



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

JANUARY  
2026  
VOLUME 35  
NO. 1

# CHECKPOINT

[WWW.AVA.ORG](http://WWW.AVA.ORG)

*This issue of the Checkpoint is cosponsored by* **solos**

## PRESIDENT/CEO - HENRY ROSALES

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE AMERICAN VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION ON YOUR 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY!

As we celebrate 50 remarkable years of this walking organization, I want to take a moment to honor the people who have truly carried us every step of the way — our members, volunteers and supporters.

For five decades, you've been the heartbeat of this organization. You're the ones who map out the routes, organize the walks, greet newcomers, and make every event feel welcoming. You're the planners, the problem-solvers, the early-morning-setup crews, and the friendly faces that turn a simple walk into a lifetime experience.

Your dedication has created more than just events — you've built a community of Fun, Fitness and Friendships. You've helped neighbors meet, helped families explore their cities, and helped countless people discover the joy of our walking movement. Through every walk you design, every event you manage, and every social gathering you host, you've strengthened the communities around you.

Our celebration cannot be whole without recognition of the leadership that guides and supports this great organization. To our current Board Chair, Carl Cordes, and all former Chairs, thank you for the vision and steady direction. To all Board Members, current and former, your commitment and guidance ensure that our mission stays strong and our future stays bright. To our Deputy Directors, your hands-on leadership keeps our programs running smoothly and our volunteers supported. To our Club Officers, Committee Members, Club Members and Volunteers, thank you for the countless hours you invest behind the scenes — planning, coordinating, and making sure every detail is handled with care.

And of course, to our supporters — the partners, sponsors, community leaders, and longtime members who stand with us — your encouragement and belief in our mission has sustained this organization and strengthened our work.

Fifty years is an extraordinary milestone, and it belongs to all of you. Your passion, your time, and your unwavering support have made this organization what it is today.

Thank you for your commitment, your energy, and your generosity. Special thanks to all our clubs who will host an event in celebration of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! Cheers to the next fifty years, one step at a time.

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## AVA WALK APPLICATION

The AVA's walk application is in the "pre-development" phase. A project manager has been contracted to help recruit and onboard a qualified UI/UX researcher and designer. The project manager will work with this individual on defining or selecting one primary persona, creating exploratory wireframes, and conducting research sprints for up to 20 user interviews to validate assumptions and feature value for a Minimum Viable Product (MVP). This phase of the work does not include software design or development beyond wireframes and is expected to take up to 180 hours or 4 ½ weeks. The projected cost is \$30,000. Because consultants are paid on an hourly basis the cost could be more or less, depending on changes requested by the AVA.

The AVA's Finance Chair, CEO, and Board Members will work collaboratively to implement a strategic funding plan that supports the development of the AVA's walk application. This effort will leverage grants, sponsorships, corporate partnerships, and individual contributions to achieve a campaign goal of \$600,000. These resources will be invested in both the development and targeted marketing of the app to ensure its long-term success and sustainability. If you would like to support these efforts, please contact Seth Werner at [finance\\_chair@ava.org](mailto:finance_chair@ava.org)

Look for monthly progress updates in the Checkpoint. Should you have questions contact the Chair of the walk application committee, Jeff Giddings at [jhgiddings@gmail.com](mailto:jhgiddings@gmail.com).

## AVA WEDNESDAY WEBINARS - JANUARY 21, 2026

The next webinar is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 7:00p.m. - 8:00p.m. Central.

To register for the webinar, [click here](#) or go to the AVA website homepage. Once you have registered for the Zoom meeting a link will be sent to the email you used to register.

**Guest Host: Karen Kaufman, AVA Board Member, Atlantic Region**

### Presenters:

*Ron Jones, AVA Deputy Director, Atlantic Region, Beth Stenstrom, Kay Shoemaker, Holly Pelking, and John McClellan.*

The Atlantic Region (Karen Kaufman, Regional Director and Ron Jones, Deputy, Regional Director) will host the January webinar on "How to Get New Members and Retain Them."

The panel will present how each reached out to potential members and how they kept them interested in their clubs. The intended audience is any AVA member. Panel members are Ron Jones, Beth Stenstrom and Kay Shoemaker from the Fredericksburg Walking Club, Holly Pelking, Pacific Regional Director, and John McClellan from the Happy Wanderers Club. To register, go to <https://ava.org/monthly-webinar/>. Make a New Years Resolution to tune in and get best practices on how to grow your club. Recruiting new members is a great way to celebrate the AVA 's 50 Anniversary!

