

Atlantic Region Ramblings #27

1. Please go ahead and start renewing your YREs for 2017. Our goal is to have the events renewed or new ones added by August 15. That will give the State Association Presidents and myself two weeks to finish approving the events. The deadline is August 30. Changes can be made until September 15. Whatever is in the ESR system on that date will be published in the 2017 Starting Point.

- Be very careful about identifying an event as "No Renewal". Once it is selected, it cannot be reversed. You will have to reenter the event into the ESR system.

- Don't forget to identify the qualifying AVA Special Programs. It should be much easier than it was a year ago. There are only two new special programs starting on January 1, 2017: Underground Railroad and Ice Cream Parlors.

2. The Commendable Service Award replaced the Certificate of Service Award on June 1. As Club Presidents, you should be presenting this award frequently. If your club was one of those who had an event on National Trails Day or to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Volkssporting in the US, you should consider whether anyone is deserving of the Commendable Service Award.

The CS Award is similar to the Meritorious Service Award in that the nominating form requires a short (not to exceed 50 words) citation. Don't overthink the citation. As an example, a proposed citation "For commendable service to the Freestate Happy Wanderers as the Point of Contact for the volksmarch on June 11, 2016 in Laurel, MD celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Volkssporting in the United States. Due to Jane's efforts, this event was an outstanding success." has 43 words.

3. The AVA National Executive Committee met June 10 -12 in Fredericksburg, TX. The official minutes will be posted in about three weeks. The following comments are unofficial:

a. The Youth Committee has been redesignated as the Programs Committee with additional responsibilities. Debbie Kruep is the Chairman. A Membership Committee was added with Jeanne Miller as Chairman.

b. The last Checkpoint mentioned that IVV is proposing to change the event and distance award levels. We are going to study the proposal and come up with a plan on how to implement.

c. On-line Start Box (OLSB). The POC is composing Frequently Answered Questions (FAQs) that will disseminated shortly. There seems to be a lot of misconceptions about where the OLSB is going.

- End state is not to replace all traditional start boxes with OLSB. The focus is on using OLSB where we are unable to find a start point and/or where the start point is a long distance from the POC. I think one goal is to use OLSB in lieu of "mail-in registration".

- An event cannot have both OLSB and a traditional start box.

- They are looking for more events to convert to OLSB. If you have an event that is currently mail-in registration, the POC has to travel a long ways to service the start box, or you have problems finding a start point, consider going with OLSB for 2017. You will need to make that decision soon – the information that goes into Starting Point is different. Please contact me if interested.

d. There was more discussion about the 2017 budget than I have seen in previous years. We are currently expected to lose about \$60,000 for the current fiscal year (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016).

We approved a balanced budget (where projected revenue slightly exceeds expenses) for the next fiscal year. I personally think the projected revenue is being very optimistic. Hopefully, I am wrong...;

e. Candy Purcell, Director of Operations and Finance, will be retiring effective June 30. Her replacement is Erin Grosso who has the title of Finance Manager.

f. The new tag line for the AVA will be “AVA: America’s Walking Clubs”.

g. The POC for the AVA National Parks Special Program wrote an article in the TAW that explained that the only National Park Service units that qualified were those officially designated as National Parks, National Monuments, or National Memorials. There was discussion that the NEC approved a proposal that made all national park service units as eligible and that is what we still want. I am not saying that it is 100% resolved but when renewing your YREs for 2017, you should identify all national park service units as qualifying.

h. The SNOB program is going to end on December 31, 2018.

i. There is going to be a contest for a national AVA mascot. Look for more information in a future TAW or checkpoint.

j. There is going to be a National Special Program in 2017 focusing on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) in CA, OR, and WA. This does not require a thru hike of the PCT; participants must do a TBD number of day hikes.

