the next 2 years. That theme is **Helping Clubs Grow and Growing New Clubs**. From the National level we will be committed to this theme. We have formed a new committee, Club Development and Support, to focus our efforts to help you at the club level. This will include looking hard at issues that frustrate club leadership and trying to find acceptable solutions. Be sure and let your voice be heard by this committee. This committee will also be looking at finding opportunities to start new clubs and how to support those clubs in their earliest stages. Our clubs are America's Walking Club.

AVA Committees

For some time we have been seeking volunteers to serve on the various committees which will be marking the trail into the future for AVA. Here are the committees, their Chairs, and the e-mail you can use to contact the respective Chair to volunteer, ask questions, or provide ideas. Get involved and help America's Walking Club build a bright future.

[Click here to view all AVA committees and members.](#)

Bob Morrison, MBA/CPA-retired, AVA National Treasurer

Changing AVA's Accounting Year

A strategic initiative for NEC XX is streamlining business processes at AVA. One simple step is putting our financial accounting/tax year and our event sanctioning/statistical reporting year on the same calendar cycle. Presently, AVA's accounting/tax year begins on July 1st and ends June 30th while event sanctioning and statistical reporting year begins January 1st and ends December 31st.

Changing AVA's financial accounting/tax year to a calendar year is relatively easy, has no impact of our member clubs and yields some nice benefits for AVA staff and NEC members. Adjusting the accounting year will allow budgeting, annual reporting and comparisons between dollars and participation volumes reporting during the slower winter months when less participation activity places demands on staff time. During convention years, this change eases the rush to prepare convention reports and a budget while planning and conducting the biennial convention.

There are important considerations to such a change: 1) the impact to financial audits; 2) approval by Internal Revenue Service, and; 3) the impact on clubs.

The audit partner previously in charge of the AVA audits, he did not see any problems from a financial reporting perspective. He suggested either a six month audit from the close of one June 30th fiscal year to the inception of a new January 1st calendar year, or possibly an eighteen month audit for the short fiscal year period plus the entire next calendar.

AVA bylaw 3.5(a) specifies "*The fiscal year of the AVA shall be from July 1 of a given year through June 30 of the following year.*" Therefore, this requires membership approval for a bylaw change.

The tax manager who previously supervised AVA's tax filings concluded that moving AVA from a fiscal year to a calendar year would be approved by IRS.

There would be no the impact of this change on our member clubs who are under AVA's IRS Tax Exemption because each club files its own return using its own federal identification number. Ms. Reiner and I agree that changing AVA's Federal Tax Reporting period would not require member clubs to change their fiscal tax years or any business practices. (IRS specifics available).

AVA General Policies, Paragraph 1.02,A,3 states member clubs must "*Operate on a fiscal accounting year of July 1 to June 30.*" While this requirement could continue, AVA could also choose to consider amending this language freeing clubs to select any fiscal year they wish, even if it is different from AVA's reporting year.

Changing AVA's accounting/tax reporting year from June 30th to December 31st has significant benefits, is relatively simple and has absolutely no impact on our member clubs. I support this change. Here are the steps:

1. Amend the bylaws
2. Amend General Policies
3. Arrange new audit cycle
4. File RS 1128 (Application to Adopt, Change, or Retain a Tax Year) and short-year tax return.
5. Begin reporting on the new calendar year basis.

For questions or comments write to Bob Morrison, AVA National Treasurer at treasurer@ava.org.

Southeast Regional Director—John McClellan

How to Communicate to the Public What a Walk Box Is

How do we communicate to the public what a walk box is? Attached is a template for a product I created a couple of years ago that we give to business owners (or Park Rangers) where we have walk boxes to help educate their counter employees what a walk box is. Feel free to download the attached template and modify it for your local needs.

