



CHECKPOINT



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AVA Community Partnerships—Henry Rosales, AVA Executive Director

In the nonprofit sector, partnerships are critical to the success and sustainability of our work. The AVA, which is a nonprofit, is no exception. This is the reason we are intentional about planning events with external and international organizations like America Walks, AARP, U.S. National Park Service, REI, Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation, the International Marching League, the World Heritage Festival, the Mackinac Bridge Authority and others. Many of our clubs are accomplishing this by co-planning events, volunteering, and serving on committees for other nonprofits. Below is an article from one of our clubs who has done an excellent job partnering with their community! If you would like your club's partnership efforts high-lighted please send your story with photos to henry@ava.org.

Greater Des Moines Volkssport Association—Diana Whited, President

GDMVA: Iowa's Walking Club, We Do More Than Walk!

Over the past 34 years, the members of the GDMVA: Iowa's Walking Club have participated in thousands of AVA events and walked countless miles in pursuit of Fun, Fitness and Friendship. Along the way, we have forged partnerships with a variety of other non-profit organizations, many of them ongoing over many years.

The longest running partnership has been with Iowa Games. Almost since Iowa Games began in 1987, GDMVA has provided the walk route and personnel to coordinate the fitness walk. Iowa Games provides week end athletes, school children and senior citizens the opportunity to experience the thrill of great performances and satisfaction of doing their best in a statewide Olympic style competition. More recently, GDMVA has provided the same service to Des Moines Corporate Games, a company based competition that enables and supports teamwork, company pride and corporate wellness through healthy competition.

Over the years, our club has recognized Earth Day in a variety of ways. We have partnered with the Des Moines Botanical Garden's celebration of Earth Day by sponsoring an informational booth and leading walks of downtown Des Moines. For several years members have participated in the city of Des Moines Earth Day Trash Bash event. In a



city wide effort, team captains lead volunteers to different project locations across Des Moines to pick up trash.

We have an ongoing partnership with Polk County Conservation. Each October, we partner with them to provide a “Walk for Wildlife” educational event for local Girl Scout troops. In addition we have sponsored an informational booth, walk and guided bike for their annual Outdoor Expo. The Expo allows participants the opportunity to try a variety of outdoor activities and learn from experts about such varied topics as reptiles of Iowa, Monarch tagging, owls, geocaching and many more nature topics. Several of our members have presented a talk about Volkssporting.

While most of our volunteer activities are closely related to fitness and the outdoors, we have for a number of years sent a team to Meals from the Heartland, a non-profit organization of volunteers from businesses, schools, churches and community organizations who package meals for delivery to malnourished people in Iowa, across the United States and around the world.

In a developing partnership, we have joined with AARP to promote fitness. In May we led a guided walk followed by a program on Volkssporting and social time. We are currently collaborating on a second walk and hope this develops into an ongoing partnership.



Photo 1—Earth Day Trash Bash Crew

Photo 2—Preparing meals for Meals from the Heartland

Photo 3—Sharing Volkssporting on Earth Day at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden

Submitted by Diana Whited

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

NEC RECOMMENDS ACCOUNTING YEAR CHANGE

The NEC/AVA Board recommends that the membership approve an amendment to the AVA Bylaws (Article III, 3.5) to change its accounting year from the present (July 1 – June 30) fiscal year to a (January 1 – December 31) calendar year beginning in 2020.

A TAW article last year gave extensive detail about the research done to ensure that this process is perfectly legal, does not impact AVA’s or any member club’s tax exempt status and is acceptable to our auditors. Also, it has been determined that this change at the national level does not require any changes by member clubs.

