



Convention Chairperson—Sherry Sayers

Registration is now LIVE!

As of midnight, the 20th AVA Biennial Convention online registration is live.

Go to <http://2017AVAConvention.org> and select the new 'Registration' tab. You may have to refresh the page to see it. This will take you to the information you need to register successfully for the upcoming convention in Billings. Please read the page carefully. When ready, select to register for the full convention, or to select individual items.



Please read everything carefully. It can be a bit complicated, as I have attempted to save you some money with the registration process. Please email Chairperson@2017AVAConvention.org if you encounter any issues, or have questions.

20th AVA Convention in Billings 2017 -- Update

Online registration for the 20th AVA Biennial Convention opened February 1, 2017, and will run until midnight April 30, 2017. The convention events will be from June 5th, 2017 through June 11th, 2017. The Convention headquarters will be at the Red Lion Hotel and Convention Center in Billings, Montana.

I would like to put out a “challenge” to all the clubs, club members or anybody who likes to eat, and that challenge is to donate money or bring your own goodies to share at the walks. The last convention had some of the best “goodies” I have ever had at a walk, and we need to uphold that tradition. The walk in Clear Lake, I think it was, was awesome with all the baked goods, and packages of cookies, crackers, chips, etc. I would like to do that at Buffalo and Little Bighorn and maybe Cody. We have a very small club presence in this region (to be exact one club in Wyoming and only three in Montana that are far, far apart), so having homemade baked goods is not an option. We welcome anything you can bring, or with the donated money, I will make a goodie run to Sam’s Club and get all the packaged cookies, crackers, chips, fruit, etc. that an awesome walk will need. Please designate that your donation is for “walk goodies.” If anybody has any other suggestions, please contact me at Chairperson@2017AVAConvention.org.

We are still looking for volunteers for the many jobs that must be done, and have arranged schedules so you can still do all the things you need to do for the convention, including events and meetings and such, and still have time to volunteer. If you volunteer, you will receive a T-Shirt compliments of the Convention Committee. To volunteer, go to the Volunteer tab of the Convention web site (<http://2017AVAConvention.org>), read all the information, choose the task you want to help with, click on the button and it will take you to the site to note your volunteerism. Down at the bottom of the Volunteer page is the button to choose your T-Shirt size, and there are links to donate, as well.

We still need a Silent Auction Committee Chair and someone to do Geocache directions for the walks. We will still have a Silent Auction, as that is a great fundraiser for AVA, but keep in mind things such as tracking your donations and getting your receipts may be delayed. So start getting your items together to bring to the Convention, as we welcome anything you wish to donate (well, not your used socks!). If you are not going to make it to the convention, but still want to donate an item, email me at the above address and I will let you know where to mail it.

The last item I want to mention is that we have decided to sanction each of the events not just for the day advertised, but they will be sanctioned for the entire period of the convention, so that if for some reason, you are unable to do them with the rest of us, you can do them on your own. The only caveat is you must either register online (before the April 30 deadline) or at Walk Central at the hotel to pick up the directions and then please realize you will be doing the event without support, just like a Seasonal event. We are also going to be including in your registration packet a SNOB book that you will be able to get stamps for at the convention. This includes all the Regional Directors, National Officers, and Executive Director stamps.

Stay tuned for more Convention updates, either on the website or the next Checkpoint.

Information and Technology—Frank Sayers, Chair

Web Site and ESR Support Email

You are looking at an ESR, or searching for something, or have a suggestion about how something should be done on the AVA web site, now you have a way to let us know, and allowing us to track the question or suggestion.

Send an email with as much information as you have, including screen shots, things you have seen somewhere else, exactly what it is doing and what you were doing, what browser you are using, what operating system, everything that we may find useful. Send the email to ITSupport@AVA.org. It will be received and automatically logged into our ITIL based tracking system. An alert will be sent, someone will look at it, either fix it or send it to someone who can. The results will be documented and will then be searchable for future issues.

ITSupport@ava.org

Scammers at it Again

Scammers have another thing going now. They use automated software to scan web sites using 'robot' technology. This is the same technology that Google and other search engines use to provide ranking for their searches. They are looking for email addresses. Their automated technology then sends an email to whatever they find, saying generically they are looking for more information. No specifics. If you reply, you will get an email wanting money or to confirm your bank account or something, because now they know the email address is valid.

Ah, what to do? We are providers of information, and really want to be helpful. But usually when you get an email request based upon the ESR, it asks for specific information in that first email. As a general rule of thumb, if you know your email address is out there and you get a non-specific request for information, 99% chance it is a scam. That being said, sometimes we do not know.