[Click here to download template](#)

Convention Co-Chair—Lea Darling



Empire State Capital Volkssporters

PO BOX 5464, Clifton Park, NY, 12065-5464

www.walkescv.org

American Volkssport Association 21st Biennial Convention

Click here →

[2019 Convention Survey of Full Convention Registration Cost](#)

← Click here

Now that summer is slipping into our memories, we in the Northeast along with our sister clubs throughout the United States, are winding down from our busy summer walking schedules. It is time to look again at the 2019 Convention Survey on full convention registration costs.

This is a reminder to all club presidents to discuss with your members what they feel is a reasonable cost for convention 2 years hence. The deadline for submitting your suggestions is October 1st. Don't feel that you didn't have a say. This is your opportunity!

Respond to Lea Darling, convention@ava.org.



Program—Debra Kruep, Chair

Girl Scout Patch Design



Congratulations to the winner of the Girl Scout Walk Together 2017-2018 Patch Competition, Arerli Gonzales of Troop 30536 in the Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast Council. The scouts were asked to draw something they would see during a walk. She depicted some whales following her along the trail! This patch will be available to order beginning September 1 for your Walk Together events.

[Click here for consignment form](#)

#OptOutside

November 24

We are calling on all clubs who do not have a traditional walk in their area to pick their favorite YRE and hold a group/guided walk on Black Friday. Even the smallest of clubs can pick a time and go for a walk! All #OptOutside walks will be featured in a special area on the AVA website. They will also be featured on the AVA Facebook page. In order for your local walk to be included, please send the following information to missy@mcbrideink.com. The more events we have listed the better!

Name of Event, with City & State:

Start Point Location:

Start Time:

Point of Contact with email address:

401K: Invest in Your Health

AVA's first online (VOP) program is set to begin on January 1, 2018. You will be able to log your kilometers, post photos of your favorite walks, communicate with other walkers and track your distance in comparison to everyone who is enrolled in the program. These are just some of the fun things around the corner in 2018. Check back every month until 2018, we will bring you more information on this exciting program and how to enroll. Stay tuned.

John & Susan Ives— Texas Trail Roundup

CTA: Certified Tourism Ambassadors

In August we attended a half-day class to become "Certified Tourism Ambassadors," or CTAs. This is a nation-wide program available in about 45 areas, many of which have AVA clubs. There's a list at www.ctanetwork.com. The program is typically run by convention and visitors bureaus.

The purpose of the program is to train the people who have contact with tourists – most of the folks in our class worked in hotels – to be enthusiastic ambassadors for their cities and regions. About half the class focused on customer service and half on regional history and attractions. Before the class we had a 200+ page manual to read, pre-class exercises to complete, and we were expected to have explored several online resources. AVA was even mentioned in the manual! There was a test at the end of the class. Whew! We paid \$25 each for the training.

The real value, though, is in becoming members of the CTA network. We will be able to promote our events. To maintain certification, we will have to record 50 "points" every year – visiting the Alamo earns us 10 points. To encourage us to explore our city, our CTA credentials offer us discounts at local attractions, restaurants and shops and we'll be invited to special events. For example, every year Sea World invites the CTAs to a free showing of the holiday shows so we can help promote them. I can see us using the network to facilitate finding start points.

The customer service component had surprising application to our AVA clubs. One thing they emphasized is that people don't remember what you say and do: they remember how you make them feel. Great advice for attracting new members!

We intend to take full advantage of the benefits and learning opportunities. Check it out!

AVA National Office Team

Awards and Membership Coordinator—Karen Winkle

To view the Monthly Comparison Chart for the Total Number of Awards processed [click here.](#)

Now that AVA is having more Bike Events, you may want to encourage purchasing Bike Books. That will be the way we can monitor how well the program is doing. In the past several years there were only a few bike events, so it was decided that the distances could be put in the Blue, Orange, and Yellow books. With more events, and traveling Bike stamps, it is important that we keep track separately.



Here is the official AVA participant information request form. [Click here to open.](#)

Information and Technology Specialist—Hector Hernandez



Photo courtesy of Donald M. Smith

Fun Fact: "A lunchtime walk can make you more productive at work."

Walks to Remember

Lets make this a September to remember! What is your club's famous walk coming up for the month of October? Email your club's walks information to hector@ava.org and we will help market your walk.

