



VOLUME 28, NUMBER 10



Fun, Fitness, Friendship

October 2019

www.ava.org

CHECKPOINT ✓

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Fun, Fitness, and Friendship!

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David Bonewitz, Ph.D.—AVA National President

CHANGE

This is a short note about a topic that we have discussed previously—change. There are times when change is essential. Recall Blockbuster—they failed to change and from a peak in 2004 of 9,094 stores there is now only one physical Blockbuster in the entire world (located in Bend, OR). While there are other examples of businesses that failed to change as the world changed around them, I think you get the point. The curves that I showed in the “State of the AVA Nation” clearly show that AVA has been on a downward trajectory for some time. It is obvious that we must make significant changes if we are going to survive.

We started making changes with the move to do business as AVA: America’s Walking Club. While we are proud of our Volksmarching tradition and history, it was not resonating with our potential customers. We haven’t thrown away our tradition and history, but we recognized that we needed to put the America’s Walking Club out in front if we were going to attract new folks. Now, we have invested some of our resources to hire a public relations company (Mass Media) to guide us to the changes that will give us a fighting chance to turn things around. They have the expertise and have been working hard to help us find the areas that need to change for the best results. We are not changing who we are or what we do. What we are trying to change is how we are seen by the public so we can attract new walkers and donors and ultimately grow! Keep watching for those changes to roll out from the Board.

In closing, changes for AVA: America’s Walking Club will not likely be comfortable for some, but truthfully, we have two choices. We can change, or we can die a slow death. Which will you choose?

★ Starting Point book deadline extended until October 4, 2019 noon. [Click here for pre-order form.](#) ★



World Heritage Festival
 Tour de las Misiones Walk
 Volkssporters follow the trail past the San Jose Mill and Acequia partially visible to the right.—Photo Submitted by Martin Callahan

Finance Director—Erin Grosso

The AVA's 990 Income Tax Return for year ending June 30, 2019 will be filed by October 15, 2019. The AVA is changing the fiscal year end to December 31st beginning January 1, 2020. For this reason, the AVA will file a 990 Tax Return for the period of July 1 – December 31, 2019. Final unaudited financial statements will be available on the AVA Website on November 15, 2019.

IMPORTANT CLUB NOTE: An email will be sent to all club POC's and Treasurers with instructions on how to change their fiscal year end from June 30th to December 31st if the club decides to make that change. However, clubs do not have to change their fiscal year end to coincide with the AVA. Clubs should look for this email the second week of October 2019. Please contact Erin Grosso, Finance Director with any questions or concerns. erin@ava.org

Accounting Specialist—Marian DeVaul

It is time to file your 990 E-Postcard, Annual Financial Report (AFR), and update your club officers in the ESR. An IRS user guide, and the AVA Retention policy for financial and event records have been posted on the AVA website under "Clubs Only". Marian will now be processing annual club reports; please submit a copy of your filings to marian@ava.org. The deadline to have these items submitted to the National Office is November 15, 2019.

QUARTERLY REPORTING

It's time once again to submit your 3rd Quarter Participation Reports. Even if you had zero participants, you must go into the ESR and check the 3rd Quarter box to report this information. Don't forget, the deadline is midnight on October 31st, and all reports submitted after this date are past due and subject to late fees.

