



Throwback - 2018 Tour De Las Misiones Walk - Photo courtesy of Martin Callahan

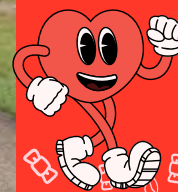


AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB
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PRESIDENT/CEO - HENRY ROSALES

AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING NOTICE

The AVA National Board of Directors will meet Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. Central Time Zone. This will be a virtual meeting on the Office 365 Teams platform. To access the meeting click on the link below. If you have problems accessing the meeting, please contact Hector at 210-659-2112 or email him at hector@ava.org. The agenda and meeting link will also be posted on the AVA website.

[Click here for the Board Meeting agenda.](#)

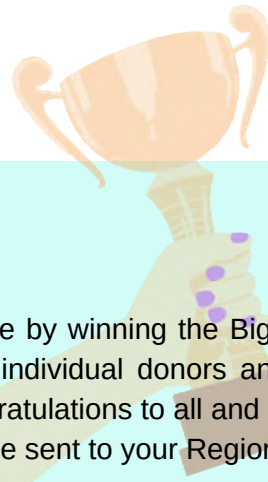
[Click here for the meeting link.](#)

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ANNOUNCING THE 2023 BIG GIVE REGIONAL CHALLENGE WINNER!

The AVA's Southwest Region has regained the throne by winning the Big Give Regional Challenge for the second time in three years! The Southwest Region had 68 individual donors and 9 club donors contributing to the total amount raised of \$22,139 for the 2023 Big Give. Congratulations to all and enjoy your front of the line pass during the 2025 Convention! The Walking Stick of Kindness will be sent to your Regional Director.



AVA CLUB DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT POLICY

If your club is struggling and in need of technical, financial, or other support be sure to check out the AVA's Policy manual under the section "Club Development and Support". Here you will find information on how to request support from the AVA and your State Association such as technical assistance, publicity, event support, or a financial mini grant for approved purposes.

Important to note that struggling clubs should first communicate with their State Associations and Regional Directors for guidance and support. It is the role of State Organizations to create and grow strong and active clubs in their region by providing marketing, education, financial and event support. To access financial support, clubs must route the request through their State Association and in the absence of a State Association, through their Regional Director.

To review the AVA Policy Manual, [click here](#).

To access the AVA's financial support form, [click here](#).

AVA FUNDRAISING BUS TOUR TO THE VOLKSMARCH AT CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL MAY 30 – JUNE 3, 2024

The AVA National Office is organizing a fundraising bus tour to the Crazy Horse Memorial Volksmarch, May 30 – June 3, 2024. The tour bus will leave San Antonio early morning on Thursday, May 30, 2024, with an overnight stop in Colorado Springs on the way out and back from Rapid City, SD. The tour bus will return to San Antonio late evening on Monday, June 3, 2024. The cost is \$995.00 per person. This includes four hotel nights with breakfast and 3 AVA sanctioned walks to include the Crazy Horse Memorial walk. Space is limited to the first forty registrants. A small non - refundable deposit is required to reserve your seat.

HERE ARE THE TRIP DETAILS.

When: May 30 – June 3, 2024

Destination: Rapid City, South Dakota to attend the Crazy Horse Memorial hike on June 1, 2024.

Departure: The bus will depart from a designated area in San Antonio, Texas to Rapid City, South Dakota the morning of May 30th and arrive in Rapid City, South Dakota, the afternoon of May 31st. The bus will make an overnight stop in Colorado Springs, CO on May 30th.

Return: The bus will return from Rapid City, South Dakota to San Antonio, on June 2nd and arrive in San Antonio late evening of June 3, 2024. The bus will make an overnight stop in Colorado Springs, CO on June 2nd.

Hotels: Included in the cost are two nights' stay at the Hilton Garden Hotel in Colorado Springs and two nights' stay at the Quality Inn in Rapid City. Breakfast is included. Guests are responsible for hotel incidentals.

Lunch: A box lunch is included in the cost for the departure trip. Refreshments will be provided on the bus. Guests are responsible for all meals other than breakfast at the hotels.

Walks: The bus tour includes the fee for 3 AVA sanctioned walks. Please bring a couple of nonperishable canned goods to pay for the entry fee to the Crazy Horse Memorial hike.

Cost: The total cost of the trip is \$995.00 per person for single occupancy and \$743.00 per person for double occupancy. If you are sharing a room with 3 or more people refer to the attached registration form for pricing. The cost includes transportation, room charges, breakfast at the hotels, 1 box lunch on the departing trip to Colorado Springs, and 3 AVA sanctioned walks.

