Starting the New Year with the Fredericksburg, VA Walking Club. 80 Plus walkers started off 2025 with a delightful group walk. - Facebook post from the Fredericksburg Walking Club shared by Kay Shoemaker.



OFFICER ELECTIONS







Click here for bio.



Click here for bio.



Click here for bio.

PRESIDENT/CEO - HENRY ROSALES

AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING NOTICE

The AVA National Board of Directors will meet Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. Central Time Zone. This will be a virtual meeting on the Office 365 Teams platform. To access the meeting click on the link below. If you have problems accessing the meeting, please contact Hector at 210-659-2112 or email him at hector@ava.org. The meeting link will also be posted on the AVA website with the agenda.

Click here for the meeting link.

BOARD MEETING DEADLINES:

January 27, 2025: Agenda items due to the Board Chair, Nancy Wittenberg, at chair@ava.org, please copy <u>henry@ava.org</u>. Agenda items should also include proposed items for the April Regular Membership Meeting so they can be discussed during the February 18th meeting.

Note: If you are a Committee Chair and would like time on the agenda, please send an email request to the Board Chair, Nancy Wittenberg, and copy Henry.

February 3, 2025: Officers, Board Members, and Committee reports and all supplemental documents for the board meeting are due at AVA National Office. Email reports and all supporting documents to henry@ava.org.

February 12, 2025: Meeting information package emailed to Board Members and Deputy Directors.

March 1, 2025: Deadline to submit Amendments to Bylaws to the Members for the April Regular Membership Meeting

Meeting Deadlines for the April 30th and May 2nd Regular Membership Meeting will be in the February Checkpoint.

AVA NEC Officer's Reports and Committee Reports: Click here for Agenda items Form Click here for Officer Report Form Click here for Committee Report Form

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ANNOUNCING THE 2024 BIG GIVE WINNERS! CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

Once again, thank you to all who contributed to the success of our annual individual donor campaign, The Big Give. As promised, here are the winners of the different prize categories that all donors were eligible for. Stay tuned for a special invite to our Big Give Celebration during the 2025 AVA Convention!

Winners of 1 free 2025 sanctioned event of your choice!

Buffalo Pathfinders, Buffalo, WY Delta Tule Trekkers, Manteca, CA Texas Volkssport Association, San Antonio, TX

Winners of a 2025 Starting Point Book!

Dana Beales, San Ramon, California Teresa Casswell, Clinton, MD Sally Clark, Danvill, VA Luanne Johnson, Orrville, OH Ed McCabe, Dripping Springs, TX

BIG GIVE Grand Prize Winners! Winners of a FREE 2025 CONVENTION REGISTRATION!

1 Club- West Texas Trail Walkers, San Antonio, TX 1 Individual- Herbert Schwencke, San Antonio, TX

To redeem your prizes please contact Marian at <u>marian@ava.org</u>.

All prizes are non-transferable

AVA WEDNESDAYS WEBINARS- JANUARY 15, 2025, AT 7:00 P.M. CENTRAL

The next AVA online seminar will be Wednesday, January 15, 2025,7:00-8:00 pm Central. The registration link will be on the AVA website, or you can <u>click here</u> to pre-register for the event. If asked for a passcode the passcode is AVA.

Special Guest Host: Sharon Moats, Northwest Region, AVA Board Member

January online seminar presenters include:

I. Jerry Wilson, Chair, 2025 AVA Conventions

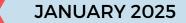
2025 AVA Biennial Convention - Lets all meet-up in New Mexico! During the webinar we will walk through tools provided for your planning. Online Convention Registration is projected to open January 13, lodging booking has been open for months, information for planning your trip is available via the AVA webpage. Follow along through the available information.

II. Diane Evans, Chair, AVA Programs

AVA Special Programs Update! Learn more about the new 2025 Special Programs as well as all the current special programs. A presentation by Diane Howell Evans, former AVA Board Member and Chair, AVA Programs Committee



Heading towards the railroad bridge on Sophia. - Facebook post from the Fredericksburg Walking Club shared by Kay Shoemaker.



LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP SUNSETTING MARCH 31, 2025

Many years ago, AVA Lifetime Membership was one of the best deals in town for members and the AVA. However, due to lack of interest, sustainability, and restructuring of our membership programs, the Lifetime Membership program will sunset March 31, 2025.

