



AVA BOARD CHAIRMAN - CARL CORDES

CALL FOR IVV AMERICAS AND OCEANIA AVA DELEGATES



IVV Americas and Oceania (IVV-AO) is the official representative at the continental level for IVV within our continents. AVA is a Member National Association obliged to have representatives attend the General Assembly and exercise their voting rights. AVA is permitted two delegates at the General Assembly which typically meets electronically once per year.

I will be appointing two delegates. If you are interested in being an AVA delegate for IVV-AO, please email me at chairman@ava.org. This is a volunteer opportunity to get involved at the international level.

PRESIDENT/CEO - HENRY ROSALES

AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING NOTICE

The AVA National Board of Directors will meet Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Central Time Zone. This will be a virtual meeting on the Office 365 Teams platform. To access the meeting click on the link below. If you have problems accessing the meeting, please contact Hector at 210-659-2112 or email him at hector@ava.org. The meeting link will also be posted on the AVA website with the agenda.

[Click here for the meeting link.](#)

Board Meeting Deadlines:

August 27, 2025: Agenda items due to the Board Chairman, Carl Cordes, at chairman@ava.org. Please copy henry@ava.org

Note: If you are a Committee Chair and would like time on the agenda, please send an email request to the Board Chairman, Carl Cordes and copy Henry.

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September 3, 2025: Officers, Board Members, and Committee reports and all supplemental documents for the board meeting are due at AVA National Office. Email reports and all supporting documents to henry@ava.org

September 10, 2025: Board meeting information package emailed to Board Members and Deputy Directors.

AVA Board Officer's Reports and Committee Reports:

[Click here for Agenda items Form](#)







[Click here for Officer and Committee Report Form](#)

AVA NATIONAL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

During the AVA Regular Membership Meeting Club members voted to amend our Bylaws replacing Associate members with Individual members and entitling Individual members with most of the same benefits as Club members including the right to vote. This means everyone over the age of 18 who is a member of the AVA National Organization can now vote on any business brought before the AVA Membership. The one benefit that does not extend to Individual members is the right to conduct or sponsor AVA sanctioned events.

In light of these Bylaws changes, Associate and Family membership categories no longer exist. The only categories that now exist are Regular Club Members, State Association Members, Individual Members and Honorary Members. Honorary members may not conduct, or sponsor AVA sanctioned events or vote at meetings of the members.

The AVA National Individual membership cost is \$25.00 per person and includes the following benefits:

-  A 10% discount on most AVA merchandise.
-  A 10% discount on our National Conventions registration full package and other signature events hosted by the National Office.
-  An annual subscription to The American Wanderer (TAW), a national walk publication of the AVA.
-  The opportunity to participate in the Centurion Challenge Program
-  Each AVA Individual member is entitled to participate in AVA Membership meetings.
-  Each AVA Individual adult (18+ years) member is entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members.

Although Family membership was never an official AVA membership category, we will continue to offer AVA Individual members the benefit to enroll up to two family members, under the age of 18 and living in the same household, as a family member for an additional nominal price of \$5.00 per family member.

Family members are not Individual members and must be under the age of 18 and therefore not entitled to vote. However, they are eligible for all other benefits. Should you have any questions please contact Erin at erin@ava.org

NEW MARKETING PARTNERSHIP WITH WIDER CIRCLES

The AVA has a new innovative marketing partner called Wider Circles. This company will help clubs engage communities by managing and marketing events on their digital platform called **Hank**. Be sure to attend the AVA webinar on August 20th at 6:00pm Central to learn more about this partnership.

Hank is your go-to for fun, friendship, and connection. This **free platform for adults 55+** helps you discover engaging events--both in-person and virtual--and connect with people who share your interests. Club Leaders: Hank will be attending the August Webinar to demonstrate Hank as a simple and free marketing tool to help your club attract more walkers.

[Click Here To Sign Up For Free!](#)

Active in Los Angeles, New York, South Florida, and Fresno regions--sign up to explore what's happening nearby!

The AVA is looking for clubs who are interested in sharing their events on the Hank platform. This platform allows clubs to post walks and socials free on their website and it automatically sends event notices to everyone who is on their site within a 10-mile radius. When a club logs into the Hank system they can communicate with everyone who plans to attend the event through a chat room, like Meetup.

Here is a link where you can learn more about Wider Circles and Hank.