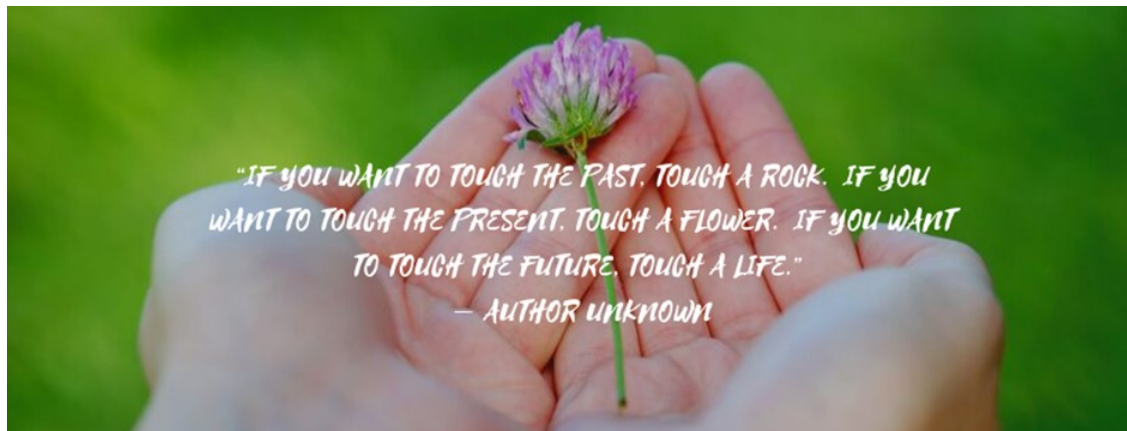
Communications— Samanta Sanchez

Insurance Requests for 2020

Clubs have begun to submit insurance requests for 2020. Our insurance company will not be processing requests for 2020 until early December. Please keep this in mind when submitting a request. Thank you.

Touch a Life, Become A Monthly Donor!

Our mission as America's Walking Club is to promote health and wellness through noncompetitive physical fitness activities for people of all ages and abilities. As America's Walking Club, we strive to be the preferred walking organization for people that want to improve their physical and mental well being, all while having fun. We can't do this alone, we need your help. By joining our **Friends of America's Walking Club Sustained Giving Program**, you are joining a special group of people dedicated to help others live a longer healthier life. Your monthly donations will help fund fitness programs that will help fight against obesity, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and depression among other health related issues. With as little as \$5 a month, you have the power to touch a life. Please consider being part of our **Friends of America's Walking Club Sustained Giving Program**. To become a monthly donor visit <https://ava.charityproud.org/Donate/?cid=2471> All donations are 100% tax deductible.



2020 Starting Point Book

The 2020 Starting Point Book pre-ordering will end October 6th. All books orders must be pre-ordered. Please use the form to order books, [Click here for form.](#)

Traditional Events Stamp

I have printed and will be sending out stamps for Traditional events from September 25 until the end of the year. If you have forgotten or will be sanctioning a late Traditional Event please send an email to hector@ava.org so that I may print the stamp for your event.

Multi-Event Calendar

Under the Events Tab on the website, we have the Multi-Event Calendar. Here you will find yearly events that happen with 2 or more events throughout the weekend. If you are planning your 2020 events, please let me know so that I may update your information on the calendar. Please email them with the format in the image to hector@ava.org.

Event Name
When
Where
Event Website
Flyer
Point of Contact
Comments

Starting Point Photo Contest

Thank you, everyone, for your submissions to the Starting Point Photo Contest this year. We had a fair amount of submissions this year. The Publicity Committee carefully reviewed all submissions and a final decision has been made. Congratulations to Diana Wendling a member of the Falcon Wanderers in Colorado Springs for winning 1st place and the front cover position with her submission. Her photo features the “A snowy walk through Garden of the Gods for Earth Day 2018. Colorado Springs, CO”. Our 2nd place winner is Frank Sayers, President of the Woodland Wanderers in Arizona, for his “Along the Trail” photo. This photo will be displayed on the back cover of the issue. The National Office would like to thank all who submitted their amazing photos for consideration.



#OptOutside - November 29, 2019 (Year #4)

There’s still time to send your information to Hector at hector@ava.org by October 7th to be included on the #OptOutside section of the AVA website. Do not forget to advertise your event in your local area! OptOutside club events will also be featured on the AVA Facebook page. Anyone searching Facebook looking for #OptOutside events will find the AVA Facebook page and learn about our events. Lastly, the AVA will waive the sanction fee for all Traditional events hosted on November 29th, 2019. It’s that easy to contribute! [Click here](#) for #OptOutside event form.

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING SCANNED BOOKS:

The electronic process of scanning & processing books will now include the Achievement Record Books
Walkers must scan books and submit to Karen Winkle via email: karen@ava.org.