I anticipate that there will another National Special Program starting in 2018 that focuses on the Appalachian Trail.

k. San Antonio is going to start the process to become a sponsor of an International Marching League (IML) event. They must hold events for 3 years in San Antonio before they can apply for IML status; therefore, the probable date is February 2020. The US Freedom Walk Festival Club is currently the only club in the US that sponsors an IML event.

l. A MOU has almost been finalized with Navigators USA. A National Walk Together Patch Contest is currently being conducted. I think the requirements to earn the patch are identical to the Girl Scout Program.

Navigators USA is a coed youth program formed in response to some of the past Boy Scout policies that some felt were exclusionary. There are currently this many chapters in these states:

DE – 0
MD – 1
NJ – 4
PA – 3
VA – 6
WV – 0

If you do a google search on “Navigators USA” there is an interactive link to a map that shows where the chapters are located.

m. The Strategic Plan was approved and objectives assigned to various people for the purpose of developing implementation plans. The details of this will shortly be communicated to the clubs – probably via a special Checkpoint.

n. The NEC voted on seven motions:

- (1) Clubs Purchasing of Stamps – withdrawn for further study.
- (2) Shorter Distance Walks – no action as the motion violates IVV policy.
- (3) Trailmaster Certification – Mentoring and Certification of AVA Associate Members – withdrawn.
- (4) Participation Report After Action Fee for Free Walkers – failed.
- (5) Release of Membership Information – passed with some minor tweaking of the wording of the motion.
- (6) Increase in Participation Fees – failed.

(7) 5K Trails – Walk Twice in Lieu of 10K – motion was withdrawn and replaced with another motion which passed. Walks must offer at least a 10K route and may also offer a minor route of 5K. The sentence in the policy manual that said that the 5K route may not be walked twice for 10K credit has been removed.

My thoughts:

- The intent was not for clubs to stop offering a 10K route and only offer a 5K route (that could be walked twice for 10K credit).

- There was recognition that walking a 5K loop clockwise and then walking the same 5K loop counter clockwise was conceptually the same as doing a 10K out and back on a rail trail or canal towpath.

- There are some places where it is only possible to offer an interesting and safe 5K. We have all been on walks where we know the Trailmaster was taking us places just to get in the additional distance to make 10K.

- Using the model of the Antietam Battlefield Walk during the Atlantic Region Conference where we did 5K in one part of the battlefield and 5K in another part of the battlefield, it is better to have an interesting 5K, drive a short distance, and then have another interesting 5K.

- We have had walks which I would describe as consisting of a 5K easy loop and a 5K difficult loop. We have some participants who want to walk 10K but for various reasons, do not want to walk a difficult trail. This change would allow them to legally walk the easy trail twice for 10K credit.

o. The next NEC meeting will be in January in Baton Rouge, LA.

4. The AVA exceeded its goal of \$50,000 by receiving \$51,115 in donations during the Big Give SA. I want to thank all of the individuals and clubs who donated. These clubs were on the list of donors that I received:

Annapolis Amblers
Baltimore Walking Club
First State Webfooters
Freestate Happy Wanderers
Germanna Volkssport Association
Liberty Bell Wanderers
Princeton Area Walkers
Seneca Valley Sugarloafers
Susquehanna Rovers
US Freedom Walk Festival Club
Wood and Dale Wanderers
York White Rose Wanderers

A lot of donors donated using a credit card. Since most clubs do not have a credit card, there is a good chance that other clubs donated but the donation is listed under the name of an individual.

5. We have a new club in Maryland – the Antietam Pathfinders out of Hagerstown! Ann Shilling is the club president. The club's first event will be at the Augustoberfest in Hagerstown on Sunday, August 28.

6. June 25 is the deadline for submitting articles for the August/September edition of The American Wanderer. If you have an event during August or September (or an event in October where people need to make reservations), submit an article promoting your event.

7. I want to recognize the US Freedom Walk Festival Club. They had 384 participants (all paid) at their Embassy Walk in Washington, DC on May 15. They sold 91 New Walker Packets!

8. I want to thank the Freestate Happy Wanderers, Germanna Volkssport Association, and York White Rose Wanderers for sponsoring events on June 11 celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Volkssporting in the US. Between the three clubs, there were about 313 participants.

