

Chargin' Charlie



March 2023

Around the World in Texas

The IVV Olympiad and International Marching League Texas Trail Roundup attracted over 1,075 participants to San Antonio from February 19 – 26th. Walkers, cyclists and swimmers from 27 countries logged over 50,000 kilometers during the week-long event. This distance is larger than the circumference of the earth at the equator. Highlights of the terrific events are featured in this newsletter. Our club Vice President Ron Jones describes the long-distance routes that he and his wife Heather completed to earn their IML certificate. Acting Secretary Dianne Purdy shares her experience during the popular “Margarita and Taco Trail Walking Trail” social on Madras Gras.

Before the official opening of the 18th Olympiad, participants took part in the international “Parade of Flags” and a volksmarch through the historic King William neighborhood. Miss Texas co-hosted the ceremony and then Elvis and a mariachi band entertained the audience at an outdoor stadium along the famous Riverwalk.



Dianne Purdy carried Ireland's flag to the Olympiad ceremony stage where Elvis performed

During the following five days of the first Olympiad in North America, participants chose from 13 volksmarches, four bike rides and a swimming event. My most memorable day included cycling between the Alamo and four other missions that are located along a 22-mile paved riverside path. These 300 year-old Spanish frontier missions are part of the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park and have been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Mission Concepción is first Spanish frontier fort south of the Alamo

NVV members volunteered during Olympiad registration, at the start point, volksmarch check points and finish table in the Olympiad village at La Villita. This cultural art hub was the venue for daily musical entertainment including Grammy winning artists. Folks could also enjoy more music, great food, festivities and boat rides along the 3.5-mile Riverwalk in the heart of downtown San Antonio.



NVV's Dana Beales, Steve Brown and Dianne Purdy pose at AVA Headquarters

Dianne Purdy and former NVV member Dana Beales highlighted the “Margarita and Taco Trail Walking Trail” as one of the best Olympiad activities. This popular walking and social event was hosted in scenic sections of the city on Madras Gras. It included checkpoints at food trucks serving tacos, a cupcake bakery, a churro stand, multiple restaurants, an antique shop, a brewery plus AVA National Headquarters. In addition to food samples, several locations served unique margaritas. Participants that ate and drank their way across the route received a patch.

Susan and I look forward to participating in the 19th Olympiad in Finland during August 2025. If you are interested in memorable multi-day Volkssport events a little closer to home, consider the American Volkssport Association Atlantic Region Conference in Dover, Delaware April 5-7, 2024 or the Canadian Volksmarch Festival in Kingston, Ontario May 24-26, 2024.

Steve Brown



Half-Marathon Walks in San Antonio

By “Wandering Ron” Jones

My wife Heather and I decided to do the “IML” track (half marathons of 20 to 22 km). In March I will walk 115 km in Spain along the Camino de Santiago, so I needed longer training hikes. The IVV Olympiad, then the IML Texas Trail Roundup from Feb. 19-26 were made to order.

The IML or International Marching League is a walking organization with generally only one walk a year per country. To “qualify” each day you must do walks of at least 20 kilometers per day.

Many people do the 42 km Marathon Walks. This was a rare opportunity to get two IML events at one time, so we decided to go for it.



The Missions of San Antonio.



Murals of San Antonio.

Each day the IVV featured walks that headed a different compass direction from the City Center. The city has hundreds of murals, dozens of mosaics, sculptures, old movie theaters, historic buildings and more. There is always something interesting to see around the next corner. The famous River Walk is a section of the 240-mile long San Antonio River. This was Heather's first visit to San Antonio, so everything was new to her. We couldn't wait!



King William Mansion and toasting with the German contingent.

On Monday February 20 we headed North. After passing several interesting sites near the convention headquarters hotel, we wandered along the San Pedro Creek Culture Park, with its beautiful murals. We then wended through Tobin Hill and Monte Vista Historic Districts, with restored Victorian and Craftsmen homes. Eventually we made it out to the San Antonio Zoo and Brackenridge Golf Course, and returned via the Museum section of the River Walk.



A restored home.

On Tuesday February 21 we went due East across the Hays Street bridge. We went in circles (on purpose) thru Dignowity Hill Historic District. The Buffalo Soldier cemetery, where re-enactors were there to greet us, was a highlight as was the San Antonio National Cemetery, with monuments to the fallen dating back to the early 1800s. We passed several colleges and eventually ended back at the headquarters hotel.



Mural proliferate.

The next day we headed West on the Murals Walk. After a 4 km loop we then walked north for miles along a new Greenway Park that followed a creek, eventually reaching Woodlawn Lake. When we reached the lake we were very tired and just wanted to turn around. However, we walked 1.5 miles around it and then trudged back home. It was very hot (86 degrees). That night I had a mild heat stroke, with a fever and the sweats.



Mission and mosaics.

On Thursday February 23 we did the South Side History Walk, wandering thru King William neighborhood past beautifully restored homes. We then walked a long way to two historic Missions — Conception and San Jose. A man introduced himself and that's how I ended up meeting Dan Friesen, the owner of Walking Adventures International. Later on, we ate a snack at McDonald's. A man I talked to eventually said "you are Wandering Ron — you should have told me that right away! We heard you on the radio in Stuttgart!" Turns out it was another Dan — Dan Armstrong and his wife Ruth from the Ramstein and Heidelberg clubs. They remembered me from a 2018 walk in some remote Germany farm village. Small world! We eventually wandered home to see the moving IVV closing ceremony, with flamenco dancers.

When it was all over, in eight days Heather and I had completed six Half-Marathons and walked over 135 miles. So, I feel ready for the Camino!



Heather and Ron – NVV Olympians!

In Non-Texas News...

While our friends were enjoying the walks and bikes in San Antonio, the weather in Northern Virginia was – changeable – I guess is the right word. Some days you could start a walk at 30 degrees and wearing layers of clothes, only to finish at 65 degrees and carrying the layers of coats.

But fear not, my friends, Spring is on its way and soon we will be complaining about the heat and humidity.

The monthly meeting of the Northern Virginia Volksmarchers is March 13 at Daniel Run Elementary School. There will be a five-kilometer walk starting there at 6 pm. The meeting itself will begin at 7:30 pm.

And don't forget our 40th Anniversary Walk April 22. It's right where the club had its first walk – Burke. Register from 9 am-12 noon. Free birthday cake from 1:30 to 2 pm at Villa Bella. We celebrate the anniversary during lunch at the restaurant please RSVP by 4/15/23. Semi-private room seats 36, so email ASAP after deciding to attend the lunch (Sandy Koontz, shkrkg@gmail.com). Menu: <https://www.villabellaristorante.com>. Start point is near Villa Bella Italian Restaurant, 6050 Burke Commons Road, Unit C, Burke VA 22015 in Burke Town Center.

Upcoming events

Maryland Day Walk at St. Mary's City March 25– The walk celebrates the founding of Maryland and the start point is the Visitor Center. Entrance is free that day.

Spring Walk in Maple Lawn April 1 – The start point is Sidamo Coffee at 8180 Maple Lawn Blvd, Fulton, Maryland. The start table is open from 8 to 11 am.

Glenview Mansion and Croydon Creek April 15 – Start Point Patio next to Norby's Cafe, 5562 Norbeck Rd, Rockville, Maryland. Start time between 9:30 am and noon.

Quote

Me thinks that the moment my legs begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow. Henry David Thoreau

Parting shot from San Antonio

