

The [Shasta Sundial Strollers](#) of Redding CA are using the Mt. Shasta Mall to log in some miles and to take advantage of the air conditioning and better air quality. Two of our members lost their homes and about six had to evacuate due to the Carr Fire. We are all so grateful to have each other and to be part of the AVA family. - Facebook Post Cynthia Turbin



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Fun, Fitness, Friendship

August 2018

CHECKPOINT ✓

The official voice of the American Volkssport Association
AVA: America's Walking Club
www.ava.org

"To our friends in Redding, CA, our hearts go out to you during these terrible fires. The Shasta Sundial Strollers have always been one of our strongest clubs and I know you will bounce back. If there is anything that the AVA family can do, please don't hesitate to let us know."—David Bonewitz, AVA President

Training Development Committee—Betty Green, Member

What sets the AVA apart from other walking experiences is the quality of our walks. Many Volkssporters believe the AVA: Trailmaster Guide and Certification Examination manual is only intended for those wishing to become certified AVA Trailmasters. In fact, this manual is a wonderful resource for everyone and especially club trailmasters (available at <http://www.ava.org/publications.php>). The table of contents is very helpful if you have a specific issue you want to look up. Tom Baltes discussed Route Mapping in a previous Checkpoint.

To continue reading and key guidelines [click here](#).



Clearing the Trail Markers in style.—
John McClellan, SE Regional Director

IT Committee—Chris Zegelin, Chair

There always appears to be a lot going on with IT. We are cleaning up problems and making progress with the new member portal (my.ava.org). If you haven't tried this yet, you can now log in using your legacy club login, and modify the text on your 2019 stamps.

From "Club Home", select "Sanctions", followed by "Stamps". You can modify the text of any stamp that has not yet been manufactured. Once manufactured, the text is locked. HQ can still modify the text, and manufacture another stamp, but there will be a cost associated with that service.

Stamps are manufactured in a batch to keep the cost low. A batch might be 6 weeks worth of stamps. This of course has to be made at least 4 weeks before the first stamp in the batch is due to allow for mailing and the club getting the stamp to the right place. This is why it continues to be important to sanction events at least 12 weeks (3 months) ahead of time. The cost of the stamp rubber is all in the setup and shut down of the equipment (labor). The cost of the rubber is pennies. A single emergency stamp can cost as much as 100 stamps made in a manufacturing run.

Stamp handles are made by volunteers. Please treat them well and appreciate the San Antonio clubs and individuals that help keep the cost to AVA low. Please do not ask for more handles than you need, and please reuse them whenever possible. We will be sending additional handles with your 2019 YRE stamps. This will allow you to put the assembled 2019 stamp in the start box before the end of 2018, and then retrieve the 2018 stamp some time in January. You will need to keep the 2018 handle for use in 2020. (Note that you can now sanction a YRE for the full year, since you will no longer need a rush stamp shuffle day, on Jan 1).

We are starting to operate from a new sanction database. This is a copy of the legacy database with some modifications. There are additional fields such as those needed for the stamps, and new features that we are developing. This “copy” happens continuously in the background, but is far from instant. We have made improvements to get the average copy time down to less than 1 hour, but if there is a rush of changes, then it might take a day. This is important to you because if you make an emergency change to the sanction, it might take a day for this change to become visible. Let us know about these emergencies.

This new database is allowing us to work towards a replacement for the current “find a club”, and “find an event” tools. This replacement will occur in the next two months. The new design is more informative and easier to use. The navigation between events and clubs is easier. They will simplify the sanctioning of an event on the Online Start Box (OSB), and other benefits.

The difficult one is the interactive map. The current design uses very old Google tools that will loose “support” by the end of this year. I timed the current load time, and it took over 8 minutes to load the information for one state. This is solely between your browser and Google using Javascript, the AVA server is not involved. The only way we can “fix” this is to rewrite the interactive map using the latest from Google. This has begun, but it is yet another huge task. We will not turn off the old interactive map until we have a good replacement.

The goal is to get to a trip planning tool. As we look at this, we find that too many of the event database entries simply won’t work. We use web services such as Google for mapping and rely on them to resolve a location based on the information that you put into the sanction. They do a pretty good job, but when our information does not conform to their expectations, the location is incorrect, and your event will not be found.

