



CHECKPOINT

WWW.AVA.ORG



July 13, 2018 - Ediz Hook walk, Port Angeles, WA, one of the NW Regional AVA Walking Festival & Conference events. 2018 Starting Point Book image submitted by Julie Heath.

AVA BOARD CHAIR - NANCY WITTENBERG

The Big Give



THE BIG GIVE IS COMING!

Please join with me in supporting our 2024 Big Give! The Big Give has been our only fund raiser in past years and has supported so much of what we need for AVA. We give because we believe in the purpose of the organization. We are its benefactors, its supporters. When we walk and pay for those walks, we are the recipients of its services: we gain better health, fitness and friendship. But, as a donor and supporter, we can think beyond our own needs to those of the wider community and the organization as a whole.

The online portion is September 18-19 from 6pm the 18th to 6pm the 19th. You will hear more about the particulars, whether there are prizes the AVA can achieve with our online efforts, etc. And, remember, the Southwest Region had the most donations last year. Will your region out-perform them? I know others were close to doing so.

Have you thought about setting up a peer-to-peer site? I have done that each year, asking my sisters and family, especially, to contribute to this organization that is so important to me. There will be information coming about how you can do that.

Other than the online 24 hours, you can always donate to the Big Give during the Big Give week and generally through the end of September. Please, RDs and DRDs, encourage your clubs to donate as well as individuals.

Let's Give Big, during the Big Give. Join with me to give whatever you can. Every little bit helps.

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PRESIDENT/CEO - HENRY ROSALES

GROUPEL RSVP PROGRAM CLARIFICATION

When a club gets an RSVP email from Grouper advising them a participant will attend one of their events, it is because the participant in question has used the Grouper RSVP program that allows the walker to select an AVA event via the Grouper online interface. This participant is called a Grouper RSVP walker.

RSVP walkers are NOT Strider participants and should NOT be recorded as Strider participants in quarterly reports. Clubs do not report RSVP participation because that report is generated by Grouper and reported separately.

GROUPER STRIDER PROGRAM

A New AVA National Initiative in Partnership with Grouper

The AVA has a new agreement with Grouper (formerly known as “Element3 Health”) to promote their new referred participants called Strider **participants (walkers)** to our events. This program is for Strider participants who use a physical start box and/or attend any of our other non-competitive sporting events to include Traditional events. Please note, Strider participants are NEW walk participants who are referred by Grouper. NEW walk participants are individuals who are new to our organization. Someone who has been walking with the AVA prior to June 1, 2024, does NOT qualify for this program.

Grouper will sponsor these participants by paying their \$2.00 event participation fee that clubs would have to pay the AVA and their \$2.00 event participation fee that goes to clubs. Note these are not free walkers. *Their walk fee is paid by Grouper and the AVA reimburses clubs \$2.00 for these participants.*

Here is how it works.

Grouper will pay the AVA the \$2.00 club portion of participation fees for all Strider participants *who attend any of their YRE/Seasonal Event or a Traditional Events and have physically signed an AVA Athletic Waiver (Registration Log or Start Card) for the event.* Clubs will receive a \$2.00 credit for each Strider participant who has attended any of these Events. The credit will be applied quarterly to their event participation invoices. This participation credit program **does not apply to ACE Weekday Guided (ACE-WG) events.**

What this means is that all **Strider** participants are sponsored by Grouper and should not be charged a club participation fee when they attend any of our Events. However, to credit clubs \$2.00 per Strider participant, clubs must record the number of **Strider** participants in their traditional and quarterly event participation reports (TE and YRE/SE). The event (TE and YRE/SE) participation reports will have a NEW category labeled Strider. This is where clubs will enter the quarterly **Strider** participant count beginning the second quarter of 2024 for YREs and Seasonals and starting **6/1/2024 for Traditional events.**

There is currently no support for the club to get a \$2 credit for a Strider participant who has registered and completed an OSB Year-Round/Seasonal online. A separate process will be developed for Strider participants who use the online start box soon.

Strider participants must pay for any/all additional fees beyond the exempted \$4.00 participation fee such as awards, park fees, special events, etc.

This program went into effect June 1, 2024.

AVA 2024 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

The AVA Membership Survey results are with Committee Chairs for their review and input. When this has been completed, the data will be consolidated into a format that is concise and easy to read. The results will be presented to the Board of Directors and then made available to all who request them.

FORMS 900 A AND B – CHANGES

Form 900 A has changed on the website and now includes a Strider, Guest, Child/NoStamp and Paid Participant category. The new **Paid Participant** category is used in place of Awards, Credit, and Non-IVV, for clubs who do not care to track these categories. Clubs who use this form can record Paid Participants under any paid category in the quarterly reports.

