

THE AMERICAN WANDERER TAW

The Walking Magazine



"Another great tourist day visiting White Sands National Park! Some of us felt like kids again when we tried to slide down the sand Dunes! It's all worth a good laugh! Onto Las Cruces to walk Old Mesilla tomorrow!"

Image and quote from Facebook post by Mary Ptacek.



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

The American Wanderer is a
national publication of the
AVA: Americas Walking Club.



THANK YOU TO ALL CLUBS WHO PARTICIPATED IN OUR ANNUAL NATIONAL WALKING WEEK BY POSTING THEIR EVENTS. THANK YOU TO ALL PARTICIPANTS WHO WALKED.



Fun, Fitness, Friendship INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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JUN
ISSUE

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The Big Give

SEPT 18-19
2024
6PM-6PM

CONGRATULATIONS



WIESBADEN (10) &
HEIDELBERG (40)
INTERNATIONAL
WANDERING CLUBS
ON A COMBINED
50 YEARS OF WALKING



Wiesbaden and Heidelberg
International Wandering
Clubs at the 2023 Olympiad.



BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

I hope all of you are out walking and enjoying our beautiful country, wherever you may be. It becomes more and more apparent the older I get, that walking is what keeps me active and alive. So, my calendar is full of walking events and festivals.

Keep encouraging others to walk with you. People want to walk with others, and we have great walks that can be super opportunities to enjoy with a group. We are a social organization, as well as one promoting fitness and exercise. How can your club promote regular walking? However you do it, people will be happy to know they have a place to find great walks with your club. And, whatever your age, just keep moving. My motto has always been "use it or lose it".

Look through this American Wanderer. Enjoy the new format and find places you can travel to and enjoy with others around the country. I am in western Washington State. I know you think of rain here. But, I always find when I walk, that the rain drops are over there – not over my head. Take care and have a great summer!



AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Find a Director in your area.

Photo courtesy of Martin Callahan

PRESIDENT'S UPDATES

YOU SPOKE, WE LISTENED

Special thanks to all who took time to complete the AVA's Membership Survey. The survey results have been sent to all Committee Chairs for their analysis and summation. Once this is completed, the results will be shared with the Board of Directors and all members who request it.

In response to member feedback from the survey, the AVA will initiate a series of webinars dedicated to addressing some of the principal areas of interest as reflected in the membership survey.

AVA webinars are the third Wednesday of every month and participants can register on the AVA website. Please refer to the monthly Checkpoint for updates on webinar topics.

If you have a recommendation for one of our webinars, email your ideas to henry@ava.org.



Tator Tours visit to White Sands. Facebook Image via post by Mary Ptacek

2025 AVA BIENNIAL CONVENTION

- SAVE THE DATES (ALL INCLUSIVE)... APRIL 25 - MAY 4, 2025!

JERRY WILSON, CHAIR, AVA CONVENTION COMMITTEE

The 2025 AVA Biennial Convention dates are actually April 29 (Tuesday) - May 2 (Friday), however there will be pre-convention events beginning April 26 - 28, Saturday - Monday; and post-convention events Saturday, May 3 - Sunday, May 4.

Also, two of the New Mexico local clubs will be hosting county walks, traditional events, held in the Northwest portion of New Mexico beginning May 5.

On Saturday, April 27, 2024, this year, outreach to the Las Cruces, NM community began at the MIRA Las Cruces festival. An information booth was front-and-center to announce that the 2025 AVA Convention was coming to Las Cruces. This year's festival ran from 2:00 - 9:00pm and showed off the best of Las Cruces. Local food, music, area merchandise and crafts were for sale. HINT: For your visit to Las Cruces in 2025: Plan to get to Las Cruces by Saturday, April 26, 2025 to join in this festival next year and get the flavor of the "Real New Mexico". Travelers can make their plans to be in Las Cruces Saturday, April 26, 2025, and travel out to the pre-convention events on Sunday and Monday, before beginning the Convention on Tuesday. Depending on your driving direction travelers could use Las Cruces as a home-base pre-convention.



"WALKING WITH THE WILD THINGS" AN AVA 2025 SPECIAL PROGRAM

BY CAROLYN WARHOL

The Capitol Volkssport Club of Olympia, WA submitted and has had accepted their proposal for an AVA 2025 Special Program. It is titled "Walking with the Wild Things." This special program will begin on January 1, 2025 and end on December 31, 2027. Participants will need to find a total of fifteen "Wild Things" to complete the program. The "Wild Things" will include Trolls, Gargoyles, Fairies, and Gnomes.

Our Northwest patch artist extraordinaire, Dorman Batson, has designed a fully embroidered 4" x 4" patch for the award. Dorman has been designing award patches for local clubs and for AVA special event months for years. Many walkers know, own, and appreciate Dorman's colorful patches. Pam Greig-Davis will be the POC for this special program.

The idea for this program started when Thomas Dambo, internationally known troll artist, installed six large, wooden trolls in the Pacific Northwest area. Dambo uses recycled wood and local volunteers to create these trolls. Many clubs in Washington and Oregon started creating troll themed YREs and Traditional routes so that walkers could enjoy these unique structures. To make this special program more interesting and more do-able for everyone across the United States, the AVA Special Programs Committee decided to include gargoyles, fairies, and gnomes.

**LEARN ABOUT ALL AVA NATIONAL SPECIAL PROGRAMS
BY GOING TO OUR SPECIAL PROGRAMS PAGE. [CLICK HERE TO VIEW PAGE.](#)**

HOW TO SIGN UP FOR A YEAR-ROUND WALK

AS POSTED ON THE TEXAS VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION FACEBOOK PAGE BY ANDY THOMAS

I thought it would be a good time to write something about all the year round events we have in Texas [and throughout the United States], and how to register and walk them. I met a couple today at the Castroville walk who want to do a lot of walks as they are preparing to do the famous Camino trek in Spain, so this post may help them and anyone in that kind of scenario, or someone who lives in a location where there are year-round walks available but rarely or never traditional walks taking place.

All the year round walks (and seasonal walks, which are in effect for longer than 2 weeks but not for the entire year) can be found at this link:

<https://my.ava.org/find-an-event.php>

You can click on Search using a map, or Search by state, then find Texas, or if you are traveling outside of Texas, click on a different state. On the state lists, traditional walks are shown first, followed by seasonal and YRE walks.

During the past several years, the YRE/seasonal walks have been transitioning from in-person registration locations toward online registration. The two methods have various pluses and minuses which I won't get into here.

For the walks that still have an in-person registration, they use a physical start box {PSB}. Finding a walk that you want to do on my.ava.org, or from a flyer or in the Start Point book, take note of its registration method and take note of all directions and comments about the start point.

PSB's are usually in businesses or other locations that are open to the public during the daytime, sometimes 24 hours a day. Sometimes the box is accessible directly, but hidden from the direct view of the public. Other times it is in a staff-only location, and you have to ask a staff person for the box, and hope that person is familiar with the box. It may help if you have a photo of a walk box on your phone that you can show the person.



If your walk is in a hotel, restaurant, etc., try to visit at a less busy time and find a person who is not busy waiting on customers. Also, do not park close to the front door if the walk route starts directly from the registration location; save the good parking for customers. Depending on circumstances and schedule, you may consider patronizing the business and doing your registration at the same time. You might consider stopping by to do your registration and book stamping in the afternoon the day before doing the walk so you don't have to spend time doing it on the day of the walk.

For those walks that have online registration, again check the information for details. There is at least one club in Colorado, I think, that developed their own online system. The AVA's Online Start Box system is a little peculiar as it was created and is maintained by volunteers. So it does take a little effort to set up your account and do the registration for events, and you have to make sure you go back and visit the "finish table."

If you have not created a personal account on my.ava.org, here is the tutorial to help with that. https://my.ava.org/find-a-tutorial.php#create_account

Here is the new tutorial about registering and completing walks on the Online Start Box. https://my.ava.org/find-a-tutorial.php?OSB_register_complete



PLEASE HELP ME FILL MY VEST

BY LESLIE STONE

Many years ago, I started volksmarching. My first USA walk was in 1981. I attended my first AVA Biennial Convention in 1985. I have attended all but three conventions since 1985.

Over the years, I had thought about getting a vest or jacket to attach patches. I guess I gave up on the quest as I was just too busy to get a vest/jacket together. I was recently gifted a vest. I thought about what I wanted to put on the vest. I decided convention patches would be appropriate.

I dug through all my convention packets, saved over the years, and found some of the convention patches. However, I couldn't find them all. It appears I would stop ordering the patches if they were not part of the Life Member full convention package.

I am asking for HELP.

