



VOLUME 29, NUMBER 2



**AMERICA'S  
WALKING CLUB**  
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

February 2020

[www.ava.org](http://www.ava.org)

# CHECKPOINT



## IN THIS ISSUE!

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## National AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB — ESTABLISHED 1976 — **WALKING** Week! April 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

In the opening days of 2020, the board of directors of America's Walking Club declared that the first seven days of April beginning in 2020 will be "National Walking Week." The dates of this annual focus on walking coincides with the first Wednesday that has traditionally been called "National Walking Day," and was first used in 2007 by the American Heart Association. While the AHA no longer sponsors the day of walking the AVA was able to capitalize on the momentum to extend the celebration to seven days and ensure that a weekend was available to use for events.

According to president of the board, David Bonewitz, "This is a great opportunity to share the importance of walking with the nation and in our local communities."

Rather than have the emphasis on just health benefits, the new declaration points out many different reasons that walking, the core activity in volkssports, is important to everyone. The board hopes that all clubs will find ways to use its trails and social activities to showcase walking for fun, fitness and fellowship and all the other reasons mentioned in the board's proclamation.

All walkers in the AVA should plan to participate in some way during the seven days. The program committee and other action teams will have more information that supports the clubs as they draw attention to one of the most important ways to improve the quality of life – walking.

**Clubs are encouraged to download the National Walking Week Declaration and use it as a template to approach local community officials and ask them to declare the first seven days in April as National Walking Week!**

[Click here to download](#) the National Walking Week Declaration template.

[Click here to download](#) the National Walking Press Release template

Pine Gove Darrell—Photo submitted by Tom Jackson



## AVA National Walking Week

In efforts to promote the AVA National Walking Week we will advertise events as we did with the OptOutside campaign. This activity will coincide with “National Walking Day” as sponsored by the American Heart Association for the last twelve years and takes place on the first Wednesday of April. This year, National Walking Day occurs on Wednesday, April 1, and National Walking Week includes the days of the first through the seventh. The creation of National Walking Week allows the focus to be on all the reasons we walk in AVA and in the country, and it will give greater flexibility for everyone to be included in activities since there will always be weekend days to participate.

We invite all clubs to host a traditional event or a group walk at your favorite YRE the first week of April. A group walk only takes one person willing to lead a group.

Please send your information to Hector at [hector@ava.org](mailto:hector@ava.org) by March 20th to be included on the National Walking Week section of the AVA website and do not forget to advertise your event in your local area! National Walking Week events will also be featured on the AVA Facebook page along with a photo, if submitted. Click below for the National Walking Week event form.

[Click here for form.](#)

## AVA National Office News

### Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales

#### New Year, New Partnerships, New Members and Volunteers!

[Element3 Health](#) is a unique matching service focused on engaging older adults in their passions (including walking!) to increase social, mental, and physical activity for healthy aging. We are thrilled to join Element3 Health in their great mission!

This year, each of our clubs is eligible to join the [Element3 Health Network](#) for FREE! Membership in Element3 Health's Network includes the following benefits:

- Access to New Members – Element3 Health will match and connect its members who are interested in walking with a local AVA club in their [Network](#).
- FREE access to [GroupWorks](#) – a safe, easy, and established online club management platform that simplifies member communications, handles event scheduling, helps with collections of payments and dues, and so much more!
- FREE access to Element3 Health's Club Leader Toolkit.

To gain access to the benefits listed above, join [Element3 Health's Network](#) today by completing a quick, [2-MINUTE PROFILE](#) on their website. Clubs wanting to participate must complete this profile.

Membership in the Element3 Health Network is optional and at the discretion of each club. To obtain more information, please reach out to our dedicated Element3 Health Network team at [network@element3health.com](mailto:network@element3health.com). There is no timeline when a club might be contacted by Element3 Health once they have completed the profile.

#### NEXT STEPS AND WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE UPCOMING MONTHS

Element3 Health will be reaching out to many of you to learn more about your club and potentially connect you with new members.

The summary of the onboarding process, member participation, and communication plan between AVA clubs and Element3 Health are outlined below. While these criteria are important in deciding if your club is ready to participate in this program, they are not disqualifying factors as the key consideration is whether your club is willing and able to welcome new members!

