



Hello NW Volkssporters!

1. Juliann Fritchman. I'm sad to report the death of our club president from Treasure Valley Volkssports in Boise, ID on 19 May 2020 at the age of 85. Even though she hadn't walked in recent years, Juliann was instrumental in keeping Volkssporting present in Idaho. I will temporarily serve as club president to assist Suelynn Williams in keeping the club going. If you know any Volkssporters in the Boise area or have any family or friends who might pitch in, we need some help to keep the club going in support of several walks in Boise. Please forward their contact information to me if you know someone who can help.

2. AVA Officers. It's that time of year to start searching for several new AVA officer candidates, including President and Vice-President, as the current officers' terms will be expired. The other two positions are open for candidates as well, although I anticipate the current officers will pursue a second term. Likewise, the Regional Director (RD) position will need to be filled, so I'll form a nominating committee in a couple months. At the same time the Deputy RD position will be open for candidates.

3. AVA Awards. The call is out for a couple more volunteers to help on the committee, as well as nominations for various AVA national awards, including Hall of Fame, Distinguished Achievement, Trailblazer and Ted Ballman Memorial Youth Awards. These nominations are done on the AVA Form 302 through me to the Awards Committee and my suspense is generally March 1. Nominations can also be made to the AVA President for awards he can present using the AVA Form 303PA. Forms are on the AVA website under Club Forms. At any time clubs may nominate individuals or supporting businesses to me for Commendable Service, Meritorious Service awards or Certificates of Appreciation. Don't wait until the last couple months before convention to nominate, as it becomes more difficult to get awards completed and submitted in time to be published in the convention booklet. We have many of AVA's most deserving club leaders who should be recognized for their endless hours of volunteer service and tremendous impact on our program. Finally, any individuals who have completed the requirements for Trailmaster Certification must apply to me for review and recognition as an AVA Trailmaster. This can be done at any time.

4. 2021 Year Round Sanctions. The window is open to sanction your events for 2021. A reminder that if you are requesting the events to be Per Participant Sanction Fee (PPSF), please put PPSF in the Comments section of your sanction. I screen for that to determine if I need to change the event type. If we miss it I have to work with the AVA staff to edit the sanction and possibly reimburse your club for sanction fees, so we want to get it right on our end. Limit the number of PPSF requests as much as possible. In the last two years we've had about 10% of our YREs/Seasonals as PPSF, which is the highest rate for any AVA region.

5. Special Programs. You've hopefully seen an invite from Hector@ava.org to a webinar on special programs on 22 July. Attend if you can, but be sure to pre-register. Hopefully this will be the start of a new way for AVA committees to conduct training or just inform the membership on key topics. During our Board meetings several committees have demonstrated different features of my.ava.org, presented budget briefings, etc., with information displayed on screen. Expanding this capability, we can foresee convention workshops and all sorts of club training being presented year round to reach more members.

6. New 2021 AVA Special Programs. Two new Special Programs will be added next year, with one tied to the Great Lakes and the other related to Veterans Groups. One of the thrusts of these two programs is that we're working to link our special programs with other groups for mutual support. Details should follow fairly soon in the TAW and Checkpoint.

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- 7. Advertising Tip.** Many of our communities, counties and states have public calendars that are available for posting events. This is another avenue for us to widen the scope of our event advertisement.
- 8. \$10 on 10th.** The Big Give is coming up on 10 September and the new theme for AVA is “\$10 on the 10th”. If you’ve not contributed yet consider at least \$10 on the 10th to show your support.
- 9. Are you an AVA member?** While your club membership shows support for that club, it doesn’t mean you are an AVA member. Under our structure, clubs are the principal membership of AVA. We’re one of the few non-profits structured in a way where members join a chapter (club) rather than the national organization. I encourage all Volkssporters to not only align with a club, but also become an AVA Associate Member. Two reasons for this: First, to show greater financial support for the national program and more importantly, to have a greater voice in the future of AVA. The Board and national staff are continually adding more incentives for national membership while looking for ways to engage every walker in an effort to grow our program.
- 10. Silent Auction.** Is your club able to provide a silent auction donation for the convention in Madison WI next summer? The silent auction is really one of the great fun events at the convention, but it depends on your donation. The best donations are wrapped around a special feature of your region, so put your thinking caps on and see what creative ideas you can generate.
- 11. Participation Data.** Have you completed your quarterly reports yet? Do the best you can to clean up the first quarter and account for as much activity as possible in the second quarter. How about your Annual Financial Report (AFR)? Those who converted to an calendar reporting basis don’t need to report now, however, all the other clubs need to complete your reports to the IRS (Form 990n) and AVA (AFR and 990n acceptance from IRS). Even though you have until into November to get your reporting done please set your sights on getting the reporting done immediately.
- 12. National Walking Week.** Although this year was a bust for the event in the first week of April, let’s hope in 2021 we can make a bigger statement with our National Walking Week. We own it and need to use it to promote walking for good health. Check out WalkVirginia.org and the link to National Walking Week. Be the first NW club to get your logo recognized as a support of National Walking Week by sending your logo to info@nationalwalkingweek.org.
- 13. NW Summer Challenge Started.** The summer challenge is on, so Louise and I hope you’re out there walking as often as you can. Several walkers have already expressed a strong interest in earning the prize money, so competition will be keen. Even if you are only able to do a few walks you’ll still qualify to compete for the \$100 drawing. Attached is a tracking sheet. Good luck to everyone!
- 14. IT Committee report.** Also attached is the IT Committee report of activity presented at the Board meeting. You can see that our IT volunteers have made huge strides in improving our sanction process, web appearance and online capabilities. What’s clear from our discussions is that we need to migrate as much of our business to the Online Startbox as we can. More than 285 YREs are now available online and more are being added continuously.
- 15. 2019 Participation Feedback.** Our region led the pack again with 32,149 participants; a rise of 1,541 from 2018. We’re nearly double the nearest region in delivering 24% of AVA participation with about 13% of the membership. Free walker numbers declined by 1,826 thanks to your clubs’ efforts.

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16. **Hosting ACE Events.** Chapter 5 of the Club Policy Manual located under the “Clubs-Clubs Only” link of the AVA website discusses AVA Community Events. This is a unique program to enable you to host shorter distance community walks at low to no cost. It can be an excellent recruiting tool for our program and a chance to partner with community groups. Check it out and let me know if you have questions.

17. **Online Startbox (OSB).** Of the 1900 plus YREs across AVA, we’ve now had 285 added to the OSB, in large part as a response to COVID-19 restrictions. It’s becoming clear that we need to migrate all our events to the OSB to create more flexible options for accessing our events. Since we can have both Physical Start Boxes (PSBs) and OSBs concurrently, there’s no barrier, other than our technical skills, to uploading all our events. For clubs limited in technical skills I suggest reaching out to your state association to find someone to help out. Please join me in committing to upload our events in the next year. Two NW clubs are already 100% OSB in addition to PSBs—Olympic Peninsula Explorers and Capitol Volkssport Club—well done!

Happy Trails! Tom Baltes, NW Regional Director, 505-298-1256, TLBaltes@aol.com