I am looking to acquire the main convention patch (not the walk award patches) for the following conventions:

- 2001 Bellevue, WA
- 2003 Colorado Springs, CO
- 2005 Cherry Hill, NJ
- 2007 Sacramento, CA
- 2009 Richardson, TX
- 2017 Billings, MT

If you have extra patches, or just want to relieve yourself of one of the above patches, I would be interested in purchasing them.

If you can help me fill in the blank spaces on my vest, please contact me at walkinginsunshineLeslie@gmail.com.

WALKING WITH SPIRIT

BY SUSAN IVES

At America's Walking Club we promote "fun, fitness and friendship" but maybe it is time to acknowledge a fourth benefit to walking. To stick with the words starting with the letter F vibe we could call it Faith but what we celebrate here is the meditative, the reflective, the thoughtful – in other words, the spiritual accepts of walking.

I can only meditate when I am walking,
When I stop I cease to think;
my mind only works with my legs.
-Jean-Jacques Rousseau

A-MAZE-ING LABYRINTHS



AVA's new A-MAZE-ing Labyrinths special program will take you by 14 labyrinths or mazes to earn a patch. A maze is a puzzle with dead ends and wrong turns. A labyrinth is unicursal, a fancy way of saying that there is only one path, the right path. Both count for this program. To earn the patch you don't have to walk on them, just pass by and wave. But, if you have never walked a labyrinth before, give it a try.

There are records of labyrinths going back more than 4,000 years. Those early ones are generally seven circuit labyrinths like the one pictured on the patch. This style of labyrinth is usually found outdoors, often with large stones or low hedges marking the circuits. More elaborate is the Chartres-style labyrinth. Built in the 13th Century, the labyrinth at Chartres is set in the cathedral floor in stone, but you may find them built of pavers or painted on a hard surface. These tend to be more formal, often in church courtyards, sometimes indoors.

In the middle ages, walking a labyrinth was considered a substitute for going on a pilgrimage to a sacred site such as Jerusalem, Rome or Canterbury. The modern labyrinth revival started in the 1990s at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. There are now more than 6,000 labyrinths listed in their labyrinth finder.

It is magical how the labyrinth path quickly delivers you to the center, so close that if you leaned over you could almost, almost touch it and then, in a few small steps you are making your way back to the edge. You do this again and again and again, in and out, trusting the path. Perhaps you encounter others coming out on the same path you are traveling to go in. You must concentrate to stay the course, you must walk slowly, your breath naturally synchronizing with your steps, with your heartbeat, with the path, with the universe. Where am I going? How do I get there? What do I do once I arrive? What happens next? The sacred geometry of the labyrinth does not provide the answers but rather radiates the wisdom of the ages, of the hundreds, thousands, maybe even millions of feet who have walked it before. At the end – was that only twenty minutes? – You are drained. Or refreshed. Or enlightened. But never the same as you were when you started. The labyrinth worked its magic.

To get your booklet for the labyrinth special program contact Betty Green of the Liberty Bell Wanderers. Hint for trailmasters: Betty found that by diverting a few of her club's existing walks by just a few blocks she was able to incorporate labyrinths. For more information, including a link to the labyrinth finder:
<https://cb.ava.org/specprog.php>



Angels whisper to a man when he goes for a walk.
-Raymond Inmon



Pilgrims show off their pilgrim passports and completed Compostelas outside San Fernando Cathedral.

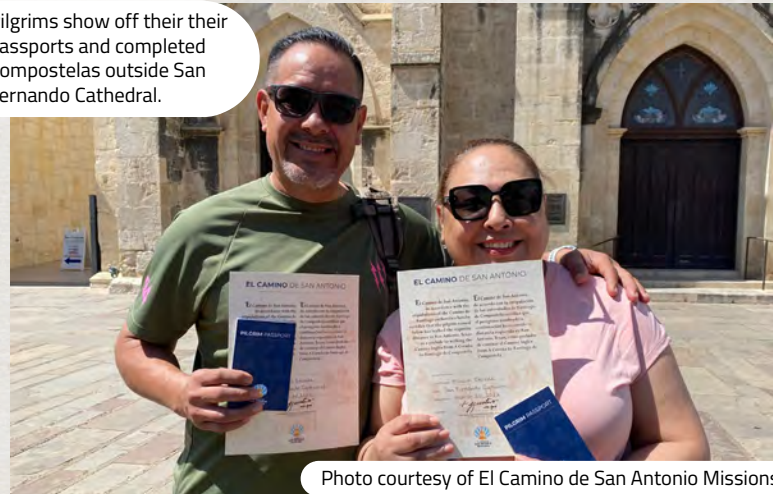


Photo courtesy of El Camino de San Antonio Missions



EL CAMINO DE SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS

EL CAMINO DE SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS TRAIL

San Antonio, TX is the only place outside Europe where you can officially begin walking the El Camino de Santiago, the pilgrimage route that leads to the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain. (Camino is the Spanish word for path, or way. Santiago is St. James, a variation of San Diego.)

If you start your pilgrimage in San Antonio, which includes San Fernando Cathedral and the Mission Trail through four of the 300-year-old missions, you can receive 30 km credit, in the form of a lovely certificate signed by San Antonio's Archbishop, toward the Camino Ingles (English route.) You must walk 100 km to obtain a Compostela, the official certificate attesting that you have completed the pilgrimage, which can only be issued at the cathedral in Spain. If you complete all or part of your San Antonio leg of the pilgrimage by car or bus, or did not complete the entire 30 km, you can obtain a perigrino (pilgrim) certificate, which shows you traveled the Camino. If it sounds medieval – it is.

Start at the Padre Margil Pilgrimage Center, on the grounds Mission Conception. Padre Margil (pronounce it: marHEEL) was the Franciscan missionary who founded Mission San Jose in 1720. There is a fantastic introductory film and a few well done exhibits, including one on "praying with your hands," about the use of beads in many of the world's religions. Although this is Christian pilgrimage, all faiths and secular walkers are enthusiastically welcome to participate on their own terms.

A "Pilgrim Passport," your only out of pocket cost, is \$10. You stamp your passport at San Fernando Cathedral and at each of the missions. When you are done, you will fill out a form, self-certify that you actually did the 30 km of walking between the missions, and get your certificate. There is also a children's version of the passport.

You can get IVV credit for your El Camino de San Antonio walks, too! There are four year-round walks that incorporate the Missions:

- Mission Conception and Mission Reach
- Mission San Jose to Mission Conception
- Mission San Jose to Mission San Juan
- Mission San Juan to Mission Espada

You will also need to complete the year-round River Walk South walk, which takes in San Fernando Cathedral. All of these sites are visited in various walks during the Texas Trail Roundup in February. If you're traveling to New Mexico for the AVA convention in 2025, San Antonio is about 600 miles (an 8-hour drive) from Las Cruces.

This new program, started in 2022. The San Antonio Missions are a UNESCO World Heritage site and part of the National Park Service. Each mission is still an active Catholic parish. Many walkers have El Camino on their bucket list. Is it on yours? Find out more at: <https://caminosanantonio.org>.





REGIONAL TALES FROM THE TRAILS



ATLANTIC REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

SUGARLOAFERS SPONSORING 26 YEAR ROUND EVENTS (YRES)

BY ANTHONY (TONY) LAING

The Seneca Valley Sugarloafers Volksmarch Club of Montgomery County Maryland have expanded their YRE offerings by sponsoring 26 YRES in four political jurisdictions: 20 in Montgomery County, Maryland; three in the District of Columbia; two in Frederick County, Maryland and one in Carroll County, Maryland at the town of Westminster which includes a trail through McDaniel College

The advent of the Online Start Box has (OSB) allowed the Sugarloafers to offer more YRES since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019. The OSBs allow for better tracking and monitoring as compared to the Physical Start Boxes (PSBs). Only two of our walk use the PSB.

The 20 YRES in Montgomery County offer a variety of options for walkers ranging from an indoor mall walk at Montgomery Mall to hidden gems such as Seneca Creek State Park, Little Bennett Regional Park, Old Town Gaithersburg, the Sandy Spring Underground Railroad etc. We have something for everybody.

With the District of Columbia, we offer three walks that traverse historical sites including Georgetown, the National Zoo, and Embassy Row.

In Frederick County, we sponsor walks at the suburban towns of Ijamsville and Urbana. These walks were created to help walkers complete the Walking the USA A-Z Special Programs book with towns starting with an "I" and a "U"

Moreover, the Sugarloafers offer two seasonal walks. The first one is the Kenwood Cherry Blossoms/Spring Flowers from March 11 to June 30. This walk features a stunning display of cherry blossoms in late March and early April. This display rivals the cherry blossoms that surround the Tidal Basin in the District of Columbia. After the cherry blossom season is over the neighborhood is alive with brightly colored azaleas as well as other spring flowers, shrubs, and trees.