All books must meet following guidelines in order to be processed electronically:

- Front of the book must be complete to include name, address, phone number and email.
- Member should indicate in the email whether they wish to receive patches, pins or certificates.
- The entire book must be scanned.
- Green and Purple books will scan properly on an 8.5”x11” page.
- Rose books must be copied front and back and only two columns per page. (If the copy is reduced it is often too small to read.)
- Pins, patches and Certificates will be mailed as usual.

NOTE:

All books must be scanned and emailed to Karen Winkle at karen@ava.org or mailed to:

American Volkssport Association
1001 Pat Booker Rd Ste. 101, Universal City, TX 78148
Attention: Karen Winkle.

AVA's Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales

Incident Reports

Please remember to complete an incident report every time there is an incident at one of your events. Reports should be emailed to Samanta at samanta@ava.org or you can mail it to Samanta Sanchez at the AVA National Office. Although the policy states reports must be filed within 30 days of the occurrence our insurance company has advised us to go ahead and complete incident reports whenever there is an incident even if it is after the 30-day period.

[Click here to view the incident report form.](#)

National Committee Restructuring

This past June, the AVA member clubs approved the restructuring of our Standing and Operational Committees. Chairs of Standing Committees will be appointed by the AVA President, David Bonewitz. If you are interested in serving on a Standing Committee, please contact Mr. Bonewitz at President@ava.org. If you would like to serve on one of the Operational Committees, please contact the Committee Chair.

AVA Standing Committees

Nominating Committee
Finance Committee
Governance Committee
Awards and Recognition Committee
Executive Committee

AVA Operational Committees

National Programs – Chair, Susan Medlin
National Convention – Chair, Jerry Wilson
Information & Technology – Chair, Chris Zegelin
Programs & Special Programs (Club hosted) – Chair, Tim Miner
Club Development & Support – Chair, John McClellan
Fund Development – Chair, Nancy Wittenberg
Publicity & Marketing – Chair, Henry Rosales
Membership – Chair, Erin Grosso
Training, Standards & Evaluation – Chair, Sammy Hunnicutt



Big thanks to Dick and Barbara Baker for organizing and leading today's great walk to Moulton Falls. Beautiful scenery, fun group, and perfect weather.—Facebook Post from Tom and Louise Baltes.

nationalprograms@ava.org
convention@ava.org
it@ava.org
programs@ava.org
clubsupport@ava.org
vicepres@ava.org
henry@ava.org
erin@ava.org
training@ava.org

AVA Employee Training and Development Days

Effective November 2019 the National office will be closed every *first Friday of the month at 2pm Central* for employee training and development days. Continuous training and education are critical to the development and success of our employees so they can better do their job for the AVA! In the words of William Pollard, "*Learning and innovation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow.*"

Publicity and Marketing Update

Our publicity firm, Mass Media is working with Dolores Grenier to support the marketing of the US FreedomWalk Festival, October 18-21, 2019 in Arlington, Virginia. The emphasis is primarily Facebook outreach to increase event participation. The impact of their work for this event will be evaluated and refined for the next event which is the Way of Lights Walk in Belleville, Illinois, November 25, 2019. The third event marketed will be the Texas Trail Roundup, February 21-23, in San Antonio, Texas.

Mass Media has also worked with the Publicity Committee on the development of a new promotional video, a new AVA logo and a new landing page for our website. These marketing products are expected to be rolled out by mid-November. More information on how clubs can phase in the use of these marketing tools will be in the November Checkpoint.

Do You Want Your Club to Grow? (Element3 Health, Walking Program)

During the next few weeks the AVA National office and members of the Club Development and Support and Membership committees will be meeting with David Norris, Chairman and CEO at Element3 Health, and Spencer Morgan, Founder and Chief Community Officer at Element3 Health. This is the company that created the health referral platform GroupWorks, which we currently use.

The purpose of the meetings is to determine how we can work together on two mutual interests; **Walking Participation and Club Growth**. Mr. Norris would like to get his customers walking **and** joining clubs because as we well know, once someone joins a club the chances of them walking regularly become greater!