All Lifetime Members and those who sign up before March 31, 2025, will retain their current Lifetime Membership benefits in perpetuity. There is still time to sign up for a Lifetime Membership to take advantage of the convention discount. For more information, please contact Marian at <u>marian@ava.org</u>

GROUPER STRIDER AND RSVP PROGRAMS UPDATE

Grouper Strider Program Discontinued

The Strider program was a walk referral participation program sponsored by our partner, Grouper. The walk fees for these participants were paid by Grouper and the AVA reimbursed clubs \$2.00 for these participants. This program has been discontinued effective January 2, 2025. Strider participants must now pay for all fees to include walks, awards, park fees, and special events fees.

Grouper RSVP Program

When a club gets an RSVP email from Grouper advising them a participant will attend one of their events, it is because the participant in question has used the Grouper RSVP program that allows the walker to select an AVA event via the Grouper online interface. This participant is called a Grouper RSVP walker.

Clubs do not report RSVP participation for self-guided walks because that report is generated by Grouper and reported separately to the AVA. Grouper reimburses the AVA \$1.00 for all RVSP participants who have registered in their portal whether they actually attend a self-guided walk. The AVA credits the \$1.00 to clubs at the end of the 1st Quarter of the following year. Clubs do not need to do anything to receive this credit.

Grouper also reimburses clubs \$1.75 for all RSVP participants who attend group activities to include group walks, traditional walks, and club socials. However, for clubs to receive the \$1.75 reimbursement, they must be registered in the Grouper portal and confirm the RSVP participation. If clubs do not do this, they will receive a \$1.00 reimbursement instead of \$1.75. Grouper tracks these numbers and reports them to the AVA at the end of the year with payment. The AVA credits these fees to clubs on an annual basis. Fees for a given year are credited to the club's Quarter 1 participation invoice for the following year.

Joining the Grouper network is not required for clubs to benefit from this program. However, we highly encourage clubs to join the Grouper network so clubs can maximize the benefits and communicate effectively with RSVP participants. If you would like to join the program, please send an email to Spencer at spencer.morgan@hellogrouper.com.



AVA CONVENTION APRIL 29-MAY 2, 2025

The 2025 Biennial Convention Registration will open Monday, January 13, 2025. Special thanks to Jeff Giddings, Atlantic Regional Director who has worked many hours creating and editing the registration system for the AVA.

Registrants have the option to pay online or send a check to the AVA. Should you need help registering or have questions about payments, please contact Marian at <u>marian@ava.org</u> or feel free to call the office at 210-659-2112.

2025 CONVENTION CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

All cancellation requests must be submitted in writing and may be subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee for a full convention registration, and up to \$25.00 for a partial convention registration. You must contact the AVA no later than Tuesday, April 1, 2025, to cancel your registration for the 23rd AVA Biennial Convention. Cancellations made prior to April 1, 2025, will be eligible for refunds. No refunds will be given for cancellations made after April 1, 2025.

All requests for cancellations and refunds should be mailed or emailed to:

American Volkssport Association Attn: Marian DeVaul 1032 S Alamo Street San Antonio, TX 78210 (210) 659-2112

marian@ava.org

**note street number change in the address You may also contact Erin Grosso, AVA Finance Director at erin@ava.org.

LESLIE STONE - AVA BOARD SECRETARY

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR TELLERS AND CREDENTIALING

The AVA Secretary is looking for volunteers to serve as Tellers and in Credentialing.

What are tellers you ask? Tellers will assist in vote counting during the AVA's Biennial Convention in Las Cruces. Tellers would need to be available during the business meetings.

What is Credentialling? Credentialing is the process of confirming the delegates, alternates, and proxies, representing each club at the convention and providing them with their credentials to be able to vote in the business meetings. Credentialling also determines if a quorum has been met. Credentialling takes place at various times, such as during convention registration and immediately prior to business meetings. Voting delegates and alternates cannot be Tellers.

Both these positions are necessary for conducting business at the AVA Biennial Convention. Tellers and Credentialling work with the AVA Secretary to assure everyone who should vote votes and that the votes are counted accurately.

The Business Meetings are tentatively scheduled for:

- Wednesday April 30, 2025, from 3:30 P.M. through 5:30 P.M.
- Friday May 2, 2025, 2:30 P.M. through 4:30 P.M.

