



Happy New Year From Charles Pauwels and the Shasta Sundial Strollers!

NEC Meeting Updates

January 2018 National Executive Council Meeting

The next NEC meeting will be held January 19 - 21, 2018 at La Quinta Inn & Suites, 7160 North Frontage Road, Orlando, Florida 32812. (407) 240-5000. The meeting times are: Friday 6pm-10pm, Saturday 8am-5pm and Sunday 8am-12noon.

[Click here](#) for the January 2018 NEC meeting Agenda with attachments.

David Bonewitz, AVA National President

NEW STAMPS REQUIRE NEW STAMPING TECHNIQUE

Effective January 1, 2018, all our events will be using the new stamps which will save us money and provide a stamp with more information in our books. This is a great step forward for AVA, but with every improvement/change comes the need to adjust how we do business. These new stamps are no exception. Please be aware that you will need to be careful how you use the new stamps. If you continue to do your stamping like you always have with our old stamps, you could easily end up with just a black mark in your books.

In particular, with the old stamps we all tended to press the stamp deeply into the stamp pad and then press the stamp very hard on our books, rocking and rolling the stamp to account for the uneven slugs

in the stamp. With the new stamps, this technique could well result in a solid black mark since the new stamps do not have letters/numbers as deep as the old stamps, and most of the stamps have smaller letters with less space between the letters.

The suggested procedure for the new stamps is to ink the stamp lightly and do a trial stamp on a piece of paper (e.g., the walk directions) to ascertain imprint quality. You may determine that the stamp has too much ink and have to repeat this process to determine the correct amount of force to ink the stamp as well as the correct amount force to use get a good imprint **before** stamping your book.

It is critical that all Volkssporters get the word on changing how they stamp their books. While this is a very positive step forward for AVA, it won't take but one botched stamp in a book to sour that participant on this as an improvement. Clubs might consider putting an instruction sheet in with the stamp in their Walk Box showing both the botched stamp using the old technique and the new improved stamp using the recommended stamping technique.

Thanks to Bob Schmick (Maryland Volkssport Assoc., President) for pointing out this "black line" issue and ATRD, Mike Green for bringing it to my attention. Thanks also to Chris Zegelin for developing this new improved stamp, to Hector Hernandez for learning how to operate the new stamp cutting equipment and getting all these new stamps produced, and the rest of the folks in the office for working together to get the stamps shipped out to the clubs.

Convention Co-Chair—Lea Darling

2019 Convention Team is Canvassing All Clubs.....Does anyone have connections with a nationally known figure who could serve at our final banquet as our inspirational speaker and do so at a reasonable cost? Please contact Lea Darling, leadarling@verizon.net with your suggestions.

AVA Vice President/Fund Development Committee - Nancy Wittenberg , Chair

The Big Give, March 22, Your Chance to Make a Difference

On March 22, much earlier than last year, the AVA will again join San Antonio and surrounding counties in The Big Give S.A., a 24-hour day of giving. The Big Give is AVA's only annual fund raising campaign. Because it connects people to the causes that matter the most to them, AVA is counting on all of us to connect with AVA through a donation to the Big Give. I know our cause, our mission, is one that matters to us all. Because our clubs promote and organize non-competitive physical fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness and friendship, we have all personally benefited from AVA through our participation.

For AVA this is a nation-wide experience. Last year individuals, clubs and state associations came together to raise nearly \$68,000. The December/January edition of The American Wanderer on page 3 listed AVA's significant accomplishments this past year due in large part to all of us – 393 individuals and 92 clubs who donated through The Big Give. This year our goal is \$70,000. We are looking for 450 individuals and 100 clubs to help us reach that goal.

