



CHECKPOINT

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AVA CHAIRMAN - CARL CORDES

COMMITTEE TO EXPLORE NEW CLUB MODEL

The AVA Board of Directors passed a motion proposed by Holly Pelking, Pacific Region, unanimously at our last meeting to form an ad hoc committee to study and make recommendations to the Board for a possible new 'club' model. I have appointed Holly as Chair of this committee. There is no intention to eliminate the existing 501c3 club model we have had since our inception. But we are losing clubs aging out and requirements exceeding the capacity of remaining members. Also, we amended our bylaws extending voting and other rights to National Members, but not the right to sanction events. Can that change with a new model that could open events in areas currently underserved?

This new model should be simple, focused on event retention and maintenance of its directions. Possibly an OSB only model that eliminates typical club operation expenses. Can a declining club 'fold' into this new model and how? This ad hoc committee will explore new ideas, get feedback from the membership and report to the Board on progress at each meeting. There are questions and details that will need to be addressed such as bylaws,

legal standing, financial impact, and any potential unintended consequence. We are accepting additional committee members who are willing to actively work on this study and recommendations; exploring and writing up ideas, talking to those impacted and reporting back; no passive involvement. The committee chair will also accept and review position papers presented by anyone concerned enough to make the effort.

Are you passionate about moving AVA forward and willing to put in the time, research and effort? Then contact me at chairman@ava.org or Holly at pa_rd@ava.org and tell us why you want to be on this ad hoc committee. As with all AVA Committees, members will be required to sign NDA, Confidentiality and Work Product Agreements to participate.

PRESIDENT/CEO - HENRY ROSALES

AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING NOTICE

The AVA National Board of Directors will meet Thursday, March 12, 2026, 5:00 – 7:00 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.](#)

AVA WEDNESDAY WEBINAR FOR MARCH 18, 2026, IS CANCELLED

There will not be a webinar in March. The next webinar is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 7:00p.m. - 8:00p.m. Central.

To register for the webinar, click the link 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.

IML/AVA TEXAS TRAIL ROUND UP HIGHLIGHTS

Special thanks to all AVA officers and board members, club members, volunteers, family members and national office employees who supported the Texas Trail Round Up in San Antonio, Texas, February 20-22, 2026. This AVA hosted event brought together 258 walkers from 13 countries and 25 States. Of the total participants, sixty-eight were from international countries, eighty-eight were from the United States, and one hundred and two were from Texas (40 from San Antonio).

The Honorable Jeryl Hoover, Mayor of Fredericksburg was present at the Opening Ceremony, and the Honorable Gina Ortiz Jones, Mayor of San Antonio, and San Antonio city council member Sukh Kaur were also present at the Closing Ceremony. Special thanks to Mr. Spike Elliot, IVV Vice-President, Carl Cordes, AVA Chairman, and Dolores Grenier, former IML Pan-Pacific Vice President for attending the event.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the next 50th Anniversary event March 20-22, 2026, in Williamsburg, VA! For more info on the AVA's 50th Anniversary events click here. <https://ava.org/50th-anniversary/>



SLIVER SNEAKERS PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Thanks to all who attended the Silver Sneakers webinar in February. If you were not able to attend, you can listen to the webinar by [clicking on this link](#).

Next Steps:

If your club is interested in piloting the Silver Sneakers partnership program, please send an email to henry@ava.org expressing your interest. In the email, please include the name of the club, point of contact, and email address. Feel free to include any concerns or comments about this partnership in your email so we can address them during the next webinar. The deadline for this is March 15, 2026.

A follow-up correspondence with information on the next webinar with Silver Sneakers will be emailed to all interested clubs. During this webinar all details will be discussed to include an overview of the payment process, registration/verification process, and CPR training & certifications. This webinar will most likely be in early April.

KING WILLIAM PARADE INVITE

America's Walking Club (AVA) has been invited and accepted to once again participate in the King William Parade. The theme for this parade is "the Great Fiesta Bake Off Sugar & Spice, plus everything nice-that's what Fiest is made of. The AVA's float will feature banners from the different IVV and IML countries and Elvis impersonator, Travis Hudson, singing live on the float!

