

David Bonewitz, AVA National President

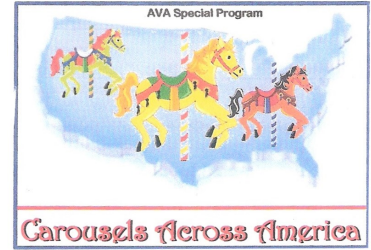
1. NEC/Board Meeting - Orlando -- We had a very successful NEC/Board Meeting January 19 and 20th. Much was accomplished, and I encourage you to watch for the official minutes to be posted on the AVA website. After reviewing the minutes, if you have questions or comments, please be sure to get in touch with your Regional Director. I am greatly encouraged by the energy, enthusiasm, and positive thinking that your National Leadership Team brings to the table. We know that there are big challenges out there for us to overcome, but I think that this team is well suited for the task. However, we must have your thoughts and input as we move forward. Stay positive, and let your voice be heard.



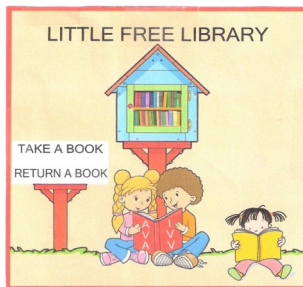
2. AVA Biennial Convention 2019 -- I am greatly excited by the work being done by the Convention Committee in Albany. They have gotten a great start and are working hard to produce an outstanding convention. We will be doing some things differently in order to make the best use of our time together. Our biennial convention is an outgrowth of the requirement in our Bylaws to have a "membership meeting" at least once every two years. That is the reason that we have the afternoon business meetings, i.e., to conduct the business of the Association. For the 2019 convention we are going to move some of the topics that have been done during the business meeting to other times. For example, we will do our awards presentations at the closing banquet. We have envisioned this as something like the Oscars, but without all the fancy clothes. One of the other areas that seems to take way too much time is the counting of ballots for the various votes that take place. Many national organizations now use electronic voting systems that really speed up the process. We are looking at some of these systems as an option for AVA. Our IT folks are also looking at new and improved ways to do registration, both in advance and at the convention. The technology is there, and we ought to be able to use it to make things run smoother and more efficiently. There is also a lot of discussion about workshops and training opportunities. Here is a place that you ought to have your voice heard. What kind of training and what kind of workshops would you like to see at Convention? If you don't speak up, don't be disappointed if something you would like to have at Convention isn't there. This is our opportunity to showcase the best of AVA to our membership and the public. Stay tuned for more information.

Special Programs —Bonnie Johnson, Chair

Three Special Programs were presented and voted on at the NEC meeting in Orlando, FL on January 19-20, 2018. Two of the programs acquiring the most votes were approved. Voting was done by using an evaluation sheet and scoring on each individual portion of the evaluation that included: historical significance, scenic interest, geographic area, qualifying events, award appearance and entertainment value.



“Carousels Across America” was submitted by the Albany Fitwalkers of Oregon. With this program you will need to complete 15 events where you would pass by a carousel that is a permanent structure and operational to qualify.



“Little Free Library” submitted by Greater Des Moines Volkssport Association of Iowa has 20 qualifying events. Only registered Little Free Libraries with an official charter sign and charter number can be used. The charter number is the qualifier. Unregistered libraries do not count.

Both programs will run January 1, 2019- December 31, 2021 when book sales are in effect. Redeem completed books for the award until December 31, 2022. The cost for each program book is \$10.

More information and details will be forth coming in TAW from the Special Program POC’s. A big thank you to all the clubs that submitted Special Program applications.

AVA Programs—Debra Kruep, Chair

Phase II is coming in June! The Program Committee will be adding a second challenge to AVA/Walker Tracker in late June 2018. This challenge will be a more interactive virtual program, complete with a map to see your progress and interesting facts along the way. There will be no additional charge. All those enrolled in the 401K: Invest in your Health program will be able to access the challenge. Stay tuned to see where we are walking next!

