

THE AMERICAN WANDERER TAW

The Walking Magazine



AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB

ESTABLISHED 1976

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



GIVE FROM THE HEART

The Big Give

SEPTEMBER 18-19, 2024



CONVENTION UPDATES

FAQs page coming soon.

Book your Convention Hotels now.

Learn more about pre and post Convention walks on the September AVA Webinar



AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB

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AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB
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SUPPORT AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB AND GIVE ONLINE ON SEPTEMBER 18-19, 2024 | 6PM - 6PM.



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MAIL YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE AMERICAN VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION:
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Fun, Fitness, Friendship INSIDE THIS ISSUE



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Barb and Chris Ramsay have traveled all over the country to participate in various walking events and challenges, including Walk Every County in several states, attend multi-day walking festivals, and support Volkssport clubs as much as they can. Hats off to the Ramsays.

Name: Barb and Chris Ramsay
Club: Pace Setters Volkssport Club in the Kansas City area
Year joined AVA: I think 1995
KMs walked: about 22,500
Number of events completed: working on 2600

Why did you join AVA? We had walked in Germany & other countries in Europe while Chris was stationed there and really enjoyed it. We did a few walks the first year we were back in the US and joined AVA about a year later when we lived near a club. Have been walking ever since.

What's your favorite walk? The walk during the Oregon Convention that went by all the waterfalls.

What's your most memorable walk? The walk in Zion National that went up the switchbacks to Angels Landing. We did not do the Angels Landing part with the chain.



SEPTEMBER 18 - 19, 2024 | 6PM - 6PM WWW.AVA.ORG



GIVE FROM THE HEART, LEAVE A FOOTPRINT.

BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE



AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Find a Director in your area.

I hope you all have been out walking this summer. I know it has been, in many areas, hotter than normal. But we are now moving into, hopefully, a cooler season. So, get out there and walk, and advertise, however you do it, to get others to walk with you and your club. We all want someone to walk with.

The Big Give. Right now, it is important that we all support the organization that is important to us. Of course that is the AVA – America's Walking Club. We are the recipients of AVA's services by walking to improve our health, fitness and friendship with those we walk with. But we should also support the organization because we believe in its mission. Please support AVA and donate through the Big Give.

Every little bit you give helps us reach our goal. It's important that you give, not how much you give. I'm sure you know there are many ways you can give. Of course, you can give during the online portion September 18-19 from 6pm the 18th to 6pm the 19th. I'm sure you've seen the ways AVA can benefit if we have a big turnout during the online portion.

But you can also give during the whole week, the whole month of September and also through the entire month of October to be counted as a Big Give donor. Please encourage your club to donate. Again, anything you or your club can give helps us reach our goal. Every amount helps, no matter how small you might think it is.

Why not consider becoming a monthly donor through sustained giving? A monthly gift, such as \$10/month, becomes an annual gift of \$120, counted toward the Big Give.

Will your region unseat the Southwest region to raise the most money toward the Big Give this year? Can we reach our \$100,000 goal to help support new initiatives like different membership models, phone-based walk applications to encourage others to try our walks, or our convention in Las Cruces, New Mexico?

Whatever you can give, be sure also to get out there and move. I've mentioned it before, but every time you can move, even a little, has a positive effect on your health. So, I need to get up and get moving. There are lots of walks and walk festivals around that are calling to me, and to you. Have fun!

A FAREWELL SALUTE TO A COLONEL, A FOUNDER, A LEADER AND A FRIEND

I first met Colonel Heinz Johnson during my onboarding with the AVA. He volunteered to orientate me to the world of volksmarching. One of my very first lessons was on how to properly stamp books! The very next day he drove me to the closest walk box and proceeded to go over in detail everything that was in that box! He also hand crafted the finest start box I have ever seen and his attention to detail is what helped the AVA create a national brand of walks second to none!

Colonel Johnson took advantage of the situation that he lived in the same area as the National Office and used it as an opportunity to build capacity of the organization by providing training for employees, clubs officers and volunteers! Colonel Johnson and his wife Priscilla were always willing to help the National Office with special events and would often drop in just to say "hello" and ask how everyone was doing. Good old fashioned Hospitality coupled with Leadership. He was the first to congratulate me when I completed my first 10 events book. His words that will remain with me forever are "leaders lead by example". This is who Colonel Johnson was!

I am grateful for all Colonel Johnson taught me but most importantly I am forever indebted for the service he gave to our great country and the American Volkssport Association. May he walk with the angels! Farewell my friend.



A TRIBUTE TO COLONEL HEINZ H. JOHNSON GLEN CONYERS

It is my privilege to know and work with him as the South Central Regional Director. I still remember when, following one of our meetings in Arizona, there was time to walk one of their YRE's. One section of the trail had a low-water bridge. Of course, on that day a small amount of water was flowing over it. All of us started across except Heinz. He stopped and removed his shoes. He said, "I have to catch a plane back home and I am not flying with wet shoes."

PRESIDENT'S UPDATES



HENRY ROSALES, PRESIDENT AND CEO

Photo courtesy of Martin Callahan

REMEMBERING CURT MYRON

SHARON MOATS, NW REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Sadly, we lost former AVA President, Curt Myron, in July of this year after a long decline in health.

I met Curt when I started Volkssporting in 2004. He was President of NW Tulip Trekkers and ESVA President a short time later.

He shared his love of Volkssporting widely and brought many walkers into the organization. Curt and his wife, Martha, always wore their Volkssport vests displaying many awards and patches from special events. Many of us were in awe as we learned of all the wonderful places they had walked and travelled.

Many of you may remember the "Whidbey Walking Festival" on Whidbey Island, WA. Walkers from around the country and Canada gathered to explore this beautiful island. Curt and Martha and their club hosted this premier event for many years. Any time I am on the island I have fond memories of those events.

Curt became NW Regional Director in 2005 and was elected AVA President 2007-2011. In 2011 he received the AVA "Hall of Fame" award. Curt later became a Vice President of IVV-Americas when it first formed.

In 2011 Curt started the Volkssport U.S.A. Volkssport club in Oak Harbor, WA. The club was a Nordic Walking Club. Curt and Martha spent several years going to Volkssport events and teaching the Nordic Walking skills. They were gracious and great teachers to all.

Thanks for walking with us Curt!



MEMORIES FROM OTHERS: AS SHARED ON FACEBOOK.



Graham Fawcett , outgoing IVV VP (Ottawa, Canada): Curt was a dear friend and a wonderful colleague. We worked well together as Presidents of our two Federations. He made a huge contribution to the AVA, IVV-Americas and Oceania and the IVV internationally. He brought out the best in all those he worked with.

Sam Korff (Former NW RD): Curt gave so much to AVA. His contributions will never be forgotten. Nearly always with a smile, he plowed through some national stubborn resistance, and made us conscious of how to put FUN in Volkssporting.

Becky Forsythe (former NW RD): I learned a lot from Curt and Martha. The quality of my life was forever enriched by his sharing and mentoring. His memories will live on and the things he did for the AVA and Volkssporting will continue to live on in so many hearts and minds.



AVA NATIONAL OFFICER ELECTIONS

ROBERT A BUZOLICH

AVA NOMINATING COMMITTEE, CHAIR

Nominations are now being accepted from candidates who seek to be national officers of the American Volkssport Association's Board of Directors: chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, or treasurer. Elections will take place during the membership meeting at the 2025 AVA Biennial Convention in Las Cruces, New Mexico, starting April 28, 2025. Successful candidates will take office effective at the close of the 2025 Biennial Convention to serve a two year term ending at the close of the 2027 Biennial Convention.

Step 1 in the process is for the candidate to submit a Letter of Intent by email no later than midnight (his/ her local time) Sunday, October 6, 2024. The brief letter need only include: office being sought; candidate's name; official mailing address; phone number; and email address. Electronic submission of the letter goes to the chair, Robert Buzolich at nominations@ava.org. A confirmation of receipt will be sent via email, as well as an attachment of Election Guidelines for Officer Candidates. Upon receipt of an individual's intent, the Nominating Committee will vet the individual's eligibility with the National Office based upon the eligibility requirements of Paragraph 4.04 [Eligibility -National Officers](#) of the current Bylaws of The American Volkssport Association. Late submission of the Letter, or failure to satisfy the eligibility requirements of Paragraph 4.04 [Eligibility -National Officers](#) of the current Bylaws of The American Volkssport Association, will cease further consideration for Step 2 in the nomination process.

Individuals, who do not satisfy the timely submission or eligibility requirements will be so notified by email.

Step 2 is for the candidate to submit a Nomination Package by email to the chair, Robert Buzolich at nominations@ava.org no later than midnight (his/her local time) Sunday, October 13, 2024. The Package must be consistent with the information in the Guidelines for Officer Candidates, but must contain two items: a biographical article (narrative) in Microsoft Word that is no more than 500 words and a candidate photo in .jpg format. The narrative should include reasons why you are a candidate for office and your goals (tell us what you hope to accomplish if elected). The Guidelines will also contain information regarding campaigning. A confirmation of receipt will be sent via email. Late submission of the package will cease further consideration in this process.

For those candidates who have met the timelines for submission of the nomination package, and whose narratives are deemed accurate, the nomination package will be forwarded by October 25 to TAW for publication in the December issue. However, the Nominating Committee may vet the accuracy of the information provided (e.g. positions held; awards received) . If there is a problem with the accuracy of the information, the Nominating Committee will notify the individual via email for correction. Corrected narratives must be received no later than October 22 so as to allow its submission to TAW on October 25. The Nominating Committee will not correct a narrative's grammar or spelling. Photos submitted will not be altered by the Committee, though the TAW publisher may do so to meet their standards for publication. The nomination package will not be returned.

Basically, what you submit is what the AVA membership will see except in two cases: if the information submitted is found to be in error, or the word count exceeds 500 words. Erroneous information may be deleted. If word count exceeds the limit you will be notified to edit and resubmit your article. If you do not resubmit in time for publication, your article may be edited to delete everything after the 500 word count. So, please be clear, concise and correct with your submission, preferably the first time.

You are entitled to one complimentary bio article and one photograph in TAW. This is considered to be your nomination package. These articles will appear in the December 2024 issue of TAW, which will be printed and released on or about December 1.



ava.org

Enjoy a Walk with
AVA: America's
Walking Club



AVA NATIONAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

NOMINATIONS DUE NOVEMBER 1ST

CARL CORDES

AWARDS COMMITTEE, CHAIR

The awards program is designed to recognize and honor those that have made significant contributions to furthering the AVA mission. It's time to think about who in your walking community deserves recognition either at the national or regional level. National Awards are presented at our Biennial Convention Awards Banquet. Complete [AVA Form 302](#) nomination form and forward to your Regional Director no later than November 1, 2024. Use this [checklist](#) as a guide for types of activities to recognize. The Regional Directors must review and forward nominations with recommendation to the Awards Committee by December 1, 2024.

NATIOANL AWARDS



Hall of Fame - This is the lifetime achievement award for the AVA. Should have previously received the Distinguished Achievement award.

Distinguished Achievement – More than just years of service to an individual club. Should have previously received Meritorious Service Award.

Ted Ballman Memorial Youth – An individual or organization inside or outside AVA who has worked to enhance or promote Volkssport programs for youth.

Trailblazer - Significant contribution by an AVA Club to the development of walking trails or to the support of trail related issues.

National Awards approved by Board of Directors will be presented during AVA's 24th Biennial Convention in Las Cruces, New Mexico during the awards banquet May 1, 2025.

Nominations for Regional Awards (Meritorious Service, Commendable Service, Certificate of Appreciation) can be submitted [at any time](#) on [AVA Form 303](#) to your Regional Director. These awards are reviewed, approved, and prepared by your RD. Presentation method/timing is determined by the RD. To appear in the 2025 Awards Booklet the Regional Director must submit name/city/state of recipients presented between March 2023 thru February 2025 to the Awards Committee no later than March 1, 2025. Only include the citation, 50 words or less, for Meritorious Service awardees. Refer to [Recognition Awards](#) in the AVA Policy Manual for complete awards criteria and nominating procedures.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SISTER ORGANIZATION UP NORTH.

