

Chargin' Charlie

June 2023

Third Wednesday Guided Group Walks — A Success and a Challenge

By Ron Jones

To paraphrase "Field of Dreams" - "If you walk it, they will come." I'm talking about NVV's Third Wednesday Walks that started in September 2022, and have grown.

I joined NVV in September 2019 and had an idea in early 2020 to feature our Year-Round Events. I thought it was great to be in a club with 10 Year-Round and Special Events, and I wanted to learn all the trails. Clubs in Germany, where I last walked, rarely have year-rounders and put their energy into one large traditional event each year. Since the NVV program year was 10 months and we had 10 trails, I figured we could easily feature a different trail each month!

I also thought it would be perfect for COVID times, when everyone was cooped up and isolated!

The first Third Wednesday walk was September 23, 2020 at Lake Accotink in Springfield with two walkers -- Helen Garamone and myself. The second Wednesday walk was October 21, 2020 at Dyke Marsh in Alexandria with 4 walkers: myself, Helen Garamone, Steve Brown and Susan Brown. In those days, we walked with COVID masks and limited attendance to 15 people.



We started small!

We held four walks in 2020 with 15 walkers, and another 10 walks in 2021 with 79 walkers, and 10 walks in 2022 with over 100 walkers. Our lowest attendance was one person due to stormy weather (myself in March 2021 and Steve Brown in March 2023).

Our highest was 25 walkers in May 2022, the Six Ponds walk in Burke hosted by Sandy Koontz.



But we got bigger!

In 2023, we have held three walks so far, with a high of 13 walkers in May. The last one this Program Year is Wednesday June 19, 9 am at the Bread and Water Cafe in Alexandria – Dyke Marsh. About a year into the effort, in November 2021, I created the NVV Meetup group and soon had over 200 people on that site! We now have about 400!

This is something we should continue to nourish.

My wife Heather retires this fall and we will move to Smith Mountain Lake then, so that presents a challenge. Unfortunately, I cannot continue as either Vice President or coordinator of the Third Wednesday walks. But the NVV officers have plans to continue leading the walks. An email has been sent to Walk Hosts to consider hosting their YRE trail for one month. Steve Brown has already volunteered to host the September 2023 walk. Since we have 10 YRE trails, that equals our 10 months (Sept 2023–June 2024). Also, Diane Purdy will send an occasional email to request walk hosts. Finally, I will continue to post club events on Meetup, as that's been a good way to get new walkers.

In total to date, we have hosted over 25 Wednesday walks, with over 200 attendees. A great success!

My fervent hope is Walk Hosts will continue to volunteer. There is nothing "special" about the Third Wednesday. One walk host said parking for his trail is better on the weekend (free versus a charge during the week). If the Third Wednesday doesn't work, pick a day, time and trail that works for you. If you have questions, please contact me or Steve Brown.

I hope to start a Volksmarching Club at Smith Mountain Lake, near Roanoke, which is called the "Jewel of the Blue Ridge Mountains".



Smith Mountain Lake!

We already have a beautiful sanctioned YRE walk in the State Park (listed under Huddleston, Virginia). The trail follows the shore, with scenic mountain views in every direction. You pass an old tobacco barn and wind through an actual Chestnut forest, and even go over a bridge onto a small island, circling the island and coming back. I will send more info when the club is up and running and we host our first event. Until then, I will close not by saying Farewell, but as Arnold Schwarzenegger says in the Terminator movie: "Hasta la vista, baby." Hope to see you on the trail sometime!

NVV Meeting Minutes, May 8, 2023

Attendees: Steve Brown, Bonnie, Dianne, Margaret & Roy, Karen & Barry, Ron, Sandy & Ralph, Helen & Jim, Jack & Susan.

There were 6 to 8 walkers prior to the meeting.

Interesting walks: Barry and Karen walked Fredericksburg. Jack and Susan did that walk too.

Ron did eight 5Ks in two days in the Tidewater area, including Yorktown and Fort Monroe.

Treasurer talked about our finances. We are in good shape.

For our 40th anniversary, we had 60 to 65 walkers. It was a great walk, great trail, great cake, and lunch. Note our photos in the current Wanderer!

We talked about making it a yearly event in April.

Our Oktoberfest Fort Belvoir walk is sanctioned, and Rob is working on the route with two five-kilometer loops with no checkpoint.

Helen is working on the holiday event in Alexandria in December; Greenbelt, Maryland club has already sanctioned.

Helen suggested a new walk to celebrate Black History - to be held in Alexandria.

Concerning our year rounds: Sandy has redone South Run, it is now either a seven-kilometer or an 11-kilometer option.

Lake Accotink walk -- Construction is done! Walk directions at the Swiss Bakery (remote start).

Wednesday walks:

May 17 - ask Ron how many joined!

June 21, will start at 9 o'clock, at the Bread and Water Café in Alexandria (1512 Belle View Blvd).

Coming National/International events:

Oct 20-22nd - US Freedom Walk Festival in Arlington

Apr 5-7th, 2024 - AVA Atlantic Region Conference in Dover, Delaware.

May 24-26, 2024 - Canadian Volksmarch Festival in Kingston, Ontario.

Aug 14-17, 2025 - 19th IVV Olympiad in Tampere, Finland

Dianne Purdy

Overachievers!

2100 events - Helen Garamone

4,000 kilometers - Steve Brown.

A – Cute – Blast from the Past

Who remembers these?



Upcoming local events

July 19 - "A Land Before Greenbelt" Night walk. Start table open 4-5:30 pm. 15 Crescent Road, Greenbelt, Maryland.

Aug. 12 - Summer Walk at Columbia, Maryland. Start table open 7:30-9 am. Blandair Park East Playground, Columbia, Maryland.

Aug. 16 - Lake and Underpasses in Greenbelt Night Walk. Start 4-5:30pm at 15 Crescent Road, Greenbelt, Maryland.

Aug. 19 - Historic Hagerstown, Maryland. Start table 8-11am, finish by 2pm. 23 North Potomac Street, Hagerstown. Maryland.

Quote

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go."

Dr. Seuss, "Oh, the Places You'll Go!"