Then in the fall we offer the second seasonal with Kensington Fall Colors and Holiday Lights from October 1 through December 30. This YRE starts with a display of fall leaves on stately trees and then concludes with holiday neighborhood with a stop at the magnificent Mormon Temple with its thousands of lights and one of the largest Christmas creche displays in the country. This is one walk not to be missed.

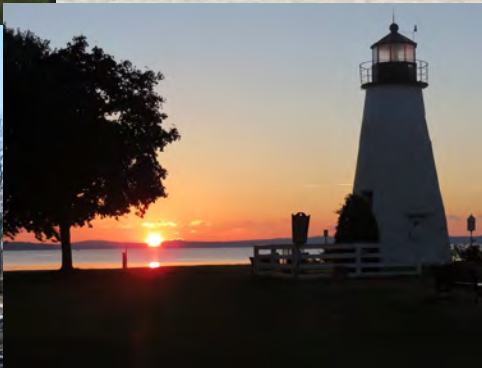
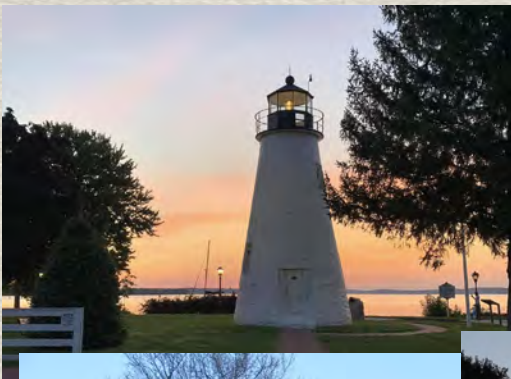
Checkout our YRE offerings at sugarloafers.org and come join us.



JOIN US IN HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND, ALONG THE SHORE OF THE BEAUTIFUL CHESAPEAKE BAY IN SEPTEMBER FOR A LIGHTHOUSE-FEATURED WALK!

BY SUE CAPP

The Baltimore Walking Club will sponsor a one-day traditional event in Havre de Grace, Maryland, on September 21, 2024. Come join us for a delightful walk about town that will include qualifiers for the following special programs: Great Lakes, Great Fun, Great Fitness, Great Friendships; Lighthouses II; Par for the Course; Step to the Beat; Town Halls/City Halls; Walking With America's Veterans; and Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail. Rich in history and charm, Havre de Grace is located where the Susquehanna River completes its 444-mile journey and joins with the Chesapeake Bay. The walk will begin at the Concord Point Lighthouse Keeper's House and features 6k and 10k trails. An added bonus is that the city will be hosting a wine and seafood festival that day in the vicinity of Concord Point Park. We look forward to seeing you then!



NATIONAL WALKING WEEK TOUR OF THE SAN ANTONIO SHOES' FACTORY

BY LESLIE STONE



As part of the Randolph Roadrunners program of events for the National Walking Week and eclipse activities, President Ellen Ott arranged a tour of the San Antonio Shoes (SAS) Store and Factory, for up to eight persons.

Those lucky walkers attending the tour were excited to view the largest SAS Shoe Store in the USA. Beside shoes, the store carried socks, purses, decorations for sandals and a large variety of various candies. More exciting was the actual tour of the facilities.

We were able to witness the making of the shoes. There were no computers or automated machines making the shoes. All the shoes were cut from leather by a person. There are 3 main cuts of leather used in their shoes. The shoes were sewn together by a person at a sewing machine. Fine, decorative stitching was sewn by hand into precut holes in the leather. We saw how the leather was fitted onto the forms and checked for misalignment and flaws in the leather and stitching. We saw how the bottom of the shoe leather was roughed to allow the soles to be glued to the bottom of the shoe.

We also saw the "Mission" shoes being made for the US Armed Forces to use for physical training and other fitness activities. They come only in black but are available to the public and are light weight.

And if you really want a deal, the tours are free of charge. Popcorn can be purchased for 5 cents a bag and a glass of Coke and/or Diet Coke can be purchased for 10 cents each.

If you are in the San Antonio, TX area, a visit to the SAS Factory Store is well worth the visit.



Walking 8 new YREs and 7 new counties in New Mexico in April. Thank you Sun Country Striders for continuing to sponsor these county walks.



2024 ATLANTIC REGION CONFERENCE

BY KATHY KRESKO

The First State Webfooters Delaware hosted the 2024 Atlantic Regional Conference on April 5-7th. The Webfooters is the only AVA club in Delaware, established in 1981. The 2024 ARC was very successful, they welcomed AVA club members from nine states, with total participation for the conference of 385 participants.

The conference kicked off with a pre-ARC walk & bike event on Thursday, April 4th at the Delaware City C & D Canal Trail. The trail offers scenic 14 mile walking and bike route along the north shore of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. The canal showcases an abundant of wildlife and scenic views which makes this a perfect location for a multi-use trail for pedestrians, bicyclists, bird watchers and nature enthusiasts.

Friday, April 5th, the first day of the ARC started with registration at the Hilton Garden Inn, Dover DE where participants picked up their registration packet. The Webfooters worked with the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Dover Partnership and the Kent County Tourism, whom put together a Welcome packet for all participants which included Kent County maps, things to do, places to eat, Merchants Coupon and the free Dover Capital Key which unlock values while visiting Downtown Dover. The walking event 5K & 10K started in the quaint Town of Wyoming, in honor of Louise Fair 94, who has walked in Wyoming for 40+ years. Sites included the town's charming architecture, Fifer's orchard and wooded trails. Dover YMCA provided the location for the Swim event. Friday evening's Meet & Greet held at the 9 East Taphouse who served delicious appetizers and dessert. In attendance was Dover Mayor Christianson and Chamber of Commerce President Dr. Vendetti. The atmosphere was lively and festive with Mayor Christianson opening greeting Welcome all in attendance. Following dinner Ghost Tours were offered by the First State Heritage Park, a walking tour filled with ghost stories, hauntings and much more.

The following days were filled with 5K & 10K walking trails and 15K-25K bike routes in the Delaware countryside. In addition, First State Heritage Park held free tours of the Old State House Museum, Biggs Museum of American Art, Johnson Victrola Museum and so much more. La Baguettes celebrated with live music, food samples, giveaways and cake. Saturday evening banquet was held at 9 East Taphouse who served an outstanding buffet. During the event Jeffrey Giddings, Atlantic Regional Director presented many well deserved Awards. It was announce that the 2026 Atlantic Regional Conference will be held in Williamsburg, VA hosted by Virginia Volkssporting Association. The evening ended with another Ghost Tour filled with haunting stories.

The Silent Auction was a huge success due to the hard work of Linda and Bill Hassell (Freestate Happy Wanderers) and their volunteers. Linda's group processed over 150 items that were up for bid and sold. Outstanding!!

The First State Webfooters achieve their goal showcasing Dover Delaware. The Webfooters have eleven year rounds, plus are hosting their 34th Sea Witch triathlon, October 2024. Delaware has an endless amount of trails, bike routes, beaches, concerts and numerous breweries available to visit. Karen Kaufman, President of the Webfooters gave credit for the success to our many community connections, partnerships and volunteers. "It was just the support we had from this community. And I knew this is what I wanted to show; That Dover is a hometown community that supports everybody. I just knew that people would be happy coming here and they were," Karen Kaufman.



Ghost Tour of historic Heritage Park



Silent Auction 150+ items on display.



Karen Kaufman manages the Sale items.

ARC participants stop by La Baguettes for free French bakery item.



Virginia Volkssport Association group attended the ARC.



Dover Silver Lake checkpoint.



Freestate Happy Wanderers, Bill Hassell made a direction arrow for ARC.

THE BALTIMORE WALKING CLUB'S HAMPDEN GROUP WALK,

DECEMBER 13, 2023

BY SUE CAPP

The Baltimore Walking Club hosted a 5K seasonal group walk on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, to walk the Baltimore neighborhood of Hampden and see their own "Miracle on 34th Street" holiday lights. Eighteen walkers took off from the main entrance of the R House (a food court on 29th Street) and ventured to see how one block goes over the top to share their holiday spirit with all. For over 75 years, the residents of 34th Street have done this for free out of love for the city of Baltimore. After visiting and smiling in holiday wonder, their walk around the neighborhood took them to local shops and the campus of Johns Hopkins University. Upon return to the R House, several of the group enjoyed feasting on various offerings from the food court. A good time was had by all!



MID-AMERICA REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

ENJOY A STROLL WITH THE HOOSIER HIKERS DURING THE NAPPANEE SESQUICENTENNIAL

BY BOB BUZOLICH

The Hoosier Hikers, a club affiliated with the American Volkssport Association (AVA), invite you to participate in a monthly series of Group Walks that incorporates the highlights of the City of Nappanee, Indiana, during its sesquicentennial Year.

