



Christmas Lights River Walk - Photo submitted by Martin Callahan

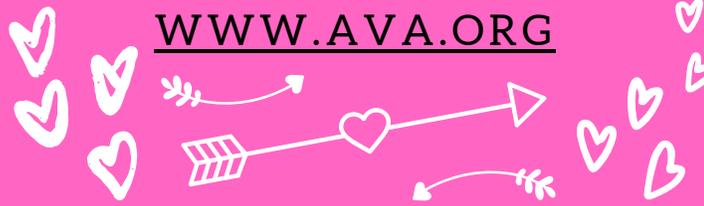


AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB  
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

FEBRUARY  
2022  
VOLUME 31  
NO. 2

# CHECKPOINT

[WWW.AVA.ORG](http://WWW.AVA.ORG)



## TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP - SUSAN MEDLIN, AVA VICE-CHAIR

### IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO REGISTER

SAN ANTONIO, Texas —It's not too late to register ([texasrailroundup.org](http://texasrailroundup.org)) for the February 18-20, Texas Trail Roundup (TTR) walking event, starting at the historic Hermann Sons building at 525 S. St. Mary's in downtown San Antonio. Walk routes include a new downtown Art Walk on Friday, the World Heritage Site Spanish Missions on Saturday, and the Pearl, Brackenridge Park, and the Japanese Tea Garden on Sunday. Route distances range from five kilometers up to a full marathon (42 km) and two half marathons (21 km). The date is timed to coincide with the annual award-winning San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo ([book your Rodeo tickets at sarodeo.com](http://book your Rodeo tickets at sarodeo.com)).

This event is organized by a local walking club, TTR, and supported by many other AVA Clubs who man checkpoints, mark trails, and work in the Start area.

These walks are eligible for credit with the International Federation of Popular Sports (IVV) and the International Walking League. For more information, Contact Susan Medlin, 12527 Fern Creek, San Antonio TX 78253, [sueammed@aol.com](mailto:sueammed@aol.com), 210-325-3523.



## NORTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR - WAYNE C. KNAPP

The AVA Policy Manual is being updated. Please send your questions and suggestions to Wayne C. Knapp, Northeast Regional Director at [ne\\_rd@ava.org](mailto:ne_rd@ava.org).



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## CEO/PRESIDENT - HENRY ROSALES

### AVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING NOTICE

The AVA Board of Directors will meet Wednesday, February 9, 2022, at 6:00p.m. Central. This will be an electronic meeting on the Office 365 Teams platform. If you would like to attend the meeting, please use this link by [clicking here](#).

### AVA'S NEW ELEMENT3 HEALTH PROGRAM

Many thanks to our AVA club members and other participants who signed up for the AVA's Element3 Health Walk Voucher Program and reported activities for 2021. In all, we had 18 participants report 1,314 activities for 2021! This is an average of 6 activities per month per participant. Peak months of reported activity were May, June, August and September. Great way to stay active! Congratulations!

If you have not signed up for this new program, there is still time to sign up and participate in 2022. Through our partnership with Element3, any walkers who are members of an eligible health plan, initially UnitedHealthcare Medicare advantage and supplemental plans, can earn free walk vouchers for participation in club related walks and activities. This includes Seasonal, Traditional, and self-guided Year-Round events and Club Activities! There is no cost at all to you - in fact, if you are eligible, enroll in this new program, and report at least 10 walks and/or club activities per month, you will receive 2 free electronic walk vouchers per month.

Here's how you can quickly and easily check to see if you're eligible:

1. Sign up at <http://e3hfun.com/ava> All you will need is your health plan ID card to determine if you are eligible. Element3 will send you a \$5 Starbucks card, whether you're eligible or not!
2. If you're eligible, then for every 5 walks and/or club activities you report per month you will be credited 1 free walk voucher, limit of 2 walk vouchers per month. In addition, if you report 120 walks or more by the end of the year you will receive a free AVA membership in 2023!
3. Once you have signed in on the Element3 Health portal and they have confirmed you are eligible, you will be sent a link to a short survey. You will use this link to report monthly activities. It is a very simple process.
4. For more information, contact Element3 Health at (833)-906-1700 or [info@element3health.com](mailto:info@element3health.com). If you have any questions with the sign-up process, they will help you.