If you reply and you get back a request from Sudan or Nigeria, move the email into your Junk folder, and if your email client allows it, block that email address so it can no longer reach you.



In the future (Real Soon Now) the main AVA web site will be redone in such a way that our POC emails will only be visible after someone has provided a valid email address and logged into the site. Usually, these scammer's software cannot do that very well. We will be more protected. I am working very hard on getting that new web site done. Your patience is appreciated.

Standards and Evaluations—Suzi Glass, Chair

AVA Best Practices – Marketing/Publicity

What's on Your Card??

Many growing clubs find person-to-person (aka word-of-mouth) publicity to be very successful. The common item left with the new person is a business-sized card. The Columbia River Volkssport Club's card includes their logo in color, their website, AVA's website, and the call to action: "Come Walk With Us", according to Bill Winton. In addition to the above, the Randolph Roadrunners include their meeting information—day, time, location and address. In both cases, the recipient has contact information for further exploration.

Your club doesn't already have a card? Head for the AVA website (www.ava.org), go to the Administrative tab, click on AVA Graphics/Logos, and scroll down to the business card to download. The front of the card can include your club name and contact information as well as a person's name, title, and email, if desired. The QR code above the red "Come walk with us" takes iPhone users with the (free) QR Reader application right to the AVA website.

With a card, every encounter with possible walkers can lead them to a next step.

Programs Committee—Debra Kruep, Chair

The Girl Scout Council of California Central Coast has Partnered with the AVA program committee to conduct the 2017-2018 Girl Scout Walk Together Patch Contest. The contest will run from March 1 to April 30, 2017.

We will be working with the AVA clubs in the California Central Coast area to help coordinate Walk Togethers with the Girl Scout council for the fall of 2017.



Special Programs —Bonnie Johnson, Chair

A new Special Program entitled “Walk Like an Olympian” was approved by the NEC at the January 21, 2017 meeting. This program will begin January 1, 2018 and books may be purchased until December 31, 2020. Participation, stamping and redemption of this book will end December 31, 2021. This Special Program is sponsored by the South Bay Striders Club, San Jose, CA with the POC being Suzie Glass.

“Walk Like an Olympian” is intended to encourage walkers to keep up their Olympic efforts by walking routes in cities that have hosted the Olympic Games (such as Lake Placid, NY and Squaw Valley, CA) or have the same name as a host city (Antwerp, OH, Rome, MD). Books can be redeemed after ten events for the Bronze Medal, fifteen events for Silver, and twenty for the Gold. More specifics of the program will be published in a future edition of TAW.



South Bay Striders, President—Chris Zegelin

The Online Start Box (OLSB)

This is the first of a series of articles that will keep you informed about the OLSB. I will try answer the most pressing questions as well as inform you of changes and improvements. To view the current list of events go to cva4u.org and click on “Online Start Box” on the left side. Then click the “Select Event” tab.

The OLSB was created for clubs who want to sponsor an event but are challenged either by distance or an appropriate start box location. Some clubs travel hundreds of miles each quarter to service start boxes, others have lost a host for the start box and are unable to find an appropriate alternative. The OLSB allows a club to continue to sponsor these events. Everyone wins when events are kept active and available.

This article will explain how you can manage a minor, spouse, parent, or friend on the OLSB. There has been a concern that moving to a fully computerized version of the start box would exclude some individuals. The OLSB addresses this by providing account connections. This feature was initially created to allow a parent to manage a minor's account and books. My own son keeps IVV books and is no longer a minor.

Each person must create an account and personally sign the athletic waiver. The exception is a parent or guardian can add a minor, and sign the waiver for them. They do this under their own account, but a separate minor account is automatically created. A minor will grow up and take over this account at age 18, without losing any of their history.

Account connections allow couples, and by logical extension, friends and relatives, to manage each others accounts. The management is a single click away with no need to remember additional passwords or account credentials. Account connections are set up once and remain in force till either party cancels the connection. The connection has limits required by basic security concerns, but provides the ability to completely manage a person's OLSB needs. The most important part is managing their walk history and Insert Cards.

Outside of the account connections, the event registration has features that allow a single person to register and pay for others that walk with them. If you have a group walk, one person can register and pay for the group. This helps families and friends that walk together, especially when several in the group do not have smart phones or even a computer at home.

