

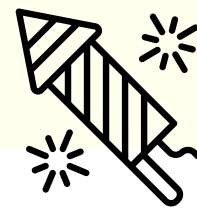


**AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB**
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

JULY
2025
VOLUME 34
NO. 7

CHECKPOINT

WWW.AVA.ORG



Walking the International Walk during the 2025 Biennial Convention.

AVA BOARD CHAIRMAN - CARL CORDES

AVA CHAIRMAN'S ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND?

2026 is the 50th Anniversary of the American Volkssport Association and we want to celebrate our clubs and members with something every month. I have an idea for an event in January 2026 and I need your feedback and level of interest. My local club is the Las Vegas High Rollers & Strollers. We have 2 walks in Boulder City NV and one at the nearby Hoover Dam. My thought for an AVA Chairman's Anniversary weekend includes these 3 events January 9-11, 2026. Walks are available every day but for this weekend maybe group walks for Dam on Friday, Historic Boulder City on Saturday and Boulder City Veterans Park walk (36 qualifiers for Walking with America's Veterans) on Sunday. Also Saturday January 10 the BC Chamber hosts the Best Dam Wine Walk in the evening (5-8pm). If you go to all the stops (about 25 shops and restaurants) you will do around 5K. And bonus idea – a fourth walk on River Mountains Loop Trail that would have a special AVA Chairman's stamp for this event.

IF any of this sounds like something you want to attend please email me at Chairman@ava.org. I would also like to know if you want a Boulder City hotel deal(s) or if you will decide on your own where to stay. Suggestions for other activities this weekend? Boulder City is small town America and very different from Las Vegas with no casinos.

Boulder City is about 25 miles from Las Vegas' Harry Reid International Airport. Numerous hotel options in Las Vegas/Henderson, too, that are a reasonable drive to Boulder City. LVHRS has 8 other YRE walks and 3 bikes in the Vegas Valley if you want a longer vacation.

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PRESIDENT/CEO - HENRY ROSALES

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWEST AVA BOARD MEMBERS!

Please join us in welcoming the following Board Members who recently joined the AVA leadership team. We look forward to working with you! Stay tuned for the August edition where we will feature the Deputy Directors!



Seth Werner
AVA Finance Chair



Robert Buzolich
Mid America
Board Member









Holly Pelking
Pacific Region
Board Member

AVA INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

During the AVA Regular Membership Meeting, Club members voted to Amend our bylaws, replacing Associate members with Individual members and entitling them with most of the same benefits as Club members, including the right to vote. Individuals cannot sanction events, only clubs.

As a result, the Associate membership category no longer exists. The new membership category is AVA Individual Members and includes the following benefits:

-  A 10% discount on most AVA merchandise.
-  A 10% discount on our National Conventions registration full package and other signature events hosted by the National Office.
-  An annual subscription to The American Wanderer (TAW), a national walk publication of the AVA.
-  The opportunity to participate in the Centurion Challenge Program
-  Each AVA Individual member is entitled to participate in AVA Membership meetings.
-  Each AVA Individual adult (18+ years) member is entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members.

The cost of Individual membership is \$25.00 per year. The August Checkpoint will have further membership updates and changes. Should you have any questions contact Henry@ava.org.

URGENT GROUPEUR UPDATE

The following message was sent in June to all AVA Club POC's regarding Grouper.

"Grouper has sunset the club calendar feature of their offering. You will no longer be able to access your club accounts or submit events through the Grouper system. Our YRE, Seasonal, and Group events will no longer be visible on their website. We were given no explanation from Grouper. While Grouper's program and technology is evolving, we are working with them to understand their future direction and if it presents any opportunities to continue to partner with them for the benefit of all parties involved."

As more information becomes available, we will share it with all Club POC's. If your club is contacted by Grouper, please refer them to the AVA National Office unless your club opts work independently with them. For clubs who were a part of the Grouper RSVP program, payment for the first quarter will be credited to your accounts once we receive it from Grouper.