[About - Wider Circle](#) | [Connecting Neighbors for Better Health](#)

We are in the initial planning stages of this partnership trying to determine if this is a good fit for our clubs. Because Wider Circles has a big market in NY, FL, and CA., these are the areas we would like to target first. This looks like a great marketing tool for clubs to help increase walk/event participation. The plan is to pilot this with a couple of clubs before rolling it out to all clubs. If your club is interested contact Henry at henry@ava.org.

AVA WEDNESDAY WEBINARS ARE BACK!

NEXT WEBINAR IS AUGUST 20, 2025, AT 7:00PM.

The next AVA online webinar will be Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 7:00-8:00 pm Central. The registration link will be on the AVA website, or you can [click here](#) to pre-register for the event. If asked for a passcode, the passcode is AVA.

Special Guest Host – Henry Rosales, President and CEO, AVA

Presenters include:

Krystee Knapic, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Wider Circles

Learn about a new, free, and powerful digital marketing tool to help your clubs attract new walkers. Hank is a **free platform for adults 55+** to discover engaging events--both in-person and virtual--and connect with people who share similar interests. Hank Senior Vice President Krystee Knapic will present at the August 20th Webinar to demonstrate their simple and free platform. Don't miss this opportunity to grow your communities. You're invited to [learn more about Hank by clicking here](#).



Erin Grosso, Marian DeVaul and Henry Rosales, AVA National Team Updates

The AVA National Team is committed to better communication with our members. To this end, all members of the National Team and Operational Committee Chairs, as needed, will be available during AVA webinars to present updates, answer questions, and listen to member concerns and recommendations at least twice a year or as often as necessary. Results from the Convention Survey will be shared during the webinar.

FREE GRAPHIC DESIGN SUPPORT FOR AVA CLUBS

If your club needs help with brochures, banners, t-shirts or website graphics email Rachel Bush, Associate Professor Graphic Design at Austin Peay State University with your interest. Be sure to advise her you are an AVA club. Her email is bushr@apsu.edu If you already emailed Rachel and she did not respond, please send her a follow up email. She had problems with her email.

The AVA will sponsor the internship fees for this program for the first five clubs who sign up. To apply for the sponsorship/mini grant please complete the mini grant form and submit it to henry@ava.org AFTER you have been accepted by Rachel Bush.

[Club Support Form](#)

BIG GIVE COMMITTEE - SAMANTA SANCHEZ, CHAIR

MY MOTHER'S JOURNEY - ANONYMOUS AVA MEMBER

At the age of fifty-seven, my mother found herself at a pivotal moment in her life. Both her daughters had flown the nest, and her once-vibrant house now echoed with silence. Her health had been on a slow decline, and as a single mother with her daughters now gone, she felt a profound sense of loneliness, confusion, and isolation. She yearned for a renewed sense of purpose.

One day, my mother decided to take a stroll in the park, a place filled with cherished memories of our countless adventures and laughter. During her walk, she came across a group of people walking together, laughing joyfully- just like we used to. Their laughter brought her countless memories of our time together. She yearned to experience that joy once more, so she decided to join them for what she thought would be a "simple walk". On that day, she was warmly welcomed by a club from the America's Walking Club organization, a noncompetitive walking organization dedicated to promoting health and wellness through fun, fitness, and friendship. Little did my mother realize that this seemingly ordinary walk would transform her life.

As my mother became a part of the group, each walk became a personal journey for her to rediscover who she was. I watched her flourish - she laughed more, her energy surged, and she made wonderful new friends. Walking alongside others served as her therapy, as she found comfort in shared stories and mutual encouragement. Every step was not only a physical accomplishment, but a step towards a healthier, more fulfilling life. Her story serves as a reminder of the strength found in community and the transformative power of walking.

By supporting organizations like America's Walking Club, you can help individuals like my mother take the first step to enhance their lives one step at a time. Your contribution to their annual fundraiser, the Big Give, can help create healthier communities, nurture lasting friendships, and transform lives. Please consider making an online donation to The Big Give on September 17 - 18 from 6 pm - 6 pm. Or mail your donation check to the American Volkssport Association: 1032 S. Alamo St., San Antonio, TX 78210, now through October 31st.