Similarly, some entries overload fields like the event city with lots of extra information. The Legacy ESR does not protect against this, but when it is displayed on a phone, the entry is unreadable. IT cannot fix any of this, it will be up to you to correct your sanction entries. IT will provide you with the tools to understand what you need to do.

With a little over a year of work, I see reasonable progress. We are all volunteers who collectively have provided more than \$150,000 worth of consulting work to AVA gratis. We will continue to focus on the most important tasks like a long term solution to convention management. All of this work has to happen while we continue to operate. It’s like finishing a plane while the shell is flying along...

We would also like to hear from you. (IT@ava.org) I went back through the 2011 IT survey and have tried to incorporate many of those ignored requests into our current work. Improvements to the current legacy ESR is #1. The member portal coupled with a better interface to AVA is #2. Full support for phones and tablets is #3. Try the new portal on your phone. The buttons are bigger and easier to use with touch, and the display works for portrait or landscape. We are listening.



Wood & Dale Wanderers Club, Virginia– Tim Miner, President



Celia Miner, treasurer of the Wood & Dale Wanderers Club of Virginia, places her 20,000 kilometer magnet on the back of her car.

One of the unique features of the sport of volksmarching is the ability to certify lifetime achievements from walking thousands of kilometers of distance over thousands of events. For many AVA walkers, the numbers can be very impressive. Now volksmarchers have a way to publicly tout their achievements while providing a very public display that they participate in “America’s Walking Club.”

For many years, runners and other distance-covering sports have used the white oval with the numbers “26.2” or “13.1” to show that they covered that many miles in one event. Sometimes one can see an oval with “10K” on it. While those numbers might be significant for one certified event, the numbers certified

in the AVA Achievement Book can help us catch the eye of others. We now can display for all to see that “Collecting Kilometers is Cool!”

After an enquiry from the Wood & Dale Wanderers Club, the national staff of the AVA created new promotional items for the organization’s page on the CafePress website with the white oval theme. These items include magnets, stickers and others that proudly display a dozen different lifetime distance achievement levels. The numbers range from 500 to 50,000 kilometers. Inside the oval are words and the logo that show that the distance come through participation in the AVA. The magnets have two sizes and the stickers come with white or clear backgrounds.

Every item purchased from CafePress with the AVA logo raises money for the organization. The AVA wins with every sale made, and the purchaser wins the admiration and respect of every other athlete that sees the accomplishments from years of walking.

Click on the CafePress logo for oval car magnets, oval Stickers and other items:



Special Programs—Bonnie Johnson, Chair

Special Programs for 2020

Time to submit those Special Programs which would begin January of 2020 with the approval of the NEC at the January 2019 meeting. **All submissions need to be in by November 1, 2018**

Any eligible club may send in proposals until November 1, 2018 to be considered for approval at the January 2019 NEC meeting. With approval, the Special Program would begin January 1, 2020.

Please follow the AVA Special Program guidelines noted in AVA Policy Special Programs/Club Challenges 4.05.

Any questions and all mailings may be directed to Bonnie Johnson, 25 - 66th Way NE, Fridley, MN 55432 763-229-3584 bonjohn@comcast.net

Special Programs ESR Update

The ESR Special Programs (SPs) addition/deletion page has been recently enhanced. This page now shows the SP begin or end dates in the drop down SP selection lists. If the SP has not yet begun, the begin date is displayed with the prefix, "Begins:". Otherwise the SP end date is displayed with the prefix, "Ends:". The end date is actually the "Redeem By" date for the SP. No date nor prefix is displayed for events with no end date.

AVA National Office Team

Operations Specialist Intern—Blake La Rue

401K Day!!!

"Just a reminder that August 11th is 401K Day! Be sure to post a picture of yourself on the AVA group Facebook page at any AVA Traditional or YRE walk wearing your red 401K shirt on August 11th in order to celebrate the achievement of completing the 401K challenge! If you are interesting in joining the 401K Challenge you can still sign up, just [click here](#) and get started improving your health!"