Should you have questions contact Henry at henry@ava.org

FREE GRAPHIC DESIGN SUPPORT FOR AVA CLUBS

If your club needs help with brochures, banners, t-shirts or website graphics email Rachel Bush, Associate Professor Graphic Design at Austin Peay State University with your interest. Be sure to advise her you are an AVA club. Her email is bushr@apsu.edu.

The AVA will sponsor the internship fees for this program for the first five clubs who sign up. To apply for the sponsorship/mini grant please complete the mini grant form and submit it to henry@ava.org AFTER you have been accepted by Rachel Bush.

[Club Support Form](#)

AVA WEDNESDAY WEBINARS– CONTINUE AUGUST 20, 2025

We are taking a break for the Summer! The next AVA online seminar will be Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 7:00-8:00 pm Central. Hint: The webinar will be about a new marketing tool for clubs! The registration link will be on the AVA website.



SAVE THE DATE: THE BIG GIVE IS HAPPENING ON SEPTEMBER 17-18!

We're thrilled to announce the 11th year of this incredible event, America's Walking Club's annual fundraiser. It's your chance to contribute to a celebration that not only supports your favorite walking organization, but also furthers a mission that's close to our hearts. Join us in this 24-hour online giving extravaganza to help us promote health and wellness. By participating, you're helping people of all ages and abilities learn the importance of investing in their own health through educational and preventative healthcare activities. Together, let's make strides toward longer, healthier lives!

CONVENTION COMMITTEE - JERRY WILSON, CHAIR

CONVENTION 2027 PROPOSALS, AND HOW ABOUT 2029

We have three proposals for hosting the 2027 AVA Biennial Convention. Those attending the Gala at the 2025 Convention in Las Cruces NM viewed presentations from these three visitor bureau proposers. Each will be assessed in several areas, among which are:

- Size of facilities to host social events, delegate meetings, vendor booths, convention registration and sports events registration, the AVA Board meeting, etc.
- Dates available in 2027.
- Various costs to attendees.
- Various costs to the Association.
- Location related to air travel, interstate roads, hotel/motel/RV accommodations, walk events, swim and biking events, etc.
- Volunteers available from local groups, clubs etc.
- Identifying vehicle and bike rental possibilities for attendees to pursue.

The three destinations in the running are Springfield MO, Norman OK, and Rogers AR. During the AVA Board Meeting held during the Board Retreat, on June 18, I was asked to make four things clear:

- AVA can still entertain a proposal to host the 2027 AVA Biennial Convention from a local club, or multiple clubs. When requested we received no hosting proposals submitted by local clubs. The proposals for the three sites currently on the list came from the visitors bureau from each area. If local clubs are interested please send a proposal as soon as possible, and include as much information as possible as to how a convention of 300 - 600 people could be hosted in your locale.
- If a local club, or multiple clubs are interested in hosting the 2029 AVA Biennial Convention, let's start talking now.

- Tasks assigned to local clubs hosting biennial conventions in their area have been greatly reduced during the last two conventions, also some of the changes to ease the need for local volunteer hours have been realized by adapting practices used during the 2023 IVV Olympiad. The three main areas local clubs would assume the lead are:
 - Sports events: Designing walk and biking (cycling) events, and arranging for a swim event and water stations, as needed
 - Local volunteers are always needed. These volunteers can come from local clubs, civic groups, local colleges, or through the local visitors bureau. Volunteers coming to conventions from other areas of the nation are encouraged to volunteer some hours.
 - Participate on the Convention Committee.
- Local clubs that develop sports events, walking, biking and swimming, receive a portion of the fees collected for each event. This began in 2021. (Another task the Convention Committee assumed in 2021 was to promote and even register convention walkers for the local club's YR and seasonal events in the area, greatly increasing the number of participants for local events not directly associated with the convention. These participants are treated as if they went to the already existing start box.)