All AVA members and family members are invited to join us at the parade in a costume related to the theme. Parade participants must sign a waiver and be willing to walk approximately 1.5 miles carrying a banner. The parade is on Saturday, April 25, 2026. Participants must arrive at the King William by 7:30am. and the parade lasts approximately 90 minutes. This invitation is open on a first-come first-served basis for the first 25 people who confirm attendance. If you would like to participate email henry@ava.org confirming your attendance.

The AVA takes part in this parade because it offers significant visibility for our organization, locally, regionally, and even nationally. With more than 30,000 spectators and coverage from multiple news outlets, the parade places the AVA prominently in front of a wide and diverse audience.



PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - SUSAN FINE, CHAIR

PUBLICITY UPDATE

It was wonderful to see so many friends and walkers from around the country, and the world, at the Texas Trail Roundup (TTR) in San Antonio Feb 20-22. Thank you to those who uploaded your photos to the shared Photo Circle app. There are over 650 photos there. If you were at the TTR, and want to share your photos, Hector can send the QR code. Email him: hector@ava.org. We would love to see all the photos, and use some of them for marketing of AVA.

The next featured event for AVA's 50th anniversary is in Williamsburg, VA for the Atlantic Region Conference March 20-22. There's a pre-walk March 19 in Fredericksburg, VA, then walks in Colonial Williamsburg and along the [Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail](#). A post-walk takes place in Alexandria, VA March 23. Plus there are daily bike and swim events. Pre-registration is available or register for the walks daily. [More information here](#).



[Miles of Memories Across the Mighty Missouri](#) is the 4th featured event for AVA's 50th celebration, April 17-19, 2026. You'll walk in Council Bluffs, Iowa, across the Missouri River to Omaha, Nebraska, and Nebraska City, NE. The Nebraska Trailblazers have confirmed that the Mayor of Council Bluffs, Jill Shudak, and the First Lady of Omaha, Viv Ewing, will walk with us on Saturday as we cross the Missouri. Great Job to the club! Pre-registration ends March 26th, so [sign up now](#). Registration on site is available, too.

Thank you to Rob McDaniel for creating a 50th anniversary video. [Check it out here](#). Please share it on your social media pages, and your club newsletters.

Rob will also create a short video for your club, free of charge, based on photos you send him. To celebrate our various regions, he's wanting to do a club spotlight series for about 4-5 clubs per region. See the one for the [Happy Wanderers](#). If you are interested, contact him at mcdaniel99@yahoo.com.

Remember our partnership with Rail to Trails Conservancy, and have an event or group YRE walk in April, especially April 25 – [Celebrate Trails Days](#), marking RTC's 40th anniversary. Fill out the [event form here](#) to be listed on their website.

If you missed the February webinar about our possible partnership with Silver Sneakers, you can [see it here](#).

50 YEARS OF AVA 40 YEARS OF RAILS TO TRAILS



AVA SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR - AMANDA JAUREGUI

2026 TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP



Thank you to everyone who made it out to the Texas Trail Roundup this year! We had a ton of fun, and we hope you did too. We are happy to report that over all three days, 585 people walked with us, including participants from 26 states and 12 countries. If you would like to get updates for next year's TTR, you can subscribe to our email list and/or follow our Facebook page. See ya'll next year!



AVA FINANCE CHAIR - SETH WERNER

FINANCIAL HEALTH TIPS FOR LOCAL CLUBS

#6 Track and Reconcile Monthly

From the Desk of the National Finance Chair

Managing money isn't always easy—but it doesn't have to be stressful. Each tip in this series is designed to help your club stay strong and focused on its mission.

Stay on Top of Your Numbers

One of the easiest ways to prevent financial surprises is to reconcile your bank account every month. This means comparing your bank statement to your records to make sure everything matches.

Quick Start Checklist:

- ✓ Download your bank statement each month
- ✓ Compare it to your income/expense records
- ✓ Investigate and correct any discrepancies immediately

Resource: Bank Reconciliation Basics – AccountingTools: <https://www.accountingtools.com/articles/what-is-bank-reconciliation.html>

ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST - MARIAN DEVAUL

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 by June 31, 2027
- For more information on the walks, please visit 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 and call with credit card information.