Form 900 B has also been added to the website. This form includes all the traditional categories and the new Strider, Guest, and Child/NoStamp Categories.

Clubs are free to use whichever form works best for their needs. Please update these forms in your start boxes as soon as possible.

[Form 900 A](#)

[Form 900 B](#)

For more information on participation categories use this link. [2024 AVA Participation Types and Their Proper Use](#)

Should you have any questions please contact henry@ava.org.

2025 BIENNIAL CONVENTION, LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO

Convention Registration, Hotels, and Transportation Updates

Convention Registration – Registration for the 2025 Biennial Convention is scheduled to open in September. The registration link will be on the AVA's website convention page.

Hotel Registration - A hotel registration link will also be posted on the AVA's website convention page within the next couple of weeks. This link will take you to a page that will list all hotels (with pricing) that are near to the convention center. Please use this site if you want to receive the negotiated discounted hotel rates.

Transportation – Onsite registration, meetings, awards banquet, silent auction, workshops, and most other convention activities will be at the Las Cruces Convention Center. We are working on bus transportation for events like the walks and the welcome reception that are not at the convention center. Please stay tuned!

Check the AVA website for convention updates or contact the convention committee at convention@ava.org



JULY AVA ONLINE MONTHLY WEBINAR IS CANCELLED

There will be no online seminar in July. Please join us for the next online seminar on August 21, 7:00pm Central.

2024 INDIVIDUAL DONOR CAMPAIGN - THE BIG GIVE, SEPTEMBER 18-19, 2024

Once a year the AVA hosts a giving campaign to support operations and help us close the funding gap. Funds are also used to support new initiatives like club banners, club multi-day events, marketing, programs, and technology development. Your support allows the national office to continue serving our clubs, members, and participants in the best way possible. There are new and exciting initiatives and events proposed for 2025 like a membership campaign, walk application, walk on the waves cruise, and an incredible convention in Las Cruces, New Mexico! Please consider donating and reaching out to others to support this utterly unique and wonderful organization that continues to strengthen our health, our friendships, and our communities.



MID-AMERICA REGIONAL DIRECTOR - CRAIG GAUGER

MID-AMERICA CONFERENCE

We'd like to thank all of the walkers who came to Kentucky from 12-18 June for our Mid-America Conference. We had many, many positive responses about the walks. Attendance wasn't as high as we had liked, but we were trying to get some local participation to perhaps recreate a walking club in central Kentucky.

Most of our walkers travelled quite a way to see the beautiful countryside that awaited them. We hosted walks in Shelbyville, Bardstown, Harrodsburg, and north of Frankfort at Cove Spring Park. I believe we had walkers coming from at least 14 states.

Also, much gratitude to all of the organizers and workers who made the events work. Special thanks to Tom and Sandy Crabill for providing food at the Harrodsburg walk.

Our next conference will be in 2026. We're planning it somewhere in Illinois.

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE - DIANE HOWELLS EVANS, CHAIR

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

[Event Brochure](#)

[Event Registration Form](#)

AVA SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The last date to complete any purchased challenge books and redeem for the AVA Special Programs of “Border Crossings” and “Great Lakes, Great Fun, Great Fitness and Great Friendships” is 12/31/2024.



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

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - SUSAN FINE, CHAIR

AVA ELEVATOR SPEECH

AVA is America’s Walking Club, which is the largest 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 support hikes, bike rides, swimming, 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.

PUBLICITY UPDATE

Our sport is not only for the health of walking, but also for the social connections we make. During the summer, if your group cannot meet to walk due to the heat, we encourage you to meet and walk at indoor malls, so walkers can keep in touch and continue to enjoy walking.

This leads to the Grouper partnership we have. When you are contacted by someone new asking about the walks, be sure to include them on your email lists, so they find out about group walks, not just traditional walks. Our goal is for your clubs to grow, and volkswalking to flourish.

The deadline for the September edition of TAW is July 25th. Please send your articles and photos to taw@ava.org. [Guidelines are here](#). And let us know if you have suggestions for stories.

And please remember that you can watch the past monthly webinars on the [AVA website](#), to learn about different aspects of upcoming programs, financials, and much more.

ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST - MARIAN DEVAUL

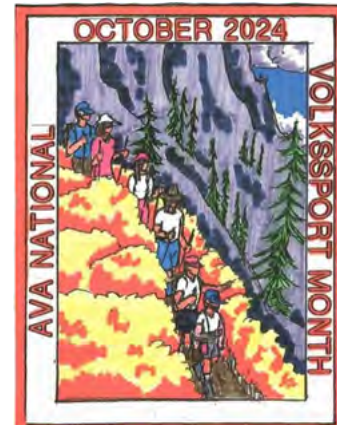
2ND QUARTER PARTICIPATION

It's time once again to submit your 2nd Quarter Participation Reports. Don't forget, the deadline is midnight on July 31st, and all reports submitted after this date are past due and subject to late fees.