The National Office has assumed the lion's share of tasks and all costs associated with preparing for and holding our national conventions. These tasks include, but are not limited to, agreeing to the convention dates, working closely with the local visitors bureau or sports bureau; and contracting with the convention hotel, convention center, local venues for social events, etc. The Convention Committee also participates in many of these tasks in a review and advisory capacity.

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - SUSAN FINE, CHAIR

PUBLICITY UPDATE

Please go through your photos from the last year of walks you've done, and choose up to three to enter in the annual Photo Contest. The winner's photo will be the front cover of the 2026 Start Point; second place is the back cover. Get info, entrance form and rules [here](#).

Here's another idea from John McClennan's post on Facebook to help promote America's Walking Club. Keep a regular calendar and get it published in as many free or low-cost mediums as you can, from the Pennysaver to the Hometown News to Facebook and meetup.com. Many people schedule their lives. A club that walks regularly builds a followership. Weekly is best. Bi-monthly is OK, at least monthly is the bare minimum. Those looking for the "fitness" or "friendship" of our [America's Walking Club](#) 4 Fs (Fun, Fitness, Friendship & Food), will turn out if you have a regular time and place or place(s).

Multi-events upcoming:



- 10/2/2025 - 10/5/2025 [Walking Stevens Pass to Leavenworth](#), sponsored by Interlaken & Central Washington Sunstriders
- 10/11/2025 – 10/13/2025 [Hike Lincoln National Forest in Ruidoso NM](#), sponsored by West Texas Trail Walkers
- 10/16/2025 - 10/19/2025 [Shady Cove, Oregon](#), sponsored by Columbia River Volkssport
- 10/17/2025 - 10/29/2025 [24th U.S. FreedomWalk Festival](#), sponsored by U.S. Freedom Walk Festival
- 10/30/2025 – 11/2/2025 [Hoofin It On Halloween](#) in Kansas, sponsored by Sunflower Sod Stompers




Mark your calendars for the Texas Trail Roundup in San Antonio, TX and the American Volkssport Association's

50th Anniversary Inaugural Walk

in the historic town of Fredericksburg, TX.

Three days, two cities, one unforgettable walking event!

FEBRUARY 20-22, 2026




AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB
ESTABLISHED 1974

IML TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP – February 20-22, 2026

THREE DAYS, TWO CITIES, ONE UNFORGETTABLE WALKING EVENT!

Mark your calendars for the **2026 TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP** and the **AMERICAN VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION 'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY INAUGURAL WALK!** Join us in historic Fredericksburg, TX to commemorate our Inaugural Walk and 50th Anniversary followed by two days of walking in colorful downtown San Antonio, TX. Highlights on the walks include the San Antonio Riverwalk, the Alamo, the UNESCO World Heritage Missions, the Pearl, the Japanese Tea Gardens and more! Distances range from 5K-42K. More event details coming soon. Check out our website at texastrailroundup.org.

HOPE Y' ALL COME!

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE - DIANE HOWELL EVANS , CHAIR

AVA 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!! 1976-2026



Planning is underway for AVA's 50th. The first IVV sanctioned volksmarch in the United States took place in Fredericksburg, TX, during the celebration of the American Bicentennial in 1976. The event was hosted by the Volkssportverein Friedrichsburg club, AVA-0001, on June 12-13, 1976. The club regularly hosts a "Founders Day" event to honor this first walk in the USA.

The Programs Committee is looking for ideas from our AVA clubs and walkers on ways to celebrate this half-century milestone, which will also coincide with America's 250th! We are currently soliciting at least one sanctioned celebratory walk each month in 2026 highlighting each of our 10 AVA regions. Currently celebratory events are scheduled for every month except July, August and November. Look for AVA's 50th Celebration Calendar in the very near future on the AVA website!

Between now and June 2026, we also encourage AVA walkers to share their AVA experiences over the past 50 years with our membership by writing an article for TAW or the Checkpoint. Suggested topics include travels, memorable events, health benefits, volunteer experience, social aspects, and many more personal memories and stories.

