



Tour de Castroville Walk - A large group of walkers along the trail. - Photo submitted by Martin Callahan

PRESIDENT/CEO - HENRY ROSALES

AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONVENING

The AVA Board of Directors will meet in San Antonio, June 17-19, 2025, to discuss the course of the AVA for the next two years. Please share your ideas and concerns with your Regional Director so they can convey them with the board during this planning session.

AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING, JUNE 18, 2025

A Special meeting of the AVA Board of Directors is scheduled for Wednesday, June 18, 2025, 8:00 am. at the Springhill Suites Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. The purpose of this meeting is to fill the vacancy of Finance Chair. Because there is only one nominee, the board will follow the vacancy policy in our bylaws and elect the Finance Chair in order to expedite the appointment of this critical position.

[To view his Candidate Statement click here.](#)



Seth Werner, Candidate for AVA Finance Chair

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AVA 2025 BIENNIAL CONVENTION FINANCIAL REPORT

A great big THANK YOU to all of you who supported the AVA's 2025 Biennial Convention with your participation. It was a really great time with so many beautiful walks and fun events. We received so many compliments on the Convention Center and the organization and efficiency of registration, credentialing and stamping. Above all, everyone really enjoyed the walks in El Paso, Juarez, White Sands, Mesilla Bosque and Las Cruces. The variety of landscapes and locations were beautiful and the food for the Welcome Reception and the Gala was INCREDIBLE!

On the financial side of the Convention, we were also very successful! The Convention was well attended by 254 registrants and finished with a \$37,641 net profit. We received nearly \$20,000 in grants and sponsorships and negotiated some really great deals on some of the major expenses. While we are very happy with our success, we fell short of our original expectation of 350 registrants which would have earned the AVA nearly \$40,000 in additional revenue. This would have resulted in a net profit of \$77,641.

We are looking forward to choosing a new site for our 2027 Biennial Convention and hope you all will plan to attend and encourage others to join you!

Thanks again,
Erin Grosso
Finance Director

To view the 2025 Biennial Convention Income Statement, [click here](#).



URGENT GROUPEUR UPDATE

We have been notified by Grouper the RSVP program has been discontinued effective immediately. If you have participants who are not paying participation fees because they are Grouper sponsored, please advise they now have to pay the participation fee. Grouper advised they sent a notice to all their participants this program has been discontinued. The AVA will reimburse participating clubs the RSVP participation fees once we have received the report from Grouper.

If your club has a Grouper account, it may have been disabled temporarily. We ask your patience while they reconstruct the platform. More information will be sent to all club POC's as it becomes available.

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. The registration link will be on the AVA website.

FREE CLUB SUPPORT WITH GRAPHIC DESIGN!

If your club needs help with brochure, banner, t-shirt or website graphics email Rachel Bush, Associate Professor Graphic Design at Austin Peay State University with your interest for support. 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 this form and submit it to henry@ava.org AFTER you have been accepted by Rachel Bush.

[Club Support Form](#)



This t-shirt design was created by students from Austin Peay!

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - SUSAN FINE, CHAIR

PUBLICITY UPDATE

What a great time I had in Las Cruces at the AVA convention and walking festival, seeing old friends and making new ones. I also learned some things that may help you, too:



- Two people gave me their AVA cards, which I'm sharing. These are great to give people when they ask "What are you doing?", when you're on a group walk. With a card that promotes your club and America's Walking Club, people have a way to (hopefully) take action, and join you in the future. Let me know if you need a template to get started: publicity@ava.org.
- If your club wants to order merchandise like t-shirts/ballcaps, etc., Erin Grosso with AVA can help get you good prices. Email her what you want. She will need info (sizes, amount, logo), and can get you quotes. For info: erin@ava.org

- You can email photos of your achievement books to AVA, so you don't have to mail them. Your distance and event books will be processed as normal. Until a new "Karen" is hired, email them to karen@ava.org for now.

I saw John McClennan's post on Facebook, and thought it's a great way to promote America's Walking Club. This photo was the window at their YMCA, where they kept a walkbox. "America's Walking Club has window "clings" for your physical Walk Box locations. Bring these to your community partners and ask them to put one up at their entrance!" Order your window clings from AVA: marian@ava.org



Multi-events upcoming:

- **6/27/2025 - 6/28/2025** [Iowa County Weekend](#), sponsored by Iowa's Walking Club and Nebraska Trailblazers
- **10/2/2025 - 10/5/2025** [Walking Stevens Pass to Leavenworth](#), sponsored by Interlaken & Central Washington Sun Striders
- **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

SPRING WALK

First State Webfooters Walking Club

**Exploring the Mispillion River
Historic town of Milford Delaware**

**Join us for our Spring Walk 5K/10K
Saturday, June 21st, registration 8-12 pm**

**Bicentennial Park
206 218 NE Front Street, Milford, DE**

**Contact Karen Fernandez fdejuankaren@comcast.net
Fee \$4.00**

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
fdejuankaren@comcast.net
410-802-6106

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 high-lighting each of our 10 AVA regions. A special section on the AVA main page will list all 2026 events celebrating AVA's 50th anniversary. Scheduled events in 2026 celebrating AVA's 50th include the Texas Trail Roundup in February, Atlantic Region Conference in March, and Crazy Horse in June.