Because I believe in AVA's mission as you do and because I continue to see the results in my own life and

big
give

Donate online March 15-22,
2018 and by check through
April 30, 2018!

health, I am again contributing \$10,000 towards a match to begin the Big Give. I ask you to join with me and our National Executive Council on March 22, by giving online at TheBigGiveSA.org. Here are some ways you can do this:

- Give online through TheBigGiveSA.org anytime Central time from **Thursday, March 15 through Thursday, March 22** and designate your contribution for the March 22 Big Give if earlier;
- Donate by mailing a check to AVA **anytime through April 30**, designating The Big Give in the memo line.
- Set up a **peer-to-peer website** through TheBigGiveSA.org and email your friends and family, to contribute through your site. It's easy and information is on their website.
- Look for information in the **Checkpoint** about special prizes the AVA can earn by giving online at certain times or other criteria.
- Encourage your club or state association to contribute.

Thank you in advance. I know with your support we can reach our goal to help AVA grow.

Look for more information on the Big Give in the March 2018 SPECIAL EDITION CHECKPOINT.

Southeast Regional Director—John McClellan

Mississippi Year-round Events Go Online in 2018

With closure of the Gulf Coast Volkssporting Club this past summer, the year-round (YRE) events in Mississippi are migrating to the CVA Online Startbox (OSB) starting 1 January 2018. The 4 venues that will continue are: Jackson (Capital), Biloxi, Ocean Springs (downtown) and the Gulf Coast National Seashore Park – also located in Ocean Springs.

The AVA's event sanctioning system (ESR) reflects this move to the OSB for 2018. New digital maps & directions of the existing routes have been transposed and posted for download. Please note though that some changes were made AFTER the printing of the annual *Starting Point* booklet. For example, the *Starting Point* may still show addresses for old physical box locations – check the online system for the address and directions to the actual Start Points. References to old physical box locations have been removed in the online (ESR) listings. In the recent past, these walks had no special programs listed. I have added some, but there may be others that qualify – so if you complete one of these events in 2018 please send me feedback, photos, etc. if you discover Special Programs that should be added.

As Southeast Region RD, I am now the Point-of-Contact (POC) for these walks. You can contact me with any issues. Please keep in mind though – I live several hundred miles away and I may not be able to assist immediately! We hope you continue to enjoy these offerings in the Magnolia State!

See You on the Trails!

Training Development Committee—Joe Blazek, Member

A Guide for Writing Good Walk Directions and Making Good Maps for YRE and Seasonal Walks

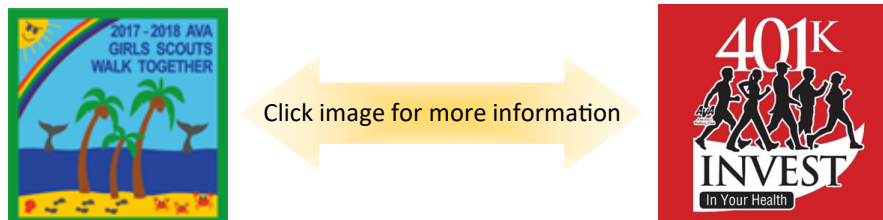
Eighteen months ago, the Evergreen State Volkssport Association (ESVA) developed a walk review program for reviewing current and new YRE/Seasonal walk events. Reviews of YREs and Seasonals since

then have shown the process to be very worthwhile. Reviewers have found directional errors and omissions of critical information, and there have been many instances where maps or written directions were confusing and needed clarification. ESVA uses a review form that has a simplified listing of the AVA Trailmaster Guide's written direction and map review elements. This form is on the ESVA website and can be used by walk developers, as well as reviewers.

Here is a process you can use to eliminate any errors or confusion in your event directions and maps. When developing new walks or making updates or significant changes to a walk, first become familiar with the elements described in the AVA Trailmaster Guide on "Written Directions" and "Maps and Map Making" and incorporate the elements into your draft walk directions and map. Second, get someone who is unfamiliar with the draft you developed, to walk the route and review your draft. The reviewer should also become familiar with the same Trailmaster Guide sections before they walk the route. With the draft in hand, the reviewer should carefully review each walk instruction and the map to see that the draft accomplishes three things. It needs to meet the Trailmaster Guide elements; the draft needs to match what is on the ground so there are no errors or omissions; and it needs to eliminate any confusion in the directions or map. Once any issues have been identified and been fixed, the paperwork can be finalized. This process will help make an excellent product for folks who walk your events.

