

Chargin' Charlie

September 2024

Summer and Fall Favorites

So, what was your favorite walk this summer? While driving along the California Coast in June, Susan and I enjoyed many scenic strolls. Our favorite Volksmarch was in the Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, which is located near Carmel-by-the-Sea. Famous photographers like Ansel Adams and Edward Weston spent years patrolling the woods and shores of Point Lobos looking for ideal images. Sea life is abundant, and we saw numerous sea otters, sea lions, and seals. We also watched hundreds of pelicans and spotted whales, using binoculars loaned to us by the friendly staff members.



Point Lobos State Natural Reserve is the Crown Jewel of California State Parks

I look forward to hearing about your favorite summer walk at our monthly club meeting on Monday September 9. The 7:30 p.m. start time is the same as usual, but the location is new. We will meet in a private dining room at Glory Days Grill, located at 9526 Old Keene Mill Road in Burke. (The elementary school that we typically meet at in Fairfax City was not able to accommodate our meeting on this date). Everyone is welcome to join the optional pre-meeting meal at Glory Days Grill scheduled for 6 p.m. The food menu is online at <https://www.glorydaysgrill.com/food/menu-with-pricing/burke>

Speaking of new, the Northern Virginia Volksmarcher's guided group walk on Wednesday, September 18, will start and finish at Bunnyman Brewing Café. This welcome addition to the Workhouse Arts Center is located at 9514 Workhouse Way in Lorton. When they opened this July, the menu included paninis, flatbreads, salads, charcuterie, German-style pretzels, and scrumptious tater tots. For an explanation of the Bunnyman legend, Café menu, list of beers, seltzers and ciders see <https://bunnymanbrewing.com>



Enjoy lunch on September 18th at Bunnyman Brewing Café indoor and outdoor tables
Work up an appetite during the 5-km (3-mile) or 10-km (6-mile) walks. The longer route includes views of scenic river from Occoquan Regional Park, the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial and historic beehive brick kiln.



Historic sights on walk include Turning Point Suffragist Memorial and beehive brick kiln

Both routes stroll through the Workhouse Arts Center, along portions of the Fairfax Cross County Trail, and a museum highlighting events that helped American women gain the right to vote. The routes are mostly on paved surfaces and also include a colorful LOVE statue that qualifies for Virginia's "Find The Love" special program.



The Workhouse Arts Center features a Love sculpture and unique museum

Enjoy food and drink at the Bunnyman Brewing Café after the walk. The group is scheduled to depart the Café at 10 a.m., so please plan to register around 9:45 am with event leader Steve Brown. Free parking is available at the Workhouse Arts Center, adjacent to the Café, along with bathrooms and water. AVA event stamp cost is \$4, and walkers not collecting stamps are asked to pay \$2 (which is what our club sends AVA).

Our annual Oktoberfest Volksmarch on Saturday, October 5, at Fort Belvoir is only a month away. Please volunteer for a shift today using the SignUpGenius page at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4DAFA62DA02-50457572-fort> If you volunteer by September 12th, NVV event organizer Rob Grunewald will be able to coordinate streamlined gate access for you if you do not have a Department of Defense identification card. This year our walk start / finish point is a large covered shelter across the street from the intersection of Goethals and Constitution Roads.

I am looking forward to fall weather and seeing you at these three terrific events.

Steve Brown, NVV Club President

Virginia escape

Sometimes you just need an escape. The heat and humidity this summer was enervating, to say the least. One day I walked out to my car in the Pentagon parking lot and the thermometer in it read 108 degrees. A friend said Washington was “like Bagdad without the car bombs.”

So, Helen and I packed up the car and headed to the hills – specifically Shenandoah National Park. We’ve been there many times over 40 years, but it has never been so welcome. The temperature in Skyland was in the low 80s during the day and down to the low 60s at night. What’s more, it is hard to beat the view. The restaurant in Skyland was pretty decent and they had a bluegrass singer in the bar.



Sunset over the Shenandoah Valley from Skyland.

We drove the Skyline Drive to Big Meadows and walked through the meadows to the woods. We were on an old logging road and the going wasn't too tough. Wild flowers were out and so were the deer, who had really no fear of us. We were only about a mile off the Skyline Drive, but we hardly saw anyone.



A doe and her two fawns at Big Meadows.

We continued on the Skyline Drive and exited from the park to go to Harrisonburg, Va., in the heart of the Valley. We stopped at an excellent barbecue place for lunch and then continued on to Natural Chimneys Park, a little dot on the map that Helen saw. It is a pretty eclectic park with the rock formations and an actual list for jousting. There were no knights present when we got there, but it was pretty. Who knew jousting was still a thing in 2024?



Natural Chimneys Park.

After Harrisonburg, we moved a couple miles up the Valley to Staunton, Va. This is a great little city that is home to Mary Baldwin College and the Staunton Military Academy. It is also home to the American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Playhouse, and Helen and I saw an amazing performance of MacBeth. The playhouse tries to remain true to seeing the performance in 1600 – it is bare bones, the lights are on at all times, some in the audience sit on the sides and the actors carry the props on and off stage. They also sing and dance at the opening of the play just as James Burbage did when he founded the Blackfriars Company. MacBeth is still playing and they are also putting on The Merry Wives of Windsor beginning this month. It is only about two hours away. It is well worth the trip.



Blackfriars Playhouse set up for MacBeth.

After the play, we walked around the downtown. President Woodrow Wilson was born in Staunton and there is a museum. There are a bunch of good restaurants including one in the old train station and much more.

At that point reality set in and we had to get back to Alexandria. We passed through Charlottesville and along a really pretty road with gorgeous horse farms and vineyards lining it before we hit back to Fredericksburg and I-95.

All in all, a very pleasant and needed escape

Jim Garamone



Helen loved the trip.

Upcoming events

Sept. 28, 2024 – The Fredericksburg Walking Club celebrates 35 years at Curtis Memorial Park at 58 Jesse Curtis Lane, Hartwood, Va. Starts at 8:30 am.

Oct. 12, 2024 – Midlothian Mines Park Walk. Starts at the Urban Farmhouse Market and Café, 13872 Coalfield Commons Place Suite 102, Midlothian, Va., at 9 am.

Oct. 18-20, 2024 – US Freedom Walk runs for three days at the Hilton Arlington National Landing Hotel at 2399 Richmond Hwy, Arlington, Va.

Sept. 28 – Frederick, Md. Oktoberfest 797 E Patrick St, Frederick, Md. starts at 9 am.

Oct. 12, 2024 – Catonsville, Md. Spring Grove and Short Line Trail. Walk. Starts at the Spring Grove Alumni Museum Garrett Bldg.55 Wade Ave, Catonsville, Md. Starts at 8 am.

Quote

"Fall down seven times and stand up eight." - Japanese Proverb