[WHF Site](#)

[Flyer](#)

[Registration Form](#)

"September 8th is the Tour de Las Missions, a 10/5km walk that allows you to walk through the World Heritage Site Historic Missions! The first 500 participants who register before August 31 will receive a Finisher Commemorative Metal, Collectable T-shirt, and Goodie Bag. This is a one of a kind opportunity to visit and celebrate San Antonio's World Heritage Sites. Hope to see you there!"

Information and Technology Specialist—Hector Hernandez

Walks to Remember

Summer is coming to an end and soon it will be walking weather! A nice cool breeze is all you need. What walk will you celebrate this upcoming month? Share it with your friends, share it with AVA. If you are in need of assistance marketing August walks and events please email your walk or event information to hector@ava.org.

Starting Point Photo Contest Ends August 31, 2018

The contest is not over. AVA is still looking for those two photos that capture the essence of Volkssporting in the USA! The first and second place winners will get their photo printed on the front side (1st place) and backside (2nd place) cover of the 2019 Starting Point book. Winners will also get a complimentary copy of the Starting Point!

Entries are due to AVA National office no later than August 31, 2018. Rules, guidelines and the official entry form are [attached here](#). Participation in the nationwide contest is open to AVA members, clubs and state organizations. All entries must have been created or occurred during the time period from June 30, 2017 – August 31, 2018. For more information contact Hector at hector@ava.org.

Don't forget to pre-order your Starting Point Books! Pre-order starts today!

Click here for [order form](#).



2017 Publicity Contest photo sent in by Mark Kruep.

Renewal Season

It's time to renew your events! Events need to be entered into the ESR so that stamps can be made and mailed out in November/December. The deadline is midnight September 15, 2018. If you would like your walks to be listed in the Starting Point book, please renew your walks at your earliest convenience. Click the link for [Renewal Instruction](#).

Here are some tips to renew your YREs and Seasonals.

- Please do not mark your events "No Renewal" if undecided. There is no "undo" button, you will have to re-enter a new ESR.
- For a faster and error free renewal, do a fast and quick renewal without changes. Simply click renew and submit. You may enter your changes or updates by going to the ESR Listing page to edit your event information.
- Your event will disappear from your renewal list if you enter incorrect information. Contact Hector to have your event reactivated if your event disappears during renewal.
- Most of the errors occur when entering information in the POC section. Please follow the instructions carefully.

Contact Hector at hector@ava.org for any ESR renewal problems and concerns.

Special Programs Reminder

For all who have renewed their events and added Special Programs please note that the listed events below are only running until the end of this year. If you added them to your list of Special Programs you can remove them so that they do not get printed in the Starting Point book or you can just leave them and they will drop off the ESR in January.

Amphitheaters
Animal Safari
Boardwalks
Food for Thought
Volcanoes

Fraud Emails

It seems scammers are at it again. If an email looks suspicious it probably is. Please look at who the email is from and if there are any misspellings in the email address. Do not click on links, open attachments, download pictures or forward the email. It should be deleted immediately. You should also never give any personal information through an email. The AVA will never request personal or financial information through an email.

2019 Starting Point Books Print Deadline

Sanctioning of 2019 YREs and Seasonals began June 1, 2018 and will end September 15, 2018. RDs have until September 30 to review their region's events. If your club sanctions a YRE or Seasonal after September 30, it will not appear in the 2019 Starting Point Book.

For tips and guidelines on entering information in the ESR for the Starting Point Book please [click here](#).

Starting Point Changes

Starting Point changes on the AVA website are only for events published in the Starting Point.

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

March Giving Madness



Have you heard? The Big Give 2019 date has been announced! Mark your calendars for March 28, 2019. Join the giving madness by supporting your favorite walking organization – Us!

2019 Convention Hotel

– Rooms Are Still Available!

A block of rooms for the 2019 AVA Convention has been reserved with the Red Lion Hotel Albany. We have blocked room nights for June 11-15 at a discounted group rate of \$109 + tax per night (limit 2 people per room). Rates increase to \$124 for three guests per room night and \$139 for four guests per room night. Complimentary continental breakfast is included for two guests only per room night. The hotel is limited in microwaves and refrigerators. If you would like to have any of these items or both, please make your request when making your reservation.