Have you paid AVA for the 401K: Invest in Your Health Challenge and not set up your AVA/Walker Tracker account yet? Everyone who has paid for the program has been sent an email with instructions and a link to create your walking account. If you have not received that email, it may have gone to spam or maybe your PayPal email address has changed and it went to an old address. We want you to be able to start tracking! If this is you, please email vop@ava.org , include your name and current email address as well as the name and email address on the PayPal account you used, and Jan will send the instructions again as soon as she hears from you.

Training Committee Member—Carolyn Adams

AVA Speak

Part of the AVA brand is in our nomenclature. New walkers, and others who come to us from their European military connection have some trouble with these terms. In fact, some of our faithful club

members do not use AVA terminology correctly. It is easy to translate our terms into more generic ones, and indeed the generic is permitted in publicity, to attract new members. However, we should encourage members to use AVA terminology. For example, within the clubs we may be saying “live walk” or “day walk”, when our term of art is “traditional event”. Using the AVA terms is essential so that we do not dilute our brand. Here follow some basic terms that we need to use appropriately, and teach our club members to use.

Traditional Event: This is a planned one (or two) day walking event, that has been advertised with a specific window of start and end times. It is manned by volunteers, who meet the walkers at a “*Start Point*”, and stamp their books at the Finish. Typically there are *Checkpoints* along the route that may be manned and may provide the walkers with water and hard candy. These are both athletic events and social events, and require good organization and active volunteerism. This is how we began, hence the name. See *Volksmarch*.

Year Round Event (YRE): This is a self directed walk which individuals can come to any day they choose. Details are found under “Events” online at www.ava.org and in the publication “Starting Point”. Here walkers will find a “*Walkbox*” (or Start Box) where they register, obtain instructions and stamp their books. A newer development is the *On Line Start Box* which allows a virtual alternative for some designated walks. Not all climates allow YREs, but many walks, including Capital walks are available nearly every day of the year to accommodate traveling *volkssporters*.

Seasonal Event: Same as the Year Round Event, but available for only part of the year. Sometimes all self directed walks are referred to as seasonals to be inclusive, and to differentiate from traditionals.

Group Walk: Typically a locally organized planned walk of a seasonal, with an appointed start time. Less restrictive than a Traditional, this allows a club to make a social event out of a well established route with minimal administrative requirements.

Guided Walk: A simpler form of volkssporting, allowing a club to streamline with just the essentials of a group leader and a “*sweep*”. (A sweep is someone at the end of group, ensuring everyone who starts is accounted for.) Here trail marking and written instructions are not required. Ideal for small groups and flexibility. Can be done as a traditional without the frills, or as a group walk of a seasonal.

Volkssporting, Volkswalk. “Volk”: is the German word for people. It is the origin of the English word “folk”, and in fact, the “V” in German is pronounced much like an “F” in English. The use of the prefix “volk or volks” is an homage to our German origin. Volkssporting is the more universal word, as not all out events are walks. A “*volkssporter*” is someone participating in volkssporting.

Volksmarch: We now call this a Traditional Event. This is a German word that translates to “people’s walk”. This term was used by the AVA in the 20th century, and is still used internationally. It went out of official usage in the AVA by membership vote. The word “march” in English has a political connotation that is not intended in the German, We are not marching anywhere. Many who started in the AVA years ago have a nostalgia for this word, but it is moribund in the AVA.

Membership Committee—Holly Pelking, Chair

SPECIAL REQUEST of all clubs and Regional Directors

The Membership Committee has had a phone meeting, and we have determined that education regarding national membership is crucial to getting new members. In this regard, we are asking clubs to:

- A. Query their members to determine how many people receive TAW. This will help us and the clubs find out what AVA's membership actually is.

- B. Let us know what you are doing with the completed start cards at Traditional Events. Are clubs merely filing them, or are they contacting people to determine whether they are members of a club or members of AVA (receiving TAW)?

Your help is greatly appreciated as we move forward in growing awareness and membership in AVA!

Please send the information to Holly Pelking, Membership Committee Chairperson at holly.pelking@yahoo.com by March 30th.

AVA National Office Team



Deadlines and Updates

Events— Please remember that all events and stamps must be submitted 90 days prior to the event. Stamps are created on a Monthly basis for all traditional events as we are working out the kinks.