## **ELECTRONIC WALK VOUCHER REDEMPTION PROCESS**

Below is the process that eligible program members will follow to receive their free walk vouchers:

1. All qualifying participants must have a "myava.org" account in order to receive your vouchers.
2. For each voucher awarded, AVA will place a \$3 credit into your Online Startbox (OSB) account at the end of each quarter. These vouchers can be used for any OSB Event.
3. As members redeem their vouchers on the Online Startbox (OSB) the club will be report this participation on their quarterly report and will receive a credit for \$1.75 for the redeemed voucher.
4. For more information on the redemption process contact [marian@ava.org](mailto:marian@ava.org)

## **NEW! EXCLUSIVE AVA TOURS WITH STANLEY SAFARIS**

The AVA is happy to announce our newest partnership with Stanley Safaris. Stanley Safaris is a Bespoke, Luxury Safari operator that focusses on experiential travel to Africa. Shaun, who founded Stanley Safaris, has been exploring Africa for over 40-years finding the best experiences to offer his guests from across the continent. For Shaun, one of the best ways to explore Africa is on a walking safari. Being on foot in Africa's wilderness is one of the purest ways to experience what Africa is about, learning about the smaller aspects of the African bush that are often missed when you are on the back of a game drive vehicle. Stanley Safaris, together with AVA have partnered to offer an exclusive AVA Walking Safari to South Africa in September this year. Limited to just 8 AVA members, the walking safari starts in the Timbavati Game Reserve which is a Big 5 Private Reserve bordering the Kruger National Park. Here, we'll enjoy game drives as well as some walking safaris to ease us into the wildlife experience of South Africa. From here we head north to the remote Pafuri Corner of the Kruger National Park for an exclusive 3-night walking safari, exploring Fever Tree forests, gorges, grasslands and woodlands on foot with some of the best walking guides in the country.



If you are interested in joining this exclusive AVA walking Safari and experience one of the best ways to explore Africa, please click on the following link for more information: <https://www.stanley-safaris.com/ava.html>

The walking Safari is not an AVA or IVV sanctioned event. Stanley Safaris is an independent tour company that is registered with Southern African Tourism Services Association and insured through Safari and Tourism Insurance Brokers. They have agreed to donate a percentage of registration fees to the AVA for each trip booked by our members and friends.

## AVA VIRTUAL ONLINE PROGRAMS (VOP) RETIRED IN 2022

During the November 2021 board meeting, the AVA Board of Directors approved the sunseting of our virtual online programs because projected participation numbers did not increase substantially over a 5-year period to offset the cost of the online platform and administration of the program. The National Office will be researching new and better online platforms so we can reinstate bigger and better online programs soon!

## ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST - MARIAN DEVAUL

### ADDITIONAL INSURANCE

Extra insurance endorsements carry an additional fee when requested. When the cost is determined, we will inform the club of the extra charges before the request for the additional insurance is secured. If the club agrees to the charges, the AVA will request the extra coverage and submit an invoice to the club.

### STARTING POINT BOOKS

We still have books available for sale at a cost of \$25.00 plus shipping and handling. For purchase, please e-mail [marian@ava.org](mailto:marian@ava.org), or call 210-659-2112.

### MERCHANDISE PRICE INCREASE

Due to an increase in manufacturing prices, we will be raising the price on the following items in 2022:

- October and May Patches will increase to \$5.00 for clubs and \$7.00 to individuals
- New Walker Packets will increase to \$10.00
- 2023 Starting Point books will also have a price increase depending on increase in print and publishing prices.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS! BIG GIVE 2022

# AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

## The Big Give 2022

6 PM Thursday, September 22  
through 6 PM Friday, September 23



## CONGRATULATIONS BIG GIVEAWAY WINNERS!

Thank you, family and friends, for opening your hearts and supporting the AVA during the Big Give 2021. Our annual fundraiser was a big success thanks to your support and generosity, generating a total of \$96,548.55! As a token of our appreciation, all Big Give 2021 donors were entered into a drawing for one of two prizes: a 2022 Starting Point Book or a complimentary registration to the 2023 IVV Olympiad & Texas Trail Roundup International Walk Fest in San Antonio, TX.\* And the lucky winners are...

**WINNERS OF A 2022 STARTING POINT BOOK:**  
George Cain of Richmond, VA  
Alan Longshore of Voorheesville, NY  
Keri Slater of Austin, TX  
Deborah Montgomery of Kennewick, WA

**GRAND PRIZE - FREE REGISTRATION TO 2023 IVV OLYMPIAD & TTR WALK FEST:**  
Phyllis Olson of Urbandale, IA  
Texas Volkssport Association of San Antonio, TX  
Timothy Miner of Woodbridge, VA  
Debra Peak of Georgetown, TX  
Peter Sweet of Lacey, WA

Please expect a letter in the mail with instructions on how to redeem your prize. Congratulations to you all and thank you for your support!

