

THE AMERICAN WANDERER

TAW

The Walking Magazine



TRANSFORM A LIFE!

DONATE TO



September 17-18, 2025



21 COUNTRIES & ABOUT 1200 PARTICIPANTS PARADED INTO PYYNIKKI STADIUM IN TAMPERE, FINLAND, FOR THE OPENING DAY CEREMONY OF THE IVV OLYMPIAD.



Fun, Fitness, Friendship **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**



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**AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB**
— ESTABLISHED 1974 —

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!

AVA BOARD CHAIRMAN MESSAGE



AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Find a Director in your area.

If it's September it's time for the Big Give, our biggest fundraising activity of the year. The Big Give is more important than ever as participation revenue remains weak. I hope you have been out there walking this summer and recruiting new walkers to your events, new members to your AVA clubs. This month let's take a look at the members we have now and supporting the Big Give. While we have raised significant funds over the years, it continues to be a small portion of our AVA family donating. Just like we need to increase paid participations for the financial health for our sport in the USA, we also need to increase our pool of donors to the Big Give. Look for information elsewhere in this issue and the recent Checkpoint news bulletins to see how your donation can have the most impact.

If you have given in the past, thank you. Please join the Board of Directors by continuing to give. Consider the possibility of 25% or more if you can. This would have a huge impact on our planning and programs for the future. For those that have not given before I have a simple challenge to start you off. Donate \$1 for every year you have been volksmarching and walking the USA with our clubs. No donation is too small (or too large, LOL)! Every dollar we collect supports the entire organization and helps provide the needed capital to enhance member support, programs and technology. Donations will also support pre-planning efforts for the 50th Anniversary events in 2026.

I had to write this in an airport waiting for my flight to Europe for the Olympiad in Tampere Finland and several other international events in the Baltic and Scandinavian region. I'm expecting a very large USA contingent walking with our international friends and sharing good times! AVA is an important member of the worldwide IVV community and I am fortunate to be able to represent the organization in person.

CHECKPOINT VS THE AMERICAN WANDERER (TAW)

America's Walking Club (AVA) has two national publications, the Checkpoint and The American Wanderer (TAW). The Checkpoint is a monthly digital publication that is emailed to AVA Club or Individual members who subscribe to it. This main purpose of the Checkpoint is to keep our members informed on updates or changes in organizational policies, procedures, and national events. The TAW is our quarterly national publication. It is also emailed to all AVA Club and Individual members. AVA Members can request a hard copy of the TAW by contacting marian@ava.org. The main purpose of the TAW is to market national and club events and inform readers about all the exciting walks in each region.

Occasionally, some of the same content will appear in the TAW and Checkpoint in an effort to reach all our members. If you are not receiving either publication and would like to, please send a request to Hector at hector@ava.org

AVA INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP CHANGES (AUGUST 2025 CHECKPOINT)

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 every AVA National, Individual Member, eighteen years or older, who is in good standing 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;
- 🚶 Each AVA Individual member is entitled to participate in Membership meetings;
- 🚶 Each AVA Individual member (18 yrs or older) is entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members.

PRESIDENT'S UPDATES



HENRY ROSALES, PRESIDENT AND CEO

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 eighteen 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

We are hopeful these changes will set us on a path of membership growth. Stay tuned for additional enhancements and benefits to our membership program.

Hank BY Wider Circle



NEW MARKETING PARTNERSHIP WITH WIDER CIRCLES

The AVA has an innovative marketing partner with Wider Circles. This company will help clubs engage communities by managing and marketing events on their digital platform called Hank.

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.

Free Sign Up Here at www.gethank.com

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

FREE CLUB SUPPORT WITH GRAPHIC DESIGN!

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 located on the AVA website under the club tab and submit it to henry@ava.org AFTER you have been accepted by Rachel Bush.

JOIN US IN BUILDING A HEALTHIER TOMORROW BY INVESTING IN HEALTH TO TRANSFORM LIVES!

Regrettably, we now live in a world where chronic illness, mental health struggles, and preventable diseases continue to rise, one thing remains clear: health is not a luxury, it's a human right. The pandemic and lingering aftermath speaks to just how fragile yet precious our health is, especially as we get up in the years.

This is something we know well and value at America's Walking Club. Our club members and volunteers are on the front lines 365 days a year promoting holistic well-being walks and events for children, families, and the elderly, so all can live vibrant healthy lives! Every time I join one of our club walks, I'm surrounded by heartfelt stories how members first laced up their shoes, how walking with the AVA transformed their health, sparked lasting friendships, and, yes, led to some unforgettable meals and refreshments along the way.

I also get asked about the future of the AVA - how we can preserve this incredible tradition so our children's children can experience the joy of volksmarching. The answer begins with each of us. By donating to a cause that speaks to your heart, you're helping secure the legacy of walking for generations to come.

Your contribution fuels national events like the Olympiad, Regional Conferences, National Conventions, and our milestone 50th Anniversary Celebration. It also powers the promotion of local club events across social media, print, and our AVA websites ensuring our message reaches new walkers every day.

But the AVA is more than events. We are here to serve individuals whether it's organizing walks, assisting clubs with invoicing and tax returns, offering graphic design and tech support, navigating legal matters, or building meaningful partnerships. That's why your support also helps sustain the dedicated personnel who make all this possible. Together, we're not just keeping the AVA alive, we're helping it thrive.

This year, we once again invite you to support our annual individual donor campaign--The Big Give. Online donations will be accepted from 6:00 PM on September 17 through 6:00 PM on September 18. If you prefer not to give online, you're welcome to mail a check to the National Office anytime between now and October 31, 2025. Every contribution, no matter the size or method, helps us move our mission forward.

Will You Join Us in Building a Healthier Tomorrow on September 17 and 18, 2025? To donate go to www.ava.org and click the donate button.

Donate today. Heal tomorrow.



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.



Walk with Purpose.
Give with heart, transform a life.

TAKE THE FIRST STEP! GIVE TO THE BIG GIVE ON
SEPTEMBER 17-18 | 6PM - 6PM.

How You Can Participate during #BigGive2025



1. Mail your donation check to the AVA National Office: 1032 S. Alamo St, San Antonio, TX, 78210. Send checks prior to **October 31st, 2025.**



2. Make an early online contribution anytime from **September 10th to September 16th, 2025.**

3. Make an online contribution on **September 17-18, 2025**, to help us leverage additional cash prizes.



4. Fundraise on behalf of the AVA by creating a Peer-to-Peer page.

5. Ask your employer to match your donation.



6. Donate during the 10 Match Minutes & double your impact.

7. Share our Big Give social media posts using the hashtags **#BigGive2025** **#TransformaLife**



PLANNING EVENTS FOR 2026

JERRY WILSON, CHAIR, CONVENTION COMMITTEE (CONTRIBUTED HISTORIC DATES BY DAVID ROBERTS)

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 40th 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. Let's plan a great 2026!



WALKING ADVENTURES KICKS OFF A NEW CHAPTER AT THE TUCSON RENDEZVOUS A REUNION, A FAREWELL, AND A CELEBRATION OF TRAVEL

BY DANI WRIGHT

Walking Adventures International is turning an exciting new page as it welcomes fresh leadership following the retirement of its longtime President, Dan Friesen. While change is underway, the heart of the organization remains steadfast: a passion for travel, friendship, cultural discovery, and experiencing the natural beauty of our world.

For 37 years, Walking Adventures International (WAI) has explored the world, sharing walks and local culture in 84 countries across all seven continents. Throughout this journey, WAI has greatly valued its partnership with the American Volkssport Association (AVA), as well as sharing the beauty of the USA on foot with wonderful walkers nationwide. The team deeply appreciates the AVA's ongoing support and looks forward to continuing this meaningful collaboration.

To celebrate a vibrant new chapter, Walking Adventures is inviting travelers to the Tucson Rendezvous. This event promises to be a reunion, a farewell, and a celebration of travel. The last WAI reunion tour was held before the pandemic reshaped global travel, making this gathering all the more meaningful as friends reconnect and new memories are made.

Tucson offers an unforgettable backdrop for this reunion. This colorful region of the USA is known for its iconic saguaro sunsets, rich Wild West history, vibrant Mexican cultural influences, and its distinction as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy. The carefully crafted Tucson Rendezvous itinerary features a range of walking tours and activities, thoughtfully balanced with ample downtime for relaxation and camaraderie.

The Tucson Rendezvous is scheduled for January 17–20, 2026, and is set to be Walking Adventures largest reunion yet. The WAI team intends to invite current and retired guides and staff, as well as all who have ever traveled with WAI—and, of course, they warmly welcome new faces to join in this special celebration.

Walking Adventures encourages interested travelers to review the full itinerary online and reach out with any questions. This reunion promises not only to celebrate past journeys but also to ignite new adventures in one of America's most captivating destinations.

For more details and to reserve your spot, contact Walking Adventures at fun@walkingadventures.com or 360.260.9393.



Travelers can also visit www.walkingadventures.com or use the QR code provided to view the full Tucson Rendezvous itinerary online.

Two IML Events in October 2025 in North America

La marche Maple Leaf March
October 10-12, 2025
Ottawa, Ontario
marchemapleleafmarch.ca

US FreedomWalk
October 17-19, 2025
Washington, DC/Alexandria, VA
usfreedomwalk.org



24TH ANNUAL IML US FREEDOMWALK FESTIVAL OCTOBER 17-19, 2025

The annual US FreedomWalk returns to Arlington, VA October 17-19, 2025. This event is one of two IML events in the United States. You'll enjoy three days of events, including walking, biking and swimming, with volkssporters from around the world. Register at usfreedomwalk.org.

All walks will start each day at a new location this year, American Legion Post 139, 3445 Washington Blvd in Arlington. There is no free parking at the site, but it is close to the Washington Metro-rail system. There are paid parking lots and paid street parking. Check the website in October, to see if there is reduced parking that is currently being negotiated.

The 21km walks on Saturday and Sunday are IML (International Marching League) accredited walks.

Friday Oct 17th, a Welcome Walk will take you west along the Potomac River, walking either a 5K or 10K. Arlington was named one of the five friendly platinum communities in the U.S. There is also a bike and swim event. The opening ceremony starts at 4pm at the Post.

Saturday, choose from the IML walk (21K), or a 12K or 6K, which all take you into Washington D.C. The walks go by embassies, memorials, the National Mall and all three branches of the federal government (depending on which walk you choose). Bike and swim events also available. Plus that evening, there is an International Dinner. Please pre-register by October 5: usfreedomwalk@gmail.com.

Sunday, choose between the 6, 12 or 21 km walking to the C&O Canal and other parks. See the complete [schedule here](#).

The designated hotel is the Holiday Inn Arlington at Ballston. The US FreedomWalk is a premier event for volkssporters. To receive IML credit, walkers must walk at least 20k on each of the primary walking days (minimum 2 days in a row). If you are 70 or older, you can do two 10Ks for IML credit. AVA and IVV credit will also be given.