The group walks are scheduled, as follows:

Monday, July 1 Walk Start Time 10 am

Saturday, August 10 Walk Start Time 10 am

Saturday, September 28 Walk Start Time 10 am



All walks start from the parking area nearest the playground in Stauffer Park, 504 Stauffer Drive in Nappanee.

All participants must register to participate in this event. The registration fee is \$4. Please arrive no later than one half hour prior to the walk's start time (9:30 am) to register. This event is sanctioned by the IVV through the AVA and qualifies for IVV credit. Registration for this event is also available through the AVA's online start box at <https://my.ava.org>. Persons, who register on-site, will receive a physical stamp in their IVV record books.

Upon completing registration participants will be segregated into two groups. Those choosing to walk the 5 – kilometer (3.2 miles) route, and those choosing to walk the 11 – kilometer (6.8 miles) route. Anticipate taking about 1.75 hours to complete the 5 – kilometer route, or 2.5 hours to complete the 10 – kilometer route.

For specific information regarding this event, please use the following link:

<https://my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=126862>

For information regarding Volkssporting activities hosted by the Hoosier Hikers, please contact Bob Buzolich via email at sonofbuzz@prodigy.net, or via phone at 574-339-9140.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

WHAT'S NEW IN THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION

SUSAN PINNEKE, NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL DIRECTOR

What's new in the North Central Region? The Northwest Nebraska Trails Association, that's what!! The Northwest Nebraska Trails Association is a new club in Chadron, Nebraska. For the past couple of years, they have apprenticed with Nebraska Wander Freunde Trailblazers and were ready to be on their own this year. They hit the ground walking, hosting an event on May 18th in Harrison, NE. They also have three very interesting year around/seasonal events that include fossil beds, college campuses and trails that showcase northwest Nebraska's natural beauty. Welcome Northwest Nebraska Trails Association to the AVA family.

The North Central Region may have the newest club in the AVA, but we also have three clubs celebrating major milestone anniversaries this year. Nebraska Wander Freunde Trailblazers is celebrating 45 years this year, Iowa's Walking Club is celebrating 40 and North Star Trail Travelers 25. Congratulations to these three clubs for their many years of fun, fitness and friendships!

As always, there is a lot to see and do in the North Central Region and now even more with our newest club. We hope you'll come and enjoy some great walks this summer.



NORTHEAST REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

CAPITAL REGION WALKING CLUBBERS SEE THE WORLD ONE STEP AT A TIME

BY BRIANNA SNYDER

Alan Longshore guesses he's walked about 7,000 miles in the last 23 years. The 85-year-old Voorheesville resident has been a member of the Capital Region walking club, [Empire State Capital Volkssporters](#), for that long and continues to meet with the group for their walks twice a week.

Before he joined the club, "I did quite a bit of walking," Longshore says. "Probably for roughly 10 years before that. I had bypass surgery in my 50s, so I had always walked a lot and (joining a walking club) intensified it and gave it more purpose as well."

The club is part of a national organization, the [American Volkssport Association](#), whose mission is to "engage Americans in lifelong walking and other noncompetitive physical fitness activities."

Volkssport, from the German word "Volksmarsch" ("people's march"), was developed in Europe as a noncompetitive fitness-walking event in the 1960s. Since then, clubs and organizations across the world have instituted local versions of the movement. The Capital Region chapter alone has been active for 37 years, according to its current president, Chris Yost.

[Continue reading the story here.](#)



JOE SHEARER PHOTOS, THE NONPAREIL

2 LOCAL CLUBS GO ON FIRST AVE WALK

BY JOE SHEARER THE DAILY NONPAREIL IN COUNCIL BLUFF, IOWA

Last week was National Walking Week, and walking clubs from both sides of the river came together to celebrate the occasion Thursday morning.

Walk the Bluff s, also known as the Council Bluff s Community Walking Club, joined up with members of the Nebraska Wander Freunde Trailblazers at the First Avenue Trail.

The City of Council Bluff s recently unveiled four new murals, all of which can be seen from the trail, and the clubs got to see some public art while walking around 3 miles.

Carrie McDonald, owner of First Row Fitness and Walk the Bluff s organizer, said the Trailblazers contacted her late last year to try and set up a group walk, and her club's first walking session of the season lining up with National Walking Week seemed like the perfect time to collaborate.

"They wanted to see the new murals put up along the First Avenue Trail," she said. "It was great. It turned out to be a beautiful day."

[Continue reading the story here.](#)



ENJOY SUMMER WITH WALK 'N MASS

BY JOSEPH LAPOINTE

Please join Walk 'n Mass on June 29 as we head south of the border for a Traditional Volkswalk in Warren, Rhode Island. The walk will start at the Warren German American Club, 27 Kelly Street. Brewery tours are available if you make a reservation. The town of Warren was first settled by the Pokanoket Indians. In 1632 Europeans established a trading post in the area with a permanent settlement following in 1653. During the mid-18th century, Warren was recognized as a leading whaling port and ship building center. When that industry declined, Warren became known for its textile manufacturing in the mid-19th century. For more info contact Ann Plichta, amplic@comcast.net, 508-965-6922 or Karen Plichta, karenp53@verizon.net, 508-673-2374.

As spring transitions to summer, we are all looking forward to enjoying the warm sunny days and exploring the scenic walks across Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Our club is preparing for a busy summer and autumn of scheduled group walks and Traditional events. We look forward to seeing many faces, both familiar and new, at our events this year.

Start times, directions to the start, and updates to the walk schedules can all be found at our website walknmass.org or on Facebook at AVA Walk 'n Mass Volkssport Club (m.facebook.com/WalknMass). These resources are updated frequently so please check in often to see what new adventures await.

NORTHWEST REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

AWARDS GIVEN AT ESVA MEETING

BY CAROLYN WARHOL

At the Spring quarterly meeting of the Evergreen State Volkssport Association (ESVA), NW Regional Director Sharon Moats handed out numerous AVA awards to many well deserving volunteers. It was a well-attended meeting that covered elections of new officers, awards for the Northwest Winter Walking Challenge, the Walk Directions Review Program, and how best to help our Washington State clubs to remain strong and healthy plus the national awards being presented.

AVA Club 40th Anniversary Awards were presented to the Central Washington Sun Striders (award accepted by V.P. Joe Blazek), the FS Family Wanderers (award accepted by Pres. Michelle Roberts), and the Columbia River Volkssport Club (award accepted by Pres. Ed Hainline).



Joe Blazek, Central Washington Sun Striders; Michelle Roberts, FS Family Wanderers; Ed Hainline, Columbia River Volkssport; Sharon Moats, NW Regional Director

ESVA meeting in Lacey, WA



Diane Howell Evans, Chase Davis, Todd Oberlander, Joe Blazek

AVA Meritorious Service Awards were presented to outgoing ESVA President Joe Blazek; outgoing Vice-President Todd Oberlander; continuing ESVA Secretary Diane Howell Evans; and continuing ESVA Treasurer Chase Davis.

AVA Commendable Service Awards were presented to the Washington State Area Coordinators Dennis Standridge (Eastern), Lynn Blazek (Central), Sandi Severtsen (Northwest), Tony Holt (Central Puget Sound), Pam Greig-Davis (South Puget Sound), and Burt Paynter (Southwest).



Lynn Blazek, Pam Greig-Davis, Tony Holt, Sandi Severtsen, Burt Paynter, Dennis Standridge

PACIFIC REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

PACIFIC REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

BY CATHY PAULEY, CVA PRESIDENT

The California Volkssport Association held its annual convention April 26-28, 2024, in Rohnert Park, Calif. (in the Napa Valley region).

It was an honor to have AVA Vice Chair Carl Cordes and his wife, Brenda Harris, in attendance as well as the Pacific Regional Director Becky Forsythe and Pacific Deputy Regional Director Suzi Glass in attendance. The Friday night meet and greet had a record attendance of 85 people, and Becky got to meet many of them for the first time. (Carl and Brenda have been long-time attendees to our convention and are already well known).

The Sonoma County Stompers led by President Marilyn Nasi and the Vaca Valley Volks led by Tom Smith hosted the 2024 Convention and really put together a great package. Marilyn worked with the Hampton Inn to get a reduced rate for lodging as well as waiving the car parking fee and then were allowed to host the meet and greet in the spacious lobby on Friday night. Tom found a delightful dinner place at Mary's Pizza Shack, which gave CVA a very good price for a pasta buffet. Both clubs worked diligently in putting together five walks in the heart of wine and beer country. The walks included Rohnert Park (Sonoma State grounds), Cotati (unusual hexagonal downtown plaza and Laguna de Santa Rosa trails), Santa Rosa (Luther Burbank House & Gardens), Sonoma (Labyrinth) and Calistoga (Labyrinth). Santa Rosa is also home to the "Peanuts" characters: Snoopy, Lucy and Charlie Brown and you can see them throughout the walks, as well as visit the museum.

