



2024 Texas Trail Roundup half marathon walkers on the trail under the Arbor de Vida public art sculpture near the San Francisco de la Espada World Heritage Site.



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

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PRESIDENT/CEO - HENRY ROSALES

HELP US WELCOME OUR NEW AVA PROGRAMS COMMITTEE CHAIR, DIANE HOWELL EVANS, AND HER COMMITTEE MEMBERS. THANK YOU FOR STEPPING UP!

Diane Howell Evans, Chair

Joe Blazek

Molly Hayward-Koert

Patrick Jones

Chris Mellen

Cheryl Dines-Patterson

Sue Strachan

Terri Tyler

Roxie Weaver

Marjorie Wytzka

NEW AVA POLICY ON PARTICIPATION FEES FOR CHILDREN 12 AND UNDER

During the February 2024 AVA Board meeting, the board passed a new policy that allows AVA clubs to determine if they will charge a participation fee for children twelve and under who do not stamp books.

If children twelve and under are charged the \$4.00 participation fee, the club must pay the AVA its part of the participation fee (\$2.00) and report them as a paid participant.

This policy goes into effect immediately. The recommended Club participation fee for anyone over the age of twelve is \$4.00.

URGENT GROUPEER PARTNERSHIP UPDATES (FORMERLY ELEMENT3 HEALTH) ELEMENT3 HEALTH IS NOW GROUPEER!

Exciting news! Element3 Health has embarked on a transformative journey and is now proudly rebranded as Grouper. Grouper is not your typical healthcare provider; they are a radically beneficial concept that is all about enhancing health through the joy of social connection. And guess what? They believe so much in the power of our community that they have stepped up to cover both AVA members' association and local club dues!

This partnership opens a realm of opportunities not just for our association, but for each local club within the AVA network. It is not just about getting your individual and club membership dues reimbursed; it's about growth and visibility for your clubs. As a club leader, joining the Grouper network places you in an expansive community of members actively seeking walking clubs. Imagine the growth and the buzz around your club as new members join, all thanks to the visibility through Grouper's network.

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It's important to note that Grouper stands out in the healthcare landscape. They're not an insurance company and they are not selling insurance. They are in the business of promoting better health through social connections and activities – a mission that aligns with the AVA. So, how can your club be a part of this? It's simple. All you need to do is fill out this form to get the ball rolling. A team member from Grouper will then reach out to dive into the details, perks, and how your club can thrive through this partnership.

Let's make health about community, connection, and the simple joys of being part of a walking club. Fill out the form, become a part of the Grouper network, and let us stride forward together!

[AVA Club Leader Interest Form \(google.com\)](#).

If you need help or have questions about any Grouper programs, please contact them directly at (833)-906-1700 or email them at info@hellogrouper.com.

MEMBERSHIP REIMBURSEMENT – NEW GROUPER INITIATIVE!

Grouper has agreed to reimburse qualifying members for their AVA Associate and/or club individual dues for their primary club only. Members must first register on their platform to see if they qualify. If a member qualifies, Grouper will send a check directly to the member for the total annual amount paid for AVA Associate and/or club membership dues (primary club only). All reimbursements will come directly from Grouper and not the AVA and there is a request to report monthly activities to Grouper. **Note, AVA Associate and club members do not qualify to have their event fees sponsored Grouper.** See below and please feel free to pass this on to your club members.

Join the Social Fitness Revolution – No Membership Fee Required for Qualifying Members

Great news for our walking enthusiasts! In an exciting partnership with Grouper, America's Walking Club now offers reimbursable AVA Associate and individual club memberships to eligible Medicare Advantage and Supplement plan holders. Check your eligibility today and get your America's Walking Club Associate membership and individual club membership (primary club only) covered without any cost! Check your eligibility today by clicking on this link below.

GrouperGroups.com/AVA

Grouper Fact Sheet [Airtable - AVA](#)

Grouper Frequently Asked Questions [Airtable - AVA](#)

Grouper Privacy Policy [Privacy Policy - Grouper \(hellogrouper.com\)](#)



AVA CLUB DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT POLICY

If your club is struggling and in need of technical, financial, or other support be sure to check out the AVA's Policy manual under the section "Club Development and Support." Here you will find information on how to request support from the AVA and your State Association such as technical assistance, publicity, event support, or a financial mini grant for approved purposes.