\*Donors of \$100+ were entered in Grand Prize drawing.



**OLYMPIAD MEMORIES**

Jean and I have attended three Olympiads: 2013 Val Gardena, Dolomites, Italy; 2015 Chengdu, China; and 2017 Koblenz, Germany. While the scenery and people are different in each location, the basic format of these Olympiads were similar.

The walkers, which number in the thousands and are from countries around the world, meet and organize themselves under their respective national flags. As a group, arranged in alphabetical order by country name. walkers then walk behind their flagbearers through the local area to a central arena, often with bands playing and crowds cheering – similar to the real Olympics. We always carried and waved small American flags. There are speeches, welcoming ceremonies, and entertainment. Then, the attendees are free to go walk the welcome walk, socialize, and/or party. Over the next several days, there are walks ranging from 10km to 42km through the cities and countryside. On the last day, the closing ceremonies occur, again with speeches and great fanfare.

Beyond walking through new and beautiful scenery, we have the most fun meeting and interacting with people from other countries, often without being able to speak each other’s language. We also enjoy meeting friends from other international walks and places in the USA. The children we see are often shy, and we delight in giving our small American flags to locals and usually get smiles in return. The least fun is sitting or standing through all the speeches!

**2013 Val Gardena, Dolomites, Italy**

The Dolomites are a mountain range in northern Italy, near both Switzerland and Austria. Prior to WWI, this area was part of Austria. The dress and food are much like Austria.



Beginning to walk into Val Gardena. We are behind Sweden and Turkey.



Gathering at a local sports field prior to getting in alphabetical order and walking.



Local Band and crowd taking pictures. Note the band uniforms.



Walkers beginning to fill the sports arena.



Beginning the Welcome Walk.



Beautiful scenery and Jean.

## 2015 Chengdu, China

Chengdu is famous for Giant Pandas and for Szechwan cooking. After our visit, we think it should also be famous for friendly Chinese walkers.

Chinese walkers carrying a banner with the name of their walking club.



Outside the Welcome Ceremony. Again, many speeches. The big surprise was the length of the Welcoming Ceremony and the spectacular entertainment.



Waiting for Closing Ceremony and, again, all the speeches.



We gave our American flag to a young, high school age, Chinese girl walk volunteer who helped us with directions and Chinese pronunciation. She was thrilled that we stopped and talked to her, allowing to practice her English with English-speaking foreigners, and then gave her our flag.

## 2017 Koblenz, Germany

Koblenz is a large industrial German city at the confluence of Rhine and Moselle Rivers. The walks were in and around the rivers and nearby hills.

Waiting to walk to the Opening Ceremonies.



Parade of Nations Flags at the Opening Ceremony.



Crowd at the Opening Ceremony. The statue, erected in 1897, is William I, first Germany Emperor of a united Germany.



Direction sign on the walk. Walks were 10, 20, 30 and 42 km.

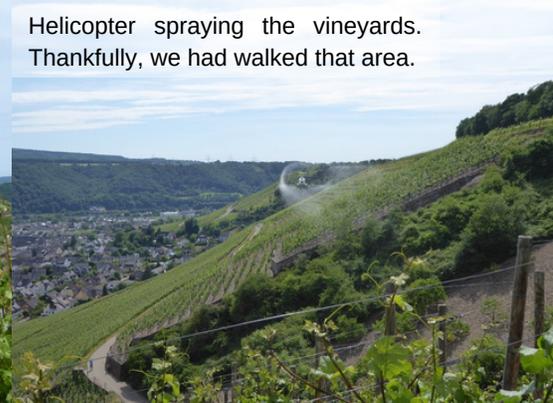




Taking a train to a vineyard walk start in a nearby town.



Wonderful but hilly vineyard walk.



Helicopter spraying the vineyards. Thankfully, we had walked that area.



Tasting German wine. Wonder if this is why so many people did this walk?



**KEYSTONE STATE VOLKSPORT ASSOCIATION - TOM JACKSON, PRESIDENT**

**ATLANTIC REGION CONFERENCE, APRIL 22-24**

The Pennsylvania Volkssport Clubs invite you to “Come Walk with Your Friends in Plymouth Meeting” at the Atlantic Region Conference, April 22-24, in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania. There will be three walks: Manayunk/Bala Cynwyd on Friday, Plymouth Meeting on Saturday, and at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge on Sunday, a Volksswim at the host hotel, and a Volksbike that starts in Conshohocken and uses the Cross County Trail and Schuylkill River Trail. The Volksswim and Volksbike are sanctioned for all three days.