Credentialing is tentatively scheduled for:

- Tuesday April 29, 2025, from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.
- Wednesday April 30, 2025, from 1:00 P.M. to 3:15 P.M.
- Friday May 2, 2025, from 1:00 P.M. to 2:15 P.M.

If you are interested in serving as a Teller or in Credentialling, please email Leslie Stone at <u>Secretary@ava.org</u>.Please advise which position(s) and time(s) you would be interested in serving.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE - JERRY WILSON, CHAIR

PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO THE 2025 CONVENTION

There are numerous reasons to come to New Mexico for the 2025 AVA Biennial Convention. Yes, local club delegates should attend, but walkers that like new walk routes including one-time only walks, walkers that enjoy Fun, Fitness and Friendship, and walkers that want to learn more about the workings, and the future of AVA should make their way to New Mexico in 2025.

To help you in planning your trip the AVA webpage can assist you.

Click the Convention box off the main AVA page, "Click here...", two buttons appear:

- Convention FAQs
- Convention Events

For Convention information the AVA website provides access to the December TAW. There are several articles available that could help your planning:

- The Call to Convention
- Convention Silent Auction
- Convention Hotels
- Volunteers Needed for Convention
- Las Cruces Walks (Convention Walks, including pre- and post-)
- A Convention Itinerary (by day, times to be finalized) is shared in the 2025 AVA Biennial

Convention - Meet You In New Mexico article.

- Pre and Post Convention Walks
- Beauty, Culture and Adventure.

2025 CONVENTION ON-LINE REGISTRATION KICK-OFF

On-line registration for the 2025 AVA Biennial Convention will be open as of Monday, January 13. The system should walk you through registration and payment.

Two offshoots from the Registration System are:

• Silent Auction - Registering auction items you are donating. Cash donations are also welcome.

• Volunteering to help while in New Mexico. Many walkers have hours around walks and other commitments that they volunteer to help put on the convention. Many volunteers are needed. A yes / no Volunteer button will be provided. Anyone selecting to volunteer will be listed outside the system, and you will be contacted by the AVA Volunteer Coordinator, Susan Pinneke.

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - SUSAN FINE, CHAIR

PUBLICITY UPDATE



The deadline for the March 2025 TAW is January 25. Please send stories and photos, and/or ideas for stories to <u>taw@ava.org</u>.

IML Texas Trail Roundup is coming up – February 14-16 in San Antonio TX. Three days of walks, bike and swim. Encourage your members to attend, as we honor Susan Medlin, former AVA Vice-President, Southwest RD, Olympiad Co-Chair, and so much more. Enjoy three days of walks along the famous RiverWalk, Alamo, historic neighborhoods, and UNESCO World Heritage Missions Trail. Get info and register at: texastrailroundup.org.

AVA NATIONAL OFFICE - 1032 S. ALAMO ST, SAN ANTONIO, TX 78210

AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB Also, at the Texas Trail Roundup, your veterans group can walk for the Golden Boot Award, awarded to the military unit, active reserve guard, ROTC, or Veteran group with the most members who complete the 42K Missions Marathon Walk. Winning unit gets bragging rights, their unit name engraved on the traveling golden boot trophy, a flag streamer to keep, and a free beer/soft drink for all participants. For more information contact Kathy Schwenke: <u>schkathy@yahoo.com</u>.

Another reminder that National Walking Month has moved to May, and is valid for any walk during the month. As you sanction walks for second quarter, we encourage you to have a traditional or group walk in May. We'll have more info in future Checkpoints on promoting this nationally.

I hope you have encouraged your members to attend the convention in Las Cruces, New Mexico, April 29-May 3, for 3 Cities, 3 States, and 2 Countries. Plus the pre- and post-walks are all within 2 hours/120 miles from Las Cruces. The committee is working hard to give everyone a wonderful experience with walks, social events, Hall of Fame dinner, and the meetings. Please see the <u>AVA website</u> for information on registration, booking hotels/RV parks, schedule, walks, and much more.

ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST - MARIAN DEVAUL

4TH QUARTER PARTICIPATION

It's time to submit your 4th Quarter Participation reports, even if you had zero participants. Don't forget, the deadline is midnight on January 31st, and all reports submitted after this date are past due and subject to late fees.

Clubs receiving RSVP credits for 2024 will populate on the 2025 Q1 reports in April.

STARTING POINT BOOKS

Due to an unexpected delay on the publisher's end, the Starting Point books were not received until the first week of January. If you placed a pre-order, the books were shipped on January 2. If a book was not reserved, we do not have any extra copies available for sale.