The Canadian Volkssport Federation had their bi-annual convention May 24-26, 2024 in Kingston, Ontario, with almost half the participants from the U.S. There were 387 walkers, representing 6 provinces, and 27 states, 1 from Brazil, 2 from Norway and 2 from England. States included AL, AZ, CA, CO, DE, FL, HI, ID, IL, KS, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, NJ, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TX, VA, WA. We look forward to seeing many of them at the AVA Convention in Las Cruces, NM.



THE LIFEBLOOD OF NONPROFITS

SAMANTA SANCHEZ

What do organizations like America Walks, Walk with a Doc, and the American Heart Association have in common? Like us, they are national nonprofit organizations committed to fostering longer, healthier lives. Our missions share a common interest, but what exactly makes these three organizations so successful? Donors! Donors are the lifeblood of nonprofits. Donors power our mission. Nonprofits like us cannot advance or keep meeting the needs of the communities we serve without the generosity of donors. Fundraising is therefore essential to the success of nonprofit organizations. The American Heart Association would not be commemorating 100 years of promoting and enhancing heart health without the support of its contributors. And without our volunteers and supporters like you, we could not have brought you fun, fitness, and friendship for 48 amazing years and counting! YOU are the reason we hold our one and only annual fundraiser, The Big Give. We want to continue to provide the preventative healthcare activities YOU and our communities nationwide need to live longer healthier lives. The unrestricted funds from The Big Give help us accomplish that and much more! Any contribution, big or small, makes an impact. Can we count on you? Give big, give from the heart!

Donate online to The Big Give on September 18-19 from 6 pm - 6 pm. Or mail your donation check to the American Volkssport Association: 1008 S. Alamo St., San Antonio, TX 78210, now through October 31st.

Give from the Heart



SEPTEMBER 18-19, 2024 | 6PM -6PM

AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB To give online visit www.ava.org



CALLING ALL NATIONAL PARK GEEKS TO THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

HELEN HULL

Our AVA convention in Las Cruces next April holds many opportunities to explore the many National Park sites in New Mexico for those who are driving. And even better than just visiting these sites, many of them are included in current YREs and some will be offered in 2025 as part of the New Mexico county walking program.

For those driving from the north and northeast, consider visiting the Capulin Volcano National Monument near Capulin. Hike the crater and base area of this volcano. Yes, there are quite a few volcano craters in New Mexico.



Continue on to Raton for a walk in a small town, and then head south on I-25 toward Santa Fe. Veer west at Watrous to visit Fort Union National Historic Site. The fort was an important stop along the Santa Fe trail and offered supplies and equipment repairs to the hundreds of wagons traveling from Kansas to Santa Fe

Continuing toward Santa Fe and about 30 miles before reaching it, stop at the Pecos National Historic Park near Pecos. Pecos was a crossroads through which hunters, gatherers, traders, missionaries, immigrants, soldiers, ranchers, and others passed and lived. It, too, was part of the Santa Fe Trail.



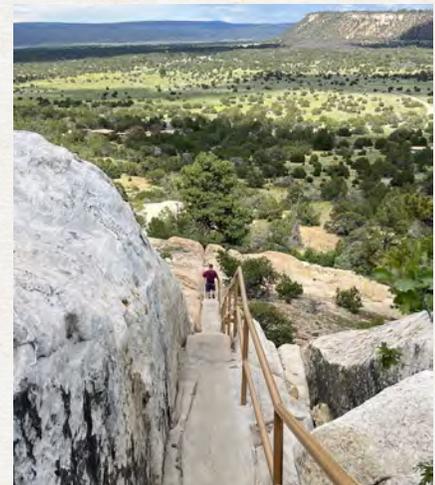
From Santa Fe, head west to Los Alamos and the Manhattan Project National Historic Site. The site was chosen by J Robert Oppenheimer as a place to develop the first nuclear weapon. The Los Alamos YRE starts at the National Park Visitor Center and passes sites, museums, and statues associated with the project.



Just 15 miles from Los Alamos, visit Bandelier National Monument, home to petroglyphs, cliff dwellings, and ruggedly beautiful canyons and mesas. Afterward continue to Jemez Springs, headquarters for the latest New Mexico National Park site, the Valles Caldera National Monument and Preserve. The preserve encompasses much of the Valles caldera, a huge volcanic crater that formed 1.2 million years ago during an enormous volcanic eruption that spread ash over large parts of New Mexico. It's a beautiful drive with hiking trails along the route. Stay tuned: There will be a 2025 YRE either at Bandelier or near Jemez Springs.

And finally on to Albuquerque, home to the Petroglyphs National Monument which consists of several sites. Check out the many petroglyphs along several trails in the area.

From Albuquerque, you can head west and north for more sites, or alternately head south to Las Cruces and the convention.



If heading west (and north), the Sun Country Striders will have YREs at more park sites for 2025 only. Head west along I-40 to El Malpais and El Murro National monuments. El Malpais has many hikes thru lava fields, collapsed lava tubes, and volcano craters. El Murro was a site of a reliable waterhole hidden at the base of a bluff. It was a popular campsite for hundreds of years for the natives and later to soldiers and settlers passing thru the area. Be sure and check out the many inscriptions left by the soldiers and pioneers at the waterhole.



Afterward, head north to the Chaco Culture National Historic Park northeast of Gallup. It served as the center of the Pueblo people from 850 to 1250 with roads leading from it to other sites. Although a bit tough to get to, the many ruins and views are worth the drive. This will be a 2025 YRE.



Then continue north to Aztec and the Aztec Ruins National Monument which features some of the best-preserved Chacoan structures of its kind and will be featured as another of the 2025 YREs.



But now back to Albuquerque, let's head south from along I-25 to Las Cruces for the convention and the National Park sites in southern New Mexico. Heading south, take a side trip to Mountainair, headquarters for the Salinas Pueblo Mission National Monument. The monument consists of 3 Spanish missions close to Mountainair with short hiking trails of 1-2 miles at each site.



Then on to Silver City (a convention walk). Consider a side trip to the Gila Cliffs Dwellings National Monument about 45 miles north of Silver City. Although it is close to Silver City, the narrow windy road to it will take 1 1/2 to 2 hours to reach. The monument features cliff dwellings and hiking trails overlooking the Gila River and canyon. And finally on to Las Cruces.



Then heading east from Las Cruces, visit White Sands National Park. Currently we are planning a convention walk there, so more to come later. Further afield, visit Carlsbad Caverns National Park which is actually about 20 miles south of Carlsbad close to Whites City. This is a current YRE and explores both the cavern and a nature trail to the entrance used to mine the guano (bat droppings) highly prized as a fertilizer and for the production of gunpowder.



And finally, although in Texas, not New Mexico, the Guadalupe Mountains National Park is only 35 miles south of Carlsbad Caverns. Currently there are plans to offer a seasonal walk there in 2025. And don't forget to visit the Chamizal National Monument in El Paso, a site which commemorates the peaceful settlement of a border dispute between the United States and Mexico.

WOW! So many places to visit and things to see. New Mexico offers caverns, mountains, ancient ruins, Spanish ruins, white sands, volcanoes, desert views, wildflowers, history, and so much more. Come for the convention, but stay longer for the many national parks.

2025 AVA BIENNIAL CONVENTION HOTELS

Book your stay through Playeasy for unbeatable hotel deals near our convention. Our collaboration ensures the widest variety and lowest rates from over 40 top booking sites, plus exclusive hotel special discounts for our convention attendees. Find your ideal accommodation, earn rewards and collect points for your loyalty program with each stay.

Click below and book hotels that the AVA has negotiated special rates with for convention attendees. The AVA may provide scheduled bus transportation to and from these hotels only for most convention activities on April 28-May 1, 2025.

[Convention Hotels](#)

[Nearby Hotels](#)



REGIONAL TALES FROM THE TRAILS



ATLANTIC REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



SUGARLOAFERS OKTOBERFEST AND MOONLIGHT WALK 2024 BY ANTHONY (TONY) LAING

The Seneca Valley Sugarloafers Volksmarch Club of Montgomery County, Maryland has completed three of its five Traditional Events for 2024. They have two more planned:

1. September 28 - Oktoberfest in Frederick, Maryland – Walk in historic Frederick and prime yourself for an Oktoberfest at the county fairgrounds. Entrance to the Oktoberfest is free if you walk our event. This Oktoberfest is one of the largest in the area and offers German food and drink as well as a varied craft fair. This walk has become an annual event and 2024 marks our 10th time sponsoring the event. Each year the club varies the route in historic Frederick which is home to various Civil War sites as well as the burial place of Francis Scott Key, who penned our national anthem.

2. November 16 - Moonlight in Seneca Creek State Park, Gaithersburg, Maryland. We offer a variety of walking experiences for club members and this night walk is an example. The Full Beaver Moon Rises at 5:16 pm and walkers will experience our beautiful park in the moonlight for a different view of the world around us, including a view of moonlight shimmering on Clopper Lake. This is a rare opportunity to see your moon shadow as you walk!

Check out all of our Sugarloafer Volkssporting activities at our Web Site: Sugarloafers.org



FIRST STATE WEBFOOTERS DELAWARE
(NonProfit Organization)

ONE DAY ONLY **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024**
SHOP 8AM - 11PM
DONATE \$5 AND ENJOY:

- 25% OFF DISCOUNT SHOPPING PASS*
- REGISTER TO WIN A \$100 BOSCOV'S GIFT CARD
One Winner at every Boscov's store

100% OF YOUR DONATION GOES TO OUR ORGANIZATION
For Shopping Passes or information, contact:

Kathy Kresko – email - 1ststatewebfooters@gmail.com

Available in Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Ohio
For more details visit boscovs.com/friendshelpingfriends
*Exclusions Apply

FUNDRAISER FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS BY KATHY KRESKO

As a fundraiser the First State Webfooters Delaware is participating in the Boscov's Friends Helping Friends one day event – Tuesday, October 22, 2024. Shopping online or in store, extended hours 8 am to 11 pm. Donate \$5.00 to support the First State Webfooters and receive a Boscov's Shopping pass which entitles you to 25% off purchases in-store or online and register to win a \$100 Boscov's Gift Card. Boscov's stores located in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Connecticut, Rhode Island and West Virginia. Please contact Kathy Kresko email address 1ststatewebfooters@gmail.com for more information.

45TH GREAT WYOMING BUFFALO STAMPEDE, WYOMING DELAWARE

BY KATHY KRESKO

The First State Webfooters had a team at the 45th Great Wyoming Buffalo Stampedo located in Wyoming, Delaware on July 13th. The event hosted 250 participants. Congratulations to Club President, Karen Kaufman, who came in third place for the 5K walk. Congratulations to Club Vice-President, Margie MacLeish, who got first place in her age group for the 10K run. The course went through mostly paved country roads, offering scenic views of orchards and countryside.

FIRST STATE WEBFOOTERS AT THE DOVER AIR FORCE BASE DELAWARE AIR SHOW

BY KATHY KRESKO



The First State Webfooters Delaware was very excited to be invited to participate in the 2024 Dover Air Force Base Air Show, May 17-19th. The 436th Civil Engineer Squadron working with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) reached out to the Webfooters to set up a booth in the STEM hangar during the Air Show. The three-day event, with May 17th being a family day for military and their dependents and the other days were open to the public, a record year of 100,000 in attendance. The airshow included aircrafts from a range of eras. Event schedule of 18 performances with the U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team, Panchito, the North American F-25, WWII era P-51 flies with a F-35A and so much more. The Webfooters had a great opportunity to reach out to many people in the Delmarva area while showing support to our military members. We were able to interact with many individuals and promote the AVA America's Walking Club, no matter what state you visit or stationed at, there is a walking club within the AVA family.

