



Hello NW Volkssporters! This month I have lots of feedback from the AVA training for RDs and officers combined with the NEC meeting in San Antonio, TX on 9-13 Aug (before they got rain soaked). Operations at the AVA headquarters have been impacted by Hurricane Harvey, but not to the extent seen in communities south of there. My message to you is that we have an optimistic and united board with a firm commitment to grow our sport by executing the Strategic Plan created a year and a half ago. I invite every Volkssporter to get on board, because our future depends on all of us working together and speaking with a loud and consistent voice about what a great program we have.

1. Top priority right now is getting our YRE/Seasonal sanctions done. Most clubs have completed some or all their sanctioning, so we're doing fine. I'd like to get all the work done before the 15 September suspense. Once renewed please go back through your work to add/update special programs, refresh comments and ensure your start time dates are still correct in the Start Time window and Event Description block, as that is what shows up in the Starting Point book. Also, be sure to indicate in the directions exact location of walkboxes at our start points to help walkers locate them and reduce frustrations in the contact with start point hosts.

- When communicating with me and AVA staff on ESRs and Per Participant Sanction (PPSF) issues please reference the 6-digit sanction number for easier reference.

2. At the NEC (Board) meeting we approved the 401K-Invest in Yourself program, which will be an online, challenge to complete 401 km in a year and track your progress online through Walker Tracker, along with all the other participants. It is a great concept helping to introduce us to a more automated way of recording our participation. A big thanks to OTSVA and the Oregon clubs for being a \$1000 sponsor of this program.

3. The Board also approved a bid for the 2021 IVV Olympiad to be held concurrent with the FreedomWalk Festival in Virginia. We're optimistic about getting this event, as the US has yet to host an Olympiad.

4. Next May 22nd is IVV's 50th anniversary and we anticipate promoting some events around that date to honor our parent organization. What should we do in the northwest? Appreciate your ideas.

5. The Board meeting schedule for the next two years has been set and it will include Jan 2018 in Florida, Jun 2018 in Albany NY to preview the next convention site, Jan 2019 in Arizona and the convention in Albany NY in 2019. Between the two annual meetings the Board will be conducting monthly electronic meetings to help move along committee actions as we implement the Strategic Plan.

6. The Board and National Staff will be hosting a tent at the 1-2 Jun 2018 Crazy Horse event to promote our program. Since the local clubs are overwhelmed by the crowds we decided to lend a hand to help increase our exposure to the non-AVA participants.

7. Among the committees being energized by the Board, the Automation committee is going to work on updating systems to better support our current and future operations. The Finance section at AVA will be updating with Quickbooks to improved efficiency and add greater capability for data analysis. The sanctioning system is woefully overdue for upgrade and that will be done in the lull of activity during Mar-May 2018. The online walk program through the California Volkssport Association will be migrated to the AVA server fairly soon, as it is now too large for their server. The move should be transparent to users.
8. The proposed non-IVV community walking concept (AVA-C) was approved by the Board for implementation. Clubs will be allowed to host shorter distance community walks to introduce the public to our program. The events will still need to be sanctioned and reported through normal procedures for data gathering only.
9. Our new Treasurer and the Finance officer at AVA have proposed moving to a calendar fiscal year from our current Jul-Jun fiscal year at AVA. The belief is that clubs would not be required to change too, but would be encouraged to follow along. Details are being researched and more to follow.
10. My Board assignment is to work on Education and Training. I'll pick up where Sam Korff left off and would like to hear from you, as well as all Volkssporters, about what training and education would help improve club operations and advancement of our program.
11. Sam Korff will be leading an Ad Hoc or Special Committee to address once and for all the question of free walking. He will form a committee of Volkssporters representing all sides of this issue and work toward a consensus of how incorporate the interest of having free walking in some regions while still supporting the revenue needs of our national program. When a consensus has been reached the committee will report to the board for a vote and on to regions, states and clubs to implement.
12. Nancy Wittenberg is Vice President and in charge of the Funds Development Committee. Hers is probably the most important and difficult task of all the committees. Our national revenues from events are no longer covering the costs of operations, so we've had to dip into reserves for the last few years. Consequently, we are now faced with the need to diversify our revenue stream through donations and grants to make up the difference. On top of that, we have to spend money on staff, automation and publicity to grow our program if we want to turn around our decline. The donations of individuals and clubs through the Big Give recently have been vital and will remain so for the next couple years to help us move toward re-launching our program. Nancy and her committee will more eloquently convey the needs and work the connections with government and private grantors to diversify our revenues.
13. Bob Morrison, as Treasurer has the dubious task of working with Erin Grosso to amend our past accounting data and reshape our future accounting to be more

consistent with other large non-profits. The reason for this is that we have to create a coherent picture for grantors to assess our program's worthiness for their dollars, so we have to get our books in order for that process. Our AVA Auditor reported at the meeting that our records are accurate with no issues. However, a professional grant writer looked over our program and believes we are great candidates for federal grants in several areas, but we need to have our records reworked to be successful in our bid.

14. For probably the first time, our RD and Board training was held with the majority of the national staff present throughout the session. There were two obvious benefits-- first, we got to know the staff better and what they do for us and second, they became more aware of the club and region level issues, which will enable them to do their jobs better. My report to you is that there is no "we" and "they" between the regions and national staff. We're all on the same team working to support clubs and individual walkers.

15. The search for a new Deputy Regional Director is almost complete. We have two candidates so far and you will get to vote soon. Thanks to both well-qualified individuals who have stepped forward and I will look forward to working with the candidate you choose.

16. If your club has any community based support, such as trail cleaning, trail use counting, etc. please report that to community@ava.org and copy to me. David Bonewitz is going to use that data for future promotion of our wider impact on communities during our fund raising efforts.

17. Be sure to read the Checkpoints monthly newsletter from AVA and all the electronic attachments. It truly has become a much better communication device thanks to our automation specialist, Hector Hernandez.

18. Our AVA website needs lots of updating, which our Automation Committee acknowledges. You can help by providing updated information, photos and so on to the national staff. In particular, the multi-day event window is way out of date and needs fresh information. The website belongs to us, not just the national staff, so please help make it a better sources to promote our program and our region.

19. Under the area of Automation the Board also approved the expense of purchasing the equipment to produce the new rubber stamps. This will still take awhile to implement, but will dramatically improve the appearance of our event stamps and reduce costs.

Seems like there is much more, but I'll address later as it comes to me. Happy Trails!

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