Leon Creek Walk. - Photo submitted by Martin Callahan.





## FINANCE DIRECTOR - ERIN GROSSO

### AVA MERCHANDISE STORE OPENS ONLINE

We are very excited to announce the AVA Store is open and ready for shopping. There are various styles of shirts, ballcaps and sweatshirts to choose from, customized by you.

You choose:

- Preferred color
- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo or just the AVA logo
- Short sleeve or long sleeve shirt of cotton/poly blend – unisex or female cut
- Dri-fit short or long sleeve in both men's and women's cuts
- Crew neck sweatshirts
- Vintage and trucker ball caps

This is your chance to get the AVA merchandise you want. Your order can be one item or several items. Clubs can order in bulk if they want.

You can also choose to have the logo across the front of the shirt, or over the breast pocket. You can choose to have the back printed with all the 17 featured events for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, or only have the front logo with no back. **YOU CHOOSE!**

When you order, you will receive an emailed receipt, and shipping information. The price listed does not include tax or shipping/handling costs. Orders will take 7-10 days to be shipped.

Here is a link to the e-store:

[https://bigfrognewbraunfels.com/americas\\_walking\\_club/shop/home](https://bigfrognewbraunfels.com/americas_walking_club/shop/home).

Please send the link for the online store to all club members so they can showcase our wonderful organization, especially during our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2026.



## AWARDS COMMITTEE - KAREN KAUFMAN, CHAIR

### AWARDS COMMITTEE

"We are looking to add one member from each of the following Regions to the Awards committee:

Mid America  
North Central  
Southeast  
Southwest  
South Central

You do not need to be an RD, DRD or Club officer to join the committee. Experience with the AVA awards program is helpful but not required to join. Please contact me at [awards@ava.org](mailto:awards@ava.org) if interested."

## AVA FINANCE CHAIR - SETH WERNER

### FINANCIAL HEALTH TIPS FOR LOCAL CLUBS

From the Desk of the National Finance Chair

Finances don't have to be complicated. These quick tips are designed to help your club stay organized, avoid common mistakes, and keep things running smoothly.

#### *Donor Intent Matters*

If a donor gives for a specific purpose, you must honor that. Track restricted funds separately to maintain trust and compliance. Mismanaging these funds can damage your reputation and even lead to legal issues.

#### Quick Start Checklist:

- ✓ Create a column for restricted funds in your spreadsheet
- ✓ Label donations clearly
- ✓ Report back to donors on use

Resource: Understanding Restricted Funds  
– Bloomerang: <https://bloomerang.co>

#### **\*Bonus: How to Attract Donors\***

Building trust with donors starts with transparency and communication. When donors see that their contributions are used as intended, they're more likely to give again—and tell others about your organization.

#### 3 Ways to Start Soliciting Donors:

- ✓ Tell Your Story: Share why your club matters and the impact donations make.
- ✓ Start Small: Ask for modest contributions tied to specific needs (e.g., "\$25 helps us fund a community event").
- ✓ Show Gratitude: Thank donors promptly and share updates on how their gift was used.

Resource: 18 Strategies to Attract and Retain Nonprofit Donors – Nonprofit Learning Lab  
<https://www.nonprofitlearninglab.org/post-1/18-strategies-to-attract-and-retain-nonprofit-donors>

*\*Stay tuned for the next tip.*





## AVA SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR - AMANDA JAUREGUI

## 2026 TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP

We are just one month away from the 2026 Texas Trail Roundup! Join us for one, two, or all three days of fun, health, history, culture, and community. Each year, walkers from around the world come together to explore one of America's most historic and culturally rich cities on foot. Whether you are an experienced walker or just starting out, we welcome you to explore with us!



On day one February 20, we will have our 50th Anniversary Walk in Fredericksburg, Texas. The Opening Ceremony will start at 9am under the Adelsverein covered pavilion at the Marktplatz. After the walk, we will have live music, a free wine tasting from Augusta Vin, beer samples from Altstadt Brewery, and a food truck for all of our walkers.