JACKIE JOHNSON MEMORIAL WALK

BY ANTHONY (TONY) LAING

The Seneca Valley Sugarloafers Volksmarch Club mourn the loss of our founder and first club president, Jackie Johnson. Jackie passed away on May 17, 2024 at the age of 88 after a brief illness. She founded the club 36 years ago in 1987 and was an active walker until recently. Jackie, like most avid Volksmarchers, walked in several states even to the point that she and her husband purchased a vanity license plate that read TRVLNPR (for traveling pair).

To celebrate her well lived life, the club has sanctioned the Jackie Johnson Memorial Walk on Saturday, May 31, 2025 at Black Hill Regional Park located near Boyds, Maryland. The club chose this site for a walk because this park was the location of the club's first Volksmarch during Thanksgiving weekend nearly 37 years ago in 1987. This walk is legendary in the club because the weather was cold and so windy that a portable toilet blew over. Nevertheless, the club prospered after this initial walk and grew to become the largest club in Maryland.

Black Hill Regional Park is the largest park in Montgomery County, Maryland comprising 2,000 acres of land. Walkers will enjoy the natural beauty of the park and spectacular views of the 505 acre Little Seneca Lake, the entrance to an old abandoned Gold Mine, and varied local wildlife.



34TH SEA WITCH FESTIVAL - TRIATHLON EVENT - REHOBOTH BEACH, DELAWARE

BY KATHY KRESKO

Come walk, bike and swim at the First State Webfooters 34th Sea Witch Festival Triathlon Event located in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware on October 26, 2024. Start /Finish is at Sussex Family YMCA, 20080 Church St., rear parking lot. Start Time 8 a.m. and finish 2 p.m. Walk 5K/10K trails, bike 10.5K to 43.6K routes and 300-meter swim at the YMCA. Enjoy the scenery along the boardwalk, beach area has many shops, restaurants and there will be the Rehoboth Sea Witch celebration with a parade and scheduled events. Team Up with Freestate Happy Wanderers on Sunday, October 27th a short distance to Ocean City Maryland, OC Convention Center 4001 Coastal Hwy, Ocean City. For more information contact Karen Kaufman 302-233-6615 or president@firststatewebfooters.org.





MID-AMERICA REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



NORTH CENTRAL REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



MID AMERICA REPORT BY CRAIG GAUGER

We have some amazing walks lined up all over the Mid America region. Come and walk the 5-mile long Mackinac Bridge walk on Labor Day. There are picturesque walks on 3 weekends in September in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois. October is full of walks. See the fall colors, interesting villages and parks, and the Indy 500 Speedway. There are at least 2 walks every weekend in October in Mid America.

We have 3 traditional walks in November in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, but many seasonal and YREs are here throughout the region.

Our seasonal and YREs are plentiful and cover all 5 states of Mid America. They are all here and waiting for your visit. Come for a weekend or a week, we will be here to welcome you. Contact us ahead of time and we can find someone to walk with you.

My wife and I have recently walked at Cascade Pk, Elyria, OH; all 4 events at our MA Conference in central Kentucky and 4 of the KY seasonal walks; Piqua, OH; Noblesville, IN; Ann Arbor, MI; Kendallville, IN; and Toledo, OH. By the time you read this we will have been to IL, as well. We also had a several-day trip to NY, where we had a great time walking there.

There is a new club brewing in north central IL. Past RD Kimi Bradley has volunteered to guide the aspiring folks to what they need to get going. This couple has walked in Germany and other places. They should have some great experience. Look out to Peoria for some new events!



WHAT'S UP IN THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION

BY SUSAN PINNEKE

Fall is a great time to walk in the North Central!! The weather is cooler and less humid and nature is at its best. Minnesota has some great park walks featuring a bit of ruggedness and some great fall foliage. South Dakota has 6 new county walks for this fall in western South Dakota. They will make for a great walking weekend September 13 - 15. Mark your calendars, for fall Crazy Horse, September 29. Nothing beats the feeling you get when you walk out on Crazy Horse's arm. It's amazing, makes the walk seem not so steep.

Nebraska sure knows how to make walking fun on September 28 with a labyrinth walk and Step to the Beat on October 5. You'll be dancing in the streets of Omaha. Wisconsin won't be left out of the fun; they've got a couple of walks planned for Two Rivers on September 22. Plan for a lovely day along Lake Michigan. Iowa is offering a new walk in the Quad Cities that takes you across the Mississippi on the new interstate bridge on October 12. How cool is that!! Besides these events, there are plenty of year round and seasonal walk routes to choose from. You can walk in parks, small towns or cities, whatever mood you are in. All in all, the North Central Region is a destination for awesome fall walking!! See you on the trail!!



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS COMING TO OMAHA DECEMBER 14.

BY SONDR A SPALDING

Our annual Festival of Lights Walk in December has seen many changes over the years. In our current start point, KANEKO Art Gallery, we are able to spread out, provide oodles of treats and lots of door prizes. An added plus is allowing our walkers to explore this unique art gallery. Established in 1998 by international artist Jun Kaneko and his wife Ree, and headquartered in three warehouses in the Old Market District of Omaha, KANEKO'S vision is to celebrate creativity in Design, Ideas, Performance, and Innovation. The gallery is always free and has been very generous in offering the use of their space at no charge.

More to the point for us walkers are the trails. The Omaha landscape has changed dramatically over the last few years. With the opening of The RiverFront, three adjoining parks filled with innovations and an abundance of holiday activities, we have a ready-made exciting destination. The parks are amazing at any time of year, but they light up with dramatic beauty during the holidays. Check out the hundreds of trees wrapped in white, twinkling lights, along with festive decorations scattered throughout Gene Leahy Mall, Heartland of America Park, and Lewis & Clark Landing. On Saturday nights, the park comes to life with a dazzling multimedia show that can be seen on the Gene Leahy Mall Performance Pavilion, Burlington Building, and 10th Street Bridge video wall. A nearly 70-foot-tall Christmas tree welcomes visitors at 8th Street Arrival Plaza in Heartland of America Park. New this year, the RiverFront is partnering with Midwest Fest adding a free holiday market featuring local artisan vendors to the food trucks and activities for all ages throughout the parks.

In the Old Market, white lights, garlands, and dazzling snowflakes illuminate the brick streets and historic architecture. This sparkling spectacle spans several blocks, from 10th to 13th Streets, between Farnam and Jackson Streets. Our walk invites you to explore the Old Market, survey the beautiful lights, and check out the brightly lit horse-drawn carriages.

Finish the walk with hot chocolate, cookies and hundreds of door prizes. Due to popular demand, we'll be adding a table of door prizes devoted to our younger walkers. All of the cookies and door prizes are donated by our club members, so be sure to thank them as well as the many volunteers who help put on this event.

Thanks to the sponsorship of The RiverFront and KANEKO, this event is entirely free with a requested donation to a local homeless shelter. We have not yet determined what we will be collecting, but watch our website, nebraskatrailblazers.com, for that information. In past years, we have collected hats and mittens, toilet paper (two van loads one year), diapers and food for the food bank. Our walkers have always been very generous. So, save the date-Saturday, December 14, starting between 4 and 6 p.m. at KANEKO Art Gallery, 1111 Jones St., Omaha, NE.

Come spend a holiday weekend in Omaha. In addition to this great walk, you can check out other Christmas events including Zoolightful at the Henry Doorly Zoo, voted the number one zoo in the nation, Santa's Rock n' Lights Drive Thru at Werner Park, the Holiday Poinsetta show and Bright Nights at Lauritzen Gardens, Christmas at Union Station and Winter Wonderland at Fontenelle Forest. If you love the arts, check out the newly reopened Joslyn Art Museum with its stunning new building (always free admission). There are sure to be holiday offerings at the Omaha Symphony, the Omaha Community Playhouse and the historic Orpheum Theater.



Join us for the Old Market Holiday Lights Walk
Dec. 14, 2024
Omaha, Nebraska

The RiverFront Parks
KANEKO Art Gallery

All Free thanks to KANEKO and The RiverFront

Midwest Fest

Free Sanctioned walk
Bright Lights
Cookies
Hot Chocolate
Door Prizes!

Nebraska Wander Freunde Trailblazers



**NORTHEAST REGION
TALES FROM THE TRAILS**



Congratulations to Loueen Whalen! She is the newest member of the Empire State Capital Volkswalkers to complete walking in all 50 states. Her milestone walk was in Newport RI. Photo by Chris Yost.

FALL IN WITH WALK 'N MASS

BY JOSEPH LAPOINTE

Please join Walk 'n Mass during this wonderful season of cooling temperatures and changing leaves. Our club is preparing for a busy autumn of scheduled group walks. We look forward to seeing you at our group walks or enjoy any of our beautiful walking routes on your own time.

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.



Having a celebratory lunch with Loueen Whalen on the occasion of her 50th state walk are Chris Y, Terry G, Louise R and Liz W.



**NORTHWEST REGION
TALES FROM THE TRAILS**



“WHERE THE SALMON RUN” GUIDED WALK – TUMWATER, WASHINGTON

BY THOMAS MALONE

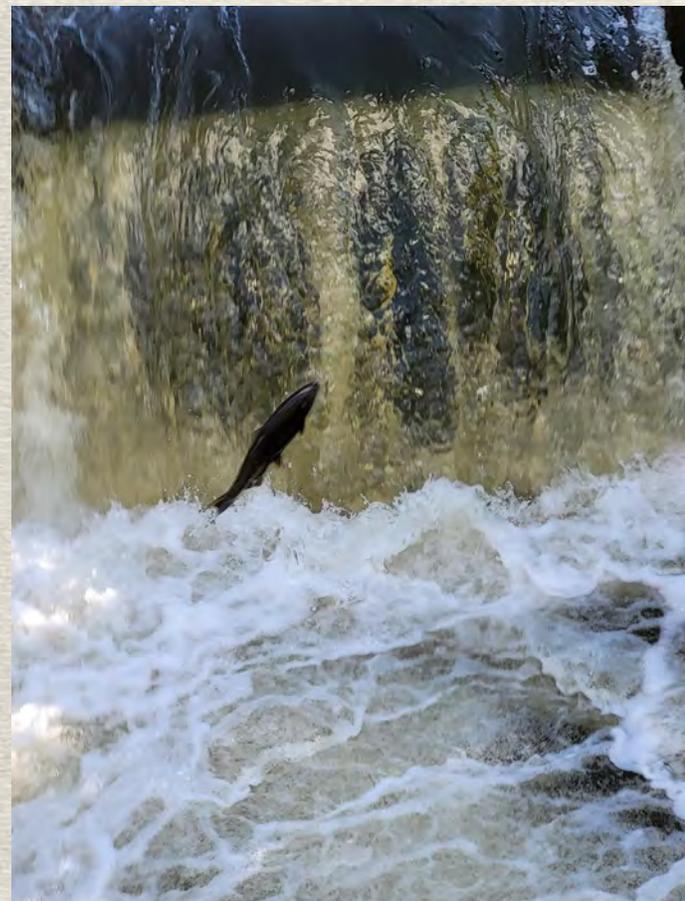
Join the Capitol Volkssport Club Saturday October 5 to view the Chinook salmon as they return to spawn in the Deschutes River. Registration begins at 9 a.m. at the Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls (110 Deschutes Way SW, Tumwater, WA 98501 – left at the corner of C Street and Deschutes Way). Restrooms are available at the start point.

The return of the fall salmon migration is an amazing natural process. Before watching the salmon through viewing windows, we will gather at 10 a.m. for a short history of the salmon hatchery from a specialist from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. 5k/ 10k guided walks begin after the talk. The 10k walkers will be divided into 2 groups – fast walkers and medium/slow walkers. The 10k walks will include a short 10 minute talk given by a docent in the capitol building rotunda. The 5k walk does not include the capitol grounds or the talk. Walkers will also be able to walk on their own with directions if desired. However, 10k walkers not part of the guided walk should be aware that they are not included in the talk given in the capitol rotunda.