I hope that you find the OLSB a useful tool to help keep these remote and difficult to sponsor events. It is important that we all support those events that are a "labor of love" for the sport, many of which are finding their way onto the OLSB. The OLSB is itself a "labor of love" for the sport.

Happy trails, Chris Zegelin.

AVA National Office Team

Awards and Membership Coordinator—Karen Winkle

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

All complete 2016 Centurion Books should be mailed in by February 15th.

Information and Technology Specialist—Hector Hernandez

Fun fact: Did you know when you take a step, you are using up to 200 muscles?

Walks to Remember

Any good walks coming up in the spring time? What is your club's famous walk coming up for the month of March? Email your club's walks information to hector@ava.org and we will help market your walk.

*An early-morning
walk is a
blessing
for the whole day.*

- Henry David Thoreau

Starting Point Books

We are almost out of books so be sure to buy your book today for \$25 plus shipping and handling. To place an order please contact Theresa at (210) 659-2112.

Starting Point Changes

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

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

Reminder: Please update all Club and contact info in your ESR asap to make sure you get all your important updates.

AVA Biennial Publicity Contest – 2017

As the excitement builds for the 2017 Convention in Billings, Montana so grows the anticipation for all the interesting and unique entries in our Biennial Publicity Contest! Winners of our 2017 national competition will be recognized at the 19th AVA Biennial Convention, June 7-9, in Billings, Montana.

All entries must have been created or occurred during the time-period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016. Specific rules and submission category guidelines are attached. A separate Official Entry Form must be submitted with each entry and this form may be reproduced as needed. Submit your form in an envelope and attach it to the items submitted for judging. All photography category entries must include the Photo Release Form.

Competition in the AVA contest is open to AVA members, clubs and state organizations. Names of the winners will be published in the American Wanderer newspaper, the AVA website, and other promotional outlets. Winning photographs or other images may be used on our website or for other purposes such as the cover photo on the “Starting Point” book.

AVA cannot be responsible for any late, damaged or incomplete entries. All entries submitted to the contest will become the property of AVA and may not be returned.

All submitted entries must arrive at AVA National Office no later than April 14, 2017. Mail them to the American Volkssport Association, 1001 Pat Booker Road, Ste. 101, Universal City, Texas 78148, Attention: Publicity Contest or email with the subject line “Publicity Contest Entry” to hector@ava.org.

Entry submission deadline is April 14, 2017 Midnight/Central Time

[Photo Release Form](#)

[Categories/Guidelines](#)

[Official Entry Form](#)

Communications—Samanta Sanchez

Anniversary and Special Request Slugs

Anniversary slugs are now available for clubs. We currently have slugs for 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, 30th, 35th, and 40th anniversary. Anniversary slug cost to clubs is shipping cost only for the first slug. Any additional anniversary slug is \$25 each. Stamps won't go out until March 1st. You may also order other custom made slugs for a \$25 charge. If you are interested in obtaining an anniversary slug for your club or any other special slug please fill out our [Special Slug Order Form](#) and email to samanta@ava.org.

Happy Anniversary!

AVA's Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales

AVA's NEW Privacy Policy

Last June the NEC approved the creation of a Privacy Policy so that certain personal data collected by AVA can be used to provide AVA members and participants with information related to AVA activities and services. It is important to note this information does not include any personal financial information and anyone can opt out at any time should they not want their information shared by contacting Karen at the National Office. This policy has been approved by the NEC and our legal counsel. A copy of this policy will be mailed to all AVA members. You can also request a copy from Membership services. **Please see the AVA Privacy Policy for our information sharing practices located on our website, www.ava.org or you may [click here](#) to review it.**

2017 AVA Convention is a Heck of a Deal at \$295.00!

If you have not registered yet you better hurry because registrations at this price will go fast! To register online go to <http://2017AVAConvention.org>.

If your club would like to host an exhibit table or send literature to be displayed during the convention this June in Billings, Montana please contact Sherry Sayers at ChairPerson@2017AVAConvention.org. The tables are free for all State Associations and Clubs on a first come first serve basis.