On day two, February 21, walkers can choose between completing a 5k, 10k, Half and Full Marathon Walk through the heart of San Antonio, followed by a fun social gathering on South Alamo Street with free goodies from Churrostar, along with a tequila tasting from Surtierra Tequila, and a beautiful performance from Mexican folklórico group, Danzantes de San Antonio.

On day three, February 22, walkers can choose between a 5k, 10k, and Half Marathon Walk through the veins and soul of San Antonio's River Walk area. The finish line and closing ceremony are opening at the Beethoven Maennerchor, which will only be open for our guests.

Registration is now open! You can look at our website for the schedule, updates, and more information. If you are coming in from out of town, you can reserve your room with the Springhill Suites by Marriott Riverwalk/Downtown by January 30th. If you are interested in volunteering for the event, you can register here.



Click image to visit site.

# solos

## Small group walking trips for solo travelers 50+



Call 1-888-259-4027 or visit [solosholidays.com/solo-walking](https://solosholidays.com/solo-walking)

## PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - SUSAN FINE, CHAIR

## PUBLICITY UPDATE

We are so excited to join Carl Cordes and all the Las Vegas High Rollers and Strollers in Boulder City, Nevada Jan 9-11, 2026, for the first festival of AVA's 50th anniversary celebrations, along with the USA's 250th birthday. Carl and his team have a great weekend planned for those of us who can attend. If you will be there, please share your photos, either on the [AVA Facebook Group page](#), or your own social media page with the tag **#AVA50**... or send to [publicity@ava.org](mailto:publicity@ava.org), and I'll post your photos. We want to showcase as many photos of our celebrations as possible.

And please forward this info to your club members, to try and attend as many other celebrations as you can, which you can find at [ava.org/50th-anniversary/](http://ava.org/50th-anniversary/). Hector is updating the page, as clubs continue to enhance their events and test the walk trails. Reminder: here's the list of upcoming "featured" festivals:

**JANUARY 9-11** – Boulder City, NV (Pacific Region) – AVA Chairman's Anniversary Celebration

**FEBRUARY 20-22** – San Antonio, TX (Southwest Region) – 6th Annual Texas Trail Roundup IML, including a walk in Fredericksburg, the first site of American volkswalking.

**MARCH 20-22** – Williamsburg, VA (Atlantic Region) – Atlantic Regional Conference

**APRIL 17-19** – Council Bluffs, IA and Nebraska City, NE (North Central Region)– Memories on the Mighty MO

**MAY 16-20** – Upstate New York (Northeast Region) – Walk the Story that Changed the World: A Multi-day Event on Revolutionary War Battle Sites

**JUNE 6-7** – Crazy Horse and Black Hills, SD (North Central Region) – 40th Annual Crazy Horse Memorial Volksmarch

**JUNE 19-21** - Indiana and Illinois – (Mid-America Region) - Mid-America Regional Conference

**JULY 24-25** – San Francisco, CA – (Pacific Region) - 50 Works of Art for 50 Years of Walking

**JULY 28 – AUG 1** – Colorado Springs, CO (Rocky Mountain Region)– Rocky Mountain Rendezvous

**AUGUST 28-29** – Boston, MA (Northeast Region)– AVA 50th Anniversary Walk in Boston

**SEPTEMBER 7** – Mackinaw City and St Ignace, MI (Mid-America Region) – Annual Mackinac Bridge Walk

**SEPTEMBER 24-27** – Astoria, OR (Northwest Region) – NW Regional Conference "Walking in the Footsteps of Lewis and Clark"

**OCTOBER 16-18** – Arlington, VA (Atlantic Region) – 25th Annual Freedom Walk Festival IML

**OCTOBER 28 – November 1** – MO, KS, OK (South Central Region) - "Halloween Klicks on Route 66"

**NOVEMBER 6-8** – Tampa area, FL (Southeast Region) – 35th Walk Around Florida

**NOVEMBER 14** – Dayton, OH (Mid-America Region) – OWF Honors Veterans

**DECEMBER 5** – Helen, GA (Southeast Region) – Weihnachten Lights Spectacular

But remember, ALL events in 2026 are a celebration. Please look to [ava.org](http://ava.org) and attend as many as you can.

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**TAW deadline** for March is January 25. Please articles and photos to [taw@ava.org](mailto:taw@ava.org).