At this event you will walk along the scenic Deschutes River and see the salmon running upstream and the four fish ladders they use in their journey. You will continue past the original Olympia Brewery building and along Capitol Lake. The 10k walkers will continue past the Port of Olympia, war memorials on the capitol campus and the historic South Capitol Neighborhood. The State Capitol itself is the centerpiece of five buildings designed by New York architects and completed in 1928. The sandstone and granite used in the construction was quarried in Washington State.

For more information visit our website:

Capitolvolkssportclub.org or contact: Barbara Malone ravnliz08@yahoo.com



**NW REGIONAL AVA WALKING FESTIVAL AND CONFERENCE
KICKING AROUND KITSAP!**

BY DIANE HOWELL EVANS



- Bainbridge Island – Troll, Town and Trail (5k & 10k/2B). Explore the parks, trails and waterfront on Bainbridge Island
- Hansville – Lighthouse (5k/1B & 11k/2B) and Greenway (5k/1C). Walk the tip of the Kitsap Peninsula on paths through the forested Greenway or along roads/paths near the shore to and from the Point No Point Lighthouse.
- Kingston – White Horse Trail (5k & 10k/2B). During weekdays, utilize complimentary public transit to walk the White Horse trail from the Indianola waterfront. An alternate 10k route utilizes the trail and park but does not require a bus ride. A 5k optional route goes to the Carpenter Lake Nature Preserve with a boardwalk trail out to the lake edge.
- Port Ludlow – McCormick Trail (5k/2B & 10k/3B). The 5k features the McCormick Loop and one hill. The 10k includes part of the Timberton Loop and the new trail in the Port Ludlow system named the McCormick RR Trail, which is a newly cleared section of an old railroad line used for logging. The McCormick section is flat and wooded and connects two other trails that make a loop. The trail may be muddy and there are several climbs on the 10k.
- Port Orchard – South Kitsap Regional Park (5k & 10k/2C). Both distances are on forest paths around the edge of the park and into the woods. The route includes a section of the Explorer Children’s Trail. The 10k route continues into a neighborhood outside the park circling a golf course with a loop around Bill Bloomquist Rotary Park.
- Silverdale – Old Town (5k/1B; 10k/2B). Walk on sidewalks and urban trails within Silverdale seeing old and new along the way with many great views of Dyes Inlet.
- Suquamish (4k/1B) and Poulsbo (6k/2B). Walk in 2 Kitsap County towns. Suquamish is rich in Native American history while Poulsbo reflects the culture of Norwegian immigrants.

For the latest information the brochure and registration form are attached below:

[Event Brochure](#)

[Event Registration Form](#)

The Clubs of the Washington Evergreen State Volkssport Association invite you to join us on Sept 19-24, 2024, to explore the beautiful Kitsap Peninsula and surrounding area. The Walkfest offers 8 walking events, 1 nearby biking event, as well as the AVA OSB sanctioned swim. There are plenty of swimming pools in the area as well as 7 YRE walks in the area.

Socials include Friday night at the My Girl Drive-In & Museum which includes a tour and Chicken Penne-Pasta buffet dinner in Kingston. The setting will have you reliving your Elvis and Rock ‘n Roll days of the past. Saturday night is a pizza and salad buffet dinner at the Scout Hall in Silverdale.

The festival will be headquartered at the Boy Scout Hall, 9161 Washington Ave. NW, Silverdale WA. Start/Finish hours are Thursday, Sept 19th, 9 am – 4 pm; Friday and Saturday, Sept 20th – 21st, 8 am – 4 pm; and Sunday, Sept 22nd, 8 am – 3 pm. If you are walking on Sept 23-24, you must register for those walks by Sunday, Sept 22.

There is no central hotel but national hotel chains are available in Silverdale and Bremerton, as well as other nearby communities of Port Orchard and Poulsbo. There are also many Vrbo and Airbnb opportunities in the local area.

Featured walks in different areas of the Kitsap Peninsula are offered each day to minimize driving distances and daily group walks are also planned. You may register for each walk individually at the Scout Hall or for all the walks using the registration form attached below.

- Bainbridge Island – Battle Point Park (5k/1B) and Grand Forest (5k & 10k/3C). One 5k stays within Battle Point Park. The other 5k & 10k are on park and forest paths around Battle Point Park and onto the Forest to Sky trail to the Grand Forest.
- Bainbridge Island – Troll, Town and Trail (5k & 10k/2B). Explore the parks, trails and waterfront on Bainbridge Island.
- Bainbridge Island – Battle Point Park (5k/1B) and Grand Forest (5k & 10k/3C). One 5k stays within Battle Point Park. The other 5k & 10k are on park and forest paths around Battle Point Park and onto the Forest to Sky trail to the Grand Forest.





ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



FALCON WANDERERS WEEKDAY WALKS

BY STEVE SANDRIDGE, RM RD

This is the third year for this program of mid-week fellowship walks consisting of two cycles of nine local YREs. The last three of these 18 walks are in September which is a great time to visit the Rockies. Kudos to the Falcon Wanderers for continuing to offer expanded walking opportunities this year.

ANNUAL PIKES PEAK FALL COLOR WALK

BY STEVE SANDRIDGE, RM RD

If you're planning to visit the Centennial State (Colorado) to see our spectacular fall Aspens, mark your calendars for the September 28th Farish Recreation Area walk near Woodland Park – the City Above the Clouds. Farish is a 600-acre military recreation park near Pikes Peak with this event open to the public (check the flyer for pre-registration or meal reservation requirements). There are usually some tasty post-walk bratwursts to be had! Along the trail you'll enjoy views of Pikes Peak - America's Mountain. Hopefully, you will see some great golden foliage! During your visit be sure to check out more than two-dozen regional YREs including four Capital walks (CO, MT, UT and WY) and plenty of great rural and city strolls.



SOUTH CENTRAL REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



TULSA WALKING CLUB PLANS SEPTEMBER WALK

POSTED BY TERESA ARNOLD

Tulsa Walking Club invites all walkers to come to their traditional event on September 21, in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Walkers will enjoy a real downtown, with many sights and sounds to delight your eyes and tempt your palate! In addition, the farmer's market will still be in full swing, always with many goodies to be found.

The walk will qualify for many Special Programs, both current and retired. Examples include: Walking with America's Veterans, Step to the Beat, Par for the Course, Town/City Hall and Rockin' around the Clock to name a few.

The city's name comes from an old Creek community in Alabama. When members of that community moved to Oklahoma along the Trail of Tears and founded a new community, they named it after their old settlement in Alabama. The town's Creek name was ReKackv (pronounced thlee-Kawtch-kuh), meaning broken arrow. The new settlement was located several miles south of present-day downtown Broken Arrow.

Decades later, the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad built a railroad which ran through the area. MKT was granted town site privileges along the route. They sold three of the as-yet-unnamed sites in 1902 to the Arkansas Valley Town Site company. William S. Fears, secretary of the company, was allowed to choose and name one of the locations. He selected a site about 18 miles southeast of Tulsa and about five miles north of the thlee-Kawtch-kuh settlement and named the new town site Broken Arrow, after the former Indian settlement.

The downtown has been revitalized into The Rose District. Enjoy lots of great eating spots to choose from!



Make plans to join us for this fun-filled walking event!

A flyer will be available for download at the AVA website. Any questions? Please contact Ralph Axsom, the event coordinator, at ralphax66@gmail.com or 918-252-4752

ANOTHER SAGA IN MY QUEST FOR WALKING KANSAS COUNTIES

BY SHERRY SAYERS

I've been somewhat lax in my reporting of county walks that I've been doing. This spring we walked eight more counties in New Mexico, but that is for another day. Today I'd like to tell you about Kansas. The Sunflower Sod Stompers hosted eight more county walks in mid-May in the cities (okay, small towns!) of Hill City, Nicodemus, WaKeeney, Ellis, Ness City, La Crosse, Hays, and Victoria. Every town on the high plains had something different and unique about them.

The first walk was in Hill City, the Graham County seat, which had not one, not two, but FOUR checkpoints, because once the word spread in the tiny town, all the businesses wanted to meet the walkers. The first checkpoint was at the Oil Museum, the second at the Graham County Auto and Arts Museum, where a model T featured in the movie "Paper Moon," along with many other cool, old cars, was on display. The third checkpoint was at Schweitzer's Hotel, where the owner, Kathy Schweitzer, greeted us with refreshments and gave us a personal tour of the old historic inn. One interesting thing I noticed was that she had starched old handkerchiefs, which were family heirlooms, onto the walls for a very neat-looking decoration. The final checkpoint was at the Graham County Historical Museum.

The second walk we did that same day was at Nicodemus National Historic Site, also in Graham County. Nicodemus was founded by newly freed slaves around 1877 and was the first black community west of the Mississippi River. Houses, churches, businesses, schools and clubs were quickly built, and the community was able to participate in political and commercial life in ways previously denied them. Unfortunately, Nicodemus experienced a decline around 1880 when the hoped-for railroad bypassed the town and there were too many years of poor harvests to sustain the town. It is pretty much a ghost town now, with many of the remaining buildings in disrepair.

On the second day, we walked in WaKeeney, the Trego County seat. In 1879, two businessmen, one named Albert Warren, the other James Keeney, plotted the site and named the town after themselves (WaKeeney). Around 1948, another two businessmen had the idea to light up the town for Christmas and since then, the town has maintained a 35-foot tree with over 3,000 lights. WaKeeney is known as the Christmas City of the High Plains. There are metal tree-shaped signs throughout the town signifying historical houses and businesses. This walk had only one checkpoint – you guessed it – at the Trego County Historical Museum!

Our second walk of this day was Ellis in Ellis County. This is the boyhood home of Walter P. Chrysler, and the first checkpoint was at his home and museum. The second checkpoint was a real treat. It was at the Ellis Railroad Museum and Doll Display, where we got to ride the miniature Aerotrain, which takes you on a ½ mile scenic loop twice! Upstairs in the railroad museum, there were over 1,600 dolls on display.

The first walk on the third day was in Ness City, the county seat of Ness County. Ness City is known for its oil drilling, so guess what? The checkpoint was at the Ness County Historical Society Oil and Ag Museum. The town also boasts the four-story Ness County Bank Building, which is nicknamed Skyscraper of the Plains. Upon its completion in 1890, it was the finest and most imposing structure west of Topeka.