[Order Form](#)

FINANCIALS

If your club is on a calendar year, Annual Financials Reports, e-Postcard filings, and Officer Updates (ESR update) are due by May 15, 2026. Please submit a copy of your filings to marian@ava.org.

May 15th, 2026 – The following items are due:

- E-post card must be filed with the IRS and a copy provided to AVA HQ.
- Club's Annual Financial Report is due to the AVA HQ.
- Update of Officers Information in the ESR must be completed by each club.

Note: Financials for clubs with a fiscal year ending on June 30 are not due until November 15, 2026

50TH ANNIVERSARY PLANNING COMMITTEE

SEARCHING FOR CLUB HOST FOR 2028 SPECIAL PROGRAM PROPOSAL



The Programs Committee received a proposal for a Special Program named “Ports of Entry.” There was a similar special program “Walking America’s Ports of Call” offered from 2016-2019 by a WA state club which is no longer active. Since the club is inactive, any club can offer to host this special program. Inquiries as to whether any other WA club wanted to host the Special Program did not elicit a taker. So, the proposal is now open to clubs anywhere in the US. Rob McDaniels, author of the proposal, is more than willing to assist any club willing to host the special program with the identification of air, land and sea ports of entry.

The proposal description and justification is complete and the proposal package only needs a signed agreement by the host club’s POCs, a completed checklist, and a sample booklet. Rob has designed a sample patch for the proposal. The November 1, 2026, deadline for 2028

Special Program proposals certainly provides more than enough time for an interested club/POC to discuss the proposal with Rob, as well as complete the additional proposal documents.

If you are interested in more details, please contact Programs@ava.org.

IMPORTANT 2026 DEADLINES FOR AVA SPECIAL PROGRAMS

REDEMPTION - the last date to complete any purchased challenge books and redeem for “Lighthouses II” and “Par for the Course” Special Programs is **12/31/2026**.



PURCHASE - the last date to purchase a challenge book for the following AVA Special Programs “A-MAZE-ing Labyrinths”, “Anniversaries Hurrah”, “Rails-to-Trails”, and “Step to the Beat” is **12/31/2026**.



ALPINE HELEN VOLKSMARCH CLUB - ROD POWELL, PRESIDENT

COME TO HELEN AND ENJOY A GREAT HIKE (I.E.VOLKSMARCH) AND OLD-FASHIONED BAVARIAN FEST EVENT AT THE BODENSEE GERMAN RESTAURANT BIERGARTEN...

Presented by the Alpine Helen Volksmarch Club (AHVC), focused primarily at promoting “Bavarian-style walking and hiking activities” that help build a healthy lifestyle and German oriented culture in our Helen community.

Our annual marquee event, the Volkswanderung 5k & 10k hike and walk, includes a “Bavarian Biergarten Style Festival”, and huge prize drawing, is held on the fourth Saturday of April every year in beautiful Helen, Georgia.



ALPINE HELEN VOLKSWANDERUNG
5k & 10k Hike/Walk
April 25, 2026
Helen, GA 30545

www.alpinehelenvolksmarch.org

www.helenga.org



IT SPECIALIST - HECTOR HERNANDEZ

PHOTOCIRCLE

AVA has started using the Photocircle app to share photos. It was introduced by our Chairman Carl Cordes during his event in Boulder City. To use the app you simply take pictures scan the QR code and share. You will need to download the app to be a part of the circle. Once you have the app you can create your own Circle whether it be for AVA or family its a nice app to use.

Boulder City - an AVA 50th Anniversary Event
Join my circle by scanning the QR Code above



2026 TTR Photos
Join my circle by scanning the QR Code above

NATIONAL EVENTS

50th Anniversary Celebrating 50 Years of Walking



AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB
FROM 1976 TO 2026
AVA.ORG

Come Walk WITH US!




50th Anniversary AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB FROM 1976 TO 2026



Click here to go to 50th Anniversary Page

Come and join us for the 25th US FreedomWalk 16-18 October 2026



An International Walking Experience



www.USFreedomWalk.org

Walk Arlington



40th Annual Spring Volksmarch June 6, 2026



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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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