John McClellan has worked hard to feature every AVA club in the U.S., on the [AVA Facebook group page](#). This month, for January, the Pacific region clubs are being honored. Look for your club on the page.

And speaking of social media, John wrote a great story to help you grow membership and communicate with members on social media. For our members, Facebook is the primary medium. Please read this and contact John with any questions: [john.mcclellan1@outlook.com](mailto:john.mcclellan1@outlook.com).



## PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - JOHN McCLELLAN

## USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUR AVA CLUB: FACEBOOK

Facebook went public in 2006. That means that social media is now 20 years old technology. It's coin of the realm. Yet less than ½ of our AVA clubs (42%) have a FB page. If your club does not – consider starting one now, during the 50th Anniversary year. Here are some tips for new or existing club pages!



## Getting Started

Facebook (FB) is FREE. It's the biggest, easy to start, and - our target audience (50+) have largely taken it over – so, it reaches who we want to reach. First, you'll need to create your own account. Once you have one, there are two basic constructs for a club Facebook presence.

1. You can create a FB "Group" – [Facebook Help Center](#)

You can create or join a group for anything — stargazing, baking, parenting — with people across the globe or across the street. Groups can be public or private. Don't make your club private! You want people to see your posts and interact with you.

2. Or you can create a "Page" – [Create a Facebook Page | Facebook Help Center](#)

FB Pages are for businesses, brands, and organizations. I like the "page" construct for a club as a non-profit business, and it gives you some additional tools. A FB page or group is connected to YOU, but with a page you will have "two" sites – your personal and your business page and you must "toggle" between them – to either post as yourself or as the business.

Creating Engaging Content

[Continue the story here](#)

## Empire State Capital Volkssporters (ESCV)

## MAY NORTHEAST REGION WEEKEND EVENT

May is for Blooming Flowers, Mother's Day, Memorial Day and the 2026 Northeast Weekend, Walk the Story that Changed the World, from May 16th thru 19th. You won't have to worry about traveling far, just to Johnstown, NY and over to Lake George, NY staying in the Georgian Lakeside Resort, Lake George Quality Inn or multiple other chain, Mom and Pop, campsites, etc in this bustling vacation spot for 3-5 less or more nights to be in the middle of everything.



Our weekend starts Saturday in Johnstown with a new 5k walk, parade and reenactment of the Patriots storming Johnson Hall. Next we will move to the Lake George area where you will have several walking choices on Sunday: Crown Point(with a scavenger hunt), Ft. Ticonderoga(includes the fort or not) and Ticonderoga. Concluding walks will be Schuylerville on Monday and Tuesday in Lake George Village. Round Lake will be our post walk on Wednesday. 2 bicycle rides will be available: Lake George and Saratoga National Historical Park any time during the weekend event.

Did you know that Ticonderoga is famous for the Ticonderoga Pencil #2 and Trekonderoga-tours of sets from the original "Star Trek" television show? We have group rates \$18 for groups of 20. Ft. Ticonderoga entrance discounted rate, \$20 for groups of 12. Don't need to be together when entering sites. Lastly on Tuesday, we are having an historical and scenic cruise on Lake George late afternoon. Need to pay on registration form so we can give names and money ahead of time to each business.

Our weekend event hotel is the Georgian Lakeside Resort in the heart of Lake George, 518 668-5401. All of our convention needs will be held here: registration, stamping, bike sign up, Meet & Greet and Plated Dinner. Check it out at [georgianresort.com](http://georgianresort.com) We also have overflow rooms at Quality In Lake George, 518 685-6055, check out web site pictures, only 1/2 mile from the Georgian. Just mention WALKNE 26 for special rate. Please call the properties directly and not go through the chain number to register.

As the hosting club, we will need many volunteers at Sign In tables, manning the lobby at the hotel for registration, questions asked and answered, weather, directions to walks, etc. Chris Yost is our Volunteer Coordinator and Louis Remillard is in charge of Registration.

We are hoping some of our clubs retired walkers will attend and volunteer to sit at a table and visit with the attendees, volunteer to help with stamping or one of the many other ways to help out. We'd love to see each and everyone of you. You are thought of often and are missed.

Our registration is OPEN NOW at [WALKescv.org](http://WALKescv.org). Click on the Northeast Logo.

Committee Members: Lea Darling, Teresa Kennedy, Wayne Knapp, Kathy Mack Louise Remillard and Chis Yost.