Register at usfreedomwalk.org. Three day walk packages are \$40. There are also two-day packages, or you can register daily at the event. For more information, please email usfreedomwalk@gmail.com.

REMINDER: IML Event in Ottawa the Weekend Before FreedomWalk

October 10 – 12, 2025, enjoy the Maple Leaf March, a world-class, non-competitive, inclusive, and not-for-profit international walking event held annually in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, in Canada, showcasing the main monuments, memorials, green spaces, and parks of Canada's National Capital Region. [Get more info here](#).

AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB PLANS 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

It's our 50th birthday! So we are having a walking party every month in 2026 to celebrate.

AVA: America's Walking Club is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2026, marking five decades of Fun, Fitness and Friendship. Special walking events will take place monthly in each region of the United States, which also coincides with America's 250th celebration.

A planning committee has been working hard with each regional director to sponsor a "featured" anniversary event; and while RDs are still working on details, we wanted to alert you to these events so you can plan your travels. Special awards are being planned with the AVA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Passport, for those who attend all featured events, or a certain number of events. Here's the featured list, as of August 10:

January 9-11 – Boulder City, NV (Pacific Region) – Chairman's Anniversary Celebration

Carl Cordes, Chair of the AVA Board, has planned a three-day kickoff celebration in Boulder City, NV, 25 miles south of Las Vegas, and home of Hoover Dam. Sponsored by the Las Vegas High Rollers and Strollers, there will be a mix of self-guided and group walks, as well as two socials. Walks include the Historic Railroad Tunnels Trail in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Bootleg Canyon, and Veterans Memorial Park. A fajita group dinner will be Friday night. Saturday evening, the city is sponsoring the Best Dam Wine Walk through historic Boulder City, which counts as a 5K (and we get a discounted price of only \$15). Pre-register and [more information here](#). Special rate at [Best Western Hoover Dam](#).



February 20-22 – San Antonio, TX (Southwest Region) – Texas Trail Roundup IML



The annual IML Texas Trail Roundup returns in 2026 to San Antonio, TX, one of only two IML events in the United States. Friday will be the 50th Anniversary Walk in Fredericksburg, TX where the first volkswalk took place in 1976. The walk will take you through this beautiful hill-country town of German heritage, with many shops and restaurants. Buses will take you back and forth for this milestone event. Saturday the IML kicks off in San Antonio with 42K and 21K events, along with 12K and 5K events. Sunday choose walks of 21K, 10K and 5K. Registration opens soon: texastrailroundup.org. Special rate at [Springhill Suites Downtown/River Walk](#).

**March 20-23 – Williamsburg, VA (Atlantic Region)
– Atlantic Regional Conference**



The Peninsula Pathfinders of Virginia are sponsoring the 2026 Atlantic Regional Conference in Williamsburg, VA for 4 days with its rich colonial history and American Revolution significance. This is a great city to celebrate AVA's 50th, and the U. S. 250th. Details are being planned now.

April – North Central Region – Iowa/Nebraska River Walk

Walk along the Missouri River. Hosted by the Nebraska Trailblazers. Info to come.



May – Northeast Region – May 17-19 Lake George, NY. More info coming.

**June 6, 2026 - Crazy Horse, SD (North Central Region)
More information to come.**



Join the Black Hills Volkssport Association for the 40th Annual Crazy Horse Memorial Volksmarch at the world's largest mountain carving in progress. This is a delightful hike to the top of the mountain the head of Crazy Horse, that volkswalkers look forward to. More information to come.

**June 19-21, 2026 Mid America Regional Conference
– Indiana and Illinois**

Enjoy walks in Terre Haute IN, Charleston IL, and Casey IL. Four walks, lunch and social. More info to come.

**July – Colorado Springs, CO (Rocky Mountain Region)
– Garden of the Gods**

The Falcon Wanderers in Colorado Springs will highlight one of the most beautiful areas in the state – Garden of the Gods. It sits beneath Pike's Peak, and within its environment, there are grasslands, stunning red sandstone formations, and mountain forest. It is a Natural National Landmark and free to the public. More details to come.



August – To Be Announced

**September 7, 2026 – Mackinaw City, MI (Mid-America Region)
– Mackinac Bridge Walk**



Because this walk is so popular, we are tentatively adding the event to our anniversary celebration. AVA will help the Mid-America RD with all aspects of the event. This is the only day a year when the Mackinac Bridge is closed to traffic until noon so pedestrians can walk across and enjoy the views of the Straits of Mackinac. The total walk across the entire bridge and back is 20k but people can choose to walk as far as they want, then turn around. More details to follow.

**September 12-13 or 19-20 – Astoria, OR (Northwest Region)
– NW Regional Conference**

The Oregon Trails State Volkssport Association is planning their Regional Conference for the Northwest in Astoria, OR. Located at the mouth of the Columbia River at the Pacific Ocean, Astoria is Oregon's oldest city, and the first permanent U.S. settlement west of the Rockies. More information to follow on the walks and socials.



**October 16-18 – Arlington, VA (Atlantic Region)
– IML FreedomWalk Festival**

2026 is the 25th Annual IML FreedomWalk Festival in Arlington, VA and Washington D. C. This will be a great year to enjoy these events through America's history in D. C. and Arlington. Three days of trails from 5K to 22K along with bike, swim, and socials. Save the Date for this special IML event. More details to follow.



Oct 28 – Nov 1 – Route 66 Walks in Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma (South Central Region)



Route 66, the most famous highway in the U.S., celebrates 100 years in 2026. The Sunflower Sod Stompers and other South Central clubs will host 5 days of walks celebrating AVA's 50th, and Rte. 66 100th birthdays. The events are a collection of walks called "Hoofin' It On Halloween Along Route 66". More details to follow.

November 6-8 (tentative dates) – Florida (Southeast Region) – 35th Annual Walk Across Florida

The Suncoast Sandpipers, Mid-Florida Milers, and the Happy Wanderers will celebrate 35 years of Walk Across Florida. Soon they will be scouting the best locations, hotels and venues for socials. More details to follow.



**November 14 – Dayton, OH (Mid-America Region)
– OWF Honors Veterans**



The Ohio Wanderer Freunde will celebrate Veteran's Day with a special event in Dayton. Save the date. More details to follow.

**December – Helen, GA (Southeast Region)
– Christmas Lights Spectacular**

Hosted by the Alpine Helen Volksmarch Club, the Weihnachten Lights Spectacular will highlight Helen's Christmas Market with unique holiday gifts and decorations, food, and fun. More information to follow.



AVA: America's Walking Club will have a special 50th Anniversary webpage with information on all the walks, socials and travel. It will feature the history of AVA, and the ways all clubs can celebrate, even if not a featured walk. A special Anniversary Program will start January 1. Any sanctioned YRE, seasonal or traditional event in 2026 may be counted, to celebrate the semi-quincentennial (250th) anniversary of the United States, and the Golden (50th) Anniversary of America's Walking Club. [Get more info here.](#)

One more thing: between now and June 2026, we 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 and stories. Contact Susan Fine for questions: publicity@ava.org.





AVA SPECIAL PROGRAMS USA/AVA ANNIVERSARY HURRAH

BY TERRY LUNGHOFER

The USA-AVA Anniversary Hurrah is a new Special Program starting in 2026 – The 250th Anniversary of the USA and the 50th of the AVA. Due to the uniqueness of the anniversary years, this program will only run from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026. Redeem completed books by December 31, 2027. This program is designed to emphasize the entire history of both the USA and the AVA, not just the events around 1776 or 1976. Each of us has our sense of the history that we wish to celebrate: It could be the men elected to office, the conflicts we've had, the geography we celebrate, the evolution of transportation, the trails and waterways followed, the arts we preserve, the culture we wish to know better, the schools and the museums which preserve history, the events of the 23 remaining AVA clubs from the original 100, the 181 still sanctioned YRE/Sea events of the original 250, the sites of our first 22 national biennial conventions, or all of the expired special programs which you missed. The sub-program you wish to accomplish within this Special Program is your choice. Space has been provided within the record book for recording an abbreviated code for some potential sub-programs or you may devise your own. Complete twenty-five (25) events to receive an embroidered patch reflecting the national geography highlighted in the Song "America the Beautiful". Every AVA sanctioned event: Traditional, YRE, SEA, or guided walk, is a qualifying event. You may complete 25 different events or you can complete a single event 25 times if your geography is isolated. Each stamp impression must be paid for and completed at a separate time. Since many locations may not have a sanctioned event which goes by a site you wish to see or visit, complete the closest event which is available and visit the true site before or after.

You will find descriptions of all AVA sanctioned events, both traditional and YRE/SEA, at the website ava.org under the Find an Event tab. Revisiting the site is recommended since new events may be sanctioned which celebrate an individual club's version of history.

This Special Program is hosted by Falcon Wanderers Volkssport Association in Colorado Springs. The books will become available on November 1, 2025. Mail your book request and a check for \$14 payable to Falcon Wanderers, c/o Terry Lunghofer, P.O. Box 17162, Colorado Springs, CO 80935-7162. Please include your mailing address and email address with your request. For more information, contact Terry Lunghofer at tlunghofer0031@gmail.com or 719-597-4307 (H).

RAILS TO TRAILS CONSERVANCY

BY SUZANNE MATYAS

Rails to Trails Conservancy is thrilled to partner with AVA to advance our shared goal of connecting people with opportunities to be active outside.

RTC is a nonprofit dedicated to building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to safely move about by foot, bike and mobility device in their everyday lives. Since 1986, RTC has worked to bring the power of trails to more places across the country—and, in 2026, we look forward to celebrating a milestone anniversary alongside AVA and the country!

Over the past four decades, RTC has worked from coast to coast, supporting the development of thousands of miles of rail-trails—former railroad corridors that have been preserved as pathways for striding and riding—and other multiuse trails for millions of people to use. Today, with more than 42,000 miles of multiuse on the ground and more trail miles being built every day, RTC is focused on connecting people with America's trails and connecting these trails into networks, further amplifying the health, safety, economic and quality-of-life benefits they deliver.