AVA Programs—Debra Kruep, Chair

It's that time of year when we invite AVA clubs to host the annual Girl Scout Walk Together Patch Contest. The past few years it has been Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri/Kansas and last year it was California. Do you have a working relationship with your Girl Scout council? Would you like to build one in your area? This program is a great way to advertise your club and build a relationship. The contest does not require a lot of time and the Program Committee is here to help you through the process. Email ava-outh@ava.org to submit your club's name for consideration. The patch will be used during the 2018-2019 season. Shown here is the winning patch from last year.



Registration is now open for the 401K: Invest in Your Health Challenge, AVA's first Virtual Online Program. The Challenge begins January 1, 2018.

Top Five Questions About 401K Registration

1. **Didn't receive email with the Walker Tracker Sign-Up Instructions:** *The email from vop@ava.org may have gone to Spam/Junk Mail. Check your Spam/Junk folder. It usually helps to create a contact for vop@ava.org. Email vop@ava.org if you still haven't received instructions within several business days.*
2. **Different name and/or email address on PayPal account:** *If you use someone else's PayPal account or a different email address, let the person know to be watching for the email from vop@ava.org, or send an email to vop@ava.org to tell the change of name and/or email address.*
3. **Creating a walking account:** *You are not automatically registered on Walker Tracker by using PayPal. You must create your individual account. Choose the **Register Now** option to create, you will choose a unique Username and Password. Once registered, you will simply log in.*

4. **Username and Email Address Clarification:** *The Username will represent you on Walker Tracker and is something you create. It must only contain letters and numbers... no special characters. Your Password is also something you create and will be used with your Username to log into your Walking account.*
5. **Address and T-Shirt Size:** *Don't worry if your mailing address or T-Shirt size changes... there will be an opportunity to correct that information at a later date. Unfortunately, you cannot change answers to the completed registration questions.*

IT Committee—Chris Zegelin, Chair

Why do we have new stamps?

The new stamps have arrived and I want to take this opportunity to tell you about the reason why they were created. There seems to be a mindless focus on costs in the various emails that have circulated around. The real reason has nothing to do with the cost of producing and handling the stamps. Any focus or discussion of costs misses the point completely.

[Click here](#) to continue reading full article.

Special Programs —Bonnie Johnson, Chair

At the January NEC meeting, four new Special Programs will be introduced and proposed to the NEC for review and approval. Each NEC member will vote using the criteria for evaluation and selection. The criteria consists of historical significance, scenic interest, geographic area, description clarity, award appearance and entertainment value.

The approved programs would begin January 1, 2019. Results will appear in the next Checkpoint.

AVA National Office Team

Awards and Membership Coordinator—Karen Winkle

To view the Monthly Comparison Chart for the Total Number of Awards processed [click here](#).

I am sure a lot of you are wondering where your books are. They are here! Due to Starting Points and new stamps, holidays, and vacations, I have gotten behind in processing my books and memberships. I am working as quickly as I can to process and mail your awards and memberships. Thanks for your patience. Karen

Information and Technology Specialist—Hector Hernandez

UPDATES!

Due to the thickness of the rubber of the new stamps the engraving

**ONE STEP AT A
TIME IS GOOD
WALKING**

Proverb

PICTUREQUOTES.COM

is not as deep as the old stamps and this can cause over inking if too much ink is used. Also, applying too much pressure can cause blotching.

Clubs might want to invest in a gel ink pad for a cleaner result.