The year 2026 is now just 6 months away! Please forward any ideas for unique ways to celebrate AVA's 50th and/or the dates of any club/regional planned 2026 celebratory event so AVA's 50th Celebration Calendar can be updated. POC contact: Diane Howell Evans, Programs@ava.org. Thank you.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS TABLE AT AVA'S 23RD BIENNIAL CONVENTION - REPORT

Thank you to all who took the time to stop by the Special Programs table at the AVA Convention in Las Cruces and discuss Special Programs with Frank Sayers, Terry Lunghofer, Terri Tyler and myself.

We had a flip chart where walkers could suggest future special programs and the ideas were very interesting and quite varied. They included: Animal Signs of the Chinese Zodiac; Food Truck Cuisines; Bank/Puzzle Geocaches; Larger than Life (10 ft+) Statues (animals/humans); Outdoor Concerts; Peter Toth Totem Poles; Planets/Heavenly Bodies; Public Art; Same City Name but in 2 different states/countries; Specialized/Personalized License Plates; and Time Capsules.



We also had a clipboard where walkers could recommend past programs they would like to see reactivated. Recommendations included: America's Family Bakeries (2012); College Campus Program (2004); Covered Bridges (2007); Historic Churches (2009); Ice Cream Parlors (2017); I Walked the USA in 10 state increments (precursor to the 50 State SP); National Parks Anniversary (2015); River Walk America (2006); Spirit of Walking/Cemetery Stroll (2006); Walking America's Murals (2012); and Walkin' Waterfalls (2009).

If a club is interested in hosting any of the special program ideas listed above, or re-activating a past special program, or hosting a completely new idea your club has been considering, please contact Diane Howell Evans for details. We are looking for new Special Programs beginning January 1, 2027 and all special program proposals need to be submitted no later than November 1, 2025, to the Programs Committee.

Thank you and the Programs Committee looks forward to assisting clubs with their Special Program ideas and proposals!

IT COMMITTEE - MIKE GREEN , CHAIR

YEAR ROUND AND SEASONAL EVENT RENEWALS FOR 2026

The renewal of 2025 Year Round and Seasonal events (YRE/SEs) for 2026 was enabled on June 1st, 2025. Clubs are expected to complete the renewal of their 2026 YRE/SEs as well as any new YRE/SEs for 2026 by 8/31/2025.

NOTE: Clubs should **NOT** use the "New event - copy previous" feature in the Edit/New "NEW EVENTS TO BE COMPLETED" section to renew YRE/SEs.

On June 1st, the my.ava.org system copied the current (published) event information of each club's sanctioned 2025 YRE/SEs into the Edit/New event buffer. These copied events are listed in the "**EVENT RENEWALS**" section of the club's Edit/New page (found via the club's home page, then clicking on the "**Sanctions**" tab, then the "**Edit/New**" tab).

Any unpublished or unapproved changes to 2025 YRE/SEs was **NOT** included in the event information copied on June 1st. The club's home page contains a "Edit/New Sanctioning Summary" table providing a count of events needing to be published or approved. Any club YRE/SEs listed in the Edit/New "**EDITING CURRENT SANCTIONS**" section may have unpublished/unapproved changes. Clicking on the "Review" button, for a listed event, displays all event information with change bars indicating what changes are still pending. Clicking on the displayed "Publish (make public)" or "Req Approval" button near the top of the Review page will apply changes to the 2025 event only (after RD approval if needed).

After June 1st, you may import any published/approved changes in a 2025 YRE/SE to the corresponding 2026 YRE/SE pending renewal by clicking on renewal's "**Reload 2025**" button. Note, reloading the 2025 event will overwrite any changes made to the corresponding 2025 pending renewal event.