All 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico are home to multiuse trails and trail networks—including one of RTC's flagship projects, the Great American Rail-Trail, which is linking trails to form a seamless 3,700-mile cross-country route. In the year ahead, we're excited to collaborate with AVA to share ways to celebrate and come together on America's trails—including for Celebrate Trails Day, RTC's annual springtime celebration of America's trails on the fourth Saturday of April! We hope you will start planning to be a part of the celebration by saving the date now to go for a walk, roll or other type of trail outing on Saturday, April 25, and staying tuned for updates. Until then, enjoy walking and exploring the trails near you and nationwide! You can connect with RTC and find more information about the trails by visiting RailsToTrails.Org



RAILS-TO-TRAILS SPECIAL PROGRAM EXTENDED

BY SHERRY SAYERS



Great News! To take advantage of the Rails to Trails Conservancy's 40th Anniversary next year plus AVA's 50th we are extending the Rails-to-Trails Special Program. The program now runs until December 31, 2026 with the redemption of books by December 31, 2027. Any sanctioned YRE, seasonal, or traditional event that walks/bikes on a portion of an official

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy identified trail which can be found at RTC's TrailLink website at <https://www.traillink.com/trailsearch/> qualifies. One stamp per event per year except for "Guided Trail" events which use the same stamp – in this case the sanction number identifies a unique event. The Special Program Booklet contains room for 16 stamps. To purchase a Special Program Booklet, please send your mailing address and e-mail address with your request plus a check for \$12 to: Colorado Springs Walking Club, 3524 N. Cascade Ave, Lot #58, Colorado Springs, CO 80907. If any questions, please contact Sherry Sayers at cswc@avaclubs.org or by phone at 719-640-6745.



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

2026 TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP IML FESTIVAL TO CELEBRATE AVA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

SUSAN FINE, PUBLICITY COMMITTEE CHAIR

The annual 3-day IML event, Texas Trail Roundup, will welcome volksmarchers from around the world to San Antonio, Texas February 20-22, 2026. The event will celebrate the 50th anniversary of AVA: America's Walking Club, and will feature a walk in Fredericksburg, Texas, where the first Volkssport event in the United States took place.

Registration will be open soon at texastrailroundup.org.

There is also a special hotel rate at the SpringHill Suites San Antonio Downtown/Riverwalk Area of \$125 per night. Must book by January 30, 2026.

While routes and socials are being finalized as of TAW deadline, here's the basic schedule for the weekend:

- Friday, Feb 20 – Anniversary walk in the beautiful hill-country town of Fredericksburg, TX, site of America's first volkswalk. Buses will take you from San Antonio to Fredericksburg. An opening ceremony will take place in the afternoon.
- Saturday, Feb 21 – IML walks of 42K (marathon) and 21K walk, along with 12K and 5K walks in San Antonio followed by a fun social gathering
- Sunday, Feb 22 – IML walk of 21K, along with 10K and 5K walks in San Antonio, followed by the closing ceremony.

The Texas Trail Roundup is the "featured" 50th anniversary event for February, so look for more information on the TTR website soon for celebration details. Volunteers will also be needed. Details to come.

While in San Antonio, you can also enjoy the world-famous San Antonio Rodeo. Most nights include a live concert. Tickets are available at sarodeo.com.

We hope you can join us February 20-22, 2026 for the annual IML Texas Trail Roundup in San Antonio.

Mark your calendars for the Texas Trail Roundup in San Antonio, TX and the American Volkssport Association's

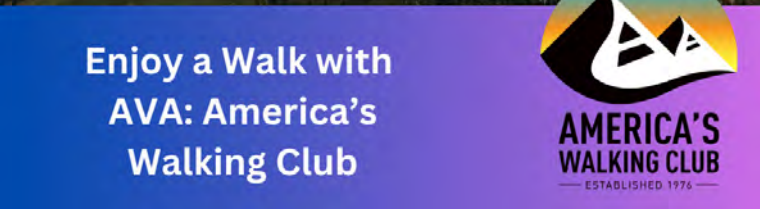
50th Anniversary Inaugural Walk

in the historic town of Fredericksburg, TX.

Three days, two cities, one unforgettable walking event!

FEBRUARY 20-22, 2026

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



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Name: Barbara Nuss
 Club: Sacramento Walking Sticks
 Year started: 1988
 # kilometers walked: 18,000
 # events walked: 2,300
 Club involvement: President of the Sticks for many, many years

I first learned about AVA when a library patron gave me a brochure for an upcoming Traditional Walk in Sacramento thru the Fab 40's over Valentine's weekend in 1988. I loved that there wasn't a specific time to start the walk. The route was wonderful and all I had to do was follow the chalk arrows and ribbons marking the way. I was hooked and, in those days, California had a plethora of clubs and Traditional Walks almost every weekend to join in. Stamping my books added to the joy of walking, not to mention the heady experience of completing them.

My most memorable walk was at the AVA National Convention 2007 in Sacramento CA. Northern California hosted the Convention and it took people all over northern California to explore and walk. At the end of the Convention, the walk took people across the Golden Gate Bridge and back. At the time I was the CVA (California Volkssport Association) President and was very involved in all the activities. I will never forget walking across that bridge and seeing people I'd met that week from all over the USA. When I'd started volkswalking, I invited friends, brought my son and never thought of joining a club. Fifteen years later, five of us attended a Sticks meeting, joined the club and months later the club voted me their new president. Four years later in 2007 I became the head of CVA and attended my first AVA Convention. I was overwhelmed with how smoothly the AVA organization ran and loved meeting other walkers from all over the USA. Friendships were formed that week and to this day, crossing the Golden Gate Bridge brings back memories of that 2007 Convention.

My favorite walk is still the Sacramento—Fab 40's Year-Round Event. The homes are elegant, stately and grandiose and yet the sidewalks are open to everyone. The walk is shady and perfect to walk in every season. Every Christmas I offer several Christmas Lights Night Walks, and this is one of our favorites because the homes are heavily decorated and you can see so much more walking than driving. Over the years I've also offered a Halloween Night Walk as well—the decorations are outrageously great and it's so fun to walk amidst families with their children.



**WALK WITH PURPOSE
GIVE WITH HEART!**



**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.**



REGIONAL TALES FROM THE TRAILS



ATLANTIC REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



ATLANTIC REGIONAL DIRECTOR

BY KAREN L KAUFMAN

Karen L. Kaufman, born and raised in Hatfield, PA, is retire from the United States Air Force, where she served 23 years honorably as a Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) and 20 years in the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington DC. Following her federal service, Karen founded The Kritter Sitter LLC, an in the pet's home pet sitting service in Delaware.

She has been an active leadership in the walking community since 2021, serving two terms as Deputy Regional Director (DRD) and now Regional Director for the Atlantic Region. She is presently serving her second term as President of the First State Webfooters Walking Club in Delaware.

Karen chaired the AVA Membership Committee for two years and currently serves as the Awards Committee Chair

SUGARLOAFERS TWO FALL TRADITIONAL EVENTS IN 2025

BY ANTHONY (TONY) LAING

The Seneca Valley Sugarloafers Volksmarch Club of Montgomery County, Maryland have sanctioned five exciting and varied walks in 2025. Three successful walks are completed and two more are scheduled.

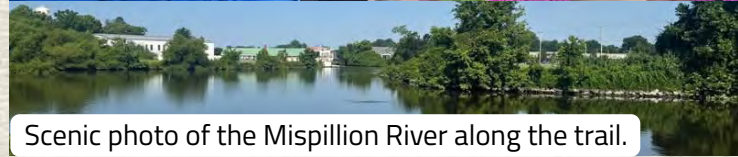
September 27—Frederick Oktoberfest—The Sugarloafers get into the swing of fall activities by sponsoring a walk in conjunction with the Oktoberfest celebration held annually in Frederick, Maryland. The club has been sponsoring this walk for several years now and it has become our most successful walk with the largest number of participants. The lesson learned for a successful walk is to hold it in conjunction with some other festival. The Volksmarch meanders on a trail alongside an urban canal and the historic city of Frederick. This is the ideal way to enjoy the food and libations by walking first and then rewarding yourself afterwards. The Oktoberfest costs \$10, but the entrance is free if you walk our event.

November 8 —King Farm—Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park Walk, Rockville —This delightful walk starts at the 26-acre J.T. Stepanek Park (dedicated to an heroic poet who died at age 13) and showcases the relatively new walkable community of King Farm that is an exemplary example of modern suburban planning, sustainability, and livability.

In addition to the Traditional Events, the Sugarloafers sponsor Wednesday morning walks throughout Montgomery County that are enjoyed by an average of 18 walkers with sometimes up to 29 showing up. We sometimes walk in a shopping mall in inclement weather but most of the time we enjoy the outdoor scenic trails in our beautiful county.

View other Sugarloafer activity on our website: sugarloafers.org.

Paul and Theresa located the hidden Goat on Goat Island.



Scenic photo of the Mispillion River along the trail.

MILTON WALK

The First State Webfooters of Delaware hosted a traditional event in Milford on Saturday, June 21st. Milford is a historic town in central Delaware along the Mispillion River. The 5K and 10K routes both included the Mispillion Riverwalk which meanders through town as well as Goat Island Nature Trail. The Webbies had a bit of fun and hid a small plastic goat on Goat Island and encouraged walkers to "find the goat" and post a picture on the Club's Facebook page. We also had a special guest walker...Bertha the AVA Walking Cat (check out her Facebook page) who was carried in her luxurious backpack with a window to see the sites. The Webbies next event is their annual triathlon (walk, bike, and swim) on Saturday, October 25th in Rehoboth Beach, DE in conjunction with the SeaWitch parade and celebration.

GERMAN VOLKSMARCHING SPIRIT REKINDLED AFTER 24 YEARS

BY RON JONES

In June 2024 Ellen Harris searched the internet in hopes of finding a Volkssport Club in the Roanoke, Virginia area. She successfully found the AVA's newest club, the Smith Mountain Walking Club on Meetup! It took a while for schedules to align. Eventually, in March 2025, on a cold windy day, Ellen joined a guided group walk in Rocky Mount. After a 24-year break, Ellen placed a stamp in her German books. Soon she completed her 175th walk and 2,500 kilometers. At the June club meeting, Ron Jones, club president, presented her with AVA certificates, patches and pins. Ellen proudly placed the pin on a Bavarian hat with all her other pins and is on her way to walk #200!



Ellens' German books. Last stamps were from 2001.

Club President Ron Jones presents Ellen Harris with AVA certificates and patches..

AUTUMN STROLLS WITH WALK 'N MASS

BY JOSEPH LAPOINTE

Please join Walk 'n Mass and explore New England during our beautiful autumn. Our club is preparing a busy schedule of group walks. We look forward to seeing you at our group walks or enjoy any of our beautiful walking routes on your own time. Keep an eye out on our website and Facebook pages for details on our events and group walks.

On September 6, we are planning an event walk in Blackstone, MA. This walk starts at Roosevelt Park and the route includes the Blackstone Gorge, Southern New England Trunk Line Trail, the Blackstone River Greenway/Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park, and the Blackstone Historical Museum. More details can be found online.

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](https://www.facebook.com/WalknMass)). These resources are updated frequently so please check in often to see what new adventures await.



SPECIAL PROGRAMS PALOOZA

BY ROGER CARR

What do you get when you plan a walk that includes as many AVA special programs as possible? You get a Special Programs Palooza Walk! Come join us as we highlight eight AVA special programs in historic downtown Fredericksburg. It is scheduled on October 25th when stores and homes are adorned in beautiful Fall decorations.

The following special programs are included: Par for the Course, Step to the Beat, Walking with America's Veterans, Washington-Rochambeau trail, Grain Elevators: Monarchs of the Plains, Walking with the Wild Things, Rails to Trails, and Town Hall/City Hall.