The Big Give **MATCH MINUTES**
 MAKE A DONATION ON
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 17 @ 6PM
 THROUGH
THURSDAY, SEPT. 18 @ 6PM
 DURING THE MATCH MINUTES DEPICTED BELOW



Pacific Time

Sept. 17 | 4:12 PM
 Sept. 17 | 5:12 PM
 Sept. 17 | 6:12 PM

Sept. 18 | 8:12 AM
 Sept. 18 | 10:12 AM
 Sept. 18 | 12:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 1:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 2:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 3:12 PM

Mountain Time

Sept. 17 | 5:12 PM
 Sept. 17 | 6:12 PM
 Sept. 17 | 7:12 PM

Sept. 18 | 9:12 AM
 Sept. 18 | 11:12 AM
 Sept. 18 | 1:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 2:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 3:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 4:12 PM

Central Time

Sept. 17 | 6:12 PM
 Sept. 17 | 7:12 PM
 Sept. 17 | 8:12 PM

Sept. 18 | 10:12 AM
 Sept. 18 | 12:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 2:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 3:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 4:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 5:12 PM

Eastern Time

Sept. 17 | 7:12 PM
 Sept. 17 | 8:12 PM
 Sept. 17 | 9:12 PM

Sept. 18 | 11:12 AM
 Sept. 18 | 1:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 3:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 4:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 5:12 PM
 Sept. 18 | 6:12 PM

YOUR DONATION WILL BE MATCHED DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR. UP TO \$100!



CONVENTION COMMITTEE - JERRY WILSON, CHAIR

PLANNING EVENTS FOR 2026

The year 2026 will be a monumental year for several reasons, why not plan walks around some of the events, A few dates to commemorate are:

- AVA will celebrate the 50th Anniversary:
 - - AVA was chartered as an associate member by IVV on April 30, 1976
 - - First Walk: In Fredericksburg TX June 12 and 13, 1976 as the Texas Walk Fest
 - - Forty-seven years ago: The first National Walking Convention was in Dayton OH on June 16, 1979 where the AVA name was adopted
 - - Ten years ago, many AVA office members came to the National Office.
- The United States will celebrate its 250th Anniversary
- Rails-to-Trails will celebrate their 40th Anniversary. Many local clubs incorporate trails created under this program in their club walks.

In 2026 the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) will celebrate their 7th Anniversary. The RTC has a major initiative underway to establish a trail 3,700 miles long from Washington DC to Washington State. The "Great American Trail". To assist in identifying existing trails, the RTC website provides "TrailLink," an on-line application that provides trail information nationwide.

I understand the AVA Nation wants to celebrate the AVA 50th Anniversary in all ten AVA Regions during 2026. More information will be coming out about the many celebrations. Also, many local clubs plan to designate events as celebrating the AVA Anniversary. The more opportunities to get out and walk the better. Lets plan a great 2026!

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - SUSAN FINE, CHAIR

PUBLICITY UPDATE

1. Please encourage your members to send us their favorite photos, for the Starting Point Photo Contest. The winner's photo will be the front cover of the 2026 Start Point; second place is the back cover. Please let your club's members know, so they can enter the contest. Get info, registration form and rules [here](#).

2. Many of you are in Finland for the IVV Olympiad. Please share your photos of some of the U.S. volkswalkers, showcasing America's Walking Club participants on [AVA Facebook](#) page. We'll include a few of them in the Sept. TAW.

3. As part of next year's AVA 50th Anniversary of American Volkssporting, the Publicity Committee is planning on extensive use of social media to highlight all aspects of our sport – especially our active clubs!! We'd like to include all clubs – but we need your help! Please send us 3-4 sentences suitable for social media, with your club logo and/or a club photo. Tell us who and where you are, how active your club is (membership, events planned for 2026), anything "special" about your club, and your contact information for anyone looking for more information. Our thanks! Please send your info to publicity@ava.org.

An example might look like this --

Our club in Nevada is AVA-296, The Las Vegas High Rollers & Stollers, established in 1985. They are an active club with 2-3 events a month, 12 self-guided walking routes and 3 bike routes in /around the Las Vegas area, Boulder City, Lake Mead/Hoover Dam, Summerlin and St. George, Utah. This club is the home club of the current AVA Board Chairman, Carl Cordes, and will be hosting our first special anniversary event of 2026 - The AVA Chairman's Anniversary Weekend from 9-11 JAN. Contact the Las Vegas High Rollers & Stollers at: [Las Vegas High Rollers and Stollers](#) or email: lvhrs1985@yahoo.com.



4. Here's another idea from John McClellan's post on Facebook to help promote your club and America's Walking Club.

**Walk As A Group!**

Group walks attract attention, and - new members!! People gravitate to the social connections and also, many feel safer in a group. Current members can start growing your club by bringing guests from their condo, or HOA.