## 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.

### 2026 CENTURION ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE:

The 2026 program begins January 1, 2026. You must be an AVA Individual Member (annual or lifetime) to participate in the Challenge. Eligible participants may register for the 2026 Challenge between October 1, 2025 and September 30, 2026 using the official registration form. Please mail forms to AVA, 1032 S. Alamo St, San Antonio, TX78210, or e-mail to [marian@ava.org](mailto:marian@ava.org).

[Centurion Instructions](#)

[Centurion Form](#)

## AVA 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE PASSPORT BOOK

### Celebrate AVA's 50th Anniversary!

In honor of this milestone, participating clubs will host 2026 Signature Events across the country. Join the celebration with the 50th Anniversary Passport Book Challenge—featuring 17 special event signature walks.

- Collect a unique sticker at each walk for your passport book.
- Complete at least 8 signature events of the passport book to earn a commemorative t-shirt.
- Complete 100% of the passport book to receive a commemorative t-shirt and an AVA tote bag!
- Program runs from 1-1-26 to 12-31-26
- Submit completed books for redemption to same address, or scan to [marian@ava.org](mailto:marian@ava.org) by June 31, 2027
- For more information on the walks, please visit [ava.org](http://ava.org)

The cost of the books are \$15.00 each plus \$1.50 for shipping and handling. Mail form along with payment to AVA, 1032 S. Alamo St., San Antonio, TX, 78210 or email form to [Marian@ava.org](mailto:Marian@ava.org) and call with credit card information.

[Order Form](#)



## PROGRAM COMMITTEE - DIANE HOWELL, CHAIR

## AVA 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PASSPORT VS. 2026 ANNIVERSARY HURRAH SPECIAL PROGRAM - WHICH ONE SHOULD I BE USING FOR WHAT?

The “AVA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Passport” is used to record the special stickers available at each of the seventeen (17) AVA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Signature Events which can be found at the link [50th Anniversary – AVA](#). The Passport costs \$15.00 each plus \$1.50 for shipping and handling and is purchased from National Headquarters. If you haven't purchased your Passport yet, the order form with the information for purchasing a book can be found at the following link: [https://cb.ava.org/checkpoint/2025/Oct/Passport\\_Book\\_Form.pdf](https://cb.ava.org/checkpoint/2025/Oct/Passport_Book_Form.pdf).

Each of the seventeen 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Signature events will have one unique sticker just for their one day or multiple day event which can be earned by walking just one of their signature events. These stickers are only available at the signature event you are attending. If you forget to collect the unique sticker at the event you attended, be aware you will not be able to collect it at any of the other AVA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Signature Events. Each signature event is receiving ONLY the unique sticker designed for their event!

So, collect a unique sticker at each signature event for your Passport. Complete at least 8 signature events and earn a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorative t-shirt or complete all 17 signature events and receive a 50th Anniversary commemorative t-shirt and an AVA tote bag! Program runs from 1-1-26 to 12-31-26. Submit your completed Passport to National Headquarters or you may scan the completed book, cover to cover, to [marian@ava.org](mailto:marian@ava.org) by June 31, 2027.



The new 2026 “Anniversary Hurrah Special Program (SP)” is used to record any event that celebrates AVA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary or America's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The qualifiers are of your own choice. Terry Lunghofer, SP POC, has written several articles for both the Checkpoint and TAW, describing the special program. Check out the recent TAW December 2025 issue, page 7, for the latest article describing the program at [Dec\\_TAW.pdf](#). The article also includes information on how to order an Anniversary Hurrah SP book or you may also check out the AVA Special Programs webpage for information on not only the new 2026 SP but all the additional active SPs at: [cb.ava.org/specprog.php](https://cb.ava.org/specprog.php).

Can I use the Anniversaries Hurrah SP booklet to record any or all of the seventeen AVA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Signature Events? Yes, of course - but remember in the special program booklet you are using the IVV Certification Stamp to record your completion of the event, not one of the unique stickers mentioned previously. Also, upon completion of the Anniversary Hurrah SP your award is an embroidered patch reflecting the national geography highlighted in the song “America the Beautiful” not an AVA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary souvenir.