Detailed information can be found at <https://walkfredericksburg.blog> or on the [Fredericksburg Walking Club Facebook page](#).



MID-AMERICA REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



MID-AMERICA REGIONAL DIRECTOR

BY ROBERT (BOB) BUZOLICH

Robert (Bob) Buzolich returns to the AVA Board of Directors as the Mid-America Regional Director for a third non-consecutive term, having served earlier from 2019 to 2023. Bob started Volkssporting in 1985, when stationed in Germany with the 1st Armored Division. His military service includes 10 years service as a commissioned officer in Military Intelligence and 4 years service as an enlisted person in photo journalism. As a commissioned officer he attained the rank of major in the US Army Reserves and the rank of Captain during his active duty service. When on active duty, he served as Company Commander for the Headquarters & Headquarters Company of the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion in Ansbach, Germany. Bob received training at the Defense Information School (DINFOS) and the Combined Arms & Services Staff School (CAS3). Bob also holds degrees from Hanover College (BA) and Miami University (MA) of Ohio in history, and from Davenport University in accounting. After his military service, Bob spent nearly 25-years as a professional tax preparer with 20 years as an Enrolled Agent, who could represent taxpayers having difficulties with the Internal Revenue Service. As an active Volkssporter, Bob served as the Vice President of the German-American Wanderclub-Ansbach, the current long-term President of the Hoosier Hikers in South Bend, IN, and current long-term Treasurer of the Indiana Volkssport Association. Bob just recently completed service as the Chairperson for 2024/2025 Nominations Committee. He has also previously served as Chairperson for the ad hoc AVA Revenue Committee, as a member of the 2024 Big Give Committee and the 2021/2023 Finance Committee. Bob's vision is that what is past is past, and moving the AVA forward requires dedication and openness to adapt to changing circumstances.



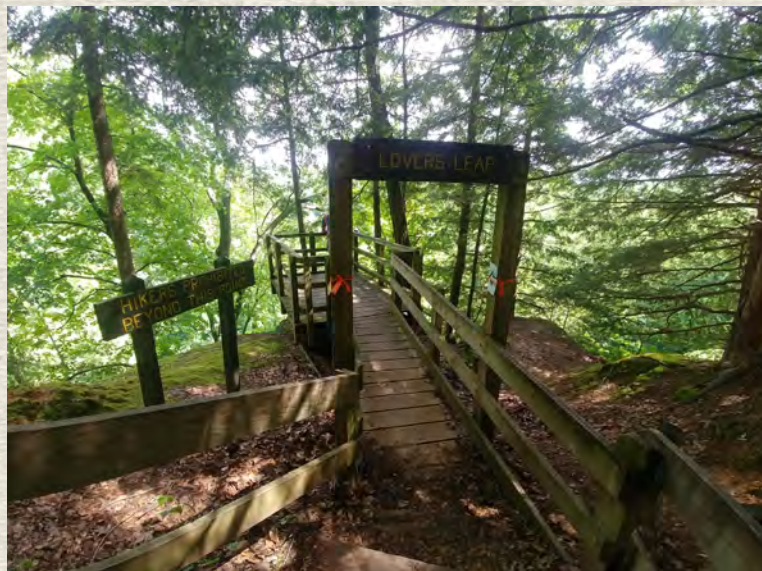
INDIANA VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES NATIONAL VOLKSSPORTING MONTH WITH AN AUTUMN FEST IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY INDIANA

BY ROBERT (BOB) BUZOLICH

The Indiana Volkssport Association (INVA) with the assistance of the Mid-America Regional Director will celebrate National Volkssporting Month during the peak of the Autumn Season with a Group Guided Walk at the Shades State Park, which straddles the boundary of Parke and Montgomery Counties in Central Indiana on Saturday, October 25. In conjunction with this Fest Weekend, the Mid-America Regional Director will host a Group Guided Walk in Crawfordsville, which is the county seat of Montgomery County, on Sunday, October 26.

On Saturday, October 25, walkers will experience the challenging trails beneath the colorful crowns of the lush forests of the Shades State Park along the banks of Sugar Creek, as it winds its way down to the Wabash River. Be cautious, though, in the event of autumn mists and drizzles, the trails may be muddy or slick. However, views of the Sugar Creek water shed should be fantastic. Keep your fingers crossed that there are no flash flood threats on this date. Walkers may choose to walk a distance of 5 or 10 kilometers. The route will consist of two 5-kilometer loops over an unimproved existing trail system that will avoid significant inclines to be traversed by steps or ladders. Registration, which is at the Hickory Shelter, opens at 9 am (Eastern time), and closes by 10:15 am with the last Walking Group hitting the trail by 10:15 am. Walking Groups may begin their adventure after a sufficient number of walkers have completed registration to form a group. Please note that this event in an Indiana State Park for which a gate fee applies. The fee is \$7 for Indiana-plated vehicles and \$9 for out-of-state plated vehicles. For specific information on this event, please use the following link:

<https://my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=129290>.



On Sunday walkers follow Bob Buzolich on The Historic & Notable Crawfordsville Group Guided Walk that acquaints Volksmarchers with the historical and other notable aspects, to include the hauntings of Crawfordsville, Indiana. Walkers may choose to walk 6 or 10 kilometers. As this is a Group Guided Walk, individuals will be segregated into an appropriate group, based upon distance and pace desired at the beginning of the walk. The route will be over sidewalks, which may be cracked and uneven, short portions of lightly travelled city streets and an improved trail, known as the Sugar Creek Trail, which is a Rails-to-Trails project. The guided walk starts at 9 am (Eastern time). Registration for this event, which is at the Sugar Creek Trailhead behind the Crawfordville Senior High School, will be from 8:30 am to 9 am. For specific information on this event, please use the following link: <https://my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=130227>.

For both events it is recommended that walkers have headcover, water and walking stick or poles, which is highly recommended for the Saturday event at the Shades State Park

Other planned activities for this fest weekend may include a state organization meeting on Saturday afternoon, a Saturday evening filled with great pizza and an appropriate beverage of your choice, and, if you so desire, a Saturday afternoon visit to the Second Annual Crawfordsville Paranormal Convention, which is free. The details of the pizza dinner and paranormal convention will be provided at the Shades State Park Event. In any case, payment terms for pizza will be "Dutch Treat."

The Points-of-Contact for these events are Bob Buzolich, who may be contacted via email at sonofbuzz@prodigy.net or via phone at 574-339-9140, and Cliff Terry, who may be contacted via email at cliffterry@sbcglobal.net or via phone 317-900-6750.



NORTH CENTRAL REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL DIRECTOR

BY KEN JOHNSON

It's an honor to serve as the new North Central Regional Director, and I will work to see that your trust in me is well placed. I'm impressed with the dedication and commitment of my fellow board members and headquarters staff who give so much of their time and talent to the AVA, in addition to significant financial guidance and support. They walk the talk. I believe they have what it takes to grow the organization into a premier and recognized recreational organization.

I am retired after 42 years with the Postal Service having worked in many functional areas, but mostly in the maintenance craft and management. I have experience directing the work of electronic technicians, mail processing equipment mechanics, building equipment mechanics, and building services personnel. I was also responsible for work in project management, labor relations, ergonomics, safety, and environmental compliance.

I was introduced to Volkssporting in 1979 while visiting a friend stationed in Germany and discovered the AVA years later. I quickly became a POC and have always enjoyed creating new events. I was asked to run for president of Twin Cities Volkssports in 2010, was elected, and have been on the board since. Lacking volunteers at the last election, I continued as president for a year beyond my term limit and also took over as treasurer for a year until a replacement could be found. I was glad for the experience as I want to be familiar with all aspects of club operation so I may support clubs as RD. I also want to keep the sport user-friendly regardless of members' access, to and comfort with the technology needed to attract new participants.

In addition to the day-to-day housekeeping duties I'm familiarizing myself with, work has begun on the 2026 calendar. Notably, the 40th anniversary of the Crazy Horse Volksmarch, the 50th anniversary of the AVA, and the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Plan on participating, or better yet volunteering to help make this is a banner year for our sport!



KIM KLAUDER COMPLETED 50 STATES/51 CAPITALS

BY KIM KLAUDER

I have completed Walking the 50 States and Walking the 51 Capitals. What a wonderful way to see the US and experience regional cooking, accents, music, history and geography. Some of it walking alone, some of it with tours, some of it with friends and family, some of it with my late husband, Steve, and most of it with my travel duck, "Little Dude." It only took me 26 years and 2 hip replacements!



WISCONSIN WALKING WEEK FUN

BY KRISTINA KENYON

The Dairyland Walkers had a nice turnout for our May Walking Week. We hosted 7 Traveling Guided Walks over 7 days in the Madison, WI area. We strolled the Upper Yahara River bike trail in DeForest and the CamRock bike trail in Cambridge. We hiked the natural trails at UW-Madison Arboretum and the natural trails at Holy Wisdom in Middleton. We toured the parks and homes on Verona's West side. Our Madison Beverage & Food Forage walk was cut short by rain and hail, but we made it to Starkweather Brewing Company (SwBC) before the worst of the storm. We enjoyed beverages and food made sweeter with discounts provided by club member and SwBC owner Nancy McVary.

We had 9-16 participants each day with a total of 83 for the week. Surprisingly, the events Monday through Friday were better attended than our weekend events.

Many thanks to our trail master, Don Suloff, and our walk leaders, Mary Liebig, Patrick Jones, Don Suloff, Jerry and Pam Wilson, Chris Flessert, Jill Ruef, and Kristina Kenyon, without whom these events would not have been possible.



NORTHEAST REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



CAROL GIESECKE, NORTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Carol grew up in western Pennsylvania and has lived in the Northeastern US except for a 5 year period in central Missouri. She began her career in Washington, DC as a Forensic Chemist with the US Justice Department, but quickly realized that a more people-oriented job would be much more satisfying. She pursued graduate work in nutrition and over the years became more and more interested in efforts to promote sustainable food systems in the US and abroad. For thirty-five years she taught nutrition and food safety courses in a variety of university and non-academic settings. She retired to Cambridge MA in 2017 after selling her home in Dover, DE. Cambridge is her happy place for sure! However she loves walking, also biking and swimming to a lesser extent. She's excited to be joining other AVA folks at the Olympiad in Finland this year. Also in 2025, she hopes to join her Walk 'N Mass colleague to walk the Boston Marathon route in early October as a fundraiser for Dana Farber Cancer Center. She's the POC for two Boston walks and hopes to renew the Cambridge walk.

Fun fact: She used to be an on-air host on several community radio stations. She started out hosting a call-in talk show on gardening and self-reliance during the "back to the land" movement in the late 1980's; then she became a DJ for a series of folk, women's and world music programs at a small community radio station in central Maine.



A toast is in order! Left to right: Nikki, Chris, Sue and Louise.