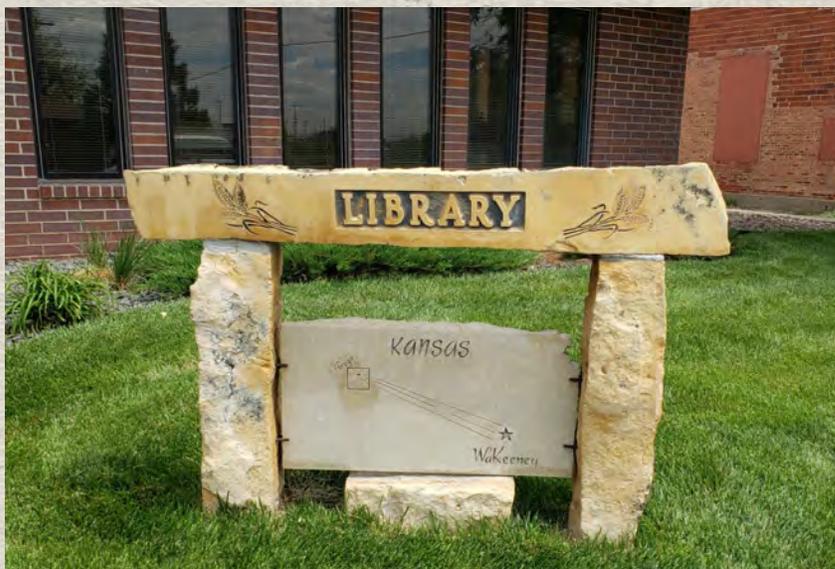


The second walk of the day was in La Crosse, the county seat of Rush County. La Crosse was founded in 1876 and was named after La Crosse, Wisconsin. This town has so many interesting things. This checkpoint was at the Kansas Barbed Wire Museum and the town is nicknamed "Barbed Wire Capital of the World!" There was every kind of barbed wire you can imagine, with over 2,400 varieties. Another museum in the same complex was the Post Rock Museum. What is post rock you ask? There are about three million acres of post rock fencing in north central Kansas from the Nebraska border to Dodge City. When the early pioneers arrived in Kansas, there were no trees to build fences, however, the industrious pioneers discovered a layer of rock/limestone in the Greenhorn formation prevalent throughout the area, and they started quarrying this limestone with stone hammers to make the fence posts. Many buildings throughout Kansas are also built from these quarries, as well, including the Basilica mentioned below. If you would like to learn more about post rock, visit this website: <https://www.rushcounty.org/PostRockMuseum/index.html>. For more information on barbed wire, visit this website: <https://www.rushcounty.org/BarbedWireMuseum/>

On our final day of walks, the first walk was held in Hays, the county seat of Ellis County. Hays is famous for Fort Hays State University, where a small portion of the trail went through the campus. The trail back from the campus was a paved trail along Big Creek. Hays also has many beautiful churches, and this was the only day that I got a little wet.

Speaking of churches, the final walk was in Victoria, also in Ellis County. Victoria is home to a beautiful Roman Catholic church, St. Fidelis Basilica. This church is commonly known as the Cathedral of the Plains. It was finished in 1911. The stained-glass windows, the Italian marble altar, and Austrian hand-carved stations of the cross are stunning. If you are ever traveling east on I-70 and see the sign for the Cathedral of the Plains, I recommend stopping. It is truly worth a visit.

So, is the moral of my story that museums are alive and well in small-town Kansas, or that I had a great time doing all these walks? Stay tuned for an upcoming article on New Mexico or maybe more counties in Kansas, as the Sunflower Sod Stompers are hosting eight more county walks in October. Check the AVA website for more information.



AN INVITATION TO THE HEARTLAND

TERRI TYLER PRESIDENT OF SUNFLOWER SOD STOMPERS AVA #234



Three swims have also been sanctioned for four days for those who enjoy the water. Come and enjoy the indoor pools, and earn more IVV events! Water walking is acceptable. There will certainly be qualifiers for some of the AVA Special Programs. In our walking venues, you will find the communities to be based around agriculture, light industry, mining, railroading, and government. Each town has a different history and things to see and to enjoy. Friday afternoon has been left open so walkers can visit 2 well-known attractions in Hutchinson: Cosmosphere – a highly acclaimed international science education center and space museum, and Stratataca – an underground salt museum filled with unique experiences and decades of history that you can only get 650 feet below this Kansas town. And for those not interested in some “sightseeing”, there are several unique and interesting YREs within driving distance of our traditional walks.

Motel rooms are blocked in Hutchinson & Salina for our attendees. On Wednesday evening, there will be a “Pizza Meet & Greet” at our motel – Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Hutchinson - to visit with old walking friends &/or make new ones. After walking and exploring on Friday and Saturday, we will meet-up once again for dinner and speakers at The Barn in Burton, and Kansas Legacy in Abilene, – 2 well-known Kansas restaurants! One of our guest speakers - from the Southwest Region - will be updating us on the activities of the 2025 AVA Convention. Pre-registration with payment is highly recommended. This will help in the planning of all of the special event activities. There definitely will be fun, fitness, friendship and food on the agenda, so come enjoy this pre-Halloween weekend in Kansas!

If you need further information, please contact: Trudy Duffman trudyduffman@yahoo.com 618-670-6920 or Terri Tyler tityler50@gmail.com 785-233-4385. E-mails are preferred due to “spam” calls. A printed brochure is available.

TWO NEW ARKANSAS COUNTY WALKS OFFERED FOR 2025

BY PAT GOLDEN PA4GOLDEN@GMAIL.COM

The Ozark Hill Hikers Walking Club of Arkansas will offer two new county walks in 2025: Clarksville in Johnson County and Ozark in Franklin County. Only a physical start box will be available to register for the walks. The walk box will be located at the Quality Inn, 1167 S. Rogers Street, Clarksville.

On April 10-11, 2025, all walkers are invited to attend a 2-day event. The 2-day event will feature the two new county walks and additional walks in Fort Smith and Van Buren, AR. Registration will be at the Quality Inn in Clarksville from 7:30 to 10:30. Room reservations may be made there by calling 479-754-3000.

The Clarksville 5km walk will be along the paved Spadra Creek Nature Trail and the 10km will continue from the trail to include a walk around the University of the Ozarks campus, in residential areas, and finally will rejoin a paved path leading back to the Nature Trail. After completing the Clarksville walk, participants may be interested in driving to the Altus Wine Trail for some wine tasting or other side trips before returning to join the group for a 5:30 dinner at Kasper’s in Clarksville.

The Ozark walk will take walkers through the downtown area, residential areas, and along the street adjacent to the Arkansas River where beautiful river homes sit along its bank.

Walk directions for a revised Fort Smith(Sebastian County) walk and the club’s year-round walk in Van Buren (Crawford County) will also be available to those who wish to add more Arkansas county walks during the trip.

Walkers, from near and far, are invited to the “Heartland of America” October 23, 24, 25, 26 & 27 for the “Hoofin’ It on Halloween” extended weekend. The Sunflower Sod Stompers of Topeka will be sponsoring this volkssporting weekend as part of the club’s 40th anniversary. This celebratory weekend will also be the 12th Biennial South Central Regional Roundup. This traditional weekend, proposed by the late Vic Schaff & former South Central Director, is being continued now for 24 years!

Six sanctioned walking events will be located in 5 different counties of central Kansas, around the I-135 corridor. The elusive Marion county event in Hillsboro is finally on the schedule for those who pursue the Sunflower State counties. Four other counties, Harvey, Reno, Rice, and Saline will also be on the agenda. These counties were walked years ago, long before the “Walking the Kansas Counties” program was established. Now, we will walk again in Newton, Hutchinson, and Salina along with events in Sterling and the Dillon’s Nature Center. Participants will be happy to read that ALL of these courses will be fairly flat; the Nature Center event being the only route on natural terrain.

Kansas in October should be enjoyable walking weather but come prepared for the extremes. There should be some fall foliage and of course, Halloween decorations found along the town trails.



SOUTHEAST REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



HONTOON ISLAND YRE RE-OPENS!

BY JOHN MCCLELLAN

After almost two years with no ferry service, our year-round event on Hontoon Island State Park in Volusia County, FL is once again accessible to the public. Ferry service was suspended right after Hurricane Ian in 2022. As of July, park Rangers are now operating the short ferry ride across the St. John's River on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only – from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Ferries will run on the hour, but those passengers on the island and ready to leave will be able to do so as well.

The Hontoon Island YRE is one of 15 walks, 2 bike rides and a swim event offered by the Happy Wanderers Walking Club in central Florida along the Atlantic Coast. Other events in our footprint include St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, Cocoa Beach and Savannah, GA. In 2024, we'll be offering a new event on the Florida Space Coast in downtown Titusville. You can find all our event offering and group walk schedule at: www.happywanderersfl.org

Hontoon Island is a "hidden gem" in Volusia County – offering both a 5k or 10k walk on the island, completely within the St. John's River. The island contains a variety of flora & fauna and was once home to a group of Timucua – a native American tribe in Central Florida. A "shell mound" built by these inhabitants can still be found on the island and is on the 10k trail option. The Hontoon Island trails are rated 2B – grassy, dirt or sandy trails, and not suitable for strollers and wheelchairs. The island is accessible only by private boat or free park ferry.

Hontoon Island State Park is located at: 2309 River Ridge Rd. DeLand, FL 32720 Call (386) 736-5309 for the ranger station. From I-4 take exit 118; SR 44 west about 7 miles through DeLand; bear left on CR 4110 for 1.9 miles; left on CR 4125 for 3.4 miles. Turn left into the Hontoon Island State Park parking lot. Tell the ferry driver or a ranger that you need the walk-box. The box is located in the Park Ranger's office.



Welcome back to Hontoon Island!

NORTHWESTERN SOUTH CAROLINA WALKS

BY MIKE LANPHER, UPSTATE PATHFINDERS

From Atlanta 19 miles inside South Carolina on Interstate 85, you can choose 2 walks west of Greenville off the interstate: SC Botanical Gardens at Clemson and city of Anderson. They are completely different but unique in their own way. The Garden to the north is both a botanical delight and a bit of history with a unique Geological Museum added to the mix. The Botanical Garden has a mix of flora and interesting trails as you walk through prepared landscapes, scores of camellias, Butterfly Garden, and the heritage trail showing different SC landscapes and flora types. The old cabins and homes produce a sense of history while the forests are established. It is a walk that can take 3-4 hours if you wish. There is an early 1900s Cadet Circle and a Class of 1939 Caboose (yes, a red caboose).

Anderson, county seat of Anderson County, sits just south of I-85 and 15 miles from The Gardens. Anderson is an historic city first known as the Electric City for being the 1st in Upstate with electricity in 1901. It also hosts the well-known Anderson University. They even have a bit of a downtown mystery - find the 24 bronze Carolina Wrens observing all that pass. The walk meanders through downtown past the new City Hall and old churches. The old and new courthouses are a nice comparison of styles. The walk goes through the downtown city park and then goes north circling back past the brewery and the farmers market to the 5K start. The 10K turns before the brewery and goes east to the Anderson University campus for your stroll through the well-groomed grounds and return to the brewery, then a farmers market area before finishing. Register for both walks on the AVA my.ava.org site Online Start Box OSB).

PRE-REGISTRATION FOR WAF33 IS NOW OPEN

BY JOHN MCCLELLAN, CATHY METHERELL & ALICE LAWRENCE

Get ready to see Old Friends and New Trails 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!

Our complete Event Brochure with the pre-registration form is now available! You may register for any/all events and sign your AVA waiver(s) in advance. If you are planning to attend any of the social events – especially the Saturday night buffet dinner at VFW 8696 – we need you to RSVP and pay in advance. Instructions for mailing in your registration and payment are on the form. We need you to complete your pre-registration and submit it – postmarked by 25 OCT. If not pre-registered, you'll be available to sign-up for events at our hotel on Friday afternoon, or daily at each individual event start table. You can find the WAF33 registration brochure online on the Happy Wanderers Walking Club website: <https://happywanderersfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/HW-WAF33-Flier-Jul-5.pdf>



It can also be found on the WAF33 Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/WalkaroundFlorida33

And don't forget that hotel reservations at our fabulous group rate of only \$102.00 (including taxes) are still available at:
www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-room.ms.10425.html?groupid=7W3EH3KO



WAF33 triathlon logo

With multiple walks, a bike event and a swim event offered this year, attendees will have the rare opportunity to complete a volkssport triathlon at WAF33 during this Olympic year! Just complete any one walk (any distance), the bike ride (15k or 26k) and the swim (300m) at either the hotel pool or the Palm Coast Aquatics Center, and you'll receive a special neck medal at no additional cost. There will be a triathlon information sheet added to your packet if your registration indicates all three events, and, we'll have a table at the hotel for triathlon check-in / completions, and more information on the bike & swim events, to include local bicycle rental opportunities.

Of course, a big event like this takes a team. Once again, we'll need about 40-50 volunteers to make WAF33 happen. Our roster of positions for volunteers is under construction, and we'll have it out by mid-September. You can sign-up to volunteer online (using Sign-up Genius), or drop us a line and we'll find something for you to do!