**Element3 Health program participation criteria**

- The Club has a dedicated POC for this program and wants to participate. The POC will manage group communication for referrals and correspondence with Element3 POC, primarily through email.
- The club hosts an average of 3 activities per month. Examples can include club meetings, socials, walks, volunteering opportunities, club members grabbing coffee together, etc. The number of club activities is not a club participation disqualifier.
- The Club has a POC who is open to responding to one monthly Element3 Health email about their members' attendance. This will be a streamlined effort and training will be provided.
- The Club is willing to accept and enroll new members who may or may not be your "traditional Volkssporter" but have an interest in walking.
- The club must be willing to enroll Element3 Health members in their club membership for one year. (Clubs will be reimbursed up to \$10 per enrolled member.)
- The club must be willing to accept complimentary walk coupons from Element3 Health participants. (Clubs will be reimbursed \$1 per each complimentary walk coupon.)
- The club agrees to have a POC or a dedicated member to do an in-person walk or a casual meeting with an Element3 Health member to help them onboard during their first visit.

## Important Dates

- For clubs that ready to participate, the program roll-out will take place on February 15th, 2020
- For clubs that are not yet ready but are interested to participate, the roll-out will take place on May 1, 2020

If your club would like to participate in May please advise your Regional Director and be sure to let them know how the AVA can support your club so you are ready to enroll in the program.

I thank all clubs who have already expressed interest and I am very excited about this new partnership with Element3 Health! This is the right combination at the right time!

"After working with the American Volkssport Association for over a year, we are very excited to be expanding our partnership. AVA has proven to be a great organization with a mission that aligns well with Element3 Health's mission to get people active. Together, Element3 Health and AVA will make a significant difference in the lives of even more people across the country." David Norris, Chairman and CEO, Element3 Health.

More information on the operational process, which will also include the reimbursement process, will be emailed to all club POC's and Regional Directors within the next week. For questions or more information feel free to contact your Regional Director or [henry@ava.org](mailto:henry@ava.org).

Thank you all and Happy New Year!

**Finance Director—Erin Grosso**

## Update and Sample Forms for Clubs Changing their Fiscal Year:

An organization may change its accounting period by filing a return for the short tax period that results from the change. A "short tax period" is an accounting period of less than 12 months. In the case of the AVA and our clubs, this "short tax period" will be July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019.

For those AVA clubs that have made the decision to change their fiscal year end from June 30 to December 31, the following steps that need to be taken.

1. Prepare an **Annual Financial Report** for the period July 1 – December 31, 2019 and submit a copy to the AVA no later than May 15, 2020.
2. **File and MAIL a short tax period return** for the period July 1 – December 31, 2019.

However, you may **not file** the 990 e-postcard. **The club must file a Form 990-EZ along with the Schedule A for the Form 990-EZ.** You must write **"Change in Accounting Period"** at the top of the Form 990-EZ IRS Tax Form. This short year return must be filed and mailed to the IRS no later than May 15, 2020.

I realize how complicated and difficult the IRS instructions are to understand. I have had more than a few phone calls from Club Treasurers who are understandably frustrated. I have read through the IRS instructions for both forms and consulted with our CPA firm to provide a highlighted sample for clubs to follow. I've spoken with several Club Treasurers and we've walked through the process together. It seems to have really helped in understanding and completing the tax form. I am providing a sample of both the 990 EZ and the Schedule A and I have highlighted the sections that, in most cases, will need to be completed.

**990-EZ** - For the most part, all the 990-EZ form will need to be completed. Page 3 of the 990-EZ is a list of Yes/No questions that are fairly straight forward. Line number 52; the "yes" box should be checked because your club must file the Schedule A.

**Schedule A** - You should only need to complete page 1 and page 3. On page one, box 10 should be checked and then you can move on to Part III. I have highlighted the lines that I believe will apply to most clubs. However, please read through all the lines and enter information as it applies to your club. I don't believe any of the clubs will need to complete Part IV, V or VI.

**\*\*Please realize that this is a sample of what I believe will apply to most of our clubs. Review the forms and if you have any questions, please email or give me a call. I am happy to help.**

- Sample 990-EZ and Schedule A:
- Links to the IRS Form 990-EZ and Schedule A are provided below.  
<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f990ez.pdf> 990 – EZ Form  
<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f990sa.pdf> Schedule A for the Form 990-EZ

Mail Return to : Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service Center  
Ogden, UT 84201-0027

A copy of this return must also be sent to the AVA National Office to Erin Grosso, [erin@ava.org](mailto:erin@ava.org).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Erin Grosso, Finance Director, at 210-659-2112 or [erin@ava.org](mailto:erin@ava.org). Thank you.