Sue is posing by the statue of John Augustus Roebling, the designer of the prototype of the Brooklyn Bridge spanning the Ohio River.

Covington, KY was the site of Sue's 50th state walk. All photos by Chris Yost.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

BY SUZANN BURKE

My 21-year Fifty State challenge began in 2004. Florida and Georgia were the first of six states that year. During the following years, there were many bus trips as well as trips by small groups of fellow members of the Empire State Capital Volkswalkers (ESCV). The goal was to travel to different states to walk and to continue to fill our books with stamps needed. I traveled to Hawaii, Arizona and Colorado for various family visits and occasions; I included plans to complete at least one Volkswalk as a part of the agendas. There was an Alaskan cruise which included a walk in that state. My thanks to Chris, my companion for state number 49, Alabama, as well as thanks to Chris, Louise and Nikki, my companions when walking in my final state, Kentucky! We celebrated with a toast at Olive Garden. I've always felt that joining ESCV was one of the best things I have ever done!

NORTHEAST REGION LIGHTHOUSE WEEKEND

BY DENISE MACARONAS

The 2025 Tri-State Lighthouse Walking Weekend has come and gone. Thanks to everyone who played a role in its success: the planning committee, the many volunteers who helped behind the scenes prior to the event, the willing volunteers who helped out during the 3-day weekend, and of course, a BIG thank you to the 114 people who registered for this event, representing 14 states. Besides the states in the Northeast Region, we had walkers from Florida, Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington.



We were pleased to have Carl Cordes, the newly-elected AVA Board Chair, join us from Las Vegas. In comments at both the Meet and Greet and the group dinner, he complimented the Northeast Region for sponsoring this multi-club event and encouraged us to keep up the effort. He also encouraged us to attend the many multi-event weekends that are held throughout the US. These events offer great opportunities to get to know volkswalkers from around the country while exploring this great land, one step at a time.

Each of the 3 walks offered something special. Gloucester, Massachusetts is America's oldest seaport and is still an authentic working waterfront community. Here, walkers were treated to 3 lighthouses, although morning fog prevented many from seeing any of them. Other highlights included gardens, statues, veterans memorials, and a drawbridge that some walkers had to stop for while a boat traveled down the canal to the open water.



For several walkers in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, that walk offered a very romantic experience. Some of us saw a wedding procession - a young Navy man with a huge grin on his face and his bride by his side. Shortly after that, we saw a man get down on one knee, presented "the box" and proposed to the shocked, then delighted, fiancé. I was walking with two members from my home club, Southern Maine Volkssport Association, who completed this romantic experience by enjoying the walk, hand in hand, celebrating 62 years of marriage!



Sunday's walk at Portland Head Light in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, offered "up close and personal" views of the most photographed lighthouse in the United States. Commissioned by President George Washington, Portland Head Light is the oldest lighthouse in Maine.



Besides the walks, there were many opportunities to socialize. At the Meet and Greet, an optional "Ice Breaker Scavenger Hunt" took place. People had to seek out walkers not from their home club who fit into a variety of categories such as participating in a non-walking Volkssport event; participating in events in various continents; and finding people who had been volkssporting for over 20 years.



The group dinner was well attended and everyone received "I heart volkssports" pins while one lucky winner at each table brought home the centerpiece - a lighthouse-decorated shot glass.

At the dinner, Carol Giesecke, Northeast Regional Director, was joined by Carl Cordes to present several AVA National Awards and Commendable Service Award Certificates to various Northeast Region members. Among the volunteers who were recognized were those who organized and volunteered at last year's "Hud to Hou" regional walking weekend. Special recognition went to Walk 'n Mass, celebrating their 40th anniversary. This award was received by Marianne Marshall, one of the founding members of the club and still a very active volunteer.

Again, thanks to everyone who made this event a success. Hope our paths cross sometime and somewhere soon.



NORTHWEST REGIONAL DIRECTOR

BY SANDI SEVERTSEN

I grew up in Seattle, Washington with a single mom and two sisters. My mom never got the hang of driving a car, so we depended upon buses for transportation and then walking to wherever we wanted to go. My love for walking continues. My happiness is accepting the challenges that AVA offers with the Centurian, Events, Distances, and many of the clubs around the U.S. My proud moments are when I walked Rim to Rim in the Grand Canyon, Northern Ireland, and the French Camino in Spain. I look forward to continuing exploring our 10 regions during the 50th anniversary.



PACIFIC REGIONAL DIRECTOR

BY HOLLY PELKING

Hello everyone! I am excited to return to the Board of Directors as the Pacific Regional Director. I was previously on the board as RD and then as Vice President of AVA serving from 2011-2017. After leaving the Board, I was Co-Chair of the 2023 Olympiad Committee from 2017-2023.

I joined volksmarching on July 4, 1988 at a tri-state event based in Ohio. This event included Ohio, Indiana and Michigan and the start point was a huge duck farm. I believe over 600 walkers were in attendance for that 3 day weekend of walking in high 90 degree heat and 90 per cent humidity. We even had a few electrical storms and rain. However, I was hooked! All these people walking together, sharing stories and having a great time was certainly for me! In addition, the award for each event was a hand painted blown duck egg with the picture of the state, and its state bird. I will never forget it.

I helped establish the Hoosier Hikers walking club that is still going strong in South Bend, Indiana.

I moved from Indiana to California in 1992, where I joined the South Bay Striders in San Jose. I have served in almost every capacity of board member to date.

Since then, I have walked all 50 states, I have completed the IVV World Cup, and numerous Centurian Program levels. I look forward to continuing walking, traveling and meeting new people for a long time! Thanks to the network of clubs and events that AVA provides, we all can enjoy these treasures.



IT'S A WEEKEND WITH THE WILD THINGS! ORCUTT AND SOLVANG - SATURDAY & SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 & 28, 2025

BY TY & GINGER FREDRIKS

Saturday Start location: OASIS Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave, Orcutt CA 93455
Start time: Register between 8:00 a.m. till 11:00 am
Finish time: Everyone must be signed back in by 2:00 p.m.
Distance-Trail ratings: 5k (3.1 miles) - 2A and 10k (6.2 miles) - 2B



Saturday Route description: It's a celebration of the Arts, Chalk-Art style! Come experience beautiful street art, music performances, dance teams, and food trucks galore at the Orcutt Children's Art Foundation Annual Chalk Fest! Watch amazing artists create masterpieces right before your eyes as the Orcutt Academy Art Club creates a 30 foot labyrinth out of chalk, featuring all four of the Special Program's Wild Things doing activities that represent the Chalk Festival Theme of "The Central Coast". Ever seen a Gnome barbecuing tri tip or a fairy go wine tasting?

Sunday Route description: Sunday's walk introduces you to Lulu, Thomas Dambo's first permanent Troll sculpture in California! She was looking for some of those famous Solvang sweets, and got stuck in the California Nature Art Museum! She is huge, made completely out of repurposed materials, and the Museum Director has waived the admission fee for us to go see her!! The museum is right on our YRE route, so our 5K and 10K walks will give you all the highlights of this fascinating Danish-themed village! You'll see windmills, European architecture, and oodles of gift shops, bakeries, and cafes! The start point Sunday is on the sidewalk outside our walk host, the Solvang Shoe Store - look for the giant red clog! The start table will be set up from 8:00-11:00am. Multiple restrooms are en route, and wheelchairs and strollers should have little problems on the 5K. Furry walkers welcome with leash and cleanup, except in the museum (Lulu is visible from the street).

Miscellaneous: Restrooms are along the route on Sunday, and at the start/finish on Saturday.

Special programs:

Saturday: Clocks, Veterans, Wild Things, Labyrinths

Sunday: Wild Things, Walk the USA, Veterans

Cost: Walk fee is \$4.00.

Contact: Ty Fredriks | 805-714-1552 | tyandginger@gmail.com



Congratulations to Brenda Harris from the Las Vegas High Roller and Strollers walking club for completing all 50 States! Celebration was in order! She mentioned that she had walked in 49 States with Tater Tours!





ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL DIRECTOR

BY CHRIS BEGNOCHE

Greetings from the Rocky Mountain Region. As the new Regional Director of this amazing region, I would like to start by introducing myself. I started walking with the AVA back in the mid to late 1990s while on summer break from school. Those first walks were with the First State Webfooters from Delaware. Once back home in Southern Nevada from summer break, my parents let me continue walking the local events hosted by the Las Vegas High Rollers and Strollers where I lived at the time. Several years ago, I decided to finally become an associate member of the AVA. With the enjoyment that I have gotten out of walking with the AVA over the years I started to have a desire to start giving back a little bit more. I started by expressing interest in hosting a walk in St. George, Utah where I now live. At the time there was just one walk in the entire state of Utah. That was the Capital Walk in Salt Lake City. Within a few short months there was a walk in St. George, Utah. About three years ago, I noticed the Rocky Mountain Region did not have a Deputy Director. Since I now live within this region, I became intrigued by the idea. Fortunately, I already had a faint idea of the responsibilities of a Regional Director and Deputy Regional Director due to knowing the Pacific Region Regional Director at the time. After a few e-mail exchanges with them I decided to express an interest in the Rocky Mountain Deputy Regional Director post. After several e-mail exchanges with the Rocky Mountain Director at the time, I decided to continue forward with my interest in the position. Needless to say, the rest is history since now I am taking on the challenge of being the next Rocky Mountain Regional Director. I am looking forward to the challenges this position will present and doing what I can to take on those challenges.

I would like to also encourage everyone to look at the many walking opportunities within the Rocky Mountain Region which include the states of Colorado, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming. This region may be on the smaller side, if not the smallest of all, but I would put money on the idea that we have some of the most breathtaking, memorable, and picturesque walks in the country.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION UPDATE - 2026

BY FRANK SAYERS

WOODLAND WANDERERS, AVA-0915



Welcome to the Rocky Mountain Region. There are awesome things happening here, so put on your travel shoes and Come On Over! The Rocky Mountain Region is Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Montana. The most awesome scenery in the world.

From January 2026 through December 2030 is the new MONTANA County Seat Challenge. The northernmost state in the region is flat, hilly, and mountainous. There are 56 counties in Montana. Yes, you heard that right, 56. We have sanctioned all 56 at once, so you are not limited to which part of the state you explore. We are going to keep them sanctioned for five years so everyone has enough time to do all they want. Sherry and I are in Montana as you read this, using our RV to do two, 1-month trips. First on the west side where we will complete

the other 28 events. Come join us! Explore Montana and download the challenge booklet at <https://WoodlandWanderers.org/Montana/> and you won't be disappointed.

In continuing news, 2026 will be the last year the 29 counties in the Utah County Seat Challenge will be sanctioned. The Woodland Wanderers have 28 events, and our erstwhile Regional Director maintains the event in St George, as well as the Bryce Canyon National Park and Zion National Park events. While you are there, explore all of the five National Parks along the south side of Utah. Find out about Utah and download the challenge booklet at <https://WoodlandWanderers.org/Utah/>.