During the annual meeting on April 28, Pacific Regional Director Becky Forsythe gave out 13 Meritorious, six Commendable, and four certificates of appreciation Regional Awards and also presented to the group two AVA Distinguished Honor awards from 2023.

Carl updated the delegates and club presidents about AVA news and changes as well as inviting them to the 2025 Biennial Convention and IVV Conventions. Becky introduced herself, presented awards and set a goal for CVA members for the next year.

The Delta Tule Trekkers and San Francisco Bay Bandits will be hosting the 2025 Convention.

Kathy Bundy, President of Low Desert Roadrunners and Vicki Clawson take a break at the "I Love Santa Rosa" stop.



Vicki Clawson set up at Lucy's Psychiatrist booth in Santa Rosa.



Maureen Carlson, left, "Charlie Brown", Joan McCarthy and Vicki Clawson with Low Desert Roadrunners enjoy a walk in Santa Rosa, Calif., during CVA Convention.



Becky Forsythe, Pacific Regional Director, presents Marilyn Nasi, President Sonoma County Stompers and Tom Smith, President Vaca Valley Volks Pacific Regional Meritorious Achievement Awards.



Wanda Martin with Delta Tule Trekkers on the Sonoma State campus.



Becky Forsythe, Pacific Regional Director, presents Priscilla Fife, President of the San Francisco Bay Bandits, the club's 40th Anniversary Milestone certificate and Pacific Regional Meritorious Achievement Award.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

SOUTHWEST UTAH

BY CHRISTOPHER BEGNOCHE, RM DRD

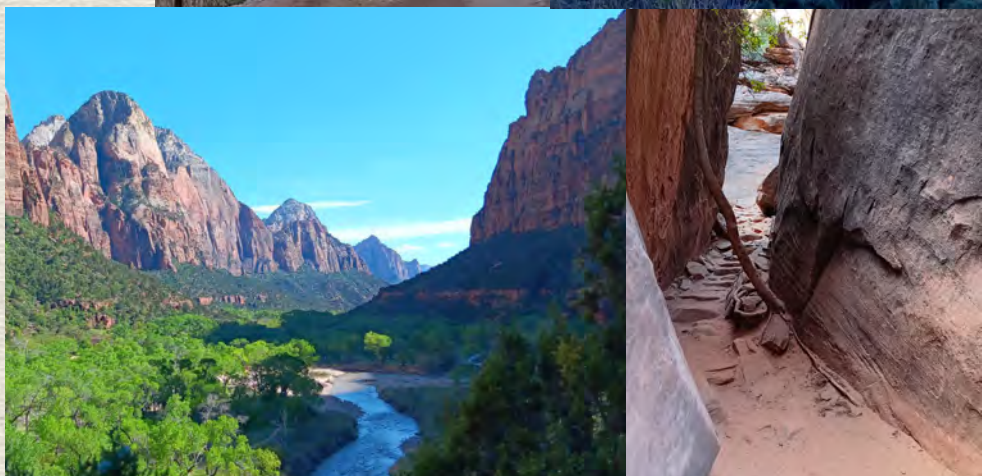
Greetings from Southwestern Utah! If you've never been to the area, Zion National Park is a great place to visit, explore, and get a walk in while you're at it. Photographic opportunities are endless so make sure to bring your camera. The local Mule Deer and Rock Squirrels seem unafraid of visitors. You may get lucky and see some wild turkey as well. Don't feed the wildlife by the way. With some construction and closures going on within the park you are encouraged to follow the directions backwards and do some backtracking when visiting the Emerald Pools.

While visiting Utah, also consider more than two dozen other Utah walks - many in rural towns throughout the state.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN WANDERERS TURNS 45!

BY STEVE SANDRIDGE, RM RD

Congratulations to the Rocky Mountain Wanderers volksmarch club as they turn 45 years old this year! They join the ranks of some of AVA's longest existing clubs. Thanks for everything you do and keep up the great work!

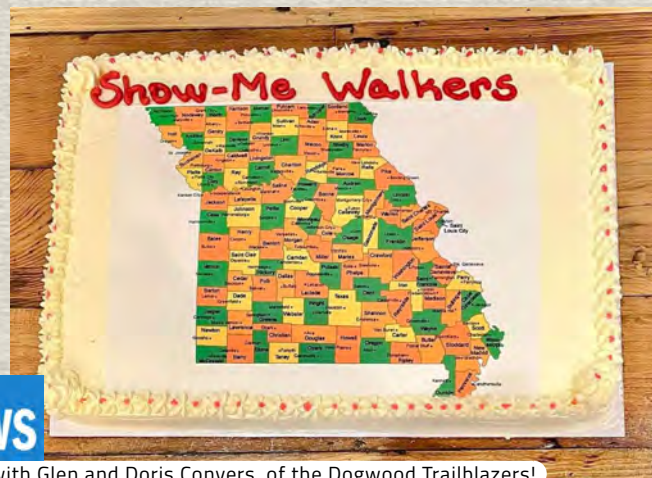


SOUTH CENTRAL REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

CELEBRATING MISSOURI COUNTIES

POSTED BY DEANNE BROWN ON AVA FACEBOOK

The Missouri clubs have been planning, plotting, and walking the 115 counties of Missouri since 2015. Many of these walks were in towns so small that a 10K could not be done and so the 5K was walked twice, the second time in the opposite direction. In a few days, we'll have finished walking all the counties.



THE
PROSPECT-NEWS

[Click to view news article with Glen and Doris Conyers, of the Dogwood Trailblazers!](#)

We gave ourselves a giant pat on the back tonight with our celebratory dinner at Bread and Butter Restaurant in Poplar Bluff. We had about 30 attendees. Special recognition goes to Doris and Glen Conyers for their leadership and to the clubs who responded with new routes in sometimes difficult places. These clubs are: Clay-Platte Trackers, Dogwood Trailblazers, Gateway Milers, Pace Setters, the former Rolla Roadrunners, and Saint Louis Walkers.

Pictures of the cake and Doris and Glen wearing their fully colored Missouri tee-shirts to the left.

WE DID IT!

BY HELEN HULL – SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

This year, 2024, our quest to walk all 64 Louisiana parishes has been completed with YREs scheduled for the last 8 parishes in southeast Louisiana. What began in 2018 as a project of adding walks in 7 new parishes is now history. Each year we traveled to another section of the state and held walks in 6-12 different locations. And now, finally in 2024, we have walked in the last 8 parishes. All but 2 of the walks (Chalmette and LaPlace) were on the west side of the Mississippi River on a 150 mile route.



We traditionally gather during the MLK weekend to kickoff the new parish walks, and this year was no different. Twenty-five walkers gathered over the weekend to complete our goal of walking in every parish.

Early arrivers on Thursday met for a modified route of the New Orleans Garden District in the morning, and then continued 10 miles east to the Chalmette Battlefield, site of the Battle of New Orleans. Our walks continued in Gretna, Belle Chasse, the Barataria National Nature Preserve, Luling, LaPlace, Houma, Thibodaux, and lastly, a walk along the Mississippi River levee in St James Parish across from Oak Alley Plantation.

And now our 7 year project has come to an end. But for those of you who could not make it to our MLK weekend, these walks are available for the entire year using the OSB registration. We have explored many state parks, small and large towns, sampled many new dishes, and formed many new friends. We have reached the end of our project. Now what am I going to do next year for the MLK weekend?