## Information and Technology Specialist—Hector Hernandez

### Online Start Box Help

As a reminder we are working to make it as user friendly as possible. Many screens have a HELP button that provides context-sensitive guidance for the page you are on. Frequently Asked Questions and Answers are available from any place on the site. All screens have a Contact Us button for users to ask questions or provide comments, to which the HelpDesk will respond usually the same day. The site has pop-up screens and warnings which are especially helpful for new users. Try us out soon at [my.ava.org](http://my.ava.org). You can always contact the HelpDesk at [osbhelp@ava.org](mailto:osbhelp@ava.org).

### RD Approval

As a way of making sure all stamps get produced and to mailed to clubs in a timely manner Mike Green has implemented a check in the RD event approval procedure. This checks if the event being approved has a start date that is less than 60 days away. If so the RD will get the following message (for example in this case for an event start date 3/3/2020) when he attempts to approved the event:

Region CSR Approval Page

#### Approval of this event is denied.

**The event start date, 3/3/2020 is less than 60 days from the current date.  
Please either change the start date to a later date (more than 60 days away) or  
call AVA HQ to approve this event and make the special arrangements to assure  
a stamp is created and shipped in time for this event.**

[Return to Listing of Events Pending Approval](#)



If the RD does call AVA National Office they should talk to Hector to “Approve” the event after assuring that the stamp can be created and delivered in time for the event in question.

## Accounting Specialist—Marian DeVaul

### YRE/Seasonal Quarter Participation

Thank you to everyone who has already reported and paid their 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter participation. I hope you found the new entry system to be an easier and better process for submitting quarterly reports.

Since it is a new procedure, we allowed for a learning curve and did not access a fee for paper invoice requests. However, beginning April 1 (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter), a \$5.00 processing fee will be charged for this service.

## Awards & Membership—Karen Winkle

2019 Centurion Books must be mailed in by the end of February 2020 to be listed in the next issue (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter) of The American Wanderer.

## Communications— Samanta Sanchez

### WALK LONG, STAY STRONG!

2020 is year six of the Big Give! Last year, our generous donors raised \$81,665.70! 409 individuals came together to support our cause. This year, our goal is to surpass \$80,000 once again. Why donate to the Big Give? Our walking programs help relieve stress, serve as a preventative measure for heart disease and cancer, help improve memory in those who suffer from Alzheimer’s, help lower the risk of obesity and provide a support group for those battling depression.

Walking is known to be the most popular form of exercise in the United States. The average American takes about 5,117 steps per day, yet we are the nation that walks the least from any industrialized nation. Lack of physical activity is the second leading cause of preventable death in the country. Only about half of adults get enough aerobic exercise to gain significant health benefits.



Click above to view YouTube video.

We are more than a walking organization; we are a walking organization dedicated to help our communities live a longer, healthier life. In fact, walking can add almost two years to your life! Many of our members walk not only for the health benefits, but for the friendships and memories created on the trails. Whether you walk for Fun, Fitness or Friendship, our mission is important, but we can’t continue it without your support. Please consider making a contribution, big or small, to the Big Give 2020 to help us continue to bring our fitness programs to current and future generations. Walk long, stay strong with America’s Walking Club.

#### How You Can Participate

1. Mail your donation checks to the AVA National Office before April 30, 2020.
2. Make an early online contribution anytime from March 19 to March 25, 2020.
3. Make an online contribution the day of March 26, 2020 to help us leverage additional cash prizes.
4. Donors can now make bank to bank transfer donations. Minimum donation amount for a bank transfer is \$100. \*Fee for bank transfer donations is \$3.00 per transaction. Fee for all other online donations is 6.2% + \$0.30.
5. Fundraise on behalf of the AVA by creating a Peer-to-Peer page. If you need assistance creating or personalizing your page, please send an email to [emily@ava.org](mailto:emily@ava.org) (note on subject line Peer-to-Peer Help) or you can reach her at 210-659-2112.

## First Big Give 2020 Donors

We are happy to announce our first match donor. Nancy Wittenberg, AVA Vice President, has pledged \$10,000 towards our Big Give Match. Thanks to her generosity, your donation will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$10,000! We hope our list of matching donors will only continue to grow.