This is the last article that will appear in TAW before the WAF33 weekend, but registrants will start receiving the "Panther Tracks" WAF33 Newsletter in the Fall. Panther Tracks will be chock full of information on our weekend, like our fabulous Florida basket raffle! You can also find information on WAF33 on the three club websites: www.happywanderersfl.org, <http://midfloridamilers.org> and <http://suncoastsandpipers.org> We're looking forward to seeing you at our 33rd multi-event weekend!



Part of the Lehigh Trail in Palm Coast, FL – where our WAF33 bike routes will be staged.



SOUTHWEST REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



Robert Adelman with Odin and Diana Adelman holding Winston pose for a picture in front of one of several Southside Lions Park monument signs visible along on the Southside Lions Park Walk which took place in November 2023 in San Antonio, Texas. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

THE RANDOLPH ROADRUNNERS' SOUTHSIDE LIONS PARK WALK

BY MARTIN CALLAHAN

The Randolph Roadrunners Volkssports club is hosting a walk event at the Southside Lions Park in San Antonio, Texas on September 21. Volkssporters will enjoy strolling along the shady trails with scenic views of Pecan Lake, park visitors fishing and numerous water fowl on the first loop.

At the beginning of the second loop, you can see the giant flower sculptures by artist Leticia Huerta which are part of her "Bloom Series" before continuing along shady trails. You can learn more about these sculptures at the following website at:

<https://events.getcreativesanantonio.com/public-art/bloom-at-blossom-park/>

The city of San Antonio purchased 600 acres of land from the estate of George W. Brackenridge in 1944 and 1966 which would later become Southside Lions Park. The Park has a community center, Pecan Valley Lake, a pool, sports fields and scenic trails. The park is also sometimes known as Hi-Lions by taking the name of the organization that worked to save the land as a public park.

The city originally purchased 346 acres from the George W. Brackenridge estate to use as a landfill. The residents of Highland Park and the members of the Highland Park Lions Club succeeded in convincing the city to turn the land into a park instead of a garbage dump.

The start point for this walk is Southside Lions Park East, Pavilion 2, 4600 Pecan Valley Drive San Antonio, Texas 78223.

For information on these two walk events contact Ellen Ott at: (210) 723-8574, email her at: ellenott@sbcglobal.net, and check out the club's website at: <http://randolphroadrunners.info/>.

You can learn more about the park online at: www.sanantonio.gov/ParksAndRec/Home/Parks.



From left to right, Robert Adelman with Odin and Diana Adelman holding Winston, Cheryl Lardy, Diane Duesterhoeft and Mike Phillips stop for a picture on the trail along Pecan Lake at the Southside Lions Park Walk which took place in November 2023 in San Antonio, Texas. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)



From left to right, John King, Mike Linnebar with Dolly, Jimmy Young, Gary Klein with Rudy, Jeanie King and Steven Stechsulte stop for a picture along the October 2022 Pearsall Park Walk trail in San Antonio, Texas. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

THE RANDOLPH ROADRUNNERS' REI OPT OUTDOOR DAY WALK AT PEARSALL PARK
BY MARTIN CALLAHAN

The Randolph Roadrunners Volkssports club is hosting an REI Opt Outdoor Day Walk event at Pearsall Park on November 29. REI is an American retail and outdoor recreation services corporation that first started a movement for people to reconnect outdoors over the holidays. This walk event after Thanksgiving is the Randolph Roadrunners' participation in the movement.

Pearsall Park is the largest park in San Antonio with 505 acres of rolling hills with walk and bike trails, artwork, basketball courts, disc golf course, dog parks, the Fitness Challenge Zone, outdoor fitness equipment, picnic tables, splash pads and more. While strolling along the walk trails through this beautiful park you will be amazed to know that it was all built on top of the former District 4 municipal landfill.

While following the trail to the top of the ridge you will pass by the "Wickiup Encampment" sustainable public art project created by nationally-recognized public artist Buster Simpson, which is one of two art installations commissioned by the city of San Antonio at the park. Wickiup refers to a primitive domed structure historically associated with Native Americans of the Southwest.

While on top of the ridge enjoying the "Wickiup Overlook" you will have a great view of Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) also known as the "Gateway to the Air Force." Lackland AFB was originally built during World War II and is now home to Air Force Basic Training and operated by Air Education and Training Command.

The start point for this unique walk is the trailhead near Pavilion 2 at Pearsall Park, 5102 Old Pearsall Road, San Antonio TX 78242. Food will be provided for Volkssporters attending the event.

For information on this event contact Ellen Ott at: (210) 723-8574, email her at: ellenott@sbcglobal.net, and check out the club's website at: <http://randolphroadrunners.info/>.

You can learn more about the park online at: www.sanantonio.gov/ParksAndRec/Home/Parks.



Cindy Mayfield with Rudy (left) and Dolly stop for a picture along the trail next to one of two art installations called "Wickiup Encampment" associated with Native Americans of the Southwest and visible along the October 2022 Pearsall Park Walk trail in San Antonio, Texas. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

SAN ANTONIO PATHFINDERS' HISTORIC GONZALES, TEXAS AND INDEPENDENCE PARK WALK
BY CHARLEY WATT JR

San Antonio Pathfinders will be hosting a brand new 5k and 10k walking trail created by Charley Watt Jr and coming up on Saturday, October 19. The start point is at the Gonzales Little League Baseball Field in Independence Park in Gonzales, Texas. For additional information on Gonzales online visit:

<https://tourgonzales.com/heritage-tourism/>

Independence Park is an attractive 22-acres of pristine native pecan trees along the banks of the Guadalupe River, this unique park is divided into two sections, the upper main level and the lower brickyard level.

This walking adventure offers two different 5k trails each with very scenic views, or you can do them both for 10k. Both trails start in the parking lot of Little League Field, on the upper-level main entrance.

The Guadalupe River route will follow a rather new 1.35-mile paved trail starting at Rotary Pavilion and head upstream into the lower "Brickyard" level, a massive manicured landscape filled with pristine native pecan trees and several optional fishing sites. You will then follow a very scenic walkway path that overlooks the Guadalupe River with a view of the 1925 Hydro Electric Plant and Dam in the background, which is still functioning today by producing 1.1 megawatts of power for the city of Gonzales. Once you reach the dam, which is checkpoint 1 and turnaround point for all walkers before continuing to the start/finish.

The second 5k trail continues past the baseball field parking lot, underneath HWY 183 Guadalupe River bridge (similar to a tunnel) and continues for 2.3k until walkers exit the park and enter the historic city of Gonzales. You will pass by several historical landmarks before reaching checkpoint 2 at Market Square Pavilion.

One of the markers you will pass includes one for the location for the George W. Davis Peach Tree Orchard which was the temporary burial site of the famous "Come and Take It Cannon." The cannon was later dug up and used by the Texas Militia against a force of 100 Mexican Dragoons (mounted infantry) sent in an unsuccessful attempt to seize it. This was the final skirmish of the Battle of Gonzales that took place on October 2, 1835.

At the Market Square in 1825 the lot was originally named the Jail Square and later changed to Market Square in 1835. On the opposite end of this lot is the historical landmark of the 1914 Riverside School for Hispanic students, now occupied by the Gonzales Pilot International Club. At this point Volkssporters will return to the park.

The street address for the start point at Independence Park is located at 820 South Saint Joseph Street. Gonzales, Texas 78629. Registration will be open from 9 am till noon, finish by 3 pm. The routes should be marked with AVA Arrows and Tape. A Directions Page will be available plus a Fact Sheet on all historical landmarks along the route. A reasonable effort has been made by the sponsor to make this a safe, enjoyable and very memorable walking adventure.

Thanking Everyone in advance for attending!

For more information contact Charley Watt Jr. at 830-469-2775 or email him at charleywattjr@yahoo.com and/or Mike Schwencke at 210-382-0367 or email him at mike.schwencke@outlook.com

A view of the 1925 Hydro-Electric Plant and Dam which is Checkpoint 1 for the upcoming walk in Gonzales, Texas on October 19. (Photo credit: Charley Watt Jr.)



A view of the Market Square Pavilion which is Checkpoint 2 at the upcoming Walk in Gonzales, Texas on October 19. (Photo credit: Charley Watt Jr.)



THE HILL COUNTRY VOLKSSPORTVEREIN'S

BY MARTIN CALLAHAN

The Hill Country Volkssportverein is hosting its popular Christmas holiday themed-walk in Comfort, Texas on November 30 which is in conjunction with Christmas in Comfort celebration. Comfort is about a 45-minute drive northwest of San Antonio at the junction of State Highway 27, U.S. Highway 87 and Interstate Highway 10.

Hermann Altgelt established the town in 1854, near the site of an Indian village. German settlers, many of whom had a philosophy opposed to a formal local government settled the town. The town suffered a tragic loss of life in 1862 at the Battle of Nueces when a large number of men from Comfort were killed attempting to cross into Mexico to enlist in the Union Army. After the war the bones of these Unionists were gathered and buried in Comfort, with a monument dedicated in 1866. The Treue der Union (Loyalty to the Union) monument is one of a few in the country that is allowed to fly the flag continually at half-mast.

With a population of almost 2,500 and a rich history, Comfort brims with character and charm. The star of the German-pioneered Texas Hill Country, Comfort has nearly a hundred pre-1910 buildings, many of which you will see along the walk trail.

The walk start-point is the Comfort Park, Highway 27, Comfort TX 78013. The start time will be between 8 and 10 a.m., finish by 1 p.m. Volkssporters have the option of doing one of two 5k routes or both for 10k through the historic old town decorated for Christmas.

Christmas in Comfort is one of the Texas Hill Country's most popular holiday events and draws many visitors to the Texas Hill Country for holiday shopping and family fun every year. The event will have around 130 vendors displaying their arts, crafts, music and delicious food treats in the historic district for a full day of holiday activities you can enjoy from 10 am to 9 pm which includes an illuminated night parade starting at 7 pm.

The Lane Valley Community Center volunteers who sell delicious food to Volkssporters at family prices at all the The Hill Country Volkssportverein's walk events will also have a booth selling tasty treats on the trail along High Street at the Christmas in Comfort event. The money from the food and drinks they sell is a fundraiser for the old Lane Valley School.

For more information on both walks call John Bohnert at: 830-496-1746 or email him at: tinabohnert@gmail.com.



Gayle Weinraub and Mike Schwencke stop for a picture on High Street with Christmas market vendors' tents visible behind them along the November 2023 "Christmas in Comfort," Texas Walk trail. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

From left to right, Mike Schwencke, with Winston, Doug Eide with Dolly and Gayle Weinraub stop for a picture in front of the Ingenhuett-Karger Saloon built in 1891 along the November 2023 "Christmas in Comfort," Texas Walk trail. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

SAVE THE DATE

COME WALK With Us

Paradise Walk

November 9-10, 2024

HOSTED BY
ARANSAS PATHWAYS

- ★ A WEEKEND FULL OF FUN FILLED FITNESS
- ★ A NON-COMPETITIVE EVENT
- ★ IDEAL FOR FRIENDS, FAMILIES, COUPLES, AND ENTHUSIASTIC WALKERS
- ★ UNIQUELY DESIGNED SCENIC MAPS OF ROCKPORT-FULTON AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO CHOOSE FROM

AN AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB SANCTIONED VOLKSSPORT EVENT

WWW.AVA.ORG

AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB

PARADISE WALK, ROCKPORT/FULTON TEXAS

BY MIKE SCHWENCKE

The San Antonio Pathfinders (SAP), Texas Volkssport Association (TVA) and the Aransas Pathways are co-hosting two days of AVA sanctioned walks in Rockport and Fulton, Texas. This event is planned on Saturday and Sunday, November 9th and 10th, 2024.

The Aransas Pathways include walking routes by area historical sites, and promotes hiking, birding and more. For additional information, go to "Aransas Pathways – What are your Pathways" website <https://aransaspathways.com/>.