Mr. Norris wants to help our clubs grow by referring people who are interested in walking to our clubs. His company receives referrals from businesses and insurance companies who incentivize their employees and customers to stay healthy by participating in a variety of outdoors physical fitness activities. Walking is one of the top ten activities on their list. Mr. Norris is seeking us out to take the lead in supporting his referred customers to walking activities. He realizes we are not the only walking organization in the country, however, because of our ongoing relationship with GroupWorks and our track record in planning walks, he is willing to explore how we can work exclusively to engage his referred clients in walking activities across the country.

One of the biggest challenges the AVA faces is club capacity. With many of our members aging out we lack enough volunteers and club members to support all the work that goes behind planning a good event. If we are successful in working with Mr. Norris this could mean more participants, more club members and possibly reimbursement of club membership dues to participating clubs! We will also have to be creative in figuring out how to engage referred participants in areas where we have no clubs. The excitement here is we could start “walking groups” that would eventually lead to club formation in new areas!

If your club is interested in participating in this referral system/Element3 Health Program, please contact your Regional Director. Full participation details will follow in the November Checkpoint. **The main club requirement is the willingness of the club to Accept, Welcome, and Engage referrals in your walking events and club membership. Let’s “AWE” them together!**

Columbia River Volkssport Club 35th Anniversary Event

This past month I was invited to attend and speak during the 35th Anniversary Celebration of the Columbia River Volkssport Club (CRVC) in Bend, Oregon. I invited my girlfriend, son and his girlfriend to join us since they live in Portland. From the moment we arrived we were greeted with smiles and hugs by current board members, former board members, club members, committee members, and the President of the CRVC Mr. Ed Hainline.

The event included 12 walks, 2 bikes, 1 swim and 1 rafting event! It was well attended with over 150 participants! Unique to this celebration was the rafting event. I commend the CRVC for stepping out and trying a different event that proved quite successful. I believe there were over 50 participants who went on the rafting trip. It was quite an adventure to ride the rapids!

The anniversary celebration culminated with a dinner banquet which was Emceed by Mr. Bill Winton, who by the way is an excellent Emcee! He demonstrated our values by giving a warm introduction not only to myself but to my family. The opportunity to experience this event reminded me how great this organization is. It reminded me once again, despite the challenges we face, the AVA is still thriving and doing well! The Fun, Fitness, and Friendship are what we do well, and we can all be proud of that. I encourage clubs to keep doing what you are doing *and* engage in new activities and initiatives.

I am very grateful for the invite and the opportunity. Special thanks to Mr. Ed Hainline who went out of his way to make me and my family feel welcomed. His hospitality and “friendship” are cherished. Oregonians ARE as friendly as Texans!



Henry Rosales, AVA Executive Director and Alma Aceves on the trail in Bend, Oregon.

IT Committee—Chris Zegelin, Chair

Website development

I am happy to announce new features for helping clubs market their events. An important part of hosting events is building excitement about your event. The new features are along side the OSB and new stamps allowing you to add pictures, a brochure, and an 'elevator pitch' to your sanctions.

To see an example try the following URL: "my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=115557"

Pictures really help people understand what they will experience on the trail. "A picture says a thousand words". How true in this case. It gives you a chance to show highlights and explain them with a short caption.

A club can market an event using brochures, but how to get them out to general distribution? You can now upload your event brochure so that everyone can see it. Event brochures are not just for traditional events, YREs, Seasonal and ACE events can also use brochures to get the word out.

Why an 'elevator pitch'? This is a short (200 characters), succinct reason to do the event. Because it is short, we can place it in event lists, and even in popups on a calendar. We can help you better market your event in more places than before.

These new features are optional. You will only use them where appropriate, but that is the vast majority of events. Certainly every traditional event would benefit from all three items. To access the features, you may do so by logging into "my.ava.org" and going to your club account. Select 'Sanctions' and then 'Sell it'. You may also use the "Enhance Approved Events" button under "ESR navigation" on the legacy ESR system. If you add these items to a 2019 YRE or seasonal, they will automatically carry forward to 2020.

We are trying to help by adding new features and capabilities with myAVA. The balance is between solving old problems and adding new and exciting features. We are moving forward trying to do some of both.