We also want to give a special thanks to our first Big Give donor, Susan Medlin, Southwest Deputy Regional Director and President of the Texas Trail Roundup. Susan is kicking off our campaign with a donation of \$1,367! This donation was used to support the purchase of the international flags for the IML.

## Are You Up for the Regional Challenge?

To add a little fun to our annual fundraiser, the region with the most amount raised during the Big Give will win a prize. The Walking Stick of Kindness will be awarded to the winning region. The Walking Stick of Kindness will be passed down from winner to winner each year. Is your region up for the challenge?

## Stay Tuned

Big Give updates will be announced in the Checkpoint and social media. Soon, we will be announcing Big Give Prizes and the specific times to contribute online during the Big Give. In previous years, the Big Give has awarded prizes to organizations with the most unique donors. This year will be no different. Remember a unique donor contribution is a donation that comes from a distinct individual – different name, email address, and credit card numbers (last 4-digits). Don't forget to join us live on Facebook on March 26. We will be livestreaming our Big Give celebration!



## Program Development & Outreach—Emily Chetwood



Click on image to see pdf.



Please click on image to see your Peer-to-Peer Hotline video

## NEC and Committee Updates



## It's Time to Walk the Appalachian Trail!

Would you like to get credit for all your steps... whether you do a Volkswalk, a walk in your neighborhood or park, or in the Mall, etc.? All Steps count in this fun and Challenging Virtual Online Program. The purpose is to get people to walk more, "visit" places they haven't been, and have a fun way to track their progress on a Virtual Map.

Once you pay for the program at [http://cb.ava.org/Appalachian\\_Trail.php](http://cb.ava.org/Appalachian_Trail.php), you will receive instructions on how to create your account on Walker Tracker (the application we use to track everyone's steps and progress) so you can track your steps. This can be done on Walker Tracker's Website or Walker Tracker's Smartphone app, and either manually or by syncing a device.

Last year, we virtually walked across Canada. In 2020, we will be virtually walking The Appalachian Trail! The steps for these routes have been adjusted so that you will need to walk an average of 5,500 steps a day. We kept it low so more walkers could finish, and allow for sickness, vacations, etc. It is a fun way to "walk" places we have not been, seeing pictures and gathering information. You can befriend people so you can easily encourage their progress and make fun teams if you would like. This is different than our regular Special Programs where you "collect" items on the actual Volkswalks you complete.

Beginning January 1, 2020, you will see your progress on a chart, along with others' progress. There will be a Pacer Rabbit that will show you where you should be to complete the Challenge by 12/31/20. If you need help, email Jan at [vop@ava.org](mailto:vop@ava.org).

We also have a Regional Traveling Team Trophy Challenge for AVA Regions. This is based on an aggregated average, so the size of the Team doesn't matter. The 2020 version starts 1/1/20, and at the end of the Challenge, the trophy will be taken away from the 2019 Winner (Rocky Mountain) and be awarded to the 2020 Winner, the Region with the highest aggregated average.

Join today!

*"I just signed up and paid thru Paypal. I really enjoyed your walk across Canada. Thru my employment/medical insurance they promoted walking down the Mississippi River. That too was fun. Thank you for promoting health and walking!!" - Kay Black*

## Big Give Committee Member—Bob Hall

### Big Give Walk-a-Thon

Come and join me and Panda (my Giant Schnauzer) in a walk-a-thon to raise a few extra dollars for our favorite walking club - AVA! We plan to criss-cross Vancouver, WA and Portland, OR the week before Big Give (Mar 18-25), going from peak to peak and butte to butte. Total distance is 200 km. You can support us virtually by pledging any amount per km and donating on Mar 26<sup>th</sup> at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/vshakqa>. (It's a shortcut to my Big Give Peer-to-Peer page.) If you live in the area, we would welcome the company on any stretch of the walk you care to join. If you'd like to create your own walk-a-thon, I would be glad to share the template with you.

Contact me at [bobhallfamily@aol.com](mailto:bobhallfamily@aol.com) or call me at 360-369-8296 for further details.