Help us keep the cost of our convention down by supporting our efforts to identify individuals, organizations or companies who might be interested in purchasing a table or sponsorship for the convention. If you know of anyone feel free to send them the attached sponsorship form and contact Henry Rosales at henry@ava.org so that he can follow up. ([Click here for sponsorship form](#))

The convention committee is seeking donated auction items for the silent auction. If you have something you would like to donate or need more information, please contact Sherry Sayers at ChairPerson@2017AVAConvention.org

2019 AVA Convention Application Released

The application for the 2019 AVA convention has been released. Any AVA club or group of clubs or state association is eligible to apply to host the 2019 convention. The deadline to submit a proposal is April 15, 2017 at midnight Central time zone. [For full details click here.](#)

AVA Call to Convention

Call to Convention and AVA Form 500 will be mailed to the clubs by the end of February. Please follow the directions on the form and return to AVA for Credentialing at Convention. Please do not forget clubs must be in “good standing” forty-five days before the opening of the membership meeting in order to be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members. For more information on the good standing policy please refer to the AVA Policy Manual, section **2.03 Status and Standing, II. Policy, A.**

Financial Update (unaudited midyear report)

The 2015-2016 AVA financial report has been completed by Armstrong, Vaughan and Associates, P.C. and is posted on the AVA website. To review the report [click here](#).

Total cost for audit was \$9,530.

Midyear unaudited financials reflect current revenues, excluding cost of goods sold, at \$161,877 which is up from last year at this point by \$3,680. Current expenses are at \$232,880 which is down from last year at this point by \$22,584. The current operational deficit is at \$90,123. This can be attributed to several factors on the revenue side to include a decrease in sanction fees (\$22,852), participation fees (\$10,963) and projected revenues for grants and the Big Give that are yet to be attained (\$49,000/grants, \$60,000 Big Give). Expenses are below the six-month’s projection by \$73,184. Our challenge continues to be a decrease in revenues primarily from our events. The convention, grants and Big Give revenues attribute to the current revenue gap however this income should come in by the end of the year.

As stated previously, with revenues streams continuing to drop it is critical to the future of the AVA that we figure out different ways to bring **new money** into the organization so that we can effectively manage the operation and promote club growth. I will continue to work at diversifying our revenue streams from sources other than the volkssporting community to include grants, special events, and individual donor campaigns.

The following proposals have been submitted and/or are in progress since July 2016.

- 2 USAA - \$10,000 – Corporate Responsibility (Declined)
- 3 Well Med Foundation - \$10,000 – Seniors & Caregivers (Declined)
- 4 Northwest Vista College- \$5,000 In-kind – Promotional Video (Declined)
- 5 America Walks - \$1,500 – Walkable Communities (Declined)
- 6 Coca-Cola Foundation - \$5,000 – General Operations (In progress)
- 7 Kronkosky Foundation – \$5,000 – Seniors and Physically Challenged (In progress)
- 8 Moody Foundation - \$5,000 – Health and Wellness (In progress)
- 9 W.K. Kellogg Foundation – \$10,000 - Healthy Children (In progress)
- 10 San Antonio Area Foundation – 10,000 – Board and Staff Development (In progress)

IVV Changes/New Resolutions for January 1, 2018

The IVV passed two new resolutions with regards to IVV awards for events and kilometers. These resolutions are to be implemented by January 1, 2018. To view a copy of the memorandum that was sent to the NEC on October 6, 2016 containing the new IVV Resolutions with NEC approved staff recommendations [click here](#).

NEW Stamps Process Coming in 2018!

Coming in 2018 the AVA National office will begin producing its own stamp handles and slugs for all club events. This means clubs will have the ability to customize their slugs for events and stamp handles will no longer need to be returned to the AVA National office. The new slugs and stamp handles will be on display and used for all convention walks this June so be sure to get your books stamped! We are currently working on the process and order form for 2018 events. Look for more details in the upcoming issues of the Checkpoint.



The Big Give is back and better than ever on May 4, 2017!



The Big Give is our annual fundraiser for the American Volkssport Association. Last year we raised over \$53,000 and this year our goal is to raise \$60,000. This is the time of year when all our clubs and supporters come together and give. Will you give?



Congratulations!

To the Freestate Happy Wanderers on your 30th Anniversary. We thank you for all the years of walking and the poster you sent to the National Office. We will be sure to display it with pride.

[Click here to view image of poster.](#)

Support Our National and International Friends!



Click image for more information.

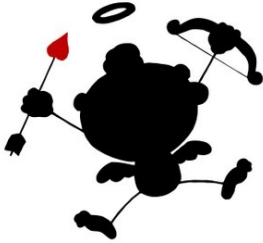
[Click here the call for proposals.](#)



Click image for more information.



[Click here for brochure.](#)

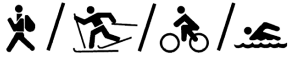


Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

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



Fun, Fitness, Friendship



The American Volkssport Association

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