On June 1st, all published 2025 YRE/SE information was copied into 2026 pending renewal events (including the 2025 PPSF setting) with the following exceptions:

1. The event year was changed to 2026.
2. Special Programs (SPs), that "expire" 12/31/2025, were removed. (The SP expiration date is the date after which the SP POC will no longer officially accept completed SP books, as indicated on the current SPs web page, <https://cb.ava.org/specprog.php>)
3. The requested number of stamps for each renewal was set to 1 for PSB and PSB/OSB events and 0 for OSB events. (The previous year's stamp request number is ignored. The first stamp for any event type is always free.)

Clubs may also choose to mark any listed renewal as "Do Not Renew". Clubs should either request approval or mark as "Do Not Renew" each 2026 pending renewal event by the 8/31/2025 deadline.

For an event the club chooses to renew, a club manager should click on the listed renewal's "**Edit**" button. Then inspect/update the information displayed on the Edit page by clicking on each of the "Sanction Tiles" buttons near the top of the page. In particular, the club should consider possibly checking off "Request event be PPSF", adding any applicable/new SPs (starting in 2026, see <https://cb.ava.org/futureprog.php>), and adjusting the number of requested stamps. Once a renewal's information has been edited and saved, a "Review" page displays all the renewal's information on one page. Clubs must click on the "Req Approval" button (near the top of the "Review" page) to indicate the renewal is ready for regional director (and state association if applicable) approval.

New YRE/SEs for 2026 should also be submitted for approval before August 31st, 2025, to assure their inclusion in the 2026 Starting Point book. Clubs may use the Edit/New page features in the "NEW EVENTS TO BE COMPLETED" and "RESURRECT AN OLD YRE / SEASONAL" sections to create new YRE/SEs as described via the "Help" button on the Edit/New page.

Please contact Mike Green, mikeginf@gmail.com, if you have any questions.

ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST - MARIAN DEVAUL

CLUB DUES

Just a quick reminder that Annual Club Dues for the 2025–2026 fiscal year will be invoiced on July 1, 2025. The yearly dues remain at \$75.00 and are due within 30 days of receiving the invoice. Thank you for your continued support!

2ND QUARTER PARTICIPATION

It's time once again to submit your 2nd Quarter Participation Reports. Don't forget, the deadline is midnight on July 31st, and all reports submitted after this date are past due and subject to late fees.

FINANCIAL

If your club's fiscal year ends on 6-30-25, it is time to file your 990 E-Postcard, Annual Financial Report (AFR), and update your club officers. 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.

2026 STARTING POINT BOOKS - PRE-ORDER NOW!

It's time to pre-order your 2026 Starting Point Book. The deadline is no later than midnight, September 30, 2025. This year, due to increased costs of printing and less books being ordered, the price has gone up to \$35.00 per book plus shipping and handling. If we see a decline in interest in ordering this year, this may be the last year we produce a paper book and instead consider creating an electronic version. Please e-mail us with any comments or concerns. Form may be mailed to AVA, 1032 S. Alamo St, San Antonio, TX 78210, or place your order by emailing the form to marian@ava.org.

[Starting Point Book Pre-Order Form](#)

IT SPECIALIST - HECTOR HERNANDEZ

YEAR ROUND EVENT RENEWALS

The Year Round Event (YRE) renewal process will begin June 1, 2025 and will end August 31, 2025.

To start the process, Clubs should go to their "Sanctions" tab, "Edit/New" tab and then to the "Event Renewal" section, where they will find a list of all of their 2025 YRE/SEs ready to be edited and reviewed for 2026.



On the renewal's review page, they will have the option to request approval or indicate the YRE/SE will not be renewed for 2026. **Clubs should NOT use the "Copy" feature in the "New Events to be Completed" section to sanction an existing 2025 YRE/SE for 2026.**

Regional Directors must review and approve all events by September 15, 2025 in order to get them into the 2026 Starting Point book. Any approvals after the 15th do not guarantee a section in the 2026 Starting Point book.

If you have any questions or need any assistance please call (210) 659-2112 or email Hector@ava.org.

***Please note that new events can be submitted year round. If you are planning a new event for 2026 you can submit those events anytime.