2018 Starting Point Books

I'm happy to hear lots of new events have been put into the ESR this year. Just remember clubs have until September 15, 2017. RDs have until September 30 to review their region's events; after September 30 if your club sanctions a YRE or seasonal it will not appear in the 2018 Starting Point Book. Starting Point changes are listed only for events published in the Starting Point.

Starting Point photo contest.

Thank you all who have submitted photos for the contest. It is now officially closed and the photos will be sent to the Publicity Committee Chair to begin judging. I wonder who has captured the essence of Volkssporting for this year.???

** The sanction window closes on 9/15/2018. After this date, you must go to Traditional Events pull down menu for Type and select YRE or Seasonal. **



Starting Point Changes

Please remember to make all changes within your ESR and then send to Hector. The website will be updated weekly. Email changes to hector@ava.org.

Click here for this months [Starting Point Changes](#)

Communications—Samanta Sanchez

Don't Miss the Deadlines!

It's Renewal time again. The 2018 YRE and Seasonal Renewal is happening now, deadline is midnight **September 15, 2017**. Please renew your walks at your earliest convenience. [Click here](#) for some "Starting Point" Tips and Guidelines by Joanne Forinash.

Reminder:

- Please do not mark your events "No Renewal" if undecided. There is no "undo" button, you will have to re-enter a new ESR.
- To avoid error during renewal make sure you enter your changes or updates correctly before you hit the renew button.
- Your event will disappear from your renewal list if you entered incorrect information.
- Most of the errors you will encounter occur in the POC section when entering information. Please follow the instructions accordingly.

If you experience any ESR issues while renewing your events please contact samanta@ava.org or hector@ava.org .

It's that time of the year again. Annual Financial Reports, e-Postcard filings and Officer Updates (ESR update) are due **November 15, 2018**. Please submit a copy of your filings to samanta@ava.org .

Spreading Fun, Fitness, and Friendship

Have an event coming up? Let us help you spread the word by allowing us to advertise your event on our social media platforms. Simply email the information you want publicized to samanta@ava.org. This can be a brochure, a brief description, or a narrative that will excite people to get up and join your event - don't be afraid to be creative! Your event will be featured as one of our Walks to Remember. Thank you!

AVA's Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales

NEC XX Taking Bold Steps Towards the Future of AVA

The National Executive Council of the AVA met this past August in Boerne (Bernie!), Texas for a jam-packed weekend of training, planning, and a brief board meeting whereby the National Executive Council approved of a new brand of AVA Community Events (ACE) designed to allow clubs flexibility in the creation of events that will support growth and enhancement of our current IVV sanctioned events.

According to AVA President, David Bonewitz, "businesses must change and adapt to changing conditions around them. To fail to do so will surely lead to slow decline and eventual death. Two classic examples of thriving businesses that failed to adapt to the changes around them are Kodak (who did not change with the growth of digital photography) and Blockbuster (who failed to see the change in technology). These are but two classic examples of businesses who failed to adapt and are no longer around. We do not want AVA: America's Waking Club to suffer this same fate. So, the goal of the national leadership is to find ways that AVA can adapt in order to not only survive, but to thrive." The development of non-IVV events called AVA Community Events is one of these changes.

The mission of the AVA is *to promote and organize noncompetitive physical fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness and friendship for all ages and abilities.* Nowhere does our mission state we should "stamp IVV books." The IVV programs have been the means by which AVA accomplishes its mission. The AVA President further states that while this has been very successful for 40 years, the world has changed and we have not. "Don't misunderstand this point. Adding new non-IVV programs does not mean that we cease our IVV programs. It just broadens our ability to accomplish our mission."

In order to be able to "legally" establish the non-IVV/AVA Community Events we may need to change our Articles of Incorporation and our ByLaws and that may very well be what it will take to change and adapt if we want to survive.