We are also researching a special logo for the event sanction stamp, a special event patch, a countdown clock on the AVA website, a celebratory t-shirt and much, much more.

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 planned celebratory events to Diane Howell Evans at Programs@ava.org. Thank you.

MID-AMERICA REGIONAL DIRECTOR UPDATE - CRAIG GAUGER

Hello walkers! Mid America has walks and bike events all summer in all 5 MA states. Regular/traditional events, Seasonal events, and YRE's. You will not run out of fun, fitness, friendship, and food, especially ice cream. lol

When you're traveling across America to visit family or see the great sights, don't forget to stop and stretch your legs on a walk along the way. There are hundreds close to interstate highways and byways. Small villages, large cities, parks, each has something interesting to see and do. Find them online or in your copy of "Starting Point".

Write or call the POC and let them know. Some of us can meet you and walk with you. Others have to work. 😞

Even if you're not on a trip, try a walk further from home. See something new! We are all here to make our walks successful. Bring friends to a walk.

If you didn't go to New Mexico for the AVA Convention, you missed great weather, exciting walks, and a chance to see wildlife. Faith is a bird watcher. She added many sightings to her life list of birds.

Faith and I also had a too close encounter when we were heading back to Las Cruces from Ruidoso, NM at 10pm. We hit an elk at 50 mph. This event demolished a new rental car and unfortunately, killed the elk. No matter how diligent in driving, things happen. We weren't injured and the EMS and Tribal Police did an outstanding job in the rescue. I hope some local families were able to harvest the elk.

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!

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.

2026 STARTING POINT PHOTO CONTEST

So many years, so many photos, so many posts. Which of those photos captured the best memories? Share those captured memories with AVA by submitting photos of the "People", "Places" or "Things" you've encountered on your journey to the Starting Point Photo Contest. The first and second place winners will get their photo printed on the front side (1st place) and backside (2nd place) cover of the 2026 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, 2025. Rules, guidelines and the official entry form are attached in link below. 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 July 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025. For more information contact Hector at hector@ava.org

We are updating the ordering process, more to come next Checkpoint.

[Click here for Photo Contest Rules](#)



WEST TEXAS TRAIL WALKERS - SUSAN NOONAN, PRESIDENT

WEST TEXAS TRAIL WALKERS HIKING FEST

Hike with an Altitude! Join the West Texas Trail Walkers to hike the rugged Sacramento Mountains of Southern New Mexico near Ruidoso. See these beautiful mountains in full fall color and discover the local history and legends of Lincoln County, New Mexico, known as the "Land of Enchantment". Ruidoso and Lincoln County in New Mexico are famous for the legends of "Smokey Bear" and "Billy the Kid."



Challenge yourself to hike three trails in the Lincoln National Forest. Friday, October 10, hike the Sawmill Trail with a 5 or 10k hike. Hike the Little and Big Bonita/Crest trails on Saturday, October 11, with the options of 4, 7, 10 or 20k. Sunday, October 12, concludes the weekend with a 6 or 11k hike on the Grindstone Lake trail. Select the shorter trail lengths for gradual inclines to see magnificent views and nature, i.e., alligator junipers, Ponderosa pines, and wildlife. For more rigorous hikes, the longer distances to the ridgetops offer panoramic views of the mountain range and the city of Ruidoso below. Be aware, all the hikes are at altitudes above 6700 feet so give yourself time to acclimate.

Back by popular demand are the "Fun Shorties." These walks are easier with shorter distances, no longer than 5k. The surfaces are paved with small elevation gains, perfect for warming up to the more challenging hikes. You can hike the fun shorties anytime from October 7-12. Consider also walking the City of Ruidoso trail offered by the local Sun County Striders Club. You can register for this year-round walk through the online start box.

After an exhilarating first day, wind down at the "Happy Hour" at Downshift Brew Pub - Riverside, Ruidoso. The "Happy Hour" is from 3:00 to 5:00 pm on Friday, October 10. On Saturday, our annual dinner and awards ceremony features genuine New Mexican cuisine with Hatch Green Chili enchiladas. Dinner begins at 7:00 pm, Saturday, October 11, at the Ruidoso Community Center.

LaQuinta Inn is our host hotel and has a negotiated rate of \$99 (before taxes) for October 7-13. Call 575-378-3514 for reservations, select option 3 and then option 0, and mention you are with the West Texas Trail Walkers. You can find vacation home rentals and other hotels by accessing Hotels.com, Airbnb, VRBO, or other lodging apps.



Camping sites near our hikes are available in the Lincoln National Forest. Many private camping resorts are also available in Ruidoso.

Join us for the long weekend or extend your stay to enjoy the year-round walks in neighboring towns in New Mexico. Check our website www.westtexastrailwalkers.org for the latest information. The brochure and registration forms will be available on-line in June 2025.

INTERNATIONAL



NATIONAL EVENTS

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

AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB
ESTABLISHED 1976
Volksmarching at its Best

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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