MID-AMERICA REGIONAL DIRECTOR - ROBERT BUZOLICH

IS LABOR DAY WEEKEND A FEST WEEKEND IN THE MID-AMERICA REGION?

If there were ever a weekend to be identified as a Fest Weekend, but was not, it is Labor Day Weekend in the Mid-America Region.

For many years, the Clubs of Indiana and Michigan have offered outstanding events beginning with the last Saturday of August in Auburn, Indiana, and culminating with the Mackinaw Bridge Walk on Labor Day. The trip from Auburn to Mackinaw is packed with interesting and enjoyable Seasonal and Year-Round Events to make this a memorable weekend.



This year the Three Rivers Strollers will continue its annual Auburn Duessey walking event in Auburn, Indiana, on Saturday, August 30. The event can only be described as fantastic, as it is orchestrated with the town's annual Auburn, Cord & Duesenberg (ACD) festival, which celebrates Auburn's history as a major producer of the finest cars ever manufactured in the United States. Along the routes you will encounter and experience the pride of Auburn, as it is displayed in the downtown , neighborhoods and museums. For the details on this event , which is not to be missed, please use the following link:

<https://my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=129660>

The culminating event of the weekend is the Michigan Pathfinder walking event on Monday, September 1, in conjunction with the annual Mackinaw Bridge Walk, when the more than five mile long bridge is closed down for six hours of only pedestrian traffic, which is otherwise prohibited. In fact, it may be the only event in the United States or Canada, where Volkspotters represent less than one percent of the more than 35,000 pairs of feet on the Bridge at one time. It can be no wonder that this event is most memorable and is most deserving of being on anyone's bucket list. For the details on this event, which is not to be missed, please use the following link:

<https://my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=129229>

Though both regular traditional events are separated by 340 miles via the interstate system, there are many easily accessible Seasonal and Year-Round Events along the travel route. These events include:

- Pokagon State Park near Angola, Indiana (I-69 Exit 354)
- Quincy, Michigan (I-69 Exit 13)
- Lansing, Michigan (I-69 Exit 95)
- Gaylord, Michigan (I-75 Exit 282)
- Mackinaw City, Michigan (I-75 Exit 337)
- Mackinac Island, Michigan (I-75 Exit 337)



For detailed information on these events, to include registration through the AVA Online Start Box, please run an event search at my.ava.org.

Enjoy a cold beverage of personal choice, and hope to see you in Indiana and Michigan for a fantastic Labor Day Weekend Fest in the Mid-America Region. By the way, I will be doing the Gaylord Seasonal Event on Sunday, August 31, starting about 8:45 am (Eastern), if anyone wishes to join me, the Mid-America Regional Director. The start point location is provided when you register for the event through the Online Start Box.

INTERNATIONAL



NATIONAL EVENTS

First State Webfooters Walking Club 35th Annual Sea Witch Triathlon

Saturday, October 25th - 8 am

Events 5K/10K Walk

Bike 10.6K-43.6K +

300 meter Swim

Start/finish Sussex YMCA, 20080 Church St.,
Rehoboth Beach Delaware



This traditional event is in conjunction with the Sea Witch Festival in Rehoboth a three day Halloween festival featuring a costume parade, pet parade, live music, games and more

Join us for the weekend



Friday, Oct 24th at the Milton YRE
walk on the Broadkill River - Online
Start Box

Sunday, Oct 26th

teaming up with

Freestate Happy Wanderers
a short distance to Boardwalk

on Atlantic Ocean

OC Convention Center

4001 Coastal Hwy,

Ocean City, Maryland

Contact: Karen Fernandez
fdezjuankaren@comcast.net
410-802-6106

CVF/FCV 2026 Festival

Yellowknife, NWT, Canada

June/June 12-14, 2026



**Come and join us for the 24th
US FreedomWalk**
17-19 October 2025

Walk to
Arlington **USFreedomWalk.org**
An International Walking Experience

AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB
Volksmarching at its Best

13th Annual Fall Volksmarch
September 28, 2025

©Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation

Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

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.



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