Important to note that struggling clubs should first communicate with their State Associations and Regional Directors for guidance and support. It is the role of State Organizations to create and grow strong and active clubs in their region by providing marketing, education, financial and event support. To access financial support clubs must route the request through their State Association and in the absence of a State Association, through their Regional Director.

To review the AVA Policy Manual, [click here](#).

To access the AVA's financial support form, [click here](#).

Should you have any questions on how this program works please contact Henry at henry@ava.org.



AMERICA'S WALKING CLUB
ESTABLISHED 1974

BUS TRIP TO WALK CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL & MORE

May 30 - June 3, 2024

Join AVA for a fun adventure to South Dakota and Colorado Springs. Trip includes bus, hotels, breakfast & walking fees. Walks include Crazy Horse Memorial, Presidents Walk in SD, Garden of the Gods in Colorado, and a visit to Mount Rushmore.

\$743/person (shared room)
\$995/person (single room)

Register: ava.org or call 210-659-2112

AVA FUNDRAISING BUS TOUR/VOLKSMARCH AT CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL MAY 30 – JUNE 3, 2024

There are still seats available for the AVA's fundraising bus tour to the Crazy Horse Memorial Volksmarch, May 30 – June 3, 2024. The tour bus will leave San Antonio early morning on Thursday, May 30, 2024, with an overnight stop in Colorado Springs on the way out and back from Rapid City, SD. The tour bus will return to San Antonio late evening on Monday, June 3, 2024. The cost is \$995.00. This includes four hotel nights with breakfast and 3 AVA sanctioned walks to include the Crazy Horse Memorial walk. Space is limited to the first forty registrants. A small non-refundable deposit is required to reserve your seat.

[For more information and registration click here.](#)

AVA ONLINE MONTHLY WEBINAR - MARCH 20, 7:00 P.M. CENTRAL

The next AVA online seminar will be Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 7:00pm Central. The registration link will be on the AVA website, or you can [click here](#) to pre-register for the event. If asked for passcode the passcode is AVA.

March online webinar presenters include:

- *Meet your National Office Team. Learn how we support the national operation and share with us how we can better support Clubs.*
- *Looking to attract new club members and get assistance with your Traditional Events? Then please join us for a presentation on change management and club partnerships at the local level by "Wandering Ron" Jones. Ron served over 25 years as an internal auditor, financial analyst, and certified Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt with the Army. He has completed over 500 events in 17 countries seeing many local organizations and club partnerships in action.*

MAKE PLANS TO JOIN US IN SAN ANTONIO, TX SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2024, FOR THE KING WILLIAM FIESTA PARADE!

Thanks to the support of the King William Association, the AVA will participate in the annual King William Fiesta Parade. This event draws over **30,000 national and international participants**. Parade participants will walk approximately three miles carrying an IVV or IML banner. This year we invite you to also carry a banner from your state and bring miniature State flags to hand out!

If you would like to participate in the parade, please RSVP by emailing henry@ava.org with your name and the number of participants in your group. Children and grandchildren are welcome to participate with you. Please put King William Parade in the subject line. Parade participants are limited to the first thirty individuals who RSVP. What a terrific way to market who we are and what we do!

2024 IML/TEXAS TRAIL ROUNDUP-ANOTHER BIG SUCCESS!

Special thanks to Susan Medlin, Southwest Regional Director, and all our club members, volunteers, and the national office team for another successful IML Texas Trail Roundup walk festival! I am very appreciative of all the work everyone puts into these events to ensure their success and promote Fun, Fitness, and Friendships! Thank you for your time, commitment, and dedication.