In 2025 the Woodland Wanderers along with the Sunflower Sod Stompers sponsored the AVA National Special Program Grain Elevators: Monarchs of the Plains. They really are everywhere, and about half the new events in Montana have them. Send \$12 to Sherry to get your Grain Elevators booklet now. <https://WoodlandWanderers.org/Grain/>

As always we have many Year-Round Events sanctioned that will allow you to explore the wide and varying landscapes from Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and now all of Montana. Colorado Springs, Denver, Estes Park, Cheyenne, Thermopolis, Salt Lake City, Helena are all places that will peg your enjoyment meter.

Register for all the Woodland Wanderers events using our contactless Online Event Registration System at <https://WoodlandWanderers.org/Store/> with your valid email address, then log in and choose all the events and put them in the cart, checkout and take your discount, pay with either a credit card (we pay the fees) or a check, and download the directions, maps and stamp immediately. Enjoy the events on your own schedule.

Come join us in the Rocky Mountain Region in 2026.

Have you been thinking your club needs a website, but do not know where to start? Go to <https://AVAClubs.org> and find out how you can get it done for free.

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL DIRECTOR

BY TERRI TYLER

My volkssporting adventures started almost 46 years ago at a festival in Ohio. We (my mother and I) were encouraged to walk 6 miles to earn a cast medallion that we just had to have. For 2 years we went back to earn our awards. By chance we happened to stop at a restaurant after our annual trip and found a volkssmarsch brochure as we were driving back to Kansas. The walk was only sixty miles away and we figured we could attend later that year. We did attend, bought books after a lot of persuasion, and our experiences began – just to fill-up those books. From then on we travelled to get our events and to earn those awards. Traveling to see new sights and to be exposed to a variety of communities and to become acquainted with other walkers just came natural to us. In 1984, we founded the Sunflower Sod Stompers of Topeka, Kansas, and I have served as club president ever since.

Through the years, we organized walks in Topeka, and around the State. Mileage on the car became volkssporting miles as we traveled to new states and to many biannual AVA Conventions which was a big incentive. Never did I think I would get the opportunity to visit all 50 states and capitals! And add in the new acquaintances and friendships we made throughout the US. With traveling to other clubs' events was so much fun, I organized van trips and some bus excursions for area walkers to enjoy. Teaching almost became my secondary job. Eventually I lost my mother (traveling buddy & co-event planner) and then I retired. I am still trying to get to those events – nearing 4200. The years have caught up to me so I cannot enjoy walking like I once did. Back issues just won't let me enjoy those trails but I can still drive. I have volunteered at several AVA Conventions and Festivals, usually in the finish area stamping the IVV Record books. Since 2016, I have stayed busy organizing walking events for the "Walking Kansas Counties" program – 105 counties in all. With any luck and determination, the 10 remaining counties in western Kansas will be walked next May. In addition, 2026 marks the 100th anniversary of the official establishment of U.S. Route 66, and since US 66 traversed through our Region, it will be our theme for our South Central Regional Roundup in October, 2026. This will be the 5th Roundup that I have helped organize and sponsor. With taking on the duties of the South Central Regional Director, I look forward in my next 2 years of service to the AVA being filled with new volkssporting tasks and making new friends along the way.

SOUTH CENTRAL UPDATES

BY TERRI TYLER

There has not much happening from the South Central Region of the United States. The heat and humidity shuts the clubs down for sponsoring traditional weekend events. Some of the clubs do have scheduled group walks of their YREs at early morning start times – trying to avoid those hot temperatures.

"Oklahoma, where the wind come sweepin' down the plain". Roger and Hammerstein got it right. That is what we ALL experienced last May at the Tulsa Walking Club's picnic. With gusts over 45mph, we were able to enjoy friendship and good food after their scheduled walk in Jenks.



At the picnic, I was able to present to Teresa Arnold from Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, a "Certificate of Service" from the AVA along with an engraved silver, "pepper". The silver pepper was emblematic of the Las Cruces Convention. Teresa stepped-up 4 years ago to fill the unexpected opening of the South Central Regional Director position. All of the area clubs appreciated Teresa's devotion and time for doing this AVA "job".

While at the picnic, I also presented Tulsa Walking Club their 40-years AVA club certificate and ribbon. Trying not to blow away, we took a picture of the presentation. Cynthia Hines and Cheryl Hiatt are bookending me and club President Rhonda Shockey in the photo.



Congratulations are also extended to South Central clubs: Pacesetters - 35 years, Lawton Walkers - 40 years, and Kansas Jaywalkers - 45 years, for fun, fitness and friendship.

Area walkers will all be waiting for Fall so we can back out there on those trails.



Sunflower Sod Stompers
Hoofin' It On Halloween
6 Sanctioned Walks
4 Kansas Counties
South Central Kansas
 POC: Terri Tyler tlttyler50@gmail.com

HOOFIN' IT ON HALLOWEEN

BY TERRI TYLER

Walkers, from near and far, are invited to the "Heartland of America" for the "**Hoofin' It On Halloween**" extended weekend, October 30 – November 2. The Sunflower Sod Stompers of Topeka will be sponsoring this volkssporting weekend as it marks the beginning of the club's 41st year.

Six sanctioned walking events will be located in 4 different counties of south-central Kansas, almost encircling the greater Wichita area. Besides Sedgwick County, the events will be in the Kansas counties of Butler, Cowley, and Sumner. Most of these counties were walked at least 5 years ago - some just at the beginning of the "Walking the Kansas Counties" program. Now, we will walk them again, hopefully with more enjoyable weather conditions. Two events will be on rail-trails. These rail-trails have never been utilized as sanctioned volkswalks. Some of the nearby towns will be included in each route. The Great Plains Nature Center, located in northeast Wichita, is on our schedule for Thursday afternoon. Wichita Skywalkers, a former volkssporting club, hosted an event there years ago. Now, the Sod Stompers want to introduce this hidden jewel of Kansas native habitat, located in Chisolm Creek Park, to present day trekkers.

The community of Wellington, south of Wichita, is home to three, different-themed museums which might spark our walkers' curiosities. And a little further south is located Winfield, home to a celebratory mural project. A mural project to celebrate Winfield's 150th year has now turned into a movement of wall art. This Kansas town has over a dozen murals located throughout the community for our participants to enjoy. Participants will be happy to read that ALL of these courses will be fairly flat; the Nature Center and rail-trails will traverse through natural settings – some on crushed limestone.

South-central 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 trails.

There will certainly be some qualifiers for AVA Special Programs. Each town has a different history and things to see and to enjoy. Come early and walk the Wichita YRE. Motel rooms are blocked; restaurants and group meals have been arranged. There are several unique and interesting YREs within a 2-hour driving time of our scheduled traditional walks. Plan to extend your stay in the Sunflower State! There definitely will be fun, fitness, friendship and food on the agenda, so come enjoy the Halloween weekend in Kansas!



If you need further information, please contact: Terri Tyler tlttyler50@gmail.com or Sarah Gregory-Long sarahslong@gmail.com. A printed brochure is available.

LIGHTS ON THE PLAZA WALK

The Clay-Platte Trackers of Kansas City will host their seasonal Lights on the Plaza Walk from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31.

NOTE: THE LIGHTS ARE NOT TURNED ON UNTIL THANKSGIVING EVENING, NOV. 27.

Walkers will enjoy a 15-block holiday spectacle on the Country Club Plaza. Thousands of glimmering jewel-colored lights accentuate all of the buildings in the Spanish-inspired shopping center.

The walk is very flat—until the last four-tenth of a mile.

Start Points: The box is at Sun Fresh, 4001 Mill, Kansas City. All of the group walks will start at the picnic shelter in Loose Park, 5200 Wornall Rd.

GROUP WALKS

Wed., Oct. 22: Loose Park, Meet: 8:45 AM. Leave: 9:00 AM.
Wed., Nov. 19: Loose Park, Meet: 9:45 AM. Leave: 10:00 AM
Fri., Dec. 5: Loose Park, Meet 4:45 PM. Leave 5:00 PM
Sat. Dec. 6: Westport Walk, Sun Fresh: Meet 9:45 AM. Leave 10:00 AM
Sun. Dec. 14: Loose Park, Meet 4:45 PM. Leave, 5:00 PM

For further information call or text Pat Thon at 816-820-0157. Email Pat at patenthons@gmail.com. Please contact Pat if you plan to attend one of the group walks.



DOGWOOD TRAILBLAZERS FALL EVENTS

BY GLEN CONYERS

Dogwood Trailblazers Walking Club of Joplin, Missouri will be hosting a fall, 2-event day October 25, 2025 in southeast Kansas. The first event will take place in Girard, Kansas in the morning, and then 12 miles away in Arma, Kansas for the afternoon event. Both towns are tied to the early coal mining industry prevalent in this area in the late 1800 hundreds.

Both towns were bedroom support communities to larger Pittsburg, Kansas. Although Pittsburg was larger, Girard surfaced as the county seat. These walks are on flat ground. Girard will have a 10 and 5k routes while only a 5k course will be available for Arma. Grain elevators are more than evident in Girard if doing that Special Program. Rest rooms and parking facilities will be handy for both towns. These walks will be worthy of your attention.



SAINT LOUIS WALKERS

The Saint Louis Walkers will sponsor a walk at Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, MO on Sunday, October 26, 2025. The cemetery is located at 4947 West Florissant Ave in St. Louis, MO. Bellefontaine Cemetery is a nonprofit, non-denominational cemetery and arboretum. Founded in 1849 as a rural cemetery, Bellefontaine has several architecturally significant monuments and mausoleums such as the Louis Sullivan-designed Wainwright Tomb, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The cemetery contains 314 acres of land and over 87,000 graves. The Saint Louis Walkers' 5K and 10K walks give one an overall picture of the cemetery. Well-known graves include those of explorer William Clark, Adolphus Busch (co-founder of the Anheuser-Busch brewery), his wife (Lily Anheuser), US Senator Thomas Hart Benton, educator Susan Blow, author William S. Burroughs, and James McDonnell (founder of the McDonnell Aircraft Corporation). The cemetery has many Union and Confederate soldiers from the American Civil War, as well as local and state politicians. It has the largest collection of private and family mausoleums and sarcophagi in Missouri. Its oldest graves are from 1816, located on pioneer Edward Hempstead's family lot. Many of the wealthiest families at Bellefontaine have ornate mausoleums which overlook the Mississippi River. These mausoleums have Classical, Roman, Gothic, and Egyptian architectural styles. Well-known mausoleums include the Wainwright Tomb, designed for Charlotte Dickson Wainwright by the famed Chicago School architect Louis Sullivan in 1892.

In addition to being a cemetery, Bellefontaine is a Level III Accredited Arboretum. The arboretum's mission is to support and enhance the cemetery as a place of perpetual commemoration, and as a garden of beauty, inspiration, and historic significance. Bellefontaine's grounds are home to a vast array of trees and shrubs of local, regional, and international origins providing a changing landscape every season.

Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum in St. Louis has a new meditation labyrinth designed by Robert Fishbone. It's a circular structure made of granite pavers, featuring a single, winding path leading to the center intended for contemplation and reflection. It will be open by the end of 2025.

5K Outer Loop

This loop has a lot of history and points of interest with some areas without headstones. You will walk past a grove of plants being grown especially for our wonderful St Louis Zoo animals. Then you will walk past the original entrance gate which is missing the welcome center building but has other interesting points. Further along you will see areas that appear to not have any or very few graves but take time to check out the tombstones and you will find that area was used during a depression, so a lot of people did not have money for headstones. These areas are completely full.

5K Inner Loop

This loop has a multitude of interesting headstones and crypts. Some of the columns look like they are broken off, but no, they were designed that way to indicate the person had died while in the middle of a project. It might be while raising her children or he was building a building or designing a park.

There will be no crypts open at the time of the walk. However, the cemetery does have tours available conducted by master guides. Individuals may tour the grounds on their own using maps available at the cemetery office.

Start Location

The walk will start just inside the main gate. Coordinates are: 38.69140 N 90.23030 W
Cemetery address is: 4947 W. Florissant Ave, St. Louis, MO 63115.

For more information, visit our website at www.saintlouiswalkers.com and enjoy a walk in the Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, MO.



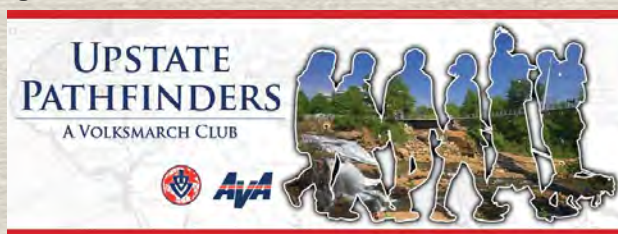
SOUTHEAST REGION TALES FROM THE TRAILS



SOUTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR

BY JEANNE STOKES

As a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT), I work behind the scenes in healthcare to keep data accurate and systems running smoothly. But my heart is in motion—literally. I believe walking is one of the simplest, most powerful ways to support mental, physical, and social well-being. I'm convinced that the foundation of wellness lies in how we move, how we engage, and who we surround ourselves with. I'm passionate about fitness, connection, and helping others embrace wellness as a lifestyle, not just a goal.



A BITTERSWEET GOODBYE - THANK YOU, UPSTATE PATHFINDERS FAMILY

BY ROB MCDANIEL

It's with a grateful heart and a touch of sadness that I share some news: after notifying our members and completing our final audit with AVA: America's Walking Club, the UpState PathFinders Volksmarch Club of Greenville, SC (Est. 2011) will officially be closing.

From the very beginning, this club has meant the world to me. After retiring from the military and moving to Clearwater, FL, I discovered the Suncoast Sandpipers and was reintroduced to Volksmarching—an activity I loved during my time in Germany. My days in Europe were filled with driving to new places, doing 10km walks, and collecting the decorative German Bier Steins along the way. That same joy and passion led to the founding of the UpState PathFinders when I moved to Greenville in 2010.

We built something special: award-winning publicity for consecutive years - thank you to the talents of our late son-in-law, Martin Britton. We grew to 200+ members, and our walk events were filled with laughter, community, and purpose. I had the honor of serving as Deputy Regional Director for six years under John McClellan, Kathryn King, and meeting many wonderful walkers throughout the Southeast.

Life has its unexpected turns—health challenges eventually led me to step away after 12 incredible years as the club's president and AVA altogether. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Michael & Joan Lanpher, who picked up the torch in 2023. Despite their dedication, the club has faced low turnout and now, they are facing health concerns. With that, the club has decided to close this chapter.

To everyone who walked with us, supported us, and helped make the UpState PathFinders what it was—thank you. Your friendship, your miles, and your memories meant everything. It was a great run—and one I'll never forget.

— Rob McDaniel
Founding Member, UpState PathFinders
Proud AVA Lifetime Member

WALK AROUND FLORIDA - CELEBRATE WALKING!

BY CATHY METHERELL, JOHN MCCLELLAN AND ALICE LAWRENCE

We hope you will join us from November 7—9 to celebrate walking at WAF34 in Orlando, Florida! We'll be getting an early start on next year's 50th anniversary of American volkssporting, where our next WAF will be a featured Regional event on the 2026 AVA anniversary calendar.

The pre-registration brochure for this year's weekend is now available. You have until October 7th to register for the group rate (\$117+taxes) at our hotel – the Fairfield Inn & Suites Orlando – Kissimmee/Celebration, and until October 25th to submit your pre-registration. Pre-registration will reserve a place for the dinner (space limited) and sign-up for events and awards – or you can register for individual events when you arrive. Ford's Garage at the Vineland Outlets Center will be our Saturday night dinner venue. A popular chain of American restaurants founded in 2012 in Florida, Ford's Garage features design and décor reminiscent of a 1920's-era service station. Ford's Garage is where "great food meets vintage vibes."

Our walks at WAF34 include two "old Florida" towns – Kissimmee and St. Cloud, that have grown to be bustling Orlando suburbs. Both are scenic lakeside villages that offer a bevy of downtown murals along with historic and cultural sites and markers. Our third walk is in the Disney-planned community of Celebration itself, with its quaint town center, luxury houses, and miles of nature trails connecting the entire neighborhood. There's also been a change of venue for Sunday since our last article.

The new Sunday morning walk is from the Osceola County Welcome Center & Museum on the Shingle Creek Regional Trail including the "Pioneer Village" about 2km out from the start/finish point. Single Creek is the northernmost headwater of the Everglades. The regional trail started with humble beginnings of just over 1 mile but now includes over 17 paved miles (of 32 planned) open for all trail users to enjoy. We'll see our customary 5k or 10k of that, but you are welcome to walk further if you wish! Special program qualifiers available across our 4 walks include: Par for the Course, Rails-to-Trails, Town Halls/City Halls, Walking with America's Veterans, and Walking the USA A—Z for letters C, K, and S.

For our A-Award this year we've ordered elegant stemless wine glasses to further our celebration! As per usual, WAF34 will also include games and contests, good friends and new memories celebrating our shared love of walking together.

You can find the downloadable pre-registration brochure along with more information leading up to WAF34 on all three club websites:

www.midfloridamilers.org;
www.happywanderersfl.org and
www.suncoastsandpipers.org



SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DIRECTOR

BY ANDY THOMAS

I have been volksmarching since 1999. I first became deputy RD in 2021 and started a second term as deputy in 2023, then became RD in 2024 in the middle of the term. I have also been secretary of the Texas Volkssport Association since 2018. For local clubs, I have often volunteered at walks and I created day 1 friendship walk routes for the Texas Trail Roundup and a few walk routes for the San Antonio Pathfinders. I also produced a newsletter for many years for the Texas Wanderers, ending in 2024 when this club consolidated with the SA Pathfinders.

SEASONAL WALKS IN FRISCO, TEXAS - HOME OF THE DALLAS COWBOYS HEADQUARTERS

BY DALLAS TREKKERS

Dallas Trekkers have a new seasonal event in Frisco, Texas, about 30 miles north of Dallas. From October 1 until December 31, 2025, the 5K/10K walk encompasses two areas of Frisco: The Star, home of the Dallas Cowboys World Headquarters, and the Hall Office Park, with numerous sculptures in its multi-use acreage.

The Star is the 91-acre campus of the Dallas Cowboys headquarters and practice facility. The walk will take you among the many restaurants (about 35), facilities, hotels, and retail space, along with the Cowboys Ring of Honor Walk. The practice arena is a 12,000-seat stadium used by the Cowboys, Frisco school district for Friday night varsity football, along with soccer and lacrosse games.

The walk continues to Hall Park, a business park comprised of 162 acres, combining business, residential, hospitality and cultural offerings. You'll walk through the Texas Sculpture Garden, named one of the best spots for outdoor art in the Metroplex.



The 10k walk will include the Dallas Stars hockey team, and the minor league baseball facilities.

Group walks will take place this fall. If interested, contact the [Dallas Trekkers](#) for information.

Register to walk this event through the Online Start Box only on the ava website. However, if you join us for a group walk, we will have the stamps available.

NOTE: Special light shows take place on Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving and early December at the Star with the Cowboy Cheerleaders, Santa, and more starting at 6PM.

THREE DAYS OF WALKS IN THE HISTORIC GONZALES AREA - "THE LEXINGTON OF TEXAS"

BY MIKE SCHWENCKE



The San Antonio Pathfinders invite you to enjoy three days of walks in one of the most historic areas of Texas – Gonzales, which is celebrating its 200th year. The event is November 7 – 9, 2025.



Friday November 7, the 10k/5k event starts anytime between 1pm to 3pm at the K. Spoetzl Brewery in Shiner, TX, about 18 miles from Gonzales, and finishes by 5pm at the Shiner Brewery Lawn area. Your walk will take you into historic Shiner, TX, founded in 1885 by Henry B. Shiner, who donated the land for the railroad. Czech and German immigrants soon became the dominant ethnic groups, and in 1909, the Spoetzl Brewery, the oldest independent brewery in Texas, was started. The brewery produces Shiner Bock, a dark German/Czech-style beer. After you finish the walk, you can purchase a tour of the brewery or some BBQ, listen to local bands, and visit the tasting room until 8pm.

Saturday November 8, the 11k/5k walk will start at 8am and finish by 12:30pm on the porch of the Gonzales Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Center. Walkers will proceed through historic Gonzales, passing museums and grand old homes. Gonzales is one of the earliest Anglo-American settlements in Texas, founded in 1825. It is referred to as "The Lexington of Texas" because it was the site of the first skirmish of the Texas Revolution in 1835, when more than 100 Mexican soldiers tried to retrieve a cannon they had loaned to the Gonzales citizens years before. A flag bearing the likeness of the cannon and the words "Come and Take It" was flown when the first shots of Texian independence were fired on October 2, 1835. The Texians won the "Battle of Gonzales". Later 32 men from Gonzales volunteered at the Alamo, the only city to send aid. All the men lost their lives defending the site.

Sunday's walk on November 9th is a 10K/5K at Palmetto State Park, about 15 miles from Gonzales, starting anytime from 8am – 10:30am. The walk is made of two 5K loops, one mainly on trails and among the Palmettos; the other on trails and roads through the park. The park was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and features bogs and dense vegetation, giving the park a jungle-like atmosphere. Water features include the San Marcos River along with the Oxbow Lake.

The host hotel for this 3-day event is the Sleep Inn and Suites by Choice Hotels in Gonzales. 25 rooms have been blocked at a special rate. Call 830-672-1888 and tell them you want the Texas Volkssport rate. Reservations must be made by two weeks before the event.