Starting Point Books— The final deadline for the last order of the Starting Point Book is due by February 16, 2018 at 5:00 p.m., Central Standard Time. The cost of the book is \$27.00 plus shipping and handling. Please e-mail Marian@ava.org with your pre-order.

Awards and Membership Coordinator—Karen Winkle

To view the Monthly Comparison Chart for the Total Number of Awards processed [click here](#).

Memberships/TAW—Please Update Your Mailing Addresses

Now that I have caught up with books, my next venture is Memberships. We get a lot of return TAW's every issue. The Post Office charges AVA 58 cents for returns. If you have moved, please send us your new address. If any walkers you know are no longer participating, may have moved out of state with family, or live in senior living centers, please try to find out if they still want to receive the papers. If your membership has not expired and you are not receiving your bi-monthly paper, please send me an email with your updated mailing address. (karen@ava.org)

Awards

The standard turnaround time for processing of Awards books is 3-4 wks. If I can process them sooner I will. Your patience is appreciated.

Information and Technology Specialist—Hector Hernandez

UPDATES!

We just finished sending out all lost and updated event stamps so please let me know when you get them. Please give it a couple of days and if you don't receive them let me know. March events are also included in this mail out.

I have finished updating the Multievent Calendar. If you see or know some information about a club hosting a multievent, please let me know so that I can get that information posted.

In order to keep the slideshow up to date pictures are needed. Please send in any pictures you'd like us to post with a brief caption, email hector@ava.org.

Walks to Remember

February is the month of love and March is the month of madness. What kind of walks will you be hosting? Share it with your friends, share it with AVA. If you are in need of assistance marketing March walks and events, please email your walk or event information and details to hector@ava.org.



Starting Point Changes

Please remember to make all changes within your ESR and then send to Hector. The website will be updated weekly. Email changes to hector@ava.org.

Click here for this months [Starting Point Changes](#)

Communications—Samanta Sanchez

The Big Give Invites You to Be a Fundraising Champion

This year, I will participate as a Fundraising Champion on behalf of the AVA through the Big Give's *Peer to Peer Fundraising*. On March 22nd, on behalf of the organization, I will be asking friends and family to donate to the AVA in honor of its members. Being a part of the AVA, has led me to meet some of the most interesting people. The love and passion that these individuals have for volkssporting is incredible. I have heard many inspiring stories and testimonials of how this organization has impacted their lives. Volkssporters don't just walk for health, but also for the places they go and the friendships they make. That is why I plan to give back to this unique organization.



You too can become a Fundraising Champion during our Big Give Fundraiser. Just visit our AVA profile on the [Big Give website](#), click on the Fundraise button, create an account, personalize your profile (share your story, set a fundraising goal) and invite your family and friends to donate to your campaign. It's that simple! Donors will be able to make contributions starting the 15th of March. Remember the donations you receive through your personal campaign will count towards AVA's overall amount raised, so spread the word!

If you need assistance creating or personalizing your page, please refer to this step by step handout or send an email to samanta@ava.org. Note on subject line *Peer to Peer Help*. Thank you for your support!

Why Do You Give to the AVA?

Some of our past donors have shared with us why they chose to make a gift to the AVA during the Big Give. You can also share with us why you choose to donate to the AVA by sending an email to Samanta@ava.org. Note on subject line Why I Give to AVA.

"As an active member of the AVA since 1988, I support the goals of encouraging a healthier lifestyle while enjoying the challenges of walking for the health of it. Walking is my personal favorite aerobic exercise and the opportunity to explore the world." – Anonymous

"I am a nine-year member of AVA in Cottonwood, CA and AVA has improved my life greatly by making new friends through its walking clubs nationwide. I love being a Shasta Sundial Stroller." – Anonymous

Visit the [Big Give website](#) on **Thursday, March 22nd** to make your contribution. Early giving will start March 15th and run through March 21st. You may also mail in your donations anytime to the American Volkssport Association 1001 Pat Booker Road, Suite 101, Universal City, TX 78148. Thank you for your support!