To make your reservations: please dial **(518) 458-7250 ext. 440**. Please make sure to ask for the American Volkssport Association Block to get the discounted rate. Stay tuned for Convention updates on Facebook and website.

Red Lion Hotel Albany
205 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12205

Accounting and Finance News— Erin Grosso/Marian DeVaul

Thank you for supporting and shopping our **First Flash Sale**! It was a great success and we've had such positive feedback. Although, we had a back order on a few of the colors, we have since received them and the last of the shirts have been mailed. Please contact us with any questions or concerns. We have already had requests for another sale with new items such as

bucket hats, ball caps, and sun shades for your cars. We are working on this and hope to have the next sale by mid-August. If you have a favorite style, color or brand...let us know. If you have an idea for a t-shirt design...let us know. As always, we appreciate your feedback and suggestions.

AVA's Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales

AVA Community Events (ACE) will be ready for implementation October 1, 2018

ACE events are non-IVV events that were approved by the National Executive Council last September. This new brand of AVA events will support enhancement of our current IVV events by allowing clubs more flexibility to create events that are not restricted by IVV guidelines and more responsive to local community needs.

ACE Events fall into the following three classifications:

ACE-Y (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. For example, a club may want to host a walk for an elementary school on their school grounds or at a park. Online accessibility of information will be limited to protect the identity and well-being of minors who will be participating.

ACE-T (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. An example of this type of event might be a traditional event whereby a club partners with a local nonprofit organization to host a walk that is less than 10 kilometers and books are not stamped.

ACE-WG (Weekday 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.

More information on the sanctioning process, event guidelines and fees will be in the September Checkpoint. Note because these events are not required to adhere to IVV guidelines, participants cannot receive IVV credit for attending any of these events. The IVV logo should not be represented on any AVA Community Events literature.



2017 Publicity Contest photo submitted by Sheila McClellan.

New Travel Savings for AVA Members!

In an effort to offer more value for our club members we have secured preferred access to a discount travel booking site that offers you exclusive hotel room rates that are up to 70% lower than any other public online travel website or hotel website.

This travel booking website has over 800,000 hotels to choose from and the online search & booking process is identical to all the other popular travel websites so you can book with ease and absolute confidence that you're getting the lowest possible rates.

In addition to hotels, you can also book discounted flights, vacation rentals, cars, and entertainment tickets.

Individual registration to access this booking site is fast and easy only requiring a user name, password, and valid email address.

[Click here now to register>>](#)

This is an exclusive benefit for our club members only so the link to the site may not be shared with the public or posted on your club websites or social media networks. If club members want to use this service they should click on the link in this newsletter or go to the AVA website and click on the "Book Now" icon. The travel booking company has agreed to give the AVA 1% of total booked

hotel revenue. This may not sound like much however if all our club members use this service it can add up for the AVA. We hope you take full advantage of it for all your travel needs and enjoy the rest of your summer!



Support Our National and International Friends

International



National



Click on image to learn more.

Click on image to view flyer.



Click on image to learn more.

When You Stay at the Red Roof You Save and the AVA Gains!



The AVA will receive 5% of all room revenues when you book at a Red Roof Inn using the Volume Plus Number (623002)! Red Roof Inn's great rates and quality rooms means that you won't be breaking the bank to afford a comfortable room. Through the American Volkssport Association, Red Roof Inn is

also offering additional value. When you book your reservation using Volume Plus Number 623002, *you'll save 15% off Red Roof Inn's Best Available rate.* Red Roof Inn's Volume Plus Number works just like an online coupon code. Use this link — https://www.redroof.com/deals/partner/American_Volkssport_Association and Red Roof Inn's online discount code will automatically be filled in for you! Or go to www.RedRoof.com to make a reservation. All you have to do to receive a discount at participating inns is enter Volume Plus Number 623002 in the VP+ / ID # slot. You can also make a reservation with an inn directly by calling 1-800-RED-ROOF (800-733-7663). You are required to provide the Volume Plus Number 623002 to the reservationist when you make your reservation, BEFORE arriving at any Red Roof Inn property.

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.



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.

