



# Chargin' Charlie

June 2024



## Canadian Volksmarch Festival:

### Beavertails and British Royalty

Warning: While the article below includes a description of the Canadian Volksmarch Festival (CVF), it also contains castles, Canadian bacon, beavertails and British royalty.

The 2024 CVF in Kingston, Ontario from May 24-26<sup>th</sup> attracted 387 walkers from five countries. Virginia Volksmarchers who participated included Steve & Susan Brown, Tim & Cecilia Miner, and Dianne Purdy. All ten walks offered during the three-day event started along a picturesque waterfront. Each 5 and 10km route included historic sites in this very interesting city that served as the first capital of the United Canada Province.

A unique fort built to protect the Kingston harbor from American military forces was featured on the 2024 CVF logo. If you travel to the area, plan to visit the historic fortifications, which are a part of a UNESCO World Heritage site. The British built multiple 3-story towers as gun platforms, observation posts and barracks to help control the strategic confluence of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. The 3-ton cannons required a 7-man crew to rotate them along a circular track inside the tower's top floor.



British built towers to protect Kingston, Ontario from Americans

Her Royal Highness Diana visited Kingston in 1991, when she met with the Princess of Wales Own Regiment. Susan and I received somewhat royal treatment while visiting the Royal Military College, where future Canadian officers earn their degrees and commissions. At the beginning of their training, cadets enter the RMC through an

impressive carved stone arch and are not permitted to go through it again until they graduate. Also in this charming coastal city is a former maximum-security penitentiary, which is now a popular tourist attraction and location for filming movies and television series (such as Star Trek and Murdoch Mysteries).

While the walks were terrific, and the banquet was popular, the premier CVF activity was a Sunday evening cruise along the St. Lawrence Seaway among the Thousand Islands. Although the Boldt Castle and Singer Castle have commanding views of the New York and Ontario mainlands, they are opulent mansions without fortifications.



Ottawa River waterfront to Parliament Hill. There, we explored the beautiful House of Commons chamber and appreciated the differences with our national government. We also expanded our knowledge during a tour of the Governor General's house, where British monarchs exercise their authority over the Canadian government. Before returning to Virginia, I cycled along a portion of the historic Rideau Canal, which is very popular for ice skating when it is frozen.

We also enjoyed Canadian culinary specialties like maple syrup, smoked meat sandwiches and Beavertails (world famous Canadian pastries) with ice cream. A few days after we departed was a popular annual rib festival, which attracts huge crowds. Our next trip to Ottawa may be timed to either ice skate on the canal or enjoy great ribs.

Information about a dozen upcoming walking festivals, including the next Canadian Volksmarch Festival (scheduled June 12-14 2026 in Yellow Knife, Northwest Territories) is available at <https://walks.ca/walking-festivals-fetes-de-la-marche>

Below are reminders about our upcoming club meeting and Wednesday Walk. Our monthly meeting on Monday June 10th starts at 7:30 pm in the Daniels Run Elementary School Art Room (3705 Blenheim Boulevard in Fairfax City). Everyone is welcome to join the optional pre-meeting meal at the Ornerly Public House (3950 University Drive in the City of Fairfax) at 5:30 pm. The menu is online at <https://www.ornerybeer.com/menu>

A new guided group walk is scheduled at Smith Mountain Lake State Park on Wednesday June 19th. Check out the 5 or 10 km scenic stroll hosted by Ron Jones at <https://www.meetup.com/northern-virginia-volksmarchers/events/301127683>

As during previous years, there are no NVV activities scheduled during July or August. I hope that you enjoy the summer and look forward to resuming club walks and gatherings in September.

Steve Brown, NVV President

### **June Group Walk at Smith Mountain Lake: The Jewel of the Blue Ridge**

See Smith Mountain Lake State Park - Jewel of the Blue Ridge Mountains! The park is a 4-hour drive from Northern Virginia.

Meetup event is: <https://tinyurl.com/ynupzxuy> and Park website is: <https://tinyurl.com/yc4fz2n3>. Trails featured are 5 or 10 km (3.1 or 6.2 miles) and in places have elevation gain from the shore to the ridge line. Trails are heavily forested but you can generally see the Lake, either close up or in a distance.

The 5km trail takes you past a picturesque tobacco barn and winds along the shoreline, even crossing to Turtle Island, which you will circle around!

The 10km trail is a ridge where American Chestnut trees have been re-introduced. Pay park entrance fee of \$7 at the Visitor's Center, then drive to the Discovery Center. Meet by 9:45 am so we can leave by 10:00 am. Look for walk host Ron Jones at a picnic table on the left side of the Discovery Center.

For ideas about lodging or for more info contact Ron Jones at [outdoorsy\\_guy1@yahoo.com](mailto:outdoorsy_guy1@yahoo.com) or (703) 217-3140. Cabins at the State Park require a two-night stay. There are drinks and snacks for purchase at the Visitor Center, but you may want to bring them with you.



Turtle Island at Smith Mountain Lake.