A deposit of 25% of the total cost is required to reserve your seat. The balance of the registration fee is due by May 1st, 2024. Beginning May 1st, registrants must pay for the trip in full. Cancellations before May 1st will receive a full refund minus a \$50 service fee. No refunds will be given after May 1st, 2024.

For registration from [click here](#).

The American Volkssport Association (AVA) reserves the right to cancel this fundraising trip due to not enough participation. Should the AVA cancel the trip, fees will be 100% refunded.

AVA ONLINE MONTHLY SEMINAR - FEBRUARY 21, 7:00 P.M. CENTRAL

The next AVA online seminar will be Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 7:00pm Central. The registration link will be on the AVA website, or you can [click here](#) to pre-register for the event. If asked for passcode the passcode is AVA.

February online seminar presenters include:

- I. A Major AVA Convention Announcement by Jerry Wilson, Chair, Conventions Committee, and special guests
- II. Membership Update by Karen Koffman, Committee Chair and Members of the Committee

MAKE PLANS TO JOIN US IN SAN ANTONIO, TX SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2024, FOR THE KING WILLIAM PARADE!

Thanks to the support of the King William Association, the AVA will participate in the annual King William Fiesta Parade. This event draws over 30,000 national and international participants. Parade participants will walk approximately three miles carrying an IVV or IML banner. This year we invite you to also carry a banner from your state and bring miniature State flags to hand out!

If you would like to participate in the parade, please RSVP by emailing henry@ava.org with your name and the number of participants in your group. Please put King William Parade in the subject line. Children and grandchildren are welcome to participate with you. Parade participants are limited to the first thirty individuals who RSVP. What a terrific way to market the AVA and our Clubs!

ELEMENT3 HEALTH IS NOW GROUPER

Exciting news! Element3 Health has embarked on a transformative journey and is now proudly rebranded as Grouper. Grouper is not your typical healthcare provider; they are a radically beneficial concept that's all about enhancing health through the joy of social connection. And guess what? They believe so much in the power of our community that they are now entertaining discussions with the AVA on how to pay for AVA Associate and club members' dues for qualifying members!

This partnership initiative will open a realm of opportunities not just for our association, but for each local club because it is not just about getting your dues paid; it is about club growth and visibility. Joining the Grouper network positions your club in an expansive community of members actively seeking walking clubs where their club dues are paid for by Grouper! Imagine the growth and the buzz around your club as new members join, all thanks to the visibility through Grouper's network.

To clear the way for this new initiative GROUPER will sunset the Walker Voucher program effective January 31, 2024. GROUPER will still reimburse clubs \$1.00 for all self-guided walk referrals and \$1.75 for all group activity referrals. However, club payment will be annually in December versus quarterly.

Stay tuned to the Checkpoint and AVA monthly webinars for more information on programmatic changes with GROUPER as this partnership continues to evolve. Let us make health about community, connection, and the simple joys of being part of a walking club by joining the Grouper network, and let's stride forward together!

AVA SURVEY NOTICE

The AVA will be emailing a 2024 Membership Survey to all members within the next couple of weeks. The purpose of this survey is to solicit information that will help guide us with future planning in programs, marketing, fundraising, conventions, governance, membership, and awards.

The survey will be on Google forms so it will be quick and easy to complete and submit. We ask you please take time to complete the survey and thank you in advance. In appreciation for your time, we will enter the names of all who completed the survey in a drawing for a free 2025 convention registration, and two 2024 Starting Point books. THE SURVEY WILL CLOSE MARCH 15, 2024.

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE - DIANE HOWELL EVANS, CHAIR

SEARCH IS ON FOR 2026 SPECIAL PROGRAM PROPOSALS

If you are interested in submitting an AVA Special Program proposal to the Board for approval, the new point of contact is Diane Howell Evans. Please contact Diane for submission requirements and deadlines. Congratulations Diane for chairing the AVA Programs Committee. She can be reached at programs@ava.org.

Special thanks are in order to Tim Miner for his years of service to the AVA coordinating our Special Programs. We wish him and his new position as Vice President (US), IVV-Americas and Oceania, the best in this next chapter!"

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - SUSAN FINE, CHAIR

TAW FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

TAW: Deadline for submitting stories, photos and ads for the April TAW is February 25. We had posted some FAQs in the January Checkpoint, which will be updated continuously, so check the new FAQs by [clicking here](#).