NEW AVA MARKETING PLATFORM – CONSTANT CONTACT

The AVA will begin using a new email platform to market and send emails to all our members. The platform is called Constant Contact. When emails from the AVA arrive in your inbox the header (sender) will read: AVA: America's Walking Club. The associated email address will always be hector@ava.org, until otherwise notified. The American Wanderer (TAW) and all AVA correspondents will be sent on this platform. If you do not want to receive any emails from the AVA you can unsubscribe at the bottom of the email. **If you unsubscribe, you will no longer receive any emails to include the TAW.** The Checkpoint and Club Officer updates will continue to be sent from Hector@ava.org until further notice. To unsubscribe from the Checkpoint and Officer Updates you must go into my.ava.org and unsubscribe on that platform. Should you have any questions contact hector@ava.org.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE - JERRY WILSON, CHAIR

2025 AVA BIENNIAL CONVENTION LOCATION DECIDED BY AVA BOARD

The 2025 AVA Biennial Convention will be held in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The tentative dates will be April 28 - May 2. Added to these convention dates will be pre-convention events Saturday and Sunday, April 26 and 27, and post-convention events Saturday and Sunday May 3 and 4. Plans are still being developed. National Office staff, Convention Committee members, nation-wide volunteers, local volunteers and local visitors bureau representatives are working to provide a great event! We want to see you in New Mexico in 2025! Hold these dates and travel dates.

<p>POPULATION 112,914</p> <p>COUNTY Doña Ana County</p> <p>ELEVATION -3,900 ft</p> <p>FOUNDED 1849</p> <p>ESTABLISHED 1907</p> <p>WEATHER 320 Days of Sunshine</p>	<p>NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY</p> <p>HOME OF THE AGGIES</p> <p>FOUNDED 1888</p> <p>SPARS ACROSS 900 Acres</p> <p>TOTAL STUDENTS 21,210</p> <p>COUNTRIES 89</p> <p>STATES 49</p>
<p>PROXIMITY TO...</p> <p>46 Miles EL PASO, TX</p> <p>53 Miles INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT</p> <p>41 Miles US/MEXICO BORDER</p> <p>233 Miles ALBUQUERQUE, NM</p> <p>Crossroads of INTERSTATE 10 & INTERSTATE 25</p> <p>271 Miles TUCSON, AZ</p> <p>390 Miles PHOENIX, AZ</p> <p>Midpoint between SAN DIEGO, CA & DALLAS, TX via Inter State 10</p>	

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE - DIANE HOWELL EVANS, CHAIR

FUTURE AVA SPECIAL PROGRAMS

It's time to start thinking of new AVA Special Programs which would begin in January 2026. Any AVA club in good standing may submit a proposal for a Special Program. Any new Special Program proposal submitted by a club/club's POC must be received by the AVA Programs Chair (Programs@ava.org) by October 1, 2024, and must conform to the general rules and policies of AVA and the requirements of this policy. See [Special Programs Policy](#).

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE - SUSAN FINE, CHAIR

UPDATES

National Walking Week is April 1 – 8 this year, as we are expanding the week to include the Solar Eclipse April 8. The eclipse's path will cross 13 states from Texas to Maine, and many of you have planned events for this. Please fill out [the form](#) here for any walks you do these 8 days, and email to Hector asap. There is also a template for a press release, [click here for link](#), for your local media.

With the new Grouper (formerly Element 3) promoting people to join AVA clubs, please be sure ANYONE who is new to your club knows about your weekly or monthly group walks. The AVA website lists traditional events when sanctioned; but most clubs have ongoing group walks of their YREs. New walkers want to socialize and get the exercise benefits of walking. So, put them on your email blast, give them a flyer of your group walks, give them a business card with info ([free templates here](#)) with your website, or promote your group walks on the AVA Facebook page. If you have other ideas, please let me know, so we can promote your ideas later in the TAW: publicity@ava.org.



I returned from the IML Texas Trail Roundup in San Antonio; and once again, I'm so impressed with the hard work everyone does for their events. 14 countries were represented, including the U.S., with 187 people participating. There are only 2 IMLs in the U.S.A., so please try to support them. Next up: US FreedomFest Walk in D.C./Virginia October 18-20, 2024. [Registration](#) is open now.

The American Wanderer is being edited and produced as a digital newsletter/magazine and should be emailed to everyone by the end of March. Remember, the new TAW should be shared with all your club's members, friends, other local groups, etc. It is a marketing tool for the world to know about volkswalking and AVA: America's Walking Club.

IT COMMITTEE- MIKE GREEN, CHAIR

RD/DRD APPROVAL OF UPDATE OSB EVENT DIRECTION PDFS

As per the 2/13/2024 AVA Board approved motion, RDs are now responsible for approving updated OSB event direction PDFs (not State Associations). Approvals pending emails sent to both RDs and DRDs (on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) now include the number of updated OSB PDFs that need approval (indicated by "OSB:#" in the email subject).