SOUTHEAST REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS

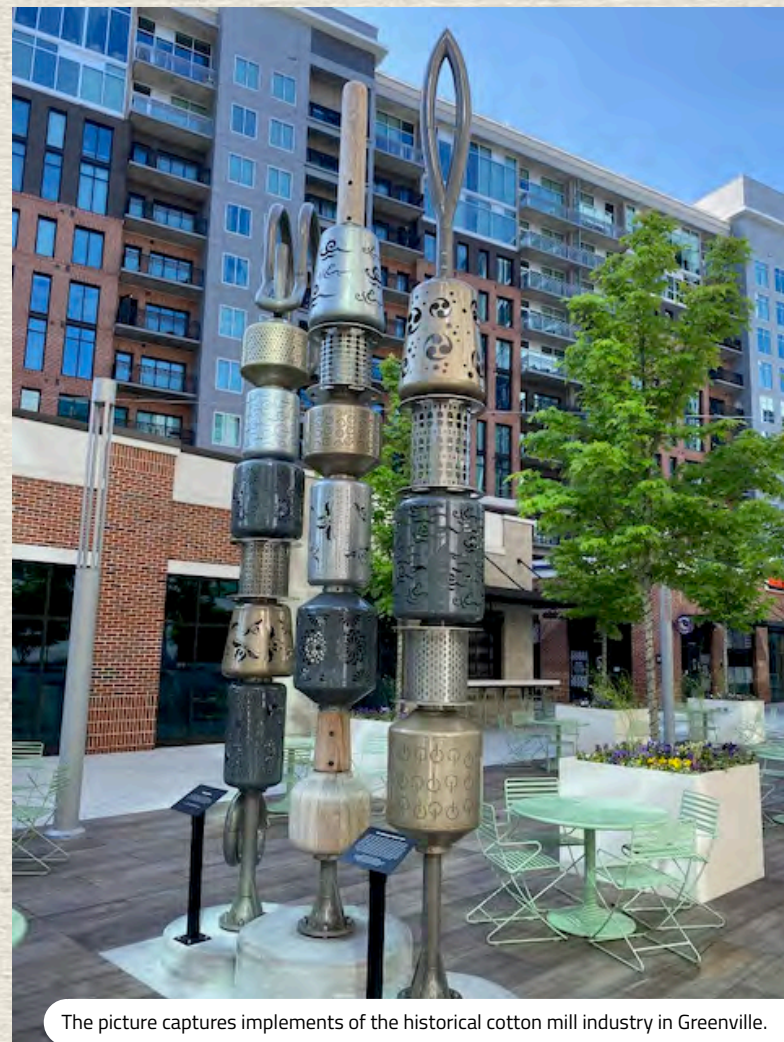
WALKING GREENVILLE SOUTH CAROLINA

BY MIKE LANPHER, UPSTATE PATHFINDERS

Greenville, South Carolina in the summer hosts multiple events on weekends and weekdays from ubiquitous Beer tours, a farmers' market, and baseball/soccer as well as offering fabulous restaurants and eateries. You can attend sports events like the AAA Greenville Drive and soccer with the Greenville Triumph SC. While this doesn't take you on the pathways and byways to see some of the local interesting items that downtown Greenville offers, the Upstate Pathfinders provide two walk events in and around downtown that showcase the city and its parks. Both walks start at the stunning Marriott Springhill Suites hotel in downtown Greenville. I wouldn't use the word stunning if that wasn't an accurate description of the architecture inside - the work of a local designer. The hotel hosts our walk box and can accommodate almost any required room needs including at the collocated Marriott Residence Inn.

These are just some of the key sites that you can see wandering through Greenville on one of our detailed 5k or 10k walks. These capture 40% of the top 13 sites in the Greenville area and all of the ones in town. They are Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail, Greenville Zoo, Falls Park on the Reedy (River), Eugenia Duke bridge, and the Liberty Bridge over Falls Park on the Reedy. Other unique sights include Dave Chihuly's "Rose" glass "tree" and wonderful memorial to a USAF pilot shot down over Cuba in the early 1960s. You also will find a bronze statue of the inventor of the laser seated on Main St. For a fun time, find the 9 bronze mice as you complete the Greenville Historic 10K.

Downtown Alive operates on Thursdays and Fridays at Noma Square and other venues. Noma Square is opposite the Hyatt and other events are around downtown. During April-October on Saturday mornings, Main Street is closed to a large Farmers Market and you may buy everything from plants to breads to our SC veggies and fruits. Christmas presents? - yes even in the summer.



The picture captures implements of the historical cotton mill industry in Greenville.

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW TRAILS! WAF33 IN PALM COAST, FL NOVEMBER 1 – 3

BY JOHN MCCLELLAN, CATHY METHERELL & ALICE LAWRENCE

Get ready to see new trails and old friends at the 33rd edition of Walk Around Florida (WAF33) to be held 1—3 November in beautiful Palm Coast, FL! WAF33 is brought to you by the Happy Wanderers, Mid-Florida Milers and Suncoast Sandpipers in the SE Region of AVA: America's Walking Club! Hotel reservations at the Best Western Plus - Flagler Beach Area are available now, with a group rate of only \$102.00 a night, including taxes. Call (386) 832-8323 and ask for the WAF33 group.

We'll be offering some new trails as well as visiting some terrific "old Florida" trails, like the Princess Place Preserve - the crown jewel of Flagler County's preserves. This beautiful 1500-acre preserve is located at the confluence of Pellicer Creek, Moody Creek, and the Matanzas River. The land was purchased by Henry Cutting in 1886 and passed on to his widow Angela Mills Cutting Worden, who eventually married Boris Scherbatoff, an exiled Russian prince. Angela assumed the title of "princess" and it was then that the once named "Cherokee Grove" came to be known as Princess Place. The original lodge built by Henry Cutting still stands as Flagler County's oldest intact structure. Also on-site is Florida's very first in-ground swimming pool. We expect to visit Princess Place as one of our two Saturday walk events.

After an opening walk on Friday afternoon, you'll have the chance to greet old friends and perhaps make a new friend at our always fabulous WAF33 Meet & Greet. Dress for a Jimmy Buffett theme, as we'll be celebrating the recent news that Florida State Route A1A (running along the Atlantic Ocean beach coast) will be re-designated as "Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway" from Fernandina Beach in the north to Mile Marker 0 in Key West. The first highway marker is slated to be installed on Friday Aug. 30, a date that itself is a nod to a Buffett classic - Come Monday, which references a Labor Day Weekend show. We can't guarantee that you'll see one of the new markers when we do the walk, but we'll try to snag one for the occasion!

Our banquet dinner on Saturday night will be hosted by VFW Post 8696 in Palm Coast. This is a great opportunity for one charitable organization to support another, and to honor our American service members, past & present. We'll have the large banquet hall, decorated in patriotic colors with Veteran's Day just about a week after our events. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is a patriotic organization of U.S. war veterans who fought in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign land, waters, or airspace as military service members. Established on September 29, 1899, in Columbus, Ohio, the VFW is headquartered in Kansas City, MO. There are roughly 19 million veterans living in the U.S. with more than 11,000 in Flagler County and 50,000+ in neighboring Volusia County, home of the Happy Wanderers.

Stay tuned for future articles with more information on the activities, A Award, social activities and pre-registration brochure. We expect to start pre-registration right after July 4th. You'll find information on WAF33 on the three club websites: www.happywanderersfl.org, <https://midfloridamilers.org> <https://suncoastsandpipers.org> and Facebook at: www.facebook.com/WalkaroundFlorida33 We're looking forward to seeing you at our 33rd multi-event weekend!



SOUTHWEST REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



HIKE IN THE LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST RUIDOSO, NEW MEXICO - OCTOBER 11-13, 2024

BY SUSAN NOONAN

Hike with an Altitude! Join the West Texas Trail Walkers to hike the rugged Sacramento Mountains of Southern New Mexico near Ruidoso. Come to see these beautiful mountains in full fall color, and to 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 11, hike the Cedar Creek trails with either a challenging 10k or an easier 5k. Hike the Jerryatrics trails on Saturday, October 12th with the options of 8, 11 or 18k. Sunday, October 13th, concludes the weekend with a 6 or 10k hike on the newest trail, the Sawmill 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 be acclimated.

Back by popular demand are the "Four Fun Shorties." These walks are easier and shorter distances and all together accumulate to 10k. The "Four Fun Shorties" will be in the on-line start box in October. Consider also walking the City of Ruidoso trail or the Mesclero Fitness trail offered by the local Sun County Striders club. You can register for these Year Round Walks through the on-line start box.

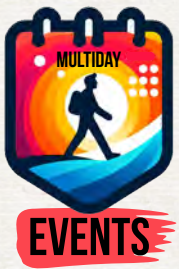
After an exhilarating first day wind down at the "Happy Hour" at Downshift Brew Pub - Riverside, Ruidoso. The "Happy Hour" is from 3:00 to 5:00 pm on Friday, October 11. On Saturday, our annual dinner and awards ceremony features genuine New Mexican cuisine with Hatch Green Chili enchiladas. Dinner begins at 6:00 pm, Saturday, October 12th at the Ruidoso Community Center.

LaQuinta Inn is our host hotel and has a negotiated rate of \$99 (before taxes) for October 8-13.

Call 575-378-3514 for reservations and mention you are with the West Texas Trail Walkers. Check out 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.

Make plans now to join us for the long weekend or consider extending your stay to enjoy all six walks. Keep checking our website, www.westtexastrailwalkers.org for the latest information. The brochure and registration forms will be available on-line in June 2024.