TAW SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Here are the guidelines for TAW. You can also see the pdf by [clicking here](#).

- Articles should be no more than 600 words (a little over or under is fine).
 - Articles should be a word document, and should be in Calibri font, in 11 point.
 - If articles are sent embedded in the email, they must be in 11 point, in Calibri font. Please, no fancy background in the email. Black on white background is how to submit the story.
- Submissions should be copy ready (with proper grammar, spelling, etc.).
- Please also include a title for your article.
- To submit, e-mail your article to TAW@ava.org
- Please include TAW and your region in the subject line.
- Include your first name, last name, and a contact e-mail address in the body of your message. Your name (but not your e-mail) will appear in the newsletter (unless you ask to be anonymous).

- We will work with you via e-mail to edit and proof your submission prior to publication.
- Articles should be sent as an attachment in Word (.doc or .docx) format. Please do not send in .pdf format.
- Related pictures are highly encouraged to be submitted along with your article.
- Images must fall into one of these categories: [1] your own work—i.e. you took the photograph; [2] freely licensed (photos on websites that are free to use); [3] public domain (photos that are not subject to copyright).
 - Attach images to the same e-mail as your article submission.
 - Include a short (1 sentence) caption of each image.
 - Do not include the photo in the body of the text.
- Submissions that are deemed commercial in nature must be approved by the President/CEO of AVA. These are articles or ads that benefit “for-profit” companies.
- Photos are highly desired (even without an article)
 - Please have one line caption with each photo
- Submissions that do not meet the above guidelines may not be accepted.
- NEW: Clubs may submit a free ad for an upcoming traditional or multi-day event (first-come, first serve basis). Ads must be 3.75 W x 2.75 H. Maximum 6 ads per region, with a limitation of 1 ad per club. Your RD will help coordinate. If there are more ads per region submitted than we can accommodate; therefore, we will have a link to our webpage, that includes the additional ads.

[Click here for pdf of guidelines.](#)

Updates

Other news: a reminder that National Walking Week remains April 1-8 for 2024. This includes any events you are having for the Solar Eclipse April 8th. We will have the form in the March Checkpoint. New multi-day events are added monthly. [Check them here.](#) You can add your multi-day event anytime, even if you don't have your walks finalized.

IT SPECIALIST - HECTOR HERNANDEZ

NATIONAL WALKING WEEK

This year is the fifth year of our National Walking Week campaign. Last year we had 38 participating Clubs and 75 events in 19 states. If your Club would like to participate this year and would like us to promote your event on social media and the AVA website, please click the link under the logo and fill out the form by March 31st. To help promote your events you can also download our pre-made event certificates, logo, flyers, and social media banners by [clicking here](#). Don't forget to send out a local press release for your event and ask local officials to issue a Proclamation in support of National Walk Week. You can find templates of these forms on the [AVA home page](#). For more information on National Walking Week go to ava.org.



Click images to go to fill out form.

2024 Atlantic Region Conference
Dover, Delaware
April 5-7, 2024

The First State Webfooters is proud to host the 2024 Atlantic Region Conference. Come Join us for days of walking, hiking and swimming.

Information: Info@firststatewebfooters.org
 Host Hotel: Garden Hilton Inn
 Dover, DE 302-674-3784

AVA Northeast Region Event
September 6 ~ 8, 2024
HUDSON to HOUSATONIC Walking Weekend

Hyde Park, NY Fri. | Poughkeepsie, NY Sat. | Kent, CT Sun.

Chat and Chew Opportunities
 Fri. eve. Meet & Greet - Germania of Poughkeepsie's "Oktoberfest"
 Sat. eve. Dinner - Poughkeepsie-area Restaurant

Event Lodging
 \$159/night Fri. & Sat.
 Hampton Inn & Suites Poughkeepsie
 2361 South Rd. (Rt. 9)
 Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/september2024weekendwalkinggroup/>
 845-463-7500 Our Discount Code: WWG

More details later:
hudtohou@gmail.com
<https://nodegreen.com/hudtohou/>

AWARDS/MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR - KAREN WINKLE

May 8th is World Walking Day!

You can also use the certificate at the weekend before or after that date.

Let me know how many copies of the certificate that you would like- at least a week before you need them.



Image found on the Sacramento Walking Sticks website. Click on image to view website.

Welt-Wander-Tag
World Walking Day
Journée Mondiale de la Marche

Urkunde für/Certificate for/Diplôme pour

Internationaler Volkssportverband e. V.
 International Federation of Popular Sports
 Fédération Internationale des Sports Populaires

Unkunde • Certificate • Diplôme 2024

Click image to view or download pdf.

ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST - MARIAN DEVAUL

STARTING POINT BOOKS

We still have 2024 Starting Point books available for sale at a cost of \$30.00 plus shipping and handling. For purchase, please e-mail marian@ava.org, or call 210-659-2112.

This bound 7 ½" x 9" publication is a collection of sanctioned walking, bicycling, swimming, hiking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and boating activities. It is your comprehensive guide to 1,966 self-guided events throughout the United States. The book includes directions to the event, trail ratings, hours of operation and whether an award is offered. [Click here for Order Form.](#)

IT COMMITTEE - MIKE GREEN, CHAIR

EVENTS WITH NO ELEVATOR PITCH / MAPPING PHRASE

Why are there so many 2024 Year Round / Seasonal events with no **Elevator Pitch / Mapping Phrase**? So far in 2024, there are 2243 YRE/SE/TEs. Among these events, there are 369 events with no Elevator Pitch (aka, Short Description) and 477 events with no **Mapping Phrase**.

RDs can determine the total # YRE/SEs missing the above mentioned event information items, as well as which clubs are missing these items via the RD Reports page and clicking on the "... Regions 2024 YRE/SE Event Analysis Summary" button.

Clubs can determine which YRE/SE/TEs are missing these items by going to their sanctions page and looking for the yellow "Missing Items" icons. Moving your mouse over a Missing Items icon will indicate what item or items are missing. (If there is no Missing Items icon for a listed event, then that event has an **Elevator Pitch** and **Mapping Phrase**.)

We will soon be exporting AVA 2024 event information (for YRE/SE/TEs) to the IVV event database that supports searching for and displaying Volkssport event information around the world via the link: <https://www.ivv-online.org/>. The AVA event information uploaded to the IVV will include the event **Elevator Pitch** and **Mapping Phrase** data along with the event city, state, and name as well as a URL to view the event details on my.ava.org; but the event Descriptions, Comments, and Driving Directions will NOT be uploaded to IVV system.

Please consider this article a plea for all clubs to promptly provide both an **Elevator Pitch** and **Mapping Phrase** for each of their events, YRE/SEs and TEs, in the next couple of weeks.

When editing an event, the **Elevator Pitch** text entry box is found by clicking on the "Description" tile button and the **Mapping Phrase** text entry box is found by clicking on the "Location" tile button, then scrolling to the bottom of the page. Note: Use the "Verify above using Google Maps" button to confirm an entered **Mapping Phrase** correctly shows the event's starting point on a Google maps. After saving any changes to an event, DO NOT FORGET to click on the "**Publish (make public)**" button (located on the top right of the save/review page) to make your changes take effect (visible to the public) for the event in question.

SUPPORT OUR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS



Join us May 24-26, 2024 for a walk through history in Canada's First Capital and surrounding areas. Registration includes 5 Event Walks, a Meet & Greet, and a Dinner.

Rejoignez-nous les 24-26 mai 2024 pour une marche à travers l'histoire dans la première capitale du Canada et les environs. L'inscription comprend 5 marches événementielles, un Meet & Greet et un dîner.

The King's Town Trekkers Volkssport Club
CVF Festival

Come join us May 24-26, 2024

Kingston Ontario Canada welcomes you for a great weekend of fun, friendship and food, oops I mean fitness.

Registration, hotel info and the schedule will be on the website: www.walks.ca

NATIONAL EVENTS

Click images to go to official website.



TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP
3-DAY International
WALKFEST

San Antonio, Texas, USA
23-25 February, 2024



38th Annual Spring Volksmarch June 1, 2024



SOLAR ECLIPSE
APRIL 8, 2024
SAVE THE DATE
 World Walking Week is 1-7 April, 2024

The Texas Hill Country will be one of the few places in North America in complete totality of the solar eclipse. Observers will see about 4 minutes and 29 seconds of totality starting at 13:32.

The Texas Volkssport Association is planning **5 & 10 km walks** in the Texas Hill Country

COME WALK WITH US
www.walktexas.org

Come and join us for the 23rd
US FreedomWalk
 18-20 October 2024

Walk in Arlington

An International Walking Experience

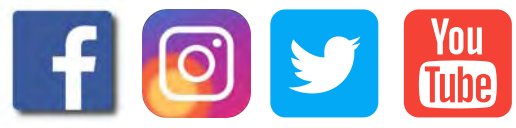
AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB
 Volksmarching at its Best

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.