OCTOBER 2024 NATIONAL VOLKSSPORT MONTH PATCH

October is National Volkssport Month. Celebrate by pre-ordering patches using the order form and returning to the National Headquarters. The 2024 patches are \$5.00 each (20% club discount does not apply. Shipping cost is not included)

Mail form to AVA, 1008 S. Alamo St, San Antonio, TX 78210, or fax form to 210-659-1212. You may also place your order by emailing this form to marian@ava.org. The deadline to order these October patches is September 15th. Don't miss this opportunity to offer this collectible patch to walk participants! Note: AVA will not be ordering extra inventory of this patch, clubs must pre-order the patch. Click on image for form.



Click image for order form

MAY NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS PATCH – ON SALE

If you missed the opportunity to purchase the 2024 May National Physical Fitness Patch, we still have some available at a sales price of \$3.00 per patch, plus a shipping/handling charge. For purchase, please e-mail marian@ava.org, or call 210-659-2112.

FINANCIAL

If your club's fiscal year ends on 6-30-24, it is time to file your 990 E-Postcard, Annual Financial Report (AFR), and update your club officers. An IRS user guide, and the AVA Retention policy for financial and event records have been posted on the AVA website under "Clubs Only". Please submit a copy of your filings to marian@ava.org.

IT SPECIALIST- HECTOR HERNANDEZ

YEAR ROUND EVENT RENEWALS

The Year Round Event (YRE) renewal process will begin June 1, 2024 and will end August 31, 2024.

To start the process, Clubs should go to their "Sanctions" tab, "Edit/New" tab and then to the "Event Renewal" section, where they will find a list of all of their 2024 YRE/SEs ready to be edited and reviewed for 2025.



On the renewal's review page, they will have the option to request approval or indicate the YRE/SE will not be renewed for 2025. **Clubs should NOT use the "Copy" feature in the "New Events to be Completed" section to sanction an existing 2024 YRE/SE for 2025.**

RD's must review and approve all events by September 15, 2024 in order to get them into the 2025 Starting Point book. Any approvals after the 15th do not guarantee a section in the 2025 Starting Point book.

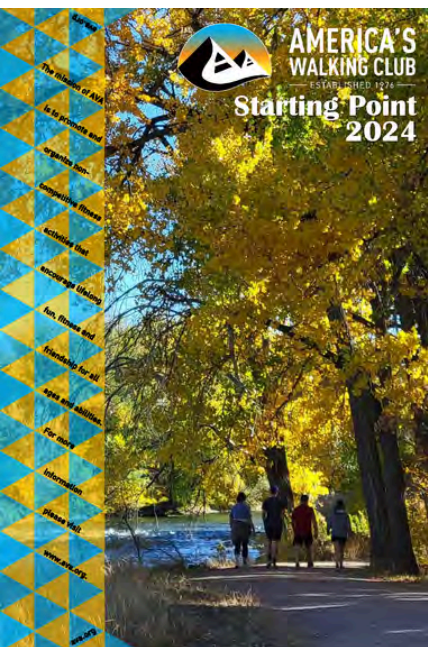
If you have any questions or need any assistance please call (210) 659-2112 or email Hector@ava.org.

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

2025 STARTING POINT PHOTO CONTEST

So many years, so many photos, so many posts. Which of those photos captured the best memories? Share those captured memories with AVA by submitting photos of the "People", "Places" or "Things" you've encountered on your journey to the Starting Point Photo Contest. The first and second place winners will get their photo printed on the front side (1st place) and backside (2nd place) cover of the 2025 Starting Point book. Winners will also get a complimentary copy of the Starting Point!

Entries are due to AVA National office no later than August 31, 2024. Rules, guidelines and the official entry form are attached in link below. Participation in the nationwide contest is open to AVA members, clubs and state organizations. All entries must have been created or occurred during the time period from July 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024. For more information contact Hector at hector@ava.org.