Bringing AVA’s financial, tax and statistical reporting all together on a calendar basis clearly makes sense. The change will move administrative work of preparing for audits and tax return preparation from the busy summer months when participation activity places more demands on staff time to the slower winter months. During convention years this change will ease the rush to prepare reports and budgets at the same time staff is involved in convention activity. Also, utilization statistics and financial results can be compared easily without the complication of extracting information from different years. None of this costs AVA or the clubs any money and has the potential to streamline and simplify business operations and keep costs low. Changing AVA’s reporting period is a relatively simple step-by-step process. First, our membership must approve the bylaw change adjusting the annual accounting year dates. Next, filing a tax return for the short period between July 1 and December 31, along with form 1128, will change the tax year with the IRS. *(Side note: The IRS always allows changes from fiscal to calendar years, whereas adopting a fiscal year is more difficult because IRS wants a legitimate business purpose.)* Finally, the management will arrange for a short period (July 1 – December 31) audit as it moves to calendar year audits.

Clubs can continue to file their IRS 990N tax returns online just as they have been. There is no requirement that AVA member clubs change their accounting year or do anything differently than they have been doing. While the

IRS allows AVA and member clubs to have different tax reporting years, some clubs may choose to change from a fiscal year to a calendar accounting year. To allow this, the NEC/Board has also agreed to change the AVA Policy Manual (1.02, II, 3) which presently requires a fiscal year by all clubs to permit clubs to select an accounting year of their own choosing.

If an AVA member club chooses to change from a fiscal year to a calendar year for accounting and tax purposes, after the changes to the AVA bylaws and policy manual have been adopted by the membership, the club will follow the same steps as outlined above for AVA. When the time for club changes is right, AVA National Office will publish more details and stand ready to help clubs in dealing with the IRS.

Convention Co-Chair—Lea Darling

DON'T EXPECT THE USUAL AT THE 2019 AVA WALKING THRU HISTORY CONVENTION

Okay, we have the typical convention hotel, but the Red Lion Hotel will surprise you with a unique serpentine shaped swimming pool. The hotel parking lot is so **huge** that you can park your campers and motorhomes there. Sorry, but there are no services for hook up and definitely no tents. You tenters will have to find a tenting site i.e. Moreau State Park.

Sure, we have the normal 3 convention walks, but we have added a new caveat with bussing **all walkers** to the Starting Points and returning **all walkers** back to the hotel each day of convention walks. Simple reason being, **very limited parking** in the areas of each of our walks. Not to worry, even if you are driving a car or renting one, please leave the drive to and from the walks up to **us**.

Our premier walk at the Saratoga National Historical Park, where the Saratoga Battles led to the "Turning Point of the American Revolution," will be a linear walk. Yes, we have done these before, but not as we will be presenting ours. The bus will drop you off at the start point and you will walk to where the bus is, get back on the bus and driven to the next point of interest, walk to the next stop and get back on the bus to head to the next walking point, etc. to the end. This will be a little longer than usual walk with much to see, experience, contemplate, and hopefully come to realize the sacrifice our Revolutionary men, women and children of the day endured to bring us to our present day **freedoms**.

Not your typical workshops will emphasize interesting AVA subjects to help clubs learn how to keep our clubs strong and vibrant in this day and age and, other fun (yes I did say FUN) and important topics. The convention selections will deal primarily with some of the amazing historical happenings in New York State.

Some unexpected social happenings beginning on Tuesday evening after dinner on your own, we will be



having a **fun** 5k walk in a beautiful park just a short walk from the hotel for those walkers who want a stretch after being on a plane, train, bus, or car. You will also be able to help (if you want) our convention pick for our not-for-profit fundraiser. More to come on this subject as things get firmed up. It has been the AVA custom for most of the convention clubs to show appreciation to their host city by making a donation to a local not-for-profit and we will continue this nice gesture. After the walk you will be able to buy, for a small fee, Ice Cream Cones and visit with some of your walking friends before the hectic days of convention commence!

In another article as we get closer to convention, I will share some of the other surprises we have for socials and the closing banquet.

Don't be surprised if you see Henry Hudson, Casey at the Bat, or Sal the Mule as you progress through some of the exciting days of convention.

Membership Committee—Holly Pelking, Chair

Hello AVA Community!

Your national Membership Committee is launching a program of outreach to walkers with an invitation to join AVA on the national level as Associate Members. A series of letters will accompany their IVV Achievement books returned for certification at the National Office. The letters are tailored to the level of achievement a walker has completed. The first letter is specifically for the first 10 event record book returned indicating an active new walker. See this letter below.