The Saturday Walk will be from the Connie Hager Pavilion through Rockport, Texas. You will see the old town, unique shops and Aransas Bay front, and experience a walk through the once-a-month street market called "2nd Saturday Market in Downtown Rockport".

The Sunday Walk will be from the host hotel through historic Fulton, Texas. You will see coastal living areas and markets, historic buildings and the frontal bay area.

If you come early or stay late that weekend, there are Year-Round-Event (YRE) walks in nearby Corpus Christi and Port Aransas, provided by SAP. An additional Rockport YRE Walk is maintained by the Rockport Trailways AVA Club (YRE – "Rockport Sampler"). Information is available for all of these YRE walks at WWW.AVA.ORG.

On Saturday, November 9, 2024, a semiannual meeting of representatives from the various Texas AVA clubs will be held in the afternoon at the host hotel's conference room. If interested, everyone is invited to attend.

The Fairfield by Marriot Hotel, 2950 Hwy 35 N Business, Rockport, Texas (phone 361-727-9007) is the host hotel for this two-day event. The hotel is holding a special rate for a number of reserved rooms, November 8 – 9, for AVA attendees. If your stay is longer than just the weekend, talk to the hotel for an extended stay at the same rates.

Additional information for visiting Rockport/Fulton Texas, go to <https://www.rockport-fulton.org/>.

NEW MEXICO COUNTY WALK PROGRAM UPDATE

BY HELEN HULL

Three years ago, the Sun Country Striders started a project to walk in all 33 counties in New Mexico. With YREs already in place in 9 of the counties, walking the remaining 24 counties was a very realistic goal. And then in 2022, the Woodland Wanderers added 3 more YREs (Lordsburg, Roswell, San Antonio) as part of their Charley Pride Challenge. So our job got easier.

In 2022, we started with walks in 3 new counties to complete the southeast section of the state, then in 2023, we added walks in 5 counties in the southwest corner, and now in 2024, we added walks in 7 counties to complete the eastern side of the state. Next year we are poised to complete the last 6 counties in the northwest sector. Over the years, we have visited small towns (Mosquero, the county seat of Harding County, home to 707 humans and 40,000 cattle), old mining towns, Spanish mission ruins, adobe ruins, national park sites, and so much more.

Current plans are to walk in the last 6 counties in 2025, and to visit more national park properties. By the time we get thru, we will have had the opportunity to visit most (we may have missed one) or all of the national park sites in New Mexico.

We will start off in Cibola County west of Albuquerque along I-40 to walk in El Malpais National Monument and continue to El Murro. Along the way, we will have an option to visit the privately owned Ice Cave and Bandera Volcano, site of a cave whose temperature never rises above freezing. Yes, even in July, there is a small frozen pool of water in the cave which continues to grow as water seeps into the cave. It is located along the highway connecting El Malpais and El Murro.

McKinley County will feature two 5k routes, one in Gallup on the original Route 66. The town features many murals, historic buildings and a museum dedicated to the Navajo Code Talkers from World War II. The other 5k route features the Church Rock Trail in the Red Rock Park just east of Gallup.

Then heading north to San Juan County, we just had to include the Chaco Culture National Historic Park. This area was the regional center of the Pueblo people from 850 to 1250. The park protects the ruins from this civilization, and although it is a bit rough to get to requiring 15 miles of driving on dirt roads, it is worth the trip. Be sure and check the park's website for current conditions before heading there

A second walk in San Juan will be in Aztec and will start at the Aztec Ruins National Monument, yes, even more ruins. The walk will continue along a trail to the historic downtown area of the town..

HILL COUNTRY VOLKSSPORTSVEREIN'S WARING, TEXAS HALLOWEEN WALK

BY MARTIN CALLAHAN

The Hill Country Volkssportverein is hosting its 45th annual Halloween Walk in Waring, Texas, on October 26-27. Waring lies along the banks of the Guadalupe River in Kendall County, about 42 miles northwest of San Antonio. R.P.M. Waring founded the town in 1887. The town was originally known as Waringford, in honor of Waring's hometown in Ireland. In 1914 the Waring was a thriving little town of 300 people, but dropped down to 59 in 2000.

The start point for the walk is Waring Hall next to the Waring Volunteer Fire Department at 11 Waring Rd, Waring TX 78074. The start time for the walk on both days is 8 am till 11 am, finish by 2 pm and the trail is rated 2A.

Volkssporters will leave Waring Hall and turn south on a county road passing the old rail depot. This lightly traveled road provides typical scenic Hill Country views. You will then follow the route as it turns west to the check point and return to the hall on the county road. The entire trail is on pavement.

After completing the walk you will want to enjoy the delicious homemade breakfast or lunch served at the start point in Waring Hall at family prices. The food is a fundraiser for preserving the historic Lane Valley School house built in 1900. On Sunday at noon the Waring Volunteer Fire Department will host their annual fish fry next door to the hall. For information on this walk call John Bohnert at 830-995-2421 or email him at tinabohnert@gmail.com.

Then we head east to Rio Arriba County to Heron Lake State Park near Los Ojos (pop 97) and Charma (pop 917). We will hike thru the woods on a scenic trail overlooking the lake at an elevation of 7200'.

Continue to Taos in Taos County for a walk thru this UNESCO World Heritage and National Historic Landmark with its many art galleries and historic buildings. The walk starts at the Kit Carson Park and goes thru the cemetery where the frontiersman and army Indian scout is buried.

Our last walk will be in Sandoval County, but plans for this county are still up in the air. We hope to complete plans for this walk in Aug, so stay tuned for more details. All of our walks are available online using the OSB. We will also have registration and stamps available during the Las Cruces Convention Apr 25-May 4. We will have group walks from Mon-Thurs following the convention; however the schedule has not been finalized at this time.

And if you would like to join us in our quest to walk the 33 counties, you can still register for our 2024 walks via OSB and then add YREs and the 2025 walks to your convention plans. Contact Helen Hull, helenthun@yahoo.com for information about the program. We will work with you to catch up the other counties later in 2025 and beyond.



RUIDOSO - LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST WALKING WEEKEND CANCELLED

BY HELEN HULL

This event, scheduled for October 11-13, 2024, has been canceled by the West Texas Trail Walkers due to the forest fires in Ruidoso and the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico. The trails have been destroyed by the fire and the Forest Service does not expect them to reopen for at least six months.



Audrey Vertucci (left) and Suzzanne Markgraf pose for a picture in front of the two Case Eagles, originally used to advertise farm equipment during the 1930s-1940s, that are displayed next to the start point at Waring Hall during the 2023 Waring, Texas Halloween Walk. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)



Lyndel Trojcek and Richard Bohnert cooking and selling tasty food to hungry Volkssporters like Mike Schwencke (far right) for the Historic Lane Valley School fundraiser during the 2023 Halloween Walk in Waring, Texas. (Photo credit: Martin Callahan)

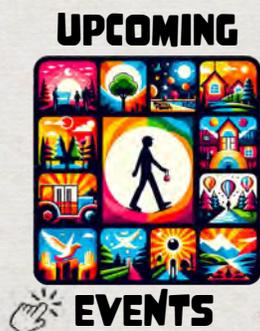


HERE IS A LIST OF UPCOMING MULTI-DAY EVENTS FOR YOUR TRAVEL PLANNING. CLICK ON THE LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION. THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THESE CLUBS.

Month	Date	Multi-day Event Description	Host Club	Location
2024				
September	06-08	Hudson to Housatonic NE Region Weekend	Volkssport Club at West Point	CT
September	13-15	Itasca State Park - Headwaters and Wilderness Trail - Walk & Bike	NorthStar Trail Travelers	MN
September	19-22	NW Regional Conference	Evergreen State Volkssport Assn.	WA
October	11-13	CANCELLED Ruidoso / Lincoln National Forest Hiking Weekend	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
November	08-10	Paradise Walk in Rockport - Texas Volkssport Assoc. semi-annual meeting	Aransas Pathways, San Antonio Pathfinders & TVA	TX
Dec/Jan	31-1	New Years Walks	Freestate Happy Wanderers	MD
2025				
February	14-16	Texas Trail Roundup / IML	Texas Trail Roundup	TX
April	10-11	Walk 2 New Arkansas Counties, Clarksville, AR	Ozark Hill Hikers	AR
April/May	29-2	AVA Biennial Convention	AVA & Sun Country Striders	NM & TX
May	5-8	Group Walk - New NM County Walks	Sun Country Striders	NM

PARTICIPANTS CORNER

CLICK ICONS TO VIEW ANNIVERSARIES, EVENTS AND AWARDS.



AVA FEATURED EVENTS

Northwest Region Conf



**Kitsap Peninsula
across Puget Sound
from Seattle**

September 19-24, 2024

8 Walks, 1 Bike & 1 Swim Plus Socials
Pre-Registration is Available Now

Sharon Moats - rd_nw@ava.org

[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

[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



**Flagler Beach in
Palm Coat, Florida**

November 1-3, 2024

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](#)

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

TX VOLKSSPORT ASSOC MEET



**Walking in
Paradise On the
Texas Coast**

November 9-10, 2024

Rockport TX

Sponsored by San Antonio Pathfinders,
TVA and Aransas Pathways
Special hotel rate available

[Click Here for More Information](#)

New Years Walks in MD



**December 31, 2024
January 1, 2025
Savage, Maryland**

4 Walks Over 2 Days
Welcome the New Year with Walks

Sponsored by Free State Happy Wanderers

Info: Linda or Bill Hassel: wahasse1798@verizon.net

[Click Here for More Information](#)



Do you know of a theme that would generate interest from a historical, cultural, educational, or scenic beauty perspective that has not previously been a Special Program? Are there major or intriguing American anniversaries occurring in 2026? Now would be the time to put your creative ideas and imagination to work. Talk with club members on walks as some have additional interests outside walking (yes, it does happen) and those other activities may generate ideas. Check your community calendars for local celebrations that are applicable across all states. Add "Brainstorming Special Programs" to the club's meeting agenda and solicit ideas at the meetings.

The AVA Special Program Policy limits new proposals for consideration, review and approval to just one AVA Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting per year which is typically the first meeting of the calendar year (i.e. 2025). If the proposal is approved, then the Special Program begins January 1st of the following year (i.e. 2026). Approval at the first BOD meeting of the calendar year provides sufficient time for the sponsoring club, before the Special Program's start date, to submit articles to TAW and the Checkpoint describing the new program, obtain booklets/awards and update the AVA webpage and OSB with the new program information. Plus, it allows the clubs across the country to understand the details of the new Special Program, review their current trails or develop new routes to include the qualifiers of the new program.

The AVA Special Program policy is on the AVA website (ava.org) and can be found by selecting the "Clubs Only" menu item at the top of the page, then select "Club Resources" followed by "Club Policies." Scroll down to the middle of the webpage and select "AVA Policy Manual." Scroll down to section named "IVV Volkssporting Events" and click on "AVA Special Programs & Club Challenges." You may also go to the Special Programs policy by using the link: [Special Programs and Club Challenges \(rev. 01.31.23 wck\).pdf \(ava.org\)](#)

WANTED -- AVA SPECIAL PROGRAM PROPOSALS FOR 2026

DIANE HOWELL EVANS
AVA PROGRAMS COMMITTEE, CHAIR

Does your club have an idea for a new AVA Special Program they would sponsor? One current Special Program will end on 12/31/25 so the Programs Committee will be looking for one new Special Program to begin on January 1, 2026

The Special Program proposal includes a complete description of the Special Program theme, a signed copy of the Special Program agreement, a budget based on the income and expenses for 100 books, a sample Special Program booklet and a color sample and size of the proposed award. The proposal needs to be received by the Special Programs Chair by **November 1st, 2024**. This deadline allows time for the Committee, during the busy holiday season at the end of the year, to review the proposal, communicate any concerns or suggestions to the club for revisions, and then review the submission of the final proposal and associated items. Presentations of the Committee's recommended Special Programs for approval are typically presented at the first BOD Meeting of the calendar Year (i.e. 2025).