The non-IVV/AVA Community Events fall into the following three classifications:

AVA Youth Community Events – This type of event will cater to clubs who will be working with youth in the elementary, middle and high school environment. Accessibility will be limited to protect the identity and well-being of minors who will be participating.

AVA Traditional Community Events – This type of event is comparable to the traditional event clubs currently host with the exception that this type of event does not have to be designed according to IVV guidelines. Hopefully this will allow clubs more flexibility to customize community events in their regions where an IVV event is not possible due to constraints of IVV guidelines thus drawing more participation.

AVA Guided Community Events – These events are designed to encourage weekly participation on a *regular* basis. Fun walks, guided walks, meet ups, etc., are examples of events that could fall into this category. Individual maps will not be required so long as there is a guide on each walk and all participants follow the guide.

Although non-IVV/AVA Community Events are not required to follow IVV guidelines, the AVA will be outlining club and insurance criteria for these types of events prior to inception. Also, because these events are not required to adhere to IVV guidelines, participants cannot receive IVV credit for attending any of these events.

The purpose of the new brand of non-IVV/AVA Community Events is to allow clubs more flexibility to create events that are not restricted by IVV guidelines are hopefully more responsive to local community needs. The projected start date for these events is January 2018. More detailed information will follow in the upcoming issues of the Checkpoint and can also be found in the August NEC meeting minutes. In the words of President Bonewitz, “let’s not follow the Kodaks and Blockbusters of this world, but adapt and change. With this, AVA: America’s Walking Club will be thriving for another 40 years and beyond.”

401K: Invest in Your Health Program (Virtual Online Program/VOP) - The NEC also approved the 401K Invest in Your Health Program. This program is an internet based program that utilizes the Walker Tracker application. The online application will allow AVA club member participants to log on and track their kilometers, walk history, photos, and other cool features for IVV Sanctioned events. Because this is a one-year pilot program slated to start January 2018, a limited number of AVA members will be allowed to participate for a nominal fee. If you are interested in participating and would like more information please contact Jan at VOP@ava.org

Recap: AVA’s NEW PRIVACY POLICY PROCEDURES ON THE COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Last June the NEC approved the creation of a Privacy Policy so certain personal data collected by the AVA could be shared with club presidents, state association presidents and Regional Directors and used only for dissemination of information related to AVA services and activities. To view this policy [click here](#). The only information that will be released will be name, address, telephone number and email address. If an individual does not want any of this information shared she/he can opt out at any time by contacting Karen at the AVA National office or by sending an email notice that you do not want your information shared to optout@ava.org

Any AVA club personnel, Regional Director or staff member with access to this information must ensure it is properly safeguarded in accordance with the AVA Privacy Policy Procedures. If this information is misused by clubs it could result in termination of membership. To view these Procedures [click here](#).

How to Request Information



Photo courtesy of Donald M. Smith

Effective June 1, 2017 a National Officer, Regional Director or Deputy Director may request personal information from the AVA National Office. To simplify the process all that is needed is the completed Request for Participant Form. Once the request form is verified by the National Office the information will be released. The AVA reserves the right to hold the information until the requestor can be verified. A two weeks turn-around time for receipt of this information is appreciated. [Click here for form.](#)

BE ADVISED THAT ALTHOUGH THIS INFO MAY BE SHARED WITH STATE ASSOCIATION AND CLUB PRESIDENTS THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN REQUEST THE INFORMATION IS AVA OFFICERS, REGIONAL DIRECTORS AND DEPUTY DIRECTORS.

Please refer to the AVA Privacy Policy for our information sharing practices located on our website, www.ava.org or contact Karen at the AVA office at 210-659-2112.

Support Our National and International Friends!

National



[Go to webpage](#)



[Go to webpage](#)

Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send us an email to the attention of Samanta requesting that you be put on our distribution list for the Checkpoint. Please note on the subject line: Request for Checkpoint.

Send your request to Samanta at samanta@ava.org.



Fun, Fitness, Friendship



The American Volkssport Association

The Mission of AVA is to promote and organize noncompetitive physical fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness, and friendship for all ages and abilities.