Tobacco barn

Helen at the Lake in the Spring



Just throw a line in and catch some keepers at Smith Mountain Lake.



Chestnut Ridge Trail at Smith Mountain Lake.



The Six Pond Crew!

### **April, May Group Walks**

In April, we ventured out on a new walk route Rob Grunewald developed starting at the Masonic Temple in Alexandria.

The traditional walk, which we've used for many years, walks south through downtown, historic Alexandria. The new route option goes north along beautiful, mature tree-lined residential streets passed Chinguapin Park, recently renovated Alexandria City High School, Oakland Baptist Church (circa 1892), and Gerald R. Ford Park, and returns through some of Alexandria's older, less traveled, well-established neighborhoods with manicured lawns and gardens. We had an excellent time!

In May, we finally had a perfect weather day, and Sandy and Ralph Koontz led a group of hearty walkers on the Burke Six-Ponds Walk. After postponing the walk two weeks due to bad weather, all the participants commented on how beautiful, shady, and scenic the route was with the trees and flowers now in full bloom!

We didn't miss the turtles either as they were basking on the rocks, sunning and just showing off. The new walkers were really happy to walk in areas they were unfamiliar with and see a different side of Virginia - of course, isn't that one of the features of Volksmarching! Thanks to our hosts for another great event!!

## **May Minutes**

Attendees: Steve, Dianne, Rob, Helen and Jim, Barry and Karen, Bonnie, Margaret and Roy.

Most of us met at Ornerly Beer Company for dinner prior to our monthly meeting.

Notable walks: Dianne traveled to Texas for the eclipse and walked Austin and Georgetown, Texas while there. She then flew to New Mexico to join a Tater Tour and did 11 walks.

Helen and Jim were in Pennsylvania and walked on the Great Allegheny Passage (The GAP). They also walked in Sandusky, Ohio; Minnehaha Falls, Minnesota and Madison, Wisconsin.

Steve walked in Shenandoah, but not a sanctioned walk.

Rob led the Masonic Temple walk on 18 April with 10 walkers participating.

Rob is redesigning the Fort Belvoir Oktoberfest walk. We should have the use of a pavilion for the start/finish point.

The 2nd NVV Anniversary walk was held on 20 April in Burke and had 54 participants.

Helen advised that some streets still have standing water on the Old Town Alexandria and the Dyke Marsh walks.

Helen also advised that the hotel for the December Holiday Extravaganza walk plans to charge \$10 to park, even if you're staying overnight. She will meet with the Greenbelt Club to confer with them.

Steve advised that Tim Miner is suggesting some events in April 2026 for the AVA 50th Anniversary and the 250th of the founding of our country!

The Pennsylvania Liberty Bell Club will be driving through our area on their way to Williamsburg, Virginia. They are planning to walk in Alexandria on 7 October, and Rob is planning to meet them. Steve and Susan, and Dianne are planning to attend the Canadian Volkssport Festival in Kingston, Ontario, on May 24-26.

## **The Parting Shot**



“The road goes ever onward.” The Great Allegheny Passage in Pennsylvania.



## NVV Meeting Agenda for June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

1. **Call to Order and Welcome New Members/ Guests**

2. **Review Previous Meeting Minutes**

3. **Notable Member Walks and Milestones**

4. **Club Reports**

- Treasurer - Barry
- Corresponding Secretary - Karen
- Membership - Margaret
- Webmaster - Roy
- Newsletter - Jim



5. **Traditional Volksmarches**

- **Oct 5<sup>th</sup>**: Oktoberfest walk on Fort Belvoir - Rob
- **Dec 7/8<sup>th</sup>**: Holiday walks in Alexandria - Helen

6. **Guided Group Walks** Weekdays register at 9:45am, depart at 10am

- **Jun 19<sup>th</sup>**: Smith Mountain Lake State Park (Bedford County) – Ron

7. **Year-Round Walk Updates: FOCs**

- Sandy, Helen, Rob, Jack & Susan, Steve & Susan, Barry & Karen, Dave, and Ron
- Quarterly Report: Email count for April June 2024 to Rob by 10 July
- Online Start Box: Reston YRE - Helen and Dave

8. **Club Officer Elections:** President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary

9. **Grouper (formerly Element3 Health) Updates:** Described in April AVA Checkpoints

- Program #1 - Clubs are reimbursed for referred walkers who attend a YRE
- Program #2 - Grouper will pay AVA and club membership dues for people that qualify (check your eligibility at <https://app.hellogrouper.com/p/ava>)

10. **Regional, National and International Events**

- **Apr 28<sup>th</sup> – May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2025:** AVA Convention in Las Cruces, NM
- **Aug 14-17<sup>th</sup> 2025:** 19<sup>th</sup> IVV Olympiad in Tampere, Finland
- **Apr 3-5<sup>th</sup> 2026:** Atlantic Regional Conference in Williamsburg, VA

11. **Other?**

12. **Next meeting:** Monday September 9th at 7:30pm