AVA Big Give Prizes

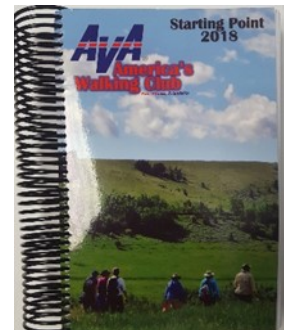
This year, AVA members who donate during the Big Give are eligible for the following prizes! More details to come



Free Traditional Sanctioned Events

2018 Starting Point Books

Free 2019 Convention Registration



Shop Online For Your Valentine and Support AVA

With Valentine's Day right around the corner make sure you get the best deals by shopping with Goodshop and AmazonSmile. When you're shopping with Goodshop or AmazonSmile, you're not only saving money for yourself, but you are also raising crucial funds for American Volkssport Association.

goodshop

Sign up for Goodshop by going to https://www.goodsearch.com/login?return_path=%2Finvite-friends. Your user profile will help keep track of the amount you've raised. Select **American Volkssport Association-AVA** from the participating organizations and begin shopping. At no cost to you, a portion of all eligible purchases will go to your chosen cause. 100% of the donation amount displayed on merchant's Goodshop page will go to the charity or school of your choice.



Shop at <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/74-2164037> and 0.5% of your eligible amazonsmile purchase will be donated to AVA directly from Amazon! Simply sign in or create an account, select **American Volkssport Association Inc – Universal City** as your charity of choice and begin shopping. It's that easy!

Finance Manager—Erin Grosso

WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOUR PHOTOS!

The National Office is working on some new promotional items and would love to use some of your photos. We are specifically interested in group photos and action photos. We are hoping to get some pictures that really illustrate what the AVA is all about.

For example:

- Photos that show off some of the unique and beautiful locations of our walks
- Actions photos of biking, swimming and skiing events
- Participants at Special and National Program events
- Group photos – family, pets, friends...you get the “picture”, right?

How and where to submit your photos

- Please send your email to erin@ava.org.
- Attach up to 5 photos per email.
- Please include the photographers full name and where the photo was taken.

AVA's Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales

Personnel Update—The implementation of strategic initiatives has created a different type of work environment. One that is fast paced and multi-dimensional. This requires a team of employees who are willing learn new things, communicate well, multi task, and make independent decisions. What follows is a description of key employee responsibilities that have been reassigned to better meet the needs of the organization and strengths of the employees.

Executive Director: Henry Rosales, henry@ava.org

Serves as chief executive officer, reporting to the national president of the American Volkssport Association (AVA). The Executive Director serves as an ex-officio member of the AVA National Executive Council (NEC), a board of directors composed of four elected officers and ten Regional Directors. Primary duties include fund development, communications, and organizational oversight of national headquarter initiatives in member outreach, programs, financial management, administration, personnel, and governance.





Financial Director: Erin Grosso, erin@ava.org

Responsible for all financial and accounting duties for the AVA national office and its nationwide network of clubs. Provides fiduciary oversight, management, and operation of AVA's finance department and all departmental functions that contribute to the overall financial health and success of the organization. Acts as the interim Executive Director in the absence of an Executive Director.



Accounting Specialist: Marian DeVaul, marian@ava.org

Responsible for invoicing related to clubs, individuals, membership and advertising, and merchandise orders. Maintains accounts receivable reports and also researches club supply requests. For questions about billing or to order merchandise please contact Marian.



Awards/Membership Specialist: Karen Winkle, karen@ava.org

Responsible for awards processing, record books processing, AVA membership database and merchandise shipping. Administrative processing in support of the Girl Scout Walk Together, Master Walker, and national special programs (A-Z, 50 States, 51 Capitols, and Centurion). She also administers the AVA associate membership program.



Communications and Publicity Specialist: Samanta Sanchez, samanta@ava.org

Responsible for coordinating all communication strategies for the AVA and supports with marketing, publicity, and fund development. Provides club support with insurance and all policy related questions.



Information Technology Specialist: Hector Hernandez, hector@ava.org

Responsible for maintenance of AVA National website and Club database (ESR). Provides information and technological support to the organization to include employees, volunteers, and member clubs, maintains the AVA national database and website, creates graphics designs and promotional videos for the AVA and oversees the stamp production process for AVA events.