I have a question: We need a print function so that you can easily print the sanctions. Should this be the entire sanction (1 or more pages), or more like a brochure? The request was for a layout where the driving directions were large enough to read when driving. This would push us toward a brochure like layout with non-critical fields printed to fit. What do you think? Have a say at chris@zegelin.com.

Club Development & Support Committee—John McClellan, Chair

Committee Interviews – New Clubs

Our committee is looking to better understand the challenge faced by new clubs in the AVA. If you are leading a club that has started within the last 2 years – we'd like to talk to you! Please contact me at johnmc82@cfl.rr.com and I'll schedule a future date for you to 'interview' with our committee. My thanks!

Club Tip of the Month

We often hear the observation that "people won't help--they just want to walk." One reason for this may be that some members don't feel any social connection to the club. Each club should be a "team". Your goal is to have as many team members as you can get, and to help members develop a sense of belonging,

Here are some ideas from Committee Members on how to change that:

- After every walk have a little social "Sit and Chat" at the start point. (If not enough seating, head to a local restaurant). Have lemonade and pack of chips for each. Ask for comments on the day's walk, what changes they would make. Make sure the conversation isn't dominated by board members. Use this time to update members on finances, route changes, and AVA info. Announce where the next walk will be and when. Ask them for suggestions of future walks. Listen with respect.

- Make “feedback” cards and have participants rank the event (1-10). Listen to what the members say, and to make them feel really special. Write down some of their comments. In the next email to members, mention the overall ranking of the walk, and thank all those who gave feedback.
- Have a board meeting after a walk. Invite everyone to stay and participate. Go through the basic agenda then ask for members to give input. Write down their comments and incorporate them into the minutes. Then, ask for their help in implementing new ideas!

Training, Standards and Evaluation—Sammy Hunnicutt, Chair

Guidelines for Prolonged Heat Exposure



Prolonged or intense exposure to hot temperatures can cause **heat-related** illnesses such as **heat** exhaustion, **heat** cramps, and **heat** stroke which is also known as sun stroke.

As the human works to cool itself under extreme or prolonged heat, blood rushes to the surface of your skin. As a result, less blood reaches your brain, muscles, and other organs. This can interfere with both your physical strength and your mental/cognitive capacity, leading, in some cases, to serious danger.

By reducing excessive exposure to high temperatures and taking other precautionary steps, most heat-related illnesses can be avoided. Those who walk in hot or humid environments -- such as throughout the Southern and Southwestern United States sites during summer months -- are most at risk. Other areas of the United States are not immune to the potential for heat related injuries and illnesses during the summer month. Also, long, hot afternoons in the spring and fall can pose problems if warning signs are ignored.

With prompt treatment, most people recover completely from heat-related illness. **However, heat stroke can be deadly if not properly managed.**

Never take extreme ambient temperatures for granted. This is especially true for areas with high humidity. High humidity increases the risk of heat illness because it interferes with the evaporation of sweat, your body's way of cooling itself.

Heat related injuries can potentially cause severe health hazards and can be fatal. Please note that there are heat related deaths every year in the United States.

Please refer to the new AVA Heat Related Illness Prevention Guidelines on the AVA website: [Click here for Guidelines.](#)



Native Americans help kick off the events with their traditional ceremony.



Doug Eide (center, number 1093) poses for a picture before the start of the bike event.



Volkssporters stroll along the trail past the front of Mission San Jose.

World Heritage Festival—Tour de las Misiones Walk—
Photos submitted by Martin Callahan.

National



18th US Annual FreedomWalk
Come Walk, Bike & Swim - Volksmarching at its BEST

October 18-20, 2019

3 DAYS
6 TRAILS
BIKE - SWIM
VOLKSTRIATHALON
SOCIAL & DINNER

Logos: stayArlington, WALKING ASSOCIATION, AYA, Bike Arlington

Click on image for more information



See you next year!
TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP
3-Day International Walk Fest
San Antonio, Texas
February 21-23, 2020

Logos: IML, WALKING ASSOCIATION, AYA

Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send your request to Hector at hector@ava.org. Please note on the subject line: Request for Checkpoint.

The American Volkssport Association

The Mission of AVA is to promote and organize noncompetitive physical fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness, and friendship for all ages and abilities.