For more information or if you have a specific question, contact Diane Howell Evans, Chair, Programs Committee, at Programs@ava.org



TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE WITH THE NEW AVA 2025 SPECIAL PROGRAM

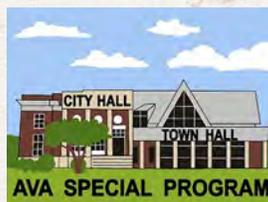
CAROLYN WARHOL

"Walking with the Wild Things" is a new AVA special program that will begin on January 1, 2025. You will be looking for trolls, gargoyles, fairies and gnomes as you walk along. Although these mythical creatures have their origins in folklore, they can be found in today's architecture, gardens, art, and children's toys among other places. You will need to find fifteen of these "wild" creatures to complete the challenge. Where can you look? Try looking for gnomes in gardens, gargoyles on churches, fairies in public gardens or bookstore windows, and trolls under bridges and in forests. If you live near Seattle, there is, of course, the famous troll under the Fremont bridge. Your reward for finishing will be a multi-colored patch designed by Dorman Batson. This special program is being sponsored by the Capitol Volkssport Club in Olympia, Washington.

The books can now be purchased for \$12 by contacting the POC Pam Greig-Davis at 6623 Riviera Ct. SE, Lacey, WA 98513. Although the program ends December 31, 2027, you have until December 31, 2028 to finish and redeem your patch. For more information, you can contact Pam at griegerprises@msn.com

AVA SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The last date to complete any purchased challenge books and redeem for the AVA Special Program "Great Lakes, Great Fun, Great Fitness and Great Friendships" is **12/31/2024**.



The last date to purchase a challenge book for the AVA Special Program "Town Hall/City Hall" is **12/31/2024**.



EXTENDED - The redemption of already purchased books for the Border Crossing Special Program has been extended to **12/31/2025**. Look for an international walk at the 2025 AVA Convention in Las Cruces, NM.

SELF-CARE SECRETS THAT WILL HELP YOU RESET AND RECHARGE

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

Self-care is a vital practice for maintaining and improving your mental health. By taking time for yourself, you can better navigate the challenges of daily life, reduce stress, and enhance your overall well-being. This article, courtesy of [America's Walking Club](#), explores various self-care strategies that can significantly support your mental health.

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH VOLUNTEERING



Volunteering can create a sense of community and [enhance your sense of purpose](#), helping to alleviate feelings of isolation. Contributing to causes bigger than yourself boosts self-esteem and showcases the impact of your efforts. This involvement provides a crucial support network and fosters a sense of belonging. By donating your time, you gain fresh perspectives that enrich your personal life.

FINDING ESCAPE AND RELAXATION THROUGH READING

Dedicating time to read offers a valuable escape and aids relaxation. Selecting materials that promote positivity or self-improvement can enrich this experience. Reading [provides a respite from personal concerns](#), allowing immersion in new worlds and ideas. This habit not only soothes the mind but also introduces coping strategies relevant to everyday life.

PRACTICING GRATITUDE DAILY

Daily gratitude practice enhances well-being by focusing on the positive aspects of life. Maintaining a gratitude journal or mentally noting what you appreciate [shifts perspectives](#) from negative to positive. This reflective practice highlights the good in life, no matter how small. Regular gratitude fosters a positive mindset, significantly improving mental health.

UNIQUE WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS

Reducing stress is crucial for maintaining mental health and overall well-being. Exploring unique and effective methods can help you find relief and achieve tranquility. Here are some innovative strategies that might be less conventional but can significantly alleviate stress:

- **Try a sensory deprivation tank:** Sensory deprivation tanks can offer a unique way to relax and reduce stress. By eliminating external stimuli, you can focus on calming your mind and relieving tension.
- **Practice mindful breathing:** Mindful breathing exercises can quickly reduce stress. Taking deep, slow breaths helps to [calm your nervous system](#) and clear your mind.
- **Take nature walks:** Spending time in nature can significantly reduce stress. The fresh air and natural surroundings can help you feel more relaxed and grounded.
- **Engage in creative activities:** Drawing, painting, or other creative outlets can be therapeutic. These activities allow you to express your emotions and distract your mind from stressors.
- **Try a natural remedy:** Incorporating a [THCA cartridge](#) into your vape routine can help manage stress. This method can provide relief by reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of calm.



Image via [Pexels](#)

PRIORITIZING GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE

Good sleep hygiene practices are vital for improving mood and cognitive function. Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule helps regulate your body's internal clock, leading to better sleep quality. [Creating a restful environment](#), free from distractions, is equally important. This includes keeping your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool. Prioritizing sleep hygiene can lead to more restful and restorative sleep, which is essential for mental health.

SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Learning to set healthy boundaries with work, relationships, and social activities is essential for preventing burnout. [Establishing clear limits](#) helps you maintain control over your mental health. By setting boundaries, you can ensure that you have enough time and energy for self-care. This practice also allows you to prioritize your well-being over the demands of others. Maintaining these boundaries is crucial for sustaining a balanced and healthy life.

MINIMIZING ENERGY-DRAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Periodically assessing and minimizing time spent with people who drain your energy is crucial for your mental health. Focus on nurturing relationships that [support and uplift you](#). Surrounding yourself with positive influences can significantly impact your well-being. It is important to recognize when certain relationships are more harmful than helpful. By minimizing negative interactions, you can create a more supportive and healthy social environment.

Self-care is an indispensable part of maintaining and improving mental health. Incorporating these self-care strategies into your daily routine can lead to a healthier, more balanced life.

THE THINGS WE CARRY

BY SUSAN IVES

Most advice on what to carry with you on a walk starts with the premise that you are going to be lost in the wilderness for a week. Bring a fishing line! Water purification tablets! A mirror to send Morse code messages to the rescue helicopters!

Maybe your walks are more adventuresome than mine but the biggest danger I typically face is a broken fingernail. Even so, I never seem to have what I need when I need it. I travel light – no backpack for me – so I took on a challenge to figure out exactly what I need to take and then to fit it into the smallest possible space.

Many years ago, when I was a scout leader, we had the girls make first aid kits that fit in a 35mm film canister. Whoops! No film in the camera bag: it's not 1985 anymore. I used an empty pill bottle instead.

Being a crazy craft lady, I decorated my bottle with washi tape, press-on gems and a couple of tassels but feel free to leave yours plain. I used the holes in the lid to tie on a small spring clip. Here's what's in my kit:

- 5 adhesive bandages
- Sheet of moleskin
- Petroleum jelly sample tube
- Pill bag: Tylenol, GasX, antihistamine, Imodium
- 2 Q-tips
- Tweezers
- 1 alcohol wipe
- 1 ginger tummy drop
- 1 cough drop
- Salt packet from fast food restaurant
- Small slip of paper with insurance information and emergency contact.



This is not intended to be a full-blown first aid resource. Rather, its purpose is to patch you up so you can finish your walk and then get proper care. Ellen Ott suggested carrying a baby aspirin: she once saved a walker who was having heart attack, she said, by giving him an aspirin. The tummy drop can also be used if your blood sugar plummets. Add the salt to water to boost hydration. John's kit has a tiny chap stick instead of the petroleum jelly. My kit is based on my experience. Yours will be different.

The key to making this work is to replenish your kit as soon as you get home. If you use the Tylenol, replace the Tylenol right away. Then, when you are headed out the door for your next adventure, your kit is ready to go with you.

My grab-and-go kit lives in an Altoids mint tin, also decorated within an inch of its life. It holds:

- \$10 bill, rolled up and tied with a foot-long piece of twine
- Two quarters
- Small penknife with a blade, file and scissors
- Small flashlight
- 3 safety pins
- Tiny screwdriver
- Whistle
- Compass
- Pencil stub
- Post-it notes
- Magnifying glass
- Small packet sunscreen
- Small packet bug repellent
- Screen cleaner wipe
- Card with ID & emergency info



Altoids tins are notorious for having their lids pop open, so it's prudent to put a handy rubber band around your kit: I use a hair scrunchie. I've never needed a whistle, and the penknife can do screwdriver stuff in a pinch, so I'll replace them if I think of a better use for the space. Right now, their slot is occupied by a thumb drive. John asked that his kit include a dental floss pick.

To fill your tin, keep your eyes peeled for tiny sample sizes and for giveaways at events. You can buy stuff in bulk and share with family, friends and walking club members. I bought 20 of those 3/4" compasses for less than \$7.

You won't be able to fly with even a small pen knife, so pack it. You might also run into a problem getting a knife through security at museums and theaters, so if that's on your itinerary leave it out for that excursion.

This isn't everything I take: I wear a hat and carry a water bottle. It's all the doohickeys, gizmos and thingamabobs that I don't need on every walk but often come in handy. What do you take on a walk? Let us know!



Other options for a container to hold your kit are a small plastic container nabbed from the kitchen or an unused eyeglass case. Medical organizations often hand out small first aid kits at health fairs, which you can augment with your collection of useful objects.

FUNDRAISING

BY SUSAN IVES

Ellen Ott, president of the Randolph RoadRunners in San Antonio, is a money making machine. Each year the club donates at least \$500 to AVA via the Big Give, and most of the money is raised in her creative fundraising campaigns. Here are three examples:



Medal Mania. Photo credit: Andy Thomas

1. For the past three years Ellen has set up a table on the lawn of AVA headquarters during the King William Fair. She sells Volkssport medals. Old medals. She charges a dollar a medal (free for children) and she's made just shy of \$300 each year. People find medals from places they visited, places they lived, places in Germany where they were stationed, medals in their favorite color, or featuring their favorite animals. . . almost everyone finds at least ONE medal they can't live without. She's started doing it on the First Friday Art Walk too.

Each medal presents a chance to talk to someone about AVA, to invite them to a walk, to have them add their name to the mailing list. Does your club have a treasure trove of old medals? You can do this too! Pick a community event where people will stop by looking for bright shiny things. Sell them or give them away leverage the opportunity to talk about AVA. It works!

2. One thing we walkers have is SHOES! For the past year or so Ellen has partnered with an organization called Got Sneakers? They recycle sneakers and you get paid for it. Sign up with them and they send you bags that hold 10-12 pair. You collect serviceable sneakers and ship them to Got Sneakers via FedEx. They pay for shipping. (Sorry, Alaska and Hawaii: continental US only.) You get paid between \$1 and \$7 for each pair of serviceable sneakers. Shoes too beat up to wear get recycled, so you are at least saving them from the landfill. The Roadrunners have made about \$130 so far. Get the details from their web site, gotsneakers.com.



From the Got Sneakers? Social Media Kit.

July 2024 Taco Cabana Sunrise Walk. Photo Credit: Andy Thomas



3. For the past decade or so the Roadrunners have held "Sunrise Walks" in June, July and August when it's too darn hot to walk during most of the day. They start at a Taco Cabana, a popular local fast food chain, with a start window of 6:30 AM – 8:30 AM. The route is a featured year-round walk, so there is no extra sanctioning fee. They set up one checkpoint. The restaurant provides parking, restrooms and kicks in a small donation for everyone who tells the cashier that they are with the club. They usually draw between 30-40 walkers. How do you set this up? Ask a restaurant manager.

Does your club have a creative fund raising program? Let us know!

The graphic features a group of nine walkers standing in a field of purple flowers. Above them, the text "Give from the Heart" is written in a white cursive font. In the bottom right corner, there is a red outline of the state of Texas with the words "The Big Give" written in white. At the bottom, a blue banner contains the text "SEPTEMBER 18-19, 2024 | 6PM -6PM" and "To give online visit www.ava.org". The America's Walking Club logo is also present in the bottom left corner of the banner.

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