[Pledges](#)

[Flyer](#)

## Club Development & Support Committee—John McClellan, Chair

### Ten Things in 2020

Happy new year and welcome to a new decade! What's your new year's resolution regarding volkssporting? Here are 10 things you can do to help your club, your Region, and *America's Walking Club* in 2020:

1. *Volunteer!* We are an almost all-volunteer, non-profit organization. Help us by working at an event checkpoint, becoming an event coordinator, distributing club literature at local businesses, or filling a vacancy on your club's board. Or, join a National committee!
2. *Get on Groupworks.* All AVA clubs have access free of charge to a club management and event advertising platform called *Groupworks*. <https://app.groupworks.com> Clubs can list events, manage membership, and interface with all the other clubs, your RD and the AVA Committees that are working on your behalf. You can upload/download documents and share "best practices." Starting this year, an exciting new program of membership referrals from the Element3 Health network to your club will begin. *Contact your RD to opt-in now!*
3. *Bring a friend to a walk!* Friends, children, grandchildren... invite them along!
4. *Highlight the new AVA logo!* Please put our new logo on all your club materials and social media, but more than this - ask your businesses that support YRE start points to display our logo and link back to us on their websites!
5. *Travel to participate in a neighboring clubs' event.* Thank them for holding that event.



6. **Make a Post about AVA on your social media!** Submit event photos to the AVA Facebook page [www.facebook.com/groups/AmericanVolkssportAssociation/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/AmericanVolkssportAssociation/) or to your own club website, Facebook page or Instagram!
7. **Buy and wear AVA apparel!** AVA created some great new shirts and hats in 2019. Get one!
8. **Consider Walking for Charity.** Go out and walk for charity and wear your AVA or club colors when you do it! Or, download the **CharityMiles** app [charitymiles.org](http://charitymiles.org) and then join our team -- #AmericasWalkingClub! You pick the charity and do the walking, sponsors make the donations! We are trying to get AVA on the approved list of recipient charities. You can help!
9. **Find a new trail.** Go out and find a great new walking or biking venue for your club, and then tell your Trailmaster about it. No club trailmaster? You can become one!
10. **Write a TAW article!**

See You on the Trails!

## Peggy Watts, GDMVA, Iowa's Walking Club

### Suzybelle Invites You Back to Iowa

Greetings from Iowa. Hi walk buddies, this is your old friend Suzybelle!! How have you all been? It's been a while since I've seen you. I had so much fun when you all came to Iowa in 2011!!! I've missed you and want to invite you back to Iowa. A group of my buddies and I have planned 20 fun and exciting walks in state parks all over the state of Iowa for you to enjoy anytime from May 1 to October 15. The parks are in all parts of Iowa, north, south, east and west. They are part of the celebration of the centennial of Iowa's state parks. All the parks have miles of beautiful trails to get you moo-ving. There are lakes. There's rugged terrain and woods and prairies. Not only will you have an enjoyable walk, you will learn about Iowa history and natural resources. There is something for everyone. Just look at a couple of the park names, The Ledges, Mines of Spain, Pilot Knob, Prairie Rose, Lake of Three Fires. Don't they sound fun!!! And that's just a few of the parks featured in the Walk 20 Iowa Parks in 2020 program. I really hope you'll plan a summer vacation to Iowa for some udderly wonderful walking. Watch The American Wanderer and The Checkpoint for more information on the fun in Iowa this summer. I just can't wait to see you again!!



Suzybelle with Andy Barlett, DNR State Parks contact.  
—Photo submitted by Susan Pinneke

For additional information visit the Iowa's Walking Club website, [iowaswalkingclub.org](http://iowaswalkingclub.org) or the Nebraska Trailblazers website, [netrailblazers.club](http://netrailblazers.club). Questions – [walk20in20@gmail.com](mailto:walk20in20@gmail.com).

## Support Our National and International Friends

### International

**VISIT SEOUL 2021**  
Let's enjoy Korea!  
Let's play Sports!  
Let's visit DMZ!

29 October – 02 November 2021

17th IJV OLYMPIAD SEOUL, KOREA 2021

**Let's enjoy Korea!**  
Let's play Sports!  
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29 October – 02 November 2021

17th IJV OLYMPIAD SEOUL, KOREA 2021



October 29—November 2, 2021 17th IVV Olympiad Seoul, Korea 2021

Click on images to enlarge.

[Click here for more information.](#)

National



Click on image for more information

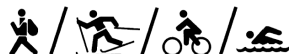


**Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It**

To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send your request to Hector at [hector@ava.org](mailto: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.***



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