Here are three ways you can structure groups walks:

a. Walk your own Year-Round / Seasonals. This is a no-brainer but not something we all do. If you sponsor several YRE/SE - you can rotate through those regularly.

b. Traveling Guided Walk. If you have only a few YRE sanctioned, or - they are spread far and wide, consider the Traveling Guided Walk sanctioning device, which allow a club to hold multiple guided walks on different routes in their area when there aren't sufficient year-round or seasonal events close by and they do not expect enough participation to cover the sanctioning costs of normal guided walks Events may be offered with the following conditions:

- The club will receive an IVV stamp that they may use for the rest of the year at multiple guided walks. The participation fee will be the same as usually paid for IVV credit. Each event must be sanctioned.
- The IVV stamp for Traveling Guided Walk (TGW) events may be renewed for subsequent years by sanctioning a Traveling Guided Walk for the next year and paying the current fee.
- Traveling Guided Walk events may not be held on currently sanctioned year-round or seasonal walk routes and clubs must not eliminate current year-round or seasonal walk routes.



c. **ACE-WG. "Fun Walks"** . Did know that [America's Walking Club](#) created a specific event format called AVA Community Events - Weekday Guided, or ACE-WG for short. This format allows you to hold events tailor-made for recruiting new members, covered by AVA's national insurance policy but at no cost to the participants (if you want). ACE-WG events are designed to encourage weekly participation on a regular basis. Fun walks, guided walks, meet ups, etc., are examples of events that could fall into this category. ACE events are NOT IVV approved, so there are no stamps for IVV credit associated with ACE.

5. **SAVE THE DATE:** The Big Give, AVA's annual fundraiser, is September 17 at 6pm through September 18 at 6pm. As we are making plans for the 50th anniversary of volkswalking in the United States in 2026 (the first event was in Fredericksburg, TX in 1976), your donation will help AVA with our 50th celebration, to help support the clubs and individuals who have committed to a special multi-day regional event – one each month in 2026. But AVA is also the backbone for those who have a passion for volkswalking, and this annual campaign helps the organization continue to provide insurance for all clubs' events, maintain the website, work on innovative solutions to keep our sport up-to-date with technology, and so much more. We will send more information in the next few weeks about the fundraiser.



IML TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP – February 20-22, 2026
THREE DAYS, TWO CITIES, ONE UNFORGETTABLE WALKING EVENT!
 Mark your calendars for the **2026 TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP** and the **AMERICAN VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION'S 50th ANNIVERSARY INAUGURAL WALK!** Join us in historic Fredericksburg, TX to commemorate our Inaugural Walk and 50th Anniversary followed by two days of walking in colorful downtown San Antonio, TX. Highlights on the walks include the San Antonio Riverwalk, the Alamo, the UNESCO World Heritage Missions, the Pearl, the Japanese Tea Gardens and more! Distances range from 5K-42K. More event details coming soon. Check out our website at texastrailroundup.org.
HOPE Y'ALL COME!

**WALK WITH PURPOSE
GIVE WITH HEART!**

Your Donation to the Big Give Paves the Path to a Better Tomorrow.

**DONATE ONLINE
SEPTEMBER 17 - 18, FROM 6 PM TO 6 PM!**

BIKE RIDE * WALK * RUN

WORLD HERITAGE FESTIVAL
 Celebrating **10 Years**

TOUR DE LAS MISIONES

2025

SEPTEMBER 6 * MISSION COUNTY PARK
REGISTER TODAY: WorldHeritageFestival.org

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE - DIANE HOWELL EVANS , CHAIR

AVA 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!! 1976-2026



The Programs Committee is looking for ideas from our AVA clubs and walkers on ways to celebrate this half-century milestone, which will also coincide with America's 250th! Please brainstorm at club meetings and share your ideas with the Programs Committee. Ideas can be sent to Programs@ava.org.

Between now and June 2026, we also encourage AVA walkers to share their AVA experiences over the past 50 years with our membership by writing an article for The American Wanderer. Suggested topics include travel, memorable events, health benefits, volunteer experience, social aspects, and many more personal memories. Send your story to the Publicity Committee at TAW@ava.org.

Calendar of signature AVA 50th Anniversary events coming very soon!

RECOGNITION OF AVA SPECIAL PROGRAM COMPLETIONS

At the Special Programs table at the Las Cruces Convention several folks inquired why they were not recognized in the TAW or on the website when they completed an AVA Special Program. A review of past TAW issues shows articles have been written by several POCs recognizing completions in their club's hosted AVA Special Program, but not all the special programs.

Moving forward, the Programs Committee would like to publish a list of the current active AVA Special Program completions. To respect a person's privacy, we need to know for anyone currently participating in an active AVA Special Program or anyone who has completed a current active AVA Special Program, if you prefer your name omitted from any recognition list. For a list of current active Special Programs please visit the AVA webpage at: cb.ava.org/specprog.php.