RDs/DRDs, please use the **OSB pending** page (**RD Homepage =>Approvals** tab => **OSB Pending** tab) to inspect each PDF via the Check PDF button and approve updated OSB event direction PDFs as follows:

1. Check that the uploaded OSB event PDF is for the designated event city, state, and name indicated on the left of the OSB pending page. It is possible (and has occurred in the past) for a club manager to incorrectly upload the PDF for a different event.
2. Confirm the OSB event PDF still contains the required elements. See Help and/or the tutorial: https://my.ava.org/find-a-tutorial.php?osb_reqs_rec
3. Check the **OK** box next to the events listed on the OSB Pending page to make the new PDF available for download by a person registered for the corresponding OSB event.

MID-AMERICA REGIONAL DIRECTOR - CRAIG GAUGER

RD UPDATE

We have a new Mid-America Region of the American Volkssport Association Facebook page. We will highlight many of our region's great walks and other scenic sights and sites!

Look ahead to June 14-16 for our MAC gathering in and near Frankfort, KY. 4 walks and a couple of meet & Greets. Hope to see you there.

ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST - MARIAN DEVAUL

STARTING POINT BOOKS

We have a limited number of 2024 Starting Point books available for sale at a cost of \$30.00, plus shipping and handling. Don't miss the opportunity to buy this year's book! For purchase, please e-mail marian@ava.org, or call 210-659-2112.

This bound 7 ½" x 9" publication is a collection of sanctioned walking, bicycling, swimming, hiking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and boating activities. It is your comprehensive guide to 1,966 self-guided events throughout the United States. The book includes directions to the event, trail ratings, hours of operation and whether an award is offered. Click here for Order Form. [Click here for Order Form.](#)



Panoramic view of walkers on the trail of the 2024 Texas Trail Roundup half marathon inside Mission San Jose.

MAY NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS PATCH

We are currently taking orders for the 2024 May National Physical Fitness Patches.

Clubs hosting events during the month of May can order patches by filling out and returning the form to AVA national headquarters no later than April 15, 2024. Supplies are limited, so orders will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Clubs may place reorders until supply is exhausted. Don't miss the chance to offer this collectible patch to walk participants. The cost is \$5.00 per patch, which does not include shipping/handling or the 20% club discount.

Mail form to AVA, 1008 S. Alamo St, San Antonio, TX 78210, or fax form to 210-659-1212. You may also place your order by emailing this form to marian@ava.org.



Click image for order form

FINANCIALS

If your club is on a calendar year, Annual Financials Reports, e-Postcard filings, and Officer Updates (ESR update) are due by May 15, 2024. Please submit a copy of your filings to marian@ava.org.

May 15th, 2024 – The following items are due:

- E-post card must be filed with the IRS and a copy provided to AVA HQ.
- Club's Annual Financial Report is due to the AVA HQ.
- Update of Officers Information in the ESR must be completed by each club.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns, I am certainly available and eager to help in any way possible.

Note: Financials for clubs with a fiscal year ending 6-30-24 are not due until November 15, 2024.



SUPPORT OUR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS

2024 Atlantic Region Conference

Dover, Delaware
April 5-7, 2024

Save THE DATE

The First State Webfooters is proud to host the 2024 Atlantic Region Conference. Come Join us for days of walking, biking and swimming.



Information: Info@firststatewebfooters.org
Host Hotel: Garden Hilton Inn
Dover, DE 302-674-3784



SOLAR ECLIPSE

APRIL 8, 2024
SAVE THE DATE

The Texas Hill Country will be one of the few places in North America in complete totality of the solar eclipse. Observers will see about 4 minutes and 29 seconds of totality starting at 13:32.

The Texas Volkssport Association is planning **58.10 km walks** in the Texas Hill Country

COME WALK WITH US
www.walktexas.org

38th Annual Spring Volksmarch June 1, 2024



Come and join us for the **23rd US FreedomWalk**
18-20 October 2024



Walk to Arlington
An International Walking Experience

AVA Northeast Region Event

September 6 ~ 8, 2024

HUDSON TO HOUSATONIC Walking Weekend

Hyde Park, NY Fri. | Poughkeepsie, NY Sat. | Kent, CT Sun.

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. 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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