We encourage you to arrive early on Thursday afternoon and join the Liberty Bell Wanderers at the Valley Forge National Historical Park. There will be a Group Walk around the park starting from the Washington Chapel Parking Lot and a Group Bike Ride starting from the far end of the lower parking lot at the Visitor Center.

The host hotel is the DoubleTree Suites in Plymouth Meeting. Reservations can be made at the rate of \$119.00 plus tax. Please make your reservation early; we have a limited block of rooms. The conference rate is also available before and after the conference if extending your stay. Reservations must be made by 5 pm on March 24. Call (610) 834-8300 and use Group Code: VOL or “Volkssport Association”. (Please only book using this phone # or the link below to get the conference rate.) Here is the special link to make an online reservation:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/deeplink/?ctyhocn=PHLGHDT&groupCode=CDTVOL&arrivaldate=2022-04-21&departuredate=2022-04-24&cid=OM,WW,HILTONLINK,EN,DirectLink&fromId=HILTONLINKDIRECT>

There will be a Meet & Greet on Friday night and a Banquet, with a dinner speaker, on Saturday night. In lieu of a registration fee, there will be a silent auction to raise funds to support the conference. We encourage every attendee to contribute to the silent auction and bid on the items donated.

The Conference brochure and registration form may be downloaded from the AVA Events web site or from the AVA Multi-Day Events (Fests) web site ([https://my.ava.org/files/fest\\_brochures/ARC-2022-BrochureV8RegisterV4.pdf](https://my.ava.org/files/fest_brochures/ARC-2022-BrochureV8RegisterV4.pdf) )..

If you are having an issue making your reservation or need more information, please contact Tom Jackson at [thomasjackson@embarqmail.com](mailto:thomasjackson@embarqmail.com) or 717-309-6088.



**Atlantic Region Conference**  
**April 22-24, 2022**  
Plymouth Meeting, Pa.  
*"Walk with your Friends in Pennsylvania"*

## IT SPECIALIST - HECTOR HERNANDEZ

### NATIONAL WALKING WEEK

Thank you to all the Clubs who have already joined us to celebrate National Walk Week during the first week in April. Join the growing list of organizations and communities coming together by submitting your event to [hector@ava.org](mailto:hector@ava.org). Click on the image to find the event form. Some of the clubs who have already signed up to host events include:



- |                                |                         |                             |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cedar Milers                   | Rose City Roamers       | Washtenaw Wanderers         |
| Columbia River Volkssport Club | San Antonio Pathfinders | Valley Volks                |
| East County Windwalkers        | The UpState PathFinders | Vancouver USA Volkssporters |
| Randolph Roadrunners           | Texas Trail Roundup     |                             |
| Ridgewalkers Walking Club      | Tulsa Walking Club      |                             |

To help promote your events you can download our pre-made certificates, event logo, event flyers, and social media banners. You can find these marketing tools at the bottom of the National Walking Week page by [clicking here](#). If you would like us to promote your event on social media and the AVA website, please complete the event form and email it to [hector@ava.org](mailto:hector@ava.org) by March 6th. Images to help promote your event is encouraged. 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 walk week go to [ava.org](http://ava.org)

## SUPPORT OUR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS

### INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Click images to go to official website.



Pentiction, British Columbia, Canada  
May 27-29, 2022  
We hope you will "Come Walk with Us, Visit with Us, Eat with Us and Enjoy a Fantastic Weekend of Fun, Fitness and Friendship"  
Register now and see you soon.

**NATIONAL EVENTS**

Click images to go to official website.



**TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP  
FEBRUARY 18-20, 2022**

Join us in beautiful San Antonio as we offer 3 days of great walking events and 4 nights of the award winning Stock Show and Rodeo. For those who attend our 2020 IML and our 2022 IML, we offer a free Sugar Skull pin to commemorate every one we lost in the COVID Pandemic.—POC: sueammed@aol.com  
*Come walk with us.*



**Mid-America Regional Conference  
MAC2022  
June 17 - 19, 2022  
Dayton, Ohio**

**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.**



1008 S Alamo St · San Antonio, TX 78210, Phone 210.659.2112 · Fax 210.659.1212 [Message US.](#)