Subsequent letters are being developed for walkers who have achieved over 10 events, who are not yet AVA members, as well as a third letter for those walkers who have become Associate Members.

There are new programs ahead on the trail for our AVA Associate Members. We want to be sure you don't miss out!

Submit those IVV record books for certification, and see which letter you get!

[10 Events Letter](#)

Training Development Committee—Joe Blazek, Member

How is your club's website doing? Is it up-to-date and accurate with the latest information on your club and your club's events?

When we sanction our club's walk/bike events each year, we usually make some changes to incorporate and update new information. We try to incorporate new national and state challenges. Things like event starting points, POC contacts, and event distances can change from year to year. Our traditional event is new and different each year and we add and subtract some of our seasonal events from year to year to give folks something new to attract them to our corner of the world. These types of changes can result in a need to update our website to accurately reflect the changes we make.

Because of changes that occur to club membership information from year to year and changes made to your club's sanctioned events over time, each club

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should review its website information at least once a year, if not more often and update the information where needed. Make sure your club contacts are still the same, any contact addresses and phone numbers are still correct, your event information is still accurate, web links still work, and any posted pictures show current club members and current events.

An up-to-date club website is a welcoming informational platform for folks to see what your club is all about. If the information is wrong or out-of-date, sometimes that can be a turnoff for those who might be interested in your club's events

AVA Programs—Debra Kruep, Chair

#OptOutside

#Optoutside November 23 (Year #3)

This year we would like to continue the #Optoutside tradition for a third year. Last year we had 53 clubs host an #Optoutside event. This is an increase of over 30% of club participation from 2016. Total number of recorded participation was 1156 walkers with approximately 24 people new to AVA. Congratulations to the #Optoutside Traditional event hosted in conjunction with an REI warehouse and its employees in Seattle. I understand we may have an additional collaborative effort in another area of the country for 2018. The more clubs we have participating the more publicity it drives for the entire AVA.

How can your club be part of the #Optoutside experience? It's very easy. Conduct a traditional event or a group walk at your favorite YRE. A group walk only takes one person willing to lead a group. Send your information to AVA by October 8th to be included on the #Optoutside section of the AVA website, advertise your event in your local area, fill out a participation form after the event(available in the December Checkpoint.). All the participating clubs will be listed in one area on the AVA website. They will also be featured on the AVA Facebook page. Anyone searching Facebook looking for #Optoutside events will find the AVA Facebook page and learn about our events. It's that easy to contribute! [Click here](#) for #Optoutside Event form.



Gateway Milers at Creve Coeur Lake in Missouri—
Debra Kruep

Virtual Online Program

Congratulations to all who have completed the 401K: Invest in Your Health Challenge! Thank you for posting your bright smiling faces on Facebook and celebrating 401K Day with AVA! Also, quick update, there will be a second T-shirt mailing in January for those who were not able to complete the program before May 31st. There will also be another 401K T-Shirt Day to celebrate the program's end (date to be determined) so everyone who completed may celebrate together!

VOP Teams Challenge

Just for fun gather a team together and compete for bragging rights! The challenge begins September 1 and ends December 31. The top three teams will get a shout out in the TAW. This will get you ready for the Regional Team Competition we will begin in 2019. Not sure how to get a team together? Contact VOP@ava.org for help. Coming in October exciting information on the new Virtual Online Program for 2019!

AVA National Office Team

Awards & Membership—Karen Winkle

The first of three letters, drafted by the Membership Committee will be mailed out starting the first week of September. The first letter will be directed to all first time, 10 Event Awards. It will congratulate them on completing their first 10 Events and explaining the history of how AVA was brought to the US by members of our military.

The letter will also encourage walkers to join their local clubs, and hopefully become a national member as well.

You will also notice that our Membership Renewal forms have changed. The form now includes how you would like to receive the American Wanderer and the choice of opting out of your personal information being shared within the AVA NEC.