2025 CENTURION ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE



The 2025 program begins January 1, 2025. You must be an AVA Associate Member (annual or lifetime) to participate in the Challenge. Eligible participants may register for the 2025 Challenge between October 1, 2024 and September 30, 2025 using the official registration form. Please mail forms to AVA, 1032 S. Alamo St, San Antonio, TX78210, or e-mail to marian@ava.org.

Centurion Challenge Instructions

Centurion Challenge Registration

2025 DELEGATE SELECTION AND PROXY DESIGNATION (AVA FORM 500)

The 2025 Delegate Selection and Proxy Designation (AVA Form 500) will be e-mailed to club POC's by the end of January. Please complete the form, ensure all required signatures are obtained, and retain a copy for your records. Submit the executed form to AVA for credentialing at the Convention. The form must be postmarked or emailed no later than March 15, 2025. If the deadline for returning this form to the National Office is missed, the form must accompany the Delegate, Alternate, or Proxy to the Credentials Booth at the Convention. The form should be mailed or e-mailed to:

American Volkssport Association, Inc. Attn: Marian DeVaul 1032 S. Alamo Street San Antonio, TX 78210

email: <u>marian@ava.org</u>



Please do not forget that clubs must be in "good standing" forty-five days before the opening of the membership meeting to be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members. The final date for clubs to meet the criteria of being in "good standing" to vote is midnight of March 15, 2025. Detailed information and some things to keep in mind regarding the AVA's Good Standing Policy and Membership Voting Policy is provided below.

To Review AVA's Good Standing Policy Click Here

The 2025 "DELEGATE SELECTION AND PROXY DESIGNATION" (AVA Form 500) will be e-mailed out to the Point of Contact for each AVA active club in January.

Click here for Credentialing FORM 500

DIANE HOWELL EVANS - PROGRAMS COMMITTEE, CHAIR

MULTI-DAY EVENTS (FESTS)

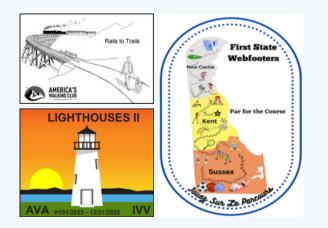
Many fellow walkers use the Multi-Day Events Calendar to plan their vacations/walking trips. The earlier a club can enter information about their upcoming fests the greater the lead time to prospective attendees for planning travel dates, transportation, accommodations and daily schedules.

To create a new Fest or edit an existing one, you must be logged into my.ava.org and have club management privileges. The IT Committee has developed an online data entry form for you to use when creating your club's fest. The first 5 data fields are required when creating the fest entry: start date, end date, name of the fest, city or town where the fest will take place, and the 2-character state abbreviation. The remaining data fields (registration location, POC name and email, and website) can be entered later. If you have an approved save-the-date flyer or brochure, you can upload it at this time or later. The next step is to enter the sanction numbers of the events if known at the time. Any of the non-required data fields can be entered later by editing the fest. And finally, be sure and click on the "Save" button!

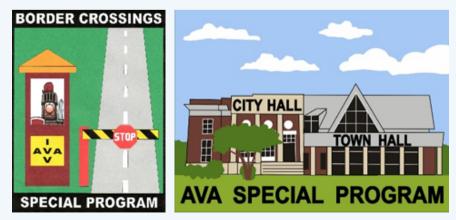
During the entire data entry or edit process, there is a "Help" function available to assist you with the necessary steps. If you have any questions during the process, please do not hesitate to contact your Regional Director or programs@ava.org for assistance. So please take advantage of adding your fests to the Multi-Day Event Calendar to promote your events to both local walkers as well as travelers interested in seeing new areas of our country!

SPECIAL PROGRAM DEADLINES

If you are still considering participating in Special Programs, the following Special Programs have a 12/31/25 deadline for the PURCHASE of the current program book:



The last date to REDEEM the following Special Programs challenge books is 12/31/25:



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



THE SEARCH IS ON! SPECIAL PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2027

Does your club have an idea for a new AVA Special Program they would like to sponsor beginning in 2027? Three current Special Programs (Lighthouses II, Par For the Course, and Rails-to-Trails) will end on 12/31/26, so the Programs Committee will be looking for three new Special Programs to begin on January 1, 2027.