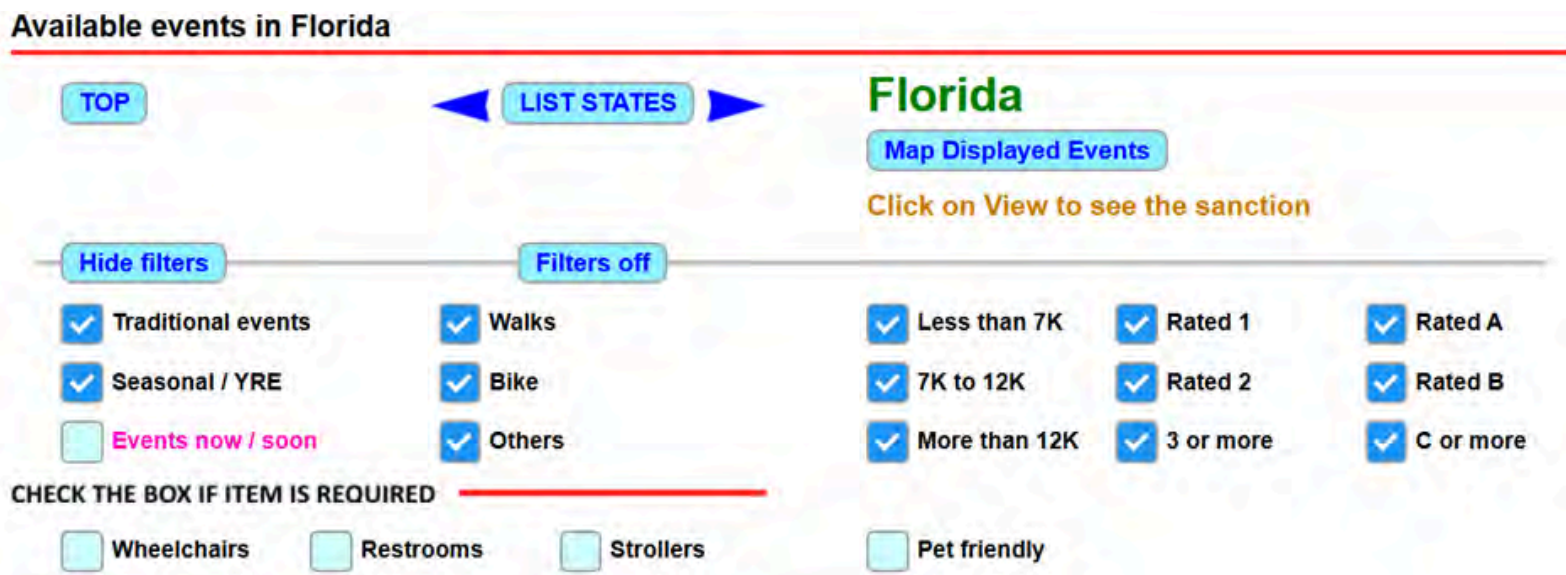


[Click here for Photo Contest Rules](#)

FILTERING EVENTS BASED ON ACCESSIBILITY AND AMENITIES

Steve Sandridge, Rocky Mountain Region RD, presented an overview of the AVA to approximately 70 RVers at the “Escapees National RV Rally” in Rock Springs, WY this past June. Steve reported that “the RV crowd was very interested with lots of positive feedback”. This feedback included a request to be able to search for events based on wheelchair accessibility. Later, Brad Bart (treasurer of the Handicapped Travel Club (250+ member national club, <https://www.handicappedtravelclub.com>) followed up with a specific request for this feature using the my.ava.org “Contact us” button to request support for a search filter based on accessibility.


Chris Zeglin has since added the capability to filter events based accessibility/amenities (Wheelchairs, Strollers, Pets, Restrooms) to the “Search by state” feature found by starting from the my.ava.org Find a... page, clicking on the “Search by state” button, then selecting then clicking on the button for the state of interest. Below is an image showing the top portion of the Search by state page for Florida where the bottom portion (not shown) lists Florida event based on the filter settings



Notice the new section “CHECK THE BOX IF ITEM IS REQUIRED” that includes checkboxes for Wheelchairs, Restrooms, Strollers and Pet friendly.

By checking the Wheelchairs box, the events listed will only include those sanctioned with “Easy” or “Medium” for Wheelchairs. This is the same for Strollers, while checking Restrooms or Pet Friendly will list events sanctioned as “Yes” for these amenities.

In general, listed events by the “Search by state” feature are based on all boxes checked. This page makes use of “browser cookies” to save the checked boxes for future “Search by state” event sessions.

Don’t forget to use the “Map Display Events” to view event locations on a map. Use to “Show Map Markers Legend” link to understand/use the different type of map markers. Click on the corner-marked square,  in the corner of the map to activate a full screen display of the map.

WEST TEXAS TRAIL WALKERS - SUSAN NOONAN, PRESIDENT

Due to the forest fires, the West Texas Trail Walkers have decided to cancel this event. The Forestry Service has closed the trails we selected for the hikes and does not anticipate reopening them for six months. I have already canceled the sanctions at myava.org. The website states that the RD and AVA HQ sign offs are necessary. This is a devastating event for the Ruidoso community.

SUPPORT OUR NATIONAL FRIENDS



Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It
To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send your request to Hector at hector@ava.org. Please note on the subject line: Request for Checkpoint.



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



1008 S Alamo St · San Antonio, TX 78210, Phone 210.659.2112 · Fax 210.659.1212 Message US.