HERE IS A LIST OF UPCOMING MULTI-DAY EVENTS FOR YOUR TRAVEL PLANNING. CLICK ON THE LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION. THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THESE CLUBS.

Month	Date	Multi-day Event Description	Host Club	Location
2024				
June	12-18	Mid-America Conference Walks	Clubs in either OH, MI, IN, IL	KY
August	02-04	NW Hiking Weekend	Four Plus Foolhardy Folks	WA
August	23-25	Wallace Weekend	Lilac City Volkssport Assoc.	ID
September	06-08	Hudson to Housatonic NE Region Weekend	Volkssport Club at West Point	CT
September	13-15	Itasca State Park	NorthStar Trail Travelers	MN
September	19-22	NW Regional Conference	Evergreen State Volkssport Assn.	WA
October	7-10	Colonial Williamsburg Bus Tour	Liberty Bell Wanderers	VA
October	11-13	Ruidoso / Lincoln National Forest	West Texas Trail Walkers	NM
October	17-20	Shady Cove	CRVC-Rogue Valley Walkers	OR
October	18-20	23rd US FreedomWalk Festival / IML	U.S. Freedom Walk Festival Club	VA
October	23-27	Hoofin' It on Halloween	Sunflower Sod Stompers	KS
November	01-03	Walk Around Florida (WAF33)	Happy Wanderers Walking Club	FL
Dec/Jan	31-01	New Years Walks	Freestate Happy Wanderers	MD
2025				
February	21-23	Texas Trail Roundup / IML	Texas Trail Roundup	TX
April/May	29-02	AVA Biennial Convention	AVA & Sun Country Striders	NM & TX

PARTICIPANTS CORNER

CLICK ICONS TO VIEW ANNIVERSARIES, EVENTS AND AWARDS.



AVA FEATURED EVENTS

Northeast Region Weekend



**Hudson to
Housatonic**

September 6-8, 2024

Walks in Hyde Park, NY; Over the Hudson River;
and Kent Village, CT, plus social and dinner

Andrew Schmidt, hudthou@gmail.com or phone 845-464-2676
Carol West, carol.west@sbcglobal.net or phone 860-999-1957

[Click here for more information](#)

Northwest Region Conf.



**Kitsap Peninsula
across Puget Sound
from Seattle**

September 19-22, 2024

8 Walks Planned Plus Socials
Registration opens in May

Sharon Moats – rd_nw@ava.org

[Click here for more information](#)

See all the walks/bike/swim events: ava.org – find a walk

Hike Lincoln National Forest



**West Texas Trail
Walkers in
Ruidoso, NM**

October 11-13, 2024

Four hikes over three days 5K – 18K
on beautiful mountain paths

Susan Noonan
Susan.noonan@gmail.com

Registration opens in June.
Must pre-register.

[Click Here for More Information](#)

US Freedom Walk Festival



**IML Accredited
Walks in
Washington DC area**

October 18-20, 2024

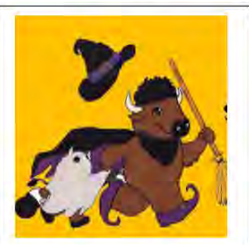
Walks from 5K to 21K in Arlington, VA
and Washington, D.C., plus bike & swim events

Enjoy events from walkers from around the world.
Register now. Special hotel rate.

[Click Here for More Information](#)

See all the walks/bike/swim events: ava.org – find a walk

South Central Regional Conf



**Hoofin It On
Halloween
Hosted by Sunflower
Sod Stompers**

**October 25 - 27, 2024
Hutchinson Kansas**

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Walk Around Florida



**November 1-3, 2024
Flagler Beach in
Palm Coast, Florida**

**Four walks – bike & swim
Special hotel rate**

Sponsored by Happy Wanderers, Mid Florida
Milers and the Suncoast Sandpipers

Info: John McClellan johnmc82@cfl.rr.com

[Click Here for More Information](#)

HARMONIZE YOUR HEALTH: SIMPLE STEPS FOR EVERYDAY VITALITY

BY PATRICIA SARMIENTO, PUBLIC HEALTH CORPS
INFO@PUBLICHEALTHCORPS.ORG

Embarking on a journey towards comprehensive well-being requires integrating health-focused habits into your daily life. Courtesy of [America's Walking Club](#), this article explores essential practices that nurture your health from various aspects, effortlessly blending into your everyday routine. By adopting these habits, you pave the way for a life brimming with vitality and balance.

EMBRACING DAILY HYDRATION

Embark on a journey towards better health by making hydration a priority. Starting your day with a glass of water sets a positive tone for your body's hydration needs. Healthline notes that [consistently drinking water throughout the day](#) is not just a habit, it's a cornerstone for maintaining your health, supporting vital bodily functions and fostering a sense of vitality.

ORGANIZING RECORDS

Keeping your medical files and documents organized is essential for efficient health management and effective communication with healthcare providers. Organizing these files not only helps you keep track of your medical history and treatments but also simplifies the process of sharing critical information with doctors when you're [finding out how a file to PDF converter works](#). When it comes to sharing files, PDFs are often the preferred format over Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files.

This preference is due to the consistent formatting that PDFs maintain across different platforms, ensuring that the document appears the same way it was sent without any alterations. To facilitate this, you can utilize online tools that convert Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files into PDFs. These tools are typically user-friendly, allowing you to convert your files by simply dragging and dropping them into the conversion tool, making the management of your medical documents both straightforward and efficient.

EATING HEALTHY SNACKS

The Food Network points out that healthy snacks are an [excellent way to satisfy hunger](#) between meals while fueling your body with essential nutrients. Opt for options like fresh fruits, nuts, and yogurt which are not only tasty but also packed with vitamins, protein, and fiber. Remember, good snacking habits contribute to a balanced diet and can make a significant difference in your overall health and well-being.

FLAVORING WITH HERBS AND SPICES

[Transform your cooking by embracing](#) the use of herbs and spices for seasoning. This approach not only infuses your dishes with a rich palette of flavors but also diminishes the need for excess salt. Cutting down on sodium intake is advantageous for maintaining heart health and can also alleviate bloating, thus making your meals both delicious and health-conscious. Additionally, many herbs and spices contain antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties, contributing to overall wellness.

COUNTERACTING PROLONGED SITTING

In today's fast-paced world, extended periods of sitting have become a common aspect of daily life. To [counteract the adverse impacts](#) of this sedentary trend, it's essential to incorporate frequent breaks into your daily schedule. Engaging in light stretching exercises or taking short walks during these intervals can greatly enhance your physical health, aiding in muscle flexibility and circulation, thereby contributing to your overall physical wellness.



Image via [Freepik](#)

KEEP YOUR HOME CLEAN

Maintaining a clean and healthy home is crucial for ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for your family. When cleaning, it's important to be informed about the cleaning products you use, as some may contain carcinogens or other harmful chemicals. Always take the time to read the ingredients listed on product labels and check their safety ratings to ensure you are [using non-toxic and safe options](#).

CONSIDER GOING BACK TO SCHOOL ... ONLINE

Work-related stress can significantly impact one's mental health, particularly if you find your current job no longer challenging or if you're contemplating a career change. Switching careers, especially to fields with promising career prospects with a masters of health care administration ([click here for more info](#)), can be a boon for your mental health. With such a specialized degree, you'll be well-schooled in areas such as informatics and policy and governance.

Fortunately, online degree programs offer a flexible path to achieving your diploma while still working full-time or managing family obligations. But it's crucial to choose an accredited school that offers competitive tuition rates.

COMMITTING TO REGULAR EXERCISE

Physical activity stands as a fundamental component of a healthy lifestyle. Strive to dedicate a minimum of 150 minutes each week to organized physical exercise, whether it involves jogging, yoga, or swimming. Consistency in these activities is more crucial than the type of exercise chosen. Regular exercise not only bolsters your physical fitness but also plays a significant [role in nurturing mental wellness](#), helping to alleviate stress and improve mood.

Adopting these holistic health practices is a testament to the importance of self-care. From the simplicity of adequate hydration to the benefits of walking regularly and mindful dietary choices, these habits are instrumental in fostering a life of vitality and balance. Integrating these practices into your daily routine is a step towards a healthier, more fulfilling life.

America's Walking Club promotes and organizes noncompetitive fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness and friendship for all ages and abilities. Contact us to learn more! (210) 659-2112

WALKING WITH JOAN: DAVE BROWN KEEPS WIFE'S MEMORY ALIVE, ONE STEP AT A TIME

MEMBER'S CORNER - GROUPEE GAZETTE

BY SPENCER MORGAN

As darkness fell on Dec. 30, 2008, Dave and Joan Brown stood overlooking the Chesapeake Bay, their eyes fixed on a lighthouse. For Joan, it was a moment of triumph, having finally completed the American Volkssport Association's "Lighthouse, USA" special program – a challenge to complete 12 sanctioned walks with a lighthouse before midnight Jan. 1, 2009. She could now have the sweet satisfaction of putting the final stamp in her special program walk book, submit it to the AVA and receive a unique limited-edition badge. For Dave, the moment represented a different satisfaction:

"So, she had her walk book, I didn't," he said. "But I was with her...I benefitted too."