The Texas Volkssport Association (TVA) will hold a member meeting Saturday afternoon at the host hotel meeting room from 1:30pm – 5:00pm. All AVA walkers are invited to attend.

Fun Fact: the world's largest Buc-ee's Travel Center is 4 miles from Palmetto State Park in Luling Texas, on Interstate 10, featuring 120 fuel pumps, and 75,000 square feet of shopping. It's an experience you might want to visit on your way home Sunday.

Point of Contact: Mike Schwencke, San Antonio Pathfinders President at mike.schwencke@outlook.com; Phone (210) 382-0367.



NEW SEASONAL EVENT THROUGH HISTORIC PALESTINE, TX

BY HELEN HULL

A new seasonal walk begins October 1 through December 31, 2025 in Palestine, Texas, hosted by the East Texas Trekkers. Founded in the 1840's, Palestine was a major railroad center and includes many historic churches, buildings, homes and parks. A special group walk will take place Saturday November 1 at 9am in Palestine. Please contact Helen Hull if you would like to join the group: helenthehun@yahoo.com. Palestine is Helen's hometown where she was born, grew up, went to school, and still has friends and cousins. She promises to bore you with more information about the many sites in Palestine.

Palestine was also home to John H Reagan who was appointed a judge in the East Texas region in the 1840's. He established his practice there even after being warned that Palestine already had a number of lawyers in town. But even though his region included a little town a 100 miles to the north (Dallas), Palestine was the far more important city. Judge Reagan later served in many capacities including US Senator from Texas just before the Civil War. He resigned when Texas seceded from the Union and later served as Postmaster General of the Confederacy and was the only member of Jefferson Davis's cabinet captured with Davis after the war. After being released from prison, he returned to Palestine and later served as Texas Railroad Commission and was instrumental in persuading the Great Northern Pacific Railroad to make Palestine a regional center. The walk will go thru Reagan Park and pass Reagan School and the old Railroad Hospital.

More details to follow on the Texas Volkssport [Facebook](#) page. The walk is Online Start Box (OSB) only, but for the group walk, there will be a stamp available.

Located in the Piney Woods region of East Texas, Palestine is equidistant from Dallas, Houston, and Shreveport. It was founded by Daniel Parker who previously lived in Palestine, Illinois. The town is the home to the Texas State Railroad, which offers vintage train rides through the pine forests, and is a very popular excursion. There are over 1,800 historic sites and structures in the town, including many on the National Historic Registry of Homes. Palestine is also the official Dogwood Trails Capital of Texas, attracting thousands of visitors annually to the blooming of the Dogwood trees in the spring.





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.

2025 AVA Multiple Event Listing				
Month	Date	Multi-day Event Description	Host Club	Location
September	27 - 28	Walking With The Wild Things - Coastal Style	Central Coast Beach Boardwalkers	CA
October	2 - 5	Walking Stevens Pass to Leavenworth	Interlaken & Central WA Sun Striders	WA
October	11 - 13	Hike Lincoln National Forest in Ruidoso	West Texas Trail Walkers	NM
October	16 - 19	Shady Cove, Oregon	Columbia River Volkssport Club	OR
October	17 - 29	24th U.S. FreedomWalk Festival	U.S. Freedom Walk Festival Club	VA/D.C.
October	25 am and pm	Small Town America - Two Towns	Dogwood Trailblazers	KS
October	25 - 26	INVA/MARD Autumn Fest	Mid-America Region	IN
October	30 - 2	Hoofin' It On Halloween	Sunflower Sod Stompers	KS
November	7 - 9	Walk Around Florida 34	Mid-Florida Milers	FL
November	7 - 9	Historic Gonzales - 200th Birthday	San Antonio Pathfinders	TX
November	14 - 16	Haunted Gettysburg Weekend	York White Rose Wanderers	PA
December	12 - 14	Williamsburg Holiday Event	Williamsburg Holiday Events	VA
December	31 - 1	New Year's Eve/Day in Savage, MD	Freestate Happy Wanderers	MD
January	9 - 11	AVA 50th Anniversary Chairman's Events	Las Vegas High Rollers and Strollers	NV
February	20 - 22	IML Texas Trail Roundup	AVA: America's Walking Club	TX
March	20 - 22	Atlantic Regional Conference	Williamsburg	VA

PARTICIPANTS CORNER

CLICK ICONS TO VIEW ANNIVERSARIES, EVENTS AND AWARDS.



UPCOMING



EVENTS

IVV EVENT



AWARDS



IVV DISTANCE AWARDS

BIKE DISTANCE



AWARDS

AVA GIVES BACK

Prizes

FREE SANCTIONED TRADITIONAL EVENTS - FOR EVERY 25 CLUBS THAT DONATE, ONE FREE TRADITIONAL SANCTIONED EVENT & ONE 50TH ANNIVERSARY T-SHIRT WILL BE RAFFLED.

2026 STARTING POINT BOOKS - FOR EVERY 50 UNIQUE DONORS, ONE 2026 STARTING POINT BOOK & ONE 50TH ANNIVERSARY T-SHIRT WILL BE RAFFLED.

Grand Prize

50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT- ONE AVA CLUB AND ONE INDIVIDUAL WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE AVA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT AT THE CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL VOLKSMARCH, HOSTED BY THE BLACK HILLS VOLKSSPORT ASSOCIATION, JUNE 6, 2026. THE PRIZE INCLUDES ONE INDIVIDUAL 2-DAY WALK PASS AND A FREE 2-NIGHT, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY, HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS IN RAPID CITY, SD. IT DOES NOT INCLUDE TRAVEL EXPENSES.



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!



AVA FEATURED EVENTS

Walking with Wild Things



Orcutt & Solvang, CA

Sept 26 - 28, 2025

Walk the Orcutt Chalk Festival with music, food, and beautiful chalk art. Enjoy Solvang, the Danish capital of America with the Santa Ynez Mission

Sponsored by Central Coast Beach Boardwalkers

Information: Ty Fredriks tyandginger@gmail.com

[Click here for more information](#)

Leavenworth, WA & Beyond

*Interlachen
Trailblazers &
Central
Washington
Sunstriders*

**Four Autumn
Walks & Bike
October 2-5, 2025**

Headquarters: Lake Wenatchee Club House.

Walks in state parks, trails and downtown

Socials, plus 10 nearby YREs

Information: Irene Stanford: irenestanford@msn.com

[Click here for more information](#)

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

Hike Lincoln Forest Natl Park



**Ruidoso, NM
October 10-12, 2025**

Three Trails in Lincoln Natl Forest

5K – 20K available

Social Event plus Dinner

Special Hotel rate of \$99 at La Quinta

[Pre-Registration Required](#)

Sponsored by West Texas Trail Walkers

susan.noonan@gmail.com

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Shady Cove, Oregon

*Columbia
River
Volkssport
Club*

**Shady Cove, OR
October 16-19, 2025**

5 Walks in town, parks & trails.

Shady Cove is the gateway to
Crater Lake National Park

Info: Ed Hainline: opahainline49@gmail.com

[Click Here for More Information](#)

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

24th IML US FreedomWalk



**IML Events
October 17 - 19, 2025**

3 Walks (5K – 22K)
+ Swim & Bike Events

Arlington, Va & Washington DC

Registration open now.

Info: usfreedomwalk@gmail.com

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Small Town America



**October 25, 2025
AM & PM**

Walk Girard and Arma, Kansas

Two walks in one day to discover
life in small town Kansas

Sponsored by Dogwood Trailblazers

Info: glenconyers@sbcglobal.net

[Click Here for More Information](#)

AVA FEATURED EVENTS

Autumn Fest in Indiana

Indiana
Volkssport
Assoc. and
Mid-America
Regional Dir.

October 25-26, 2025

Waveland and
Crawfordsville, IN

Group guided walks, plus see the Annual
Crawfordsville Paranormal Convention

Sponsored by Mid-America Regional Director and
Indiana Volkssport Association

Info: Bob Buzolich sonofbuzz@prodigy.net

[Click here for more information](#)

Hoofin' It On Halloween



October 30-Nov 2
6 walks
6 cities in Kansas

Walk Wichita, Goddard, Wellington,
Arkansas City, Winfield & Andover
Sponsored by Sunflower Sod Stompers

Information: Terri Tyler ttyler50@gmail.com

[Click here for more information](#)

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

Gonzales TX 200th Birthday



November 7-9, 2025
Gonzales TX

Three Days of Walks in Shiner,
Gonzales & Palmetto State Park

Texas Volkssport Assoc meeting Saturday
Special hotel rate at Sleep Inn and Suites

Sponsored by San Antonio Pathfinders and
Texas Volkssport Association

Info: mike.schwencke@outlook.com

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Walk Around Florida 34



November 7-9, 2025
Kissimmee/Orlando FL

Walk Orange & Osceola Counties

4 Walks and a Swim near Orlando
Socials and Dinner

[Pre-register now](#)

Special Hotel Rate at [Fairfield Inn](#)

Sponsored by The Mid-Florida Milers, Happy Wanderers,
and Suncoast Sandpipers

[Click Here for More Information](#)

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

Haunted Gettysburg



November 14-16, 2025
Gettysburg, PA

4 Walks including Ghost Tour
Gettysburg Remembrance Day Parade - and see
thousands of Civil War Reenactors

Special Hotel Rate \$79 at Days Inn
[Pre-registration](#) open now.

Sponsored by York White Rose Wanderers

Info: thomasjackson@embarqmail.com

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Williamsburg Holidays



December 12-14, 2025
Williamsburg, VA

Holiday Night Walk thru Colonial
Williamsburg
Day Walk – Colonial, and William
and Mary campus

[Pre-registration](#) encouraged for discount rate

Info: Pam Bowers pb6116@gmail.com

[Click Here for More Information](#)

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AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

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AMERICA'S
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13th Annual Fall Volksmarch September 28, 2025



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TO OUR QUARTERLY
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DECEMBER EDITION - DEADLINE OCTOBER 25

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TO PURCHASE AD SPACE CONTACT HENRY@AVA.ORG



AVA IS AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB,
WHICH IS THE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP WALKING
ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

WE ARE DEDICATED TO PROMOTING HEALTH AND
WELLNESS BY PROVIDING FUN-FILLED,
WELL-PLANNED AND INFORMATIVE
WALKS. THESE WALKS ARE
NON-COMPETITIVE, WHICH ALLOWS
PARTICIPANTS TO WALK AT
THEIR OWN PACE. WE ALSO HOST
HIKES, BIKE RIDES, SWIM,
AND IN SOME REGIONS, CROSS-COUNTRY
SKIING AND SNOWSHOEING.

WE HAVE MORE THAN 180 CLUBS ACROSS
THE UNITED STATES, WITH MORE
THAN 2,500 EVENTS EACH YEAR. VISIT OUR WEBSITE
AT AVA.ORG TO LOCATE A CLUB AND WALKS NEAR YOU.

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Fun, Fitness, Friendship