As Terry mentions in his article one can determine their own sub-programs to celebrate AVA's and America's history if they are so inclined, but it is NOT a requirement. After months of considering possible sub-programs, I finally arrived at the following for my own self-defined qualifiers: 5 events where one of the first one hundred AVA clubs, which is still in existence, is celebrating AVA's 50<sup>th</sup> or their own club anniversary; 5 YREs of the first 100 sanctioned YREs still in existence today; 5 events showcasing major US achievements including a July 4<sup>th</sup> event on the east coast; 5 AVA convention cities; and 1 event for each Special Program from the past that I missed (Murals, Covered Bridges, Volcanoes, Cities in Songs and the Underground Railroad).

I would really be interested in what others are doing – write an article for an upcoming TAW or submit a posting on AVA's Facebook page! Terry said it best, “Each of us has our own sense of the history that we wish to celebrate.”

I hope this article has clarified the difference between the AVA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Passport and the Anniversary Hurrah Special Program. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Howell Evans at: [Programs@ava.org](mailto:Programs@ava.org).

## CELEBRATE TRAILS DAY – APRIL 25, 2026

The Rails to Trails Conservancy's (RTC) annual springtime celebration of America's trails, which occurs every year on the 4th Saturday of April, is just around the corner. Our new partnership with RTC and our shared goal of creating activities to get folks outside, enjoying nature and on America's trails is a wonderful opportunity to promote each other's organization. If your club is hosting an event on a Rails-to-Trails or a multi-use trail on the weekend of April 25th, or any time during the month of April, please let AVA know so we can work with RTC to promote your event on their Celebrate Trails Day website, social media postings and e-mails to their RTC community. Please forward information on your event (club name, date, location, name of trail, and POC) to [Programs@ava.org](mailto:Programs@ava.org) using the subject "Celebrate Trails Day."

For more information on Rails to Trails Conservancy 2026 Partnership Opportunities [click here](#).

## DECEMBER 2025 TAW CORRECTION

Incorrect Ending Date.

Programs Committee article on page 12.

The Current Extended Years Special Programs

Washington-Rochambeau NHT (9/1/22 – 12/31/32)

## 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PLANNING COMMITTEE

### AVA 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SIGNATURE EVENT – VOLUNTEER WORKER REQUEST

**TO:** Club President, Event Trailmaster/POC  
**FROM:** Diane Howell Evans, Chair, AVA Programs Committee  
**SUBJECT:** Non-Club Member Assistance Needed at your AVA 50<sup>th</sup> Signature Event

If you require non-club member volunteer workers for your upcoming AVA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Signature Event, please contact Diane Howell Evans with the event name, date of event, location of event, volunteer position name (i.e. greeter, start table, finish table, etc.), shift hours (8-10 am, 10-Noon, Noon-2pm, etc.), and any other information you would like to provide.

Please specify in the subject line of your e-mail the text string "Volunteer Worker Request" and forward to: [Programs@ava.org](mailto:Programs@ava.org).

Hector Hernandez and I will be creating a SignUpGenius volunteer system with the requested positions and shifts for your event. Once we have your club's information, we will send out a blast e-mail with a link recruiting volunteers for your club's event as well as publicize on the AVA web site and in the Checkpoint and TAW.

If any questions or concerns, please contact Diane at [Programs@ava.org](mailto:Programs@ava.org).

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR AVA 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SIGNATURE EVENTS

It is time to celebrate AVA's 50<sup>th</sup>! Seventeen events are happening across the U.S., and some are hosted by very small Volkssport clubs who answered National's call to celebrate AVA's 50<sup>th</sup>, showcase their region and promote our organization both locally, state-wide and nationally. These clubs are going to need assistance with everything from registration to checkpoints to walking with new participants to trail sweeping and maybe even more depending on the location. If you are attending any of the seventeen events and would like to help, please let me know by e-mailing me your full name, event you are planning to attend, and both phone and e-mail information to: [Programs@ava.org](mailto:Programs@ava.org).

You don't need to specify a position, date, or time right now as we are currently collecting information from the host clubs on the dates, type of positions and shifts needed. Once we have all the information about a club's event, we will be using SignUpGenius to list the event and volunteer positions needed. Once the club event information is entered and confirmed in the system, we will send out a link for SignUpGenius so you can sign up for both a position and time that fits your schedule.