Office Depot® Brand Gel Stamp Pad, 3 1/4" x 4 5/8", Black Item # 420852
★★★★☆ (20) | Description | Share | Print



\$4.99 each

Select an option

☒ One-Time Delivery

☐ Subscription Delivery

Pickup or Delivery

☒ Next Business Day Delivery

Order in the next 3 hours 26 minutes and get it Friday, January 5

☐ Need it sooner? Order by 2pm and get it today

☐ Pick Up In 1 Hour **Save 5%**

"I used the gel ink pad (Office Depot gel stamp pad) & the stamp worked out fine. With the gel ink pad, there is not a problem of stamping too hard & then messing up your book." - Carol Romig

Walks to Remember

New Year, new walks and old walks. What's a walk you remember or want people to remember? Share it with your friends, share it with AVA. If you are in need of assistance marketing February walks and events, please email your walk or event information and details to hector@ava.org.



Old Stamp Handles

In an effort to help clubs save on costs, the National office is not requiring clubs to return the old stamp handles and slugs to the AVA.

However, should a club want to return the old stamp handles and slugs to the AVA it is much appreciated. We will store them until a decision has been made on what to do with them.

Click image to view it larger in your browser.

Starting Point Changes

Please remember to make all changes within your ESR and then send to Hector. The website will be updated weekly. Email changes to hector@ava.org.

Click here for this month's [Starting Point Changes](#)

Communications—Samanta Sanchez

Join Us March 22, 2018 to Make a Difference!

Our annual fundraiser, The Big Give 2018 is just a few months away!! The day of giving will be taking place on **Thursday, March 22nd**. The Big Give will be held a few weeks earlier than prior years so please make sure to save the date. Won't be able to donate on March 22nd? No worries, early giving will start March 15 and run through March 21. Don't miss the opportunity to make a healthy impact in your community. [Click here](#) to donate online at your favorite walking club – America's Walking Club. Thank you!



2018 Insurance Certificate for Events

The general Certificate of Liability Insurance for 2018 is now available for clubs through our AVA website

through the clubs tab. Please visit online or [click here](#). If you are in need of a Certificate of Insurance for Additional Insured, please submit your request through your club's ESR. [Click here](#) for step by step instructions on how to submit your insurance request online. Please email Samanta at samanta@ava.org for any questions or concerns.

Accounting Specialist—Marian DeVaul

We are out of the 2018 Starting Point Books. If you would like to put your name on the waiting list for the next order, please send your request to Marian@AVA.org. These books will be at a slightly higher cost as the Pre-Order phase for the original order is over.

Thank You and I hope you have a very Happy & Prosperous New Year!

Finance Manager—Erin Grosso

Happy New Year from the AVA Accounting Team!

As of January 1st, 2018, we will be using a new accounting package (QuickBooks Premier). As with any change, there are likely to be a few hiccups. While we have done our best to avoid errors, we understand that something may get past us. For the most part, the invoices will look very similar, the information on the invoices will be more clear and the timeliness of invoicing will improve. In the past, checks issued against accounts have been applied to the general balance on account. That will change beginning with invoices dated January 1, 2018 and going forward. Checks issued against account balances will be applied to the invoice intended to be paid. This will lend to properly addressing questions and/or discrepancies with invoicing and payments. Statements will continue to be mailed for account reconciliation purposes. For now, we will continue to invoice and mailout invoices each Friday. Our clubs and members have invoice payment terms of net 30 days. Meaning, invoices should be paid within 30 days of the date on the invoice. Clubs and members will not receive a statement if their account balance is zero. Ideally, we will begin emailing invoices to club Treasurers and members. Our goal is to become more eco-friendly and reduce the cost of producing, processing, and mailing invoices, statements, and receipts.

In the first week of February, the accounting office intends to mail/email our clubs and members a survey addressing such things as invoicing, customer service, awards processing and more. This survey is intended to help us better understand the needs of our AVA community. We genuinely want to see an increase in efficiency, cost savings, and most importantly customer satisfaction. It may take us a bit of time to get it all together but, we are excited and confident that these changes will be well received.

Please remember that quarterly reports for Clubs must be filed by January 31, 2018.

As always, please feel free to contact either Erin (erin@ava.org) or Marian(marian@ava.org) with any questions or concerns.

Best wishes for a wonderful 2018!