It was Joan who had led them to join the AVA back in 2000, and while Special Programs never clicked for Dave – too much paperwork! – he would come to understand the benefits of a group more than he could have known then. Joan had found an advertisement in a local newspaper for a walking event at a park not far from their home in suburban Philadelphia, where they'd settled after Dave's service in the Navy. They showed up late and missed the group walk. But they met some nice people who invited them to another walk happening in Norristown Farm Park a couple weeks later. Thus began their connection to the Liberty Bell Wanderers, setting them on a pathway filled with new friendships and thousands of miles of walking and biking all over the country. For Joan dozens of special programs and badges; for Dave, a support network that would save his life. The appeal of a walking club, as Dave describes it, is as simple and natural as getting out in the open air, doing physical activity and socializing. But it's the human connection piece that drives most people to the club. The Liberty Bell Wanderers' regular activities consist of group walks, known as Traditional Events (TEs), on Thursdays and Saturdays. These walks are typically along one of nearly 30 YREs (Year Round Events), defined routes maintained by the club. As an example, this Thursday they'll be doing the Perkasio - Sellersville YRE. The event consists of "two 5K walks through historic Perkasio and Sellersville, residential areas, and parks, mostly along paved trails and sidewalks." For those not averse to paperwork, the Perkasio - Sellersville walks count towards a handful of Special Programs, including: Par-For-The-Course, Rails- To-Trails, Town Halls / City Halls. Like any great organization, the AVA is rife with its own lexicon and traditions. In exchange for a \$3 fee, walkers receive an AVA Walk Credit and can record their events and distance in special logbooks which are then sent into the higher-ups at AVA headquarters for review and recognition in the form of an endless array of special patches. (AVA membership is \$25, club dues vary – both covered for eligible Grouper members.) In every state, there stretches a network of AVA YREs, a latticework of opportunity for those wishing to expand their collection of walking experiences and AVA badges. The group also organizes at least one bus trip every year.

"Every year, we would fill buses and you pick it, we go to the Midwest, we go to New England, we go down south, we go anywhere," Dave recalled. Planning for the Fall 2024 bus trip to Williamsburg VA is currently underway. For over a decade, Dave, now 72, experienced the AVA and Liberty Bell Wanderers in the comfortable role as Joan's companion.



Dave met Joan Chermack during his sophomore year at the Naval Academy. The Navy was playing Notre Dame. Dave's friend signed him up for a dance at Chestnut Hill College. Just as he was getting ready to call it a night, he noticed Joan, standing in the middle of the gym directly under a flood light. It was a sign. He asked her to dance. They would dance, and walk, for 40 years.

When Joan died in 2011, Dave leaned on the passion they had enjoyed together. He attempted to walk 3,000 miles and maintained a blog along the way to benefit the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund – he stopped after walking 1,234 miles in 10 states. He also leaned on the club, stepping into leadership which brought him closer to the community, which continues to be a source of inspiration.

"I can look at so many people in our club, in their 70s, 80s, 90s, and they're what I want to be when I grow up," he says with a smile. "There's a woman in our club that's one of the best walkers we got going. She'll be 90 this summer." An IT professional by trade, Dave brought a more analytical approach to his new role in the club.

"When my wife passed, then all of a sudden I was available and I became president shortly after," he said. He took a survey of the members. "And 80% of the club members were women, 80% were retired, and 80% were alone. By alone I mean single, divorced, widowed, never married, you know, whatever. That's our demographic. I know that for a fact for our club, and that's probably true of most clubs."

What drives the average Wanderer? "They're just looking for people to go out and do stuff with. And they pretty much have a bent on physical fitness and getting out in the air," he said. Noting that to observe an LBW walk is to understand what's really happening. "If there's 20 people in six minutes, it'll be five groups of three, and they'll keep changing. You know, you break up this group and start talking about that. And that's just how it goes."

Dave is hopeful about the opportunity for more people to find walking groups through their health plan and the Grouper directory. Newspaper ads for walking groups are not a thing anymore. For various reasons, Meetup and Facebook have not been a good fit for finding new members. Connecting people with a great group can be a matter of life and death. "I had one gentleman tell me that it saved his life," he recalled, midway into our conversation. "He was recently ... widowed and he was lost. And here's a whole other family in addition to his family. Here's a whole other social family that he would go on trips with and go on walks with."

As we were wrapping up our interview, I asked Dave if the sentiment the gentleman had shared resonated with his own experience, did he feel the Liberty Bell Wanderers had saved his own life. "Yeah. Yeah, absolutely," he said. "And I would say there are a lot of people in our club and other clubs that probably feel similar, that it's something to do. You've got a huge hole and something to help, you know, be out with people, get some air, fresh air, get some exercise."



Come and join us for the 23rd US FreedomWalk 18-20 October 2024



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Walk 
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DOLORES GRENIER, CHAIR, US FREEDOMWALK FESTIVAL

The annual IML walks in the Washington D.C. area – the US FreedomWalk Festival – takes place October 18-20, 2024. You'll enjoy three days of events, including walking, biking and swimming, with volkssporters from around the world. Register at usfreedomwalk.org.

All walks will start each day at the Hilton Arlington National Landing Hotel, 2399 Richmond Highway in Arlington, Virginia. The 21km walks on Saturday and Sunday are IML (International Marching League) accredited walks.

Here's a sneak peek at the events:

Friday October 18– the Welcome Walk will focus on Arlington, VA with 5K and 10K walks. Both walks will wind through the “Crystal City neighborhood” on the Potomac River, plus visits to the U.S. Airforce Memorial and The Pentagon. The 10K will add the Columbia Island Marina, and the George Washington Parkway. Walks start anytime from 12noon to 3pm, and finish by 6pm. The 30K bike ride and the 300m swim are from 10am – 3pm.

There is a special Opening Ceremony Friday at 4pm at the DoubleTree Hotel, which we encourage everyone e to attend.

Saturday October 19– choose between 6K, 12K, or 21K routes. Walks feature gorgeous views from both the Virginia and District sides of the Potomac River, winding through the Crystal City neighborhood, crossing 14th Street Bridge entering Washington D.C., and walking along the DC side of the Potomac River, Tidal Basin, then back across the river to walk through Arlington National Cemetery. The 21K route will add the National Mall from the Lincoln Memorial to the U.S. Capitol building. There are several food and drink choices along the trails. The 6K and 12K walks start anytime 8am – 12noon. The 21K starts 8am – 11am. Finish by 5pm. When you return, enjoy the live music with cash bar from 12:30pm – 4:30pm. You can also do the 30K bike ride from 8am to 2pm, while the swim event of 300m is 10am – 3pm.

An International Dinner is Saturday night at 6:30pm. Please pre-register by October 5: info@usfreedomwalk.org.

Sunday Oct 20 – choose from 6K, 12K, or 21K. The 12K route winds through the Crystal City neighborhood into other beautiful Arlington neighborhoods, along the Four Mile Run Trail, circling back to the Mount Vernon trail. The 21K will include the City of Alexandria, eclectic neighborhood of Delray, then on to Old Town Alexandria. 6K and 12K walks can start anytime from 8am to 12noon; 21K from 8am – 10am. The 30K bike event is from 8am – 2pm; swim of 300m is 10am – 3pm. All events must finish by 4pm.

The Closing Ceremony is at 3pm Sunday, where IML awards will be announced. Everyone is invited to attend.

For those who collect special programs, a list will be featured at the finish table. Just present your program books to the stampers.

All trails are primarily on sidewalks with some natural surfaces. Trails are mostly flat. You can see the complete [schedule here](#).

The [Hilton Arlington National Landing Hotel](#) has a special rate of \$189 per night plus tax, Oct 18-20 only, Call them at 703-418-6800 and use the group: US FreedomWalk 2024. Or follow the [link here](#).

The US FreedomWalk is a premier event for volkssporters, one of only two IML events in the United States. To receive IML credit, walkers must walk at least 20k on each of the primary walking days (minimum 2 days in a row). AVA and IVV credit will also be given.

Register at usfreedomwalk.org. Three day walk packages are \$40. There are also two-day packages, or you can register daily at the event.

For more information, please email info@usfreedomwalk.org.

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12th Annual Fall Volksmarch September 29, 2024



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