David Jones, President of the Ready Set Walk club of Snow Hill NC receiving a Milestone Anniversary award—Debra Kruep

Information and Technology Specialist—Hector Hernandez

Walks to Remember

Rain rain go away! If it's not raining in your area you must be having perfect walking weather. What are some of your autumn walks that you will celebrate this upcoming month? Share it with your friends, share it with AVA. If you are in need of assistance marketing September walks and events please email your walk or event information to hector@ava.org.

2019 Starting Point Books

Remember clubs have until September 15, 2018 to enter events. Regional Director's 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 2019 Starting Point Book. Starting

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

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

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

Click here for [order form](#).



Working on a flag stand for the upcoming TTR club event.—Photo submitted by Henry

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

2019 Convention Hotel

Have You Made Your Reservations?

A block of rooms for the 2019 AVA Convention has been reserved with the Red Lion Hotel Albany. **There are a little under 20 rooms left in our AVA block.** 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.

We will be working on securing another block of rooms at a discounted group rate with a second hotel. More details to come. Please stay tuned for convention updates on our convention website, Checkpoint, and Facebook.

Red Lion Hotel Albany
205 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12205

Insurance Requests for 2019

Clubs have begun to submit insurance request for 2019. Our insurance company will not be processing requests for 2019 until mid-late December. Please keep this in mind when submitting a request.

Thank you.



Holly Pelking celebrating 401K with the South Bay Striders—
Debra Kruep



End of Year Reports

Don't forget to file your 990 E-Postcard, Annual Financial Report (AFR), and update your club officers in the ESR. An IRS user guide, and the AVA Retention policy for financial and event records have been posted on the AVA website under "Clubs Only". Please submit a copy of your filings to marian@ava.org. Thank you.

Finance Director— Erin Grosso



NW Regional Director and crew celebrating 401K at Tilikum Crossing.—Debra Kruep

Good Standing Policy and Deadlines - Convention 2019 – Albany, NY

The excitement is beginning to build as we prepare for the 21st AVA Biennial Convention in Albany, New York. It has been my pleasure to support and work with Lea Darling & Teresa Kennedy, Co-Chairs for the Convention. Their committee has been working long and hard to create a memorable convention experience for our AVA community. As they continue to prepare for this wonderful week of events, we must make certain that our clubs are also prepared. Most importantly, we must make sure that all AVA Clubs are in **"Good Standing"** 45 days prior to the first membership meeting of the Convention so they are able to vote!

[Click here to continue reading article](#)

AVA's Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales

AVA Community Events (ACE) Almost Ready for Implementation

ACE events are non-IVV events that were approved by the National Executive Council in September of 2017. This new brand of AVA events was created not to replace IVV events but rather to enhance our current IVV events by allowing clubs the flexibility to create events that are more responsive to local community needs. ACE events are not restricted by IVV event policies and procedures. Clubs now have the **option** to host IVV events as well as AVA ACE events. Clubs are not **required** to host ACE events.

ACE Events fall into the following four 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-P (Private Events) – This event category is for clubs who host events that are exclusively for a private company or organization and not open to the public. For example, a club might offer to host a walking program for the employees of a private business. Because only employees of the company can participate, the event information will not be accessible to everyone.

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 that clearly state the start and finish will be required to be kept on file by the host club and there must be a guide on each walk that all participants are expected to follow.

More information on the sanctioning process, event guidelines and fees will be published in the October Check-point. It is important to remember ACE events **are not IVV sanctioned events** therefore participants cannot receive IVV credit for attending these events. [The IVV logo should not be represented on any ACE events literature](#)



Photo submitted by Donna

Seline

Rest in Peace Mr. Hans-Dieter Fuhr

The IVV Headquarters has shared the following sad news: “The international Federation of Popular Sports mourns Hans-Dieter Fuhr who died on May 11, 2018 at the age of 77 after a brief serious illness. Mr. Fuhr served for the IVV and DVV for many years as contact person in German-American affairs. His enormous merits lie in establishing and maintaining international friendships. Our condolences go out to the family. We will honor his memory.”

Mr. Fuhr worked directly with the AVA’s national office as our volunteer Liaison to Germany. He will be remembered as a very caring and supportive person who loved the AVA. He will be missed. May he rest in peace.

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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.



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