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 2027? 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 "Brainstorming Special Programs" to the club's meeting agenda and solicit ideas at the meetings.

The AVA Special Program Policy limits new Programs Committee recommendations to just one AVA Board of Directors (BOD) meeting per year, which is typically the first meeting of the calendar year (i.e. 2026). The Special Program begins January 1st of the following year (i.e. 2027). Committee recommendations at the first BOD meeting of the calendar year provides sufficient time in the remaining year for the sponsoring club to submit articles to TAW and the Checkpoint describing the new program, obtain booklets/awards, and create program information for the AVA webpage and OSB. Plus, it allows the clubs across the country to understand the details of the new Special Program, review/modify their current YRE/Seasonal trails, or develop new routes or traditional events to include the qualifiers of the new program.

The deadline for new 2027 Special Program proposals is November 1, 2025. For a copy of the information required in the new Special Program proposal package, please contact Diane Howell Evans at <u>Programs@ava.org</u>.

MIKE GREEN - IT COMMITTEE, CHAIR

PROPER ATTRIBUTION FOR EVENT DIRECTION MAPS

This article is meant to remind clubs that AVA Policy, <u>https://my.ava.org/files/tutorials/AVA-Policy-Event-Directions.pdf</u> requires copyrighted materials in event directions to comply with the usage rules for the copyrighted material.

Event directions should contain maps where the walking/biking route has been added. These maps are typically created using plotaroute.com or perhaps a map downloaded from a website.

The plotaroute.com service creates maps based on map data from OpenStreenMap, the maps created/displayed using plotaroute.com have the appropriate attribution in the lower left-hand corner:



The blue highlighted text is actually a link, <u>https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright</u>, leading to a page that describes the preferred attribution. This page is a link to the OpenStreetMap Attribution Guidelines page, <u>https://osmfoundation.org/wiki/Licence/Attribution_Guidelines</u>.

The Attribution Guidelines page contains the following section that is applicable to PDF files:

"Books, magazines, and printed maps"

For a printed map and similar media (that is ebooks, PDFs and so on), the credit must appear beside the map if that is where other such credits appear, or in a footnote/endnote if that is where other credits appear, or in the "acknowledgements" section of the publication (often at the start of a book or magazine) if that is where other credits appear. The URL to <u>openstreetmap.org/copyright</u> must be printed out."

When clubs create event direction maps using plotaroute.com, they often crop the map images with result of cutting off this attribution. This attribution should be restored to the map by either pasting the image of the original attribution or adding a text box like:

Map Data Copyright OpenStreetMap Contributors

to the map image. Note the link in the above box leads to <u>https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright</u>.

For maps that are downloaded from, for example, a park website that is then modified to display the walking/biking route and there are no obvious copyright or attribution guidelines, then the maps should include a link to the page where the map was downloaded from. For example,

Map: Pennypack Map 072216

Finally, a number of OSB event directions have been approved even though they did not contain the proper attribution for their maps. Starting in 2025 new OSB directions files will be required to contain the proper attribution for the maps they contain. Also Regional and Deputy Regional Directors need to check that updated OSB direction file maps contain the proper attribution prior to approval.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS



Dear President and IVV Leaders, Dear Friends of the IVV Family

Grateful for our friendship, which will never be forgotten! Although the world is unpredictable, we hope to cherish the IVV family even more, unite and cooperate, and let more people feel that IVV is the warmest and healthiest family in the world! Looking forward to gathering with the IVV family and friends in Tampere, Finland in 2025! May IVV make more positive contributions to the health, friendship, and peace of the world's citizens.

Jin Qiao (金乔) | 13910528733 CVA Secretary General China Volkssport Association (CVA) China BeijingToday Walk Center Tel: (8610)-84896320 E-mail: <u>giaojin1958@163.com</u> / <u>ivv2009@163.com</u> <u>ivv_cva@hotmail.com</u> Website: www.chinawalking.net.cn【中国徒步网】 (www.ivv-web.org/the-ivv/china-en.html)







Mitsumasa MPASHITA, Takashi FUJIMOTO, & Motohiro KAWAUCHI The 7th Asianpiad will be at Kurayoshi Japan in 2026 June 6th - 7th.





To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send your request to Hector at hector@ava.org. Please note on the subject line: Request for Checkpoint.



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.



1032 S Alamo St · San Antonio, TX 78210, Phone 210.659.2112 · Fax 210.659.1212 Message US.