Since these events occur over the next 12 months, clubs are still in the planning stages of their anniversary event scheduled for later in the year so look for the monthly Checkpoints, quarterly TAW issues or e-mail blasts from National or the Programs Committee to indicate new events needing volunteers.

Volunteers are the blood of our organization and make any event a success. With volunteers demonstrating the fun, fitness and friendship of our sport at our celebratory events our new first-time walkers will be motivated to join us for future activities, and the 3F's!

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Howell Evans at: [programs@ava.org](mailto:programs@ava.org).

## WEST TEXAS TRAIL WALKERS - SUSAN NOONAN, PRESIDENT

### GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

I am writing to enthusiastically invite you to join the West Texas Trail Walkers for an unforgettable hiking adventure in Guadalupe Mountains National Park in 2026! Please mark your calendars for the main event, October 9-11, 2026. We offer a variety of hiking options, including the challenging climb to the summit of Guadalupe Mountain, the highest peak in Texas, the picturesque McKittrick Canyon trail, famous for its stunning fall foliage in October, and the "Fun Shorties," which are accessible, shorter trails perfect for all skill levels. For those who wish to extend their experience, we encourage you to add an extra day to descend into the awe-inspiring Carlsbad cavern and explore its fascinating underground system. In addition to these incredible opportunities, we are also planning a leisurely walk along the scenic Pecos River in Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Regarding accommodations, the White's City Cavern Inn in White's City, New Mexico, situated just outside Carlsbad Caverns National Park, is the closest lodging option. Alternatively, Carlsbad, New Mexico, offers a wide array of lodging choices to suit various preferences and budgets. For those flying in, El Paso, Texas, located approximately 110 miles away, boasts the nearest major airport, making travel convenient and straightforward.

We also cordially extend an invitation to join our reconnaissance trip from March 24-27, 2026. Your participation in this pre-event exploration would be greatly appreciated, and in return, we kindly request that you volunteer to assist with one of the hikes during the main October event. This is a fantastic opportunity to join the walk directors and planning team as we explore and meticulously map out the trails, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. It's not only a rewarding experience, but it also promotes team building, especially for those of us who cannot get enough of the rugged beauty of the West Texas mountains!

The final brochure and registration forms will be available on our website, [westtexastrailwalkers.org](http://westtexastrailwalkers.org), in early June 2026. We are eagerly anticipating your participation and hope to see you in October for an incredible hiking experience!







Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear IVV National Associations,  
Dear IVV Continental Associations,  
Dear Friends,

On behalf of the entire IVV Presidium and the IVV Head Office, I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year 2026. We are all looking forward to seeing you again in the new year.

Best regards to all  
Giuseppe Colantonio  
on behalf of the IVV Presidium and the IVV Head Office

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Pia Kintziger-Groben  
IVV-Europa-Sekretariat  
Boîte Postale 94  
L-9201 Diekirch  
Tél.: +352 691302687  
[info@ivv-europa.eu](mailto:info@ivv-europa.eu)



Jin Qiao (金乔) | 13910528733  
CVA Secretary General  
China Volkssport Association (CVA)

China BeijingToday Walk Center  
Tel: (8610)-84896320  
E-mail: [qiaojin1958@163.com](mailto:qiaojin1958@163.com) / [ivv2009@163.com](mailto:ivv2009@163.com)  
[ivv\\_cva@hotmail.com](mailto:ivv_cva@hotmail.com)  
Website: [www.chinawalking.net.cn](http://www.chinawalking.net.cn) 【中国徒步网】  
([www.ivv-web.org/the-ivv/china-en.html](http://www.ivv-web.org/the-ivv/china-en.html))  
WeChat Public Number: 中国徒步网  
Add.: 1113-11, Baoli Daduihui Building,  
2-Guanyinannanjie, Tongzhou District, Beijing, China



## NATIONAL EVENTS

You're invited to roundup for our 3-day international walk fest known as the:

**Texas Trail Roundup**  
February 20-22, 2026

A premier three-day international walking festival hosted in the beautiful city of San Antonio, Texas. Each year, walkers from around the world come together to explore one of America's most historic and culturally rich cities on foot.






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US FreedomWalk**  
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**40th Annual Spring Volksmarch**  
June 6, 2026



[Click here to go to  
50th Anniversary Page](#)

**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](mailto: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, [ava.org](http://ava.org), Phone 210.659.2112 · Fax 210.659.1212 Message US.