



Hello NW Volkssporters!

**1. Convention Votes.** Thanks for the exceptional turnout from the Northwest clubs at the convention. We were extremely well represented and had all but two clubs credentialed for voting. All three motions presented for a vote passed by substantial margins and no additional business came before the membership for a vote, other than the vote on the next convention site.

- AVA fiscal year to move to a calendar year, which will require a short year budget and report, but does not obligate clubs to follow the shift.
- Several operational committees were approved for realignment under the Executive Director, while more strategic committees remain under the direct supervision of the President and Board.
- Up to three new Board positions will be available for non-Volkssporters to bring outside expertise, connections or financial support to our program.

**2. Awards.** Congratulations to Nancy Wittenberg on her President's Award, Rozy Weatherby on her Distinguished Achievement Award and the Vancouver USA Volkssporters on the Trailblazer Award. In Publicity I noted winners of photos of people by Julie Heath (1<sup>st</sup> place), Club Newsletter by the Capitol Volkssport Club (1<sup>st</sup>), and YRE brochure by Lilac City Volkssport Assn (1<sup>st</sup>). I have several extra copies of the Recognition Awards brochure from the banquet and will give them out to as many clubs as I can cover. Check with your representative to see if you got a copy.

**3. Next Convention.** The next convention will be held in Madison WI from 29 Jun to 3 Jul 2021. The convention dates do bump up against the 4<sup>th</sup> of Jul, but earlier dates were not available in the area. The 3<sup>rd</sup> is a Saturday, so I would guess that could be a travel day for those wanting to be home for the 4<sup>th</sup>. Jerry Wilson, outgoing RD from the North Central Region will head the convention committee and local clubs will be hosting the walking events.

**4. President's Challenge.** Our President, Dr David Bonewitz, acknowledged that our clubs are incredibly busy doing yeoman's work to keep our program thriving. In his State of the AVA Nation report he showed the grim statistics that document the continued decline in participation, with a large drop of 10% in 2018. He asked that our clubs work to host another Traditional Event each year and recruit more new members, while the Board works on external solutions, such as a Civil Air Patrol opportunity (see below.)

**5. CAP Opportunity.** A long-time Volkssporter, Tim Miner, who also works with Civil Air Patrol (CAP), has laid the groundwork for an initiative to invite the 60,000-member organization to use our sport as a fitness program for their members.

**6. Budget Approval.** The 2019-2020 budget was approved. Some significant cuts were made in the budget by the Board and National Staff to reduce the deficit that will be covered by reserve funds. Steps needed to further improve the budget include growing our membership, increased participation by existing members, donations and grants being pursued by the Board.

- **How Can the NW Help?** Continue to work on growing club membership is our first contribution and many of our clubs are doing just that. Next, getting new clubs started or re-started in un-served areas is a key goal for our regional leadership of State Associations and RD/Deputy RD. At recent State Association meetings I shared the declining participation data and sought and received consensus to take steps in the region to reduce our free walking numbers. I have a committee formed to develop proposals on how best

to do that and will report back to the State Associations in the near future with recommendations for standardized procedures. Increased individual paid participation is a great help and donations to AVA by clubs and individuals are also impactful. Leads on new partners from individuals, such as Tim Miner's with CAP, are critical to our growth. At the RD/DRD and State Association meeting during the convention we were encouraged to partner with Chambers of Commerce in our communities.

**7. Convention Survey.** On the AVA website there's a link to a survey. If you attended the Albany convention please take a moment to complete the short survey to help us ensure the 2021 convention fully meets your expectations.

**8. New AVA Site.** A new member link ([my.ava.org](http://my.ava.org)) is in development by the AVA IT Committee and you'll want to earmark the location and begin checking it. There's already data available with a club login access. It will house the Online Startbox (OSB) and other important individual and club links. Continue to monitor the TAW, AVA website and monthly Checkpoint newsletter for news.

**9. Service Interruption.** The AVA IT committee will soon be transitioning the California OSB to the AVA server, which will require a few days of downtime on the OSB. If you're planning to do some online walks in the near future register now.

**10. Annual Closeout.** Yep, we're at the end of our fiscal year, so please give it a best effort to complete your reporting in a timely manner on both the quarterly reports, annual financial reports and IRS reports.

**11. Community Engagement.** Dr Kate Kraft, CEO for America Walks gave several presentations at our convention on their efforts to work with communities to become more walkable. Her vision is that AVA can be some of the boots on the ground to help advocate for safer street crossings, better walkways, etc. Many of our members and clubs here in the NW already step up to that challenge. But, there are always opportunities to be heard and I encourage you to be a voice for improvement in your community.

**12. Aug/Sep Events.** Within the region we have three significant events in August and September and loads of exceptional one-day events. The Lilac City Volks Assn is hosting a multi-day, fun-filled event during August in Wallace ID, Columbia River Volks Club has a mega-event in Bend OR during September, which will be followed by another spectacular weekend in Winthrop WA hosted by the Evergreen State Volks Assn and several WA clubs. Don't miss these incredible events and bring a new walker along to experience the magic.

Happy Trails!

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