AVA's Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales

AVA Communications Tool Box

One of our biggest challenges as a National Organization is the lack of ability to communicate efficiently and effectively with our clubs and individual members. With all the recent changes in operations like the new database, the new invoicing procedures, the new stamp handles, and expanded and new program initiatives like the 401K, Olympiad (Bid), AVA Community Events (ACE events), Convention, Crazy Horse, Appalachian Trail, and the International Marching League events, it is time to implement the communications and marketing strategies of the strategic plan.

The AVA Publicity Committee will release a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) in early July, if not sooner, to seek the professional services of a consulting firm that can help us create and implement a National Communications and Marketing plan. The goal is to begin phase one of this plan by January 2019.

In the meantime, I ask your patience and support in utilizing what we currently have in our communications toolbox until we have completed our communications and marketing plan.

[Click here](#) to continue reading article.

A BIG THANKS to all our Big Give donors because if not for your continued support the AVA could not update systems, create new stamps, initiate innovative programs, streamline services, create a marketing plan, support clubs, and the list goes on!

Enjoy your Spring walks, it's my favorite time of the year to walk! I hope to visit with everyone this February 23-25, in San Antonio, Texas for the Texas Trail RoundUp Walkfest and this June 2-3, at the Crazy Horse Memorial Spring Volksmarch!



Crazy Horse Memorial Spring Volksmarch,
June 2-3, 2018

Support Our National and International Friends!



Dear All Waking friends,
Best Wishes from
INDONESIA WALKING ASSOCIATION

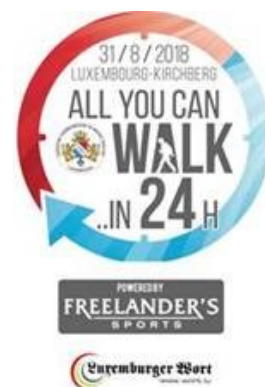
On behalf of IWA
Fitriani Kuroda
Chairman

International



Happy and healthy Year 2018 Ein gutes und gesundes Jahr 2018 Werner Friedrich

Dear all walking friends,
 Greetings from Luxembourg !!
 On behalf of the organizing committee, we would like to wish you a Merry Christmas 2017 and a Happy New Year 2018.
 See you in Luxembourg on 31 August & 01 September 2018.
 Best regards
Pia KINTZIGER
 Secrétaire Administrative
 Boîte Postale 56
 L-9201 DIEKIRCH
 Email: pia.kintziger@flmp.lu
 Tél. Bureau: +352 691302687



Click on image to view flyer.

National

Make plans to join us this February in San Antonio
 TX! Come and tour the AVA National Museum!



[Go to webpage](#)

If you are doing any Holiday traveling you might want to take advantage of the Red Roof Inn discount for AVA national and club members and support the AVA! The AVA will receive 5% of all room revenues when you book



at a Red Roof Inn using the Volume Plus Number (623002)! Red Roof Inn's great rates and quality rooms means that you won't be breaking the bank to afford a comfortable room. Through the American Volkssport Association, Red Roof Inn is

also offering additional value. When you book your reservation using Volume Plus Number 623002, you'll save 15% off Red Roof Inn's Best Available rate. Red Roof Inn's Volume Plus Number works just like an online coupon code. Use this link — https://www.redroof.com/deals/partner/American_Volkssport_Association and Red Roof Inn's online discount code will automatically be filled in for you! Or go to www.RedRoof.com to make a reservation. All you have to do to receive a discount at participating inns is enter Volume Plus Number 623002 in the VP+ / ID # slot. You can also make a reservation with an inn directly by calling 1-800-RED-ROOF (800-733-7663). You are required to provide the Volume Plus Number 623002 to the reservationist when you make your reservation, BEFORE arriving at any Red Roof Inn property.

Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send us an email to the attention of Samanta requesting that you be put on our distribution list for the Checkpoint. Please note on the subject line: Request for Checkpoint. Send your request to Samanta at samanta@ava.org.



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.