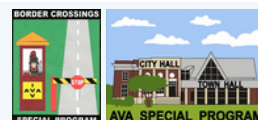
Please provide your name, city and state if you prefer your name omitted from upcoming recognition lists to Programs@ava.org by September 30, 2025.

SPECIAL PROGRAM DEADLINES

If you are still considering participating in Special Programs, the following Special Programs have a 12/31/25 deadline for the PURCHASE of the current program book:



The last date to REDEEM the following Special Programs challenge books is 12/31/25:



For information on these Special Programs, as well as all the other current programs, please review the Special Programs website at: cb.ava.org/specprog.php

ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST - MARIAN DEVAUL

FINANCIAL

If your club's fiscal year ends on 6-30-25, it is time to file your 990 E-Postcard, Annual Financial Report (AFR), and update your club officers. Both documents are to be submitted to the national office before the November 15, 2025 deadline. An IRS user guide, and the AVA Retention policy for financial and event records have been posted on the AVA website under "Clubs Only". Please submit a copy of your filings to marian@ava.org.

2026 STARTING POINT BOOKS - PRE-ORDER NOW!

It's time to pre-order your 2026 Starting Point Book. The deadline is no later than midnight, September 30, 2025. This year, due to increased costs of printing and less books being ordered, the price has gone up to \$35.00 per book plus shipping and handling. If we see a decline in interest in ordering this year, this may be the last year we produce a paper book and instead consider creating an electronic version. Please e-mail us with any comments or concerns. Form may be mailed to AVA, 1032 S. Alamo St, San Antonio, TX 78210, or place your order by emailing the form to marian@ava.org

[Starting Point Book Pre-Order Form](#)



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

**SUPPORT AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB AND
GIVE ONLINE ON
SEPTEMBER 17-18,
2025 | 6PM - 6PM.**

GO TO AVA.ORG
OR SCAN THE QR
CODE TO GIVE
ONLINE.



**DONATE BY MAIL, NOW THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2025.
MAIL YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE
AMERICAN VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION:
1032 S ALAMO ST, SAN ANTONIO, TX 78210.**

IT SPECIALIST - HECTOR HERNANDEZ

YEAR ROUND EVENT RENEWALS

The Year Round Event (YRE) renewal process began June 1, 2025 and will end August 31, 2025. Please get your events renewed soon. There are 1276 events that have not been renewed. **Don't forget to update your stamp information for special occasions like the 50th Anniversary events.**

RD's must review and approve all events by September 15, 2025 in order to get them into the 2026 Starting Point book. Any approvals after the 15th do not guarantee a section in the 2026 Starting Point book.

If you have any questions or need any assistance please call (210) 659-2112 or email Hector@ava.org.

***Please note that new events can be submitted year round. If you are planning a new event for 2025 you can submit those events anytime.



#OptOutside

For those Clubs who wish to participate in OptOutside this year, AVA will gladly post your events on the website and Facebook. Please fill out the form by clicking the link below. This year Black Friday will land on November 29th, 2024 so I will need all submissions for participating Clubs and events to be sent in by November 15, 2024. Please email hector@ava.org for any questions or help with events.

[Click here to fill out the OptOutside event form.](#)

First State Webfooters Walking Club 35th Annual Sea Witch Triathlon

Saturday, October 25th - 8 am

Events 5K/10K Walk

Bike 10.6K-43.6K +

300 meter Swim

Start/finish Sussex YMCA, 20080 Church St.,
Rehoboth Beach Delaware



This traditional event is in conjunction with the Sea Witch Festival in Rehoboth a three day Halloween festival featuring a costume parade, pet parade, live music, games and more

Join us for the weekend

Friday, Oct 24th at the Milton YRE
walk on the Broadkill River - Online
Start Box

Sunday, Oct 26th

teaming up with
Freestate Happy Wanderers
a short distance to Boardwalk
on Atlantic Ocean
OC Convention Center
4001 Coastal Hwy,
Ocean City, Maryland



Contact: Karen Fernandez
fdejuankaren@comcast.net
410-802-6106

NATIONAL EVENTS



**Hike in the Lincoln National Forest
Ruidoso, New Mexico
October 10-12, 2025**



**13th Annual Fall Volksmarch
September 28, 2025**



**Come and join us for the 24th
US FreedomWalk
17-19 October 2025**



Walk Arlington USFreedomWalk.org
An International Walking Experience

Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

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



The American Volkssport Association

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



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