Who to Call for support at the AVA National Office

For questions about late fees, sanction fees, participation fees, invoice and billing related questions and to order merchandise please contact Marian, marian@ava.org

For questions about stamps, sanction numbers, event changes, AVA database and website technical support contact Hector, hector@ava.org

For questions about club insurance, incident reports, new clubs, closing clubs, policies, and support with publicizing your events on the website and social media contact Samanta, samanta@ava.org

For questions about IVV books, new walker packets, awards, membership benefits, shipping, and AVA National special programs contact Karen, karen@ava.org

Audited Financial Report Year Ended June 30, 2017

The audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2017 has been completed and is posted on the AVA website. Expenses were lower than projected by approximately \$27,733. Revenues were also lower than projected by approximately \$86,105. In part, lower revenues can be attributed to over projections in advertising, grants and convention revenues. *Interesting to note participation fees for Tradition Events reflects a steady increase over the past two years! This is a good indicator of organizational growth if it continues in an upward trend.*

For more information on last year's financial performance refer to the attached [Auditor's report](#), [Treasurer's report](#) and [expense/revenue pie charts](#).

AVA's Traditional Event Incentive Discontinued

The incentive program for clubs who host an annual Traditional event has been repealed by the NEC effective immediately and club dues will be restored at \$50.00 annually. For more information please refer to the NEC minutes for January 2018 once they have been posted on the AVA website. For questions about invoicing contact Erin at erin@ava.org

Fun Fact! *The new stamp machine plus materials for the 2018 slugs cost the AVA \$6,897. If the AVA ordered slugs from the traditional vendor the cost for the slugs would have been approximately \$5,890.00 for YRE slugs only!*

Support Our National and International Friends!

International




National



Click on image to view flyer.

Make plans to join us this February in San Antonio
TX! Come and tour the AVA National Museum!



Three days of glorious walking, from the urban core of the 7th largest city in the USA to nearby quiet trails that will make you think you have time-traveled back 300 years.

Distances from 5km to 42km
IVV Credit
IML 2020 candidate

Texas Trail Roundup is during the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo

See you next year!
TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP
3-Day Walk Fest
San Antonio, Texas
February 23-25, 2018

John Ives, President,
Texas Trail Roundup
1.210.694.4582
jbives@texas.net

Susan Medlin,
AVA SW Regional Director
1.210.325.3523
sueammed@aol.com

texastrailroundup.org

[Go to webpage](http://texastrailroundup.org) to register now



18th Annual
US Freedom Walk Festival
An international Walking experience
19-21 October 2018
Arlington, Virginia USA

3 days of Fun, Fitness, and International Friendships.
Come walk with us to walk to Sweden our host embassy for a great adventure!
www.USFreedomWalk.org

Volksmarching at its best!

AVA
Fun, Fitness, Friendship
America's Walking Club

Click on image to learn more.

When You Stay at the Red Roof You Save and the AVA Gains!

RedRoof Plus+
Adding more WOW to your stay!™

The AVA will receive 5% of all room revenues when you book at a Red Roof Inn using the Volume Plus Number (623002)! Red Roof Inn's great rates and quality rooms means that you won't be breaking the bank to afford a comfortable room. Through the American Volkssport Association, Red Roof Inn is

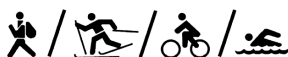
also offering additional value. When you book your reservation using Volume Plus Number 623002, you'll save 15% off Red Roof Inn's Best Available rate. Red Roof Inn's Volume Plus Number works just like an online coupon code. Use this link — [https://www.redroof.com/deals/partner/American Volkssport Association](https://www.redroof.com/deals/partner/American_Volkssport_Association) and Red Roof Inn's online discount code will automatically be filled in for you! Or go to www.RedRoof.com to make a reservation. All you have to do to receive a discount at participating inns is enter Volume Plus Number 623002 in the VP+ / ID # slot. You can also make a reservation with an inn directly by calling 1-800-RED-ROOF (800-733-7663). You are required to provide the Volume Plus Number 623002 to the reservationist when you make your reservation, BEFORE arriving at any Red Roof Inn property.

Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send us an email to the attention of Samanta requesting that you be put on our distribution list for the Checkpoint. Please note on the subject line: Request for Checkpoint. Send your request to Samanta at samanta@ava.org.



Fun, Fitness, Friendship



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.

