



Hello NW Volkssporters!

A number of the topics discussed at the NEC meeting in Orlando, FL, on 19-21 January dealt with money. That's normal for national boards of nonprofits, especially ones that have expenses greater than revenue. Fortunately, we have adequate reserves available to continue operations for several years without change until we find new revenue streams beyond dues and fees from clubs and individual members. I can assure you that your national board and staff clearly understand that they exist to serve your clubs and state associations and will work to keep service costs as low as possible, while keeping our program viable.

1. **NW Conference Link:** The online registration link is now live at www.esva.online for the July conference. Sign up early and come be a part of the fun. Our AVA President David Bonowitz and his wife Mindy will be joining us and look forward to visiting with NW walkers.

1a. **Conference Training:** What training would you like to have at the conference? My commitment is to offer training opportunities, but I want them to match your needs. I hope to have some demos of the updated ESR system in preparation for the 2019 sanctioning. What else--map making, treasurer duties, trailmaster program, social media use, etc.?

2. **Club Dues Change:** Several years ago the annual dues were raised to \$100 and a \$50 rebate incentive was put in place to encourage our clubs to host a Traditional event. The Board assessed the impact of the rebate incentive and concluded that the majority of clubs host events and it was becoming punitive for smaller/struggling clubs. Dues are reset to \$50 as of the next billing cycle after July 1, 2018, without the rebate incentive. We encourage all clubs to continue hosting Traditional events, as that is one of our most effective recruiting tools for new members.

3. **Club Dues Review:** Bob Morrison, along with the AVA staff, was tasked to perform an analysis of the cost of business for future discussions. The \$50 annual club dues don't cover the annual insurance cost per club of roughly \$158.00 and there are other fixed costs that should be assessed. A report will be ready for the June 2018 NEC meeting.

4. **Funds Obligation:** Bob Morrison presented a proposal to earmark some of our reserve funds toward IT improvements, strategic plan implementation, international event initiatives, and convention support. The last two would be refundable from project earnings. Proposal was approved. This was viewed as prudent funds management, but funds obligation still requires normal advance approval processes.

5. **Big Give 2018:** This year's fundraiser opens for donations on 15 March and the big day is March 22nd. As Fund Development Chair, Nancy Wittenberg asked that our clubs and members consider a donation to AVA. As an incentive, Nancy is sponsoring a matching fund initiative to maximize donations for this major annual fundraising event. She also offered the step-by-step process for a Peer-to-Peer Fundraising tool she'll be using to reach out to non-volkssporting family and friends to ask for their support. It's completely voluntary, but anyone interested in using the P2P process let me or Nancy know and we'll forward some information. It's great that so many clubs and members donate, but even better if we can advertise our program and solicit donations from outside our limited circle.

6. **PPSF review:** Henry Rosales presented a review of the cost and revenue of the Per Participant Sanction Fee initiative. On the surface it appears that revenues are lost due to the initiative. There was full acknowledgement that some or many events wouldn't be sanctioned

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without the PPSF offered and no action was considered. In our region we have 50 PPSF sanctioned events, which is the largest proportion in AVA. I fully support the program, but ask that you limit PPSF requests, especially if your average revenue from all events can cover those events. For example, my previous club in Albuquerque had 17 YREs, with 5-6 popular events and 11-12 less well used, but kept available because they were great events. Overall, the club broke even on events.

7. IT updates: The IT Committee acknowledged that the ESR system and AVA website have had some distressing service interruptions in recent months. Much of that is due to outside service providers and they are working to improve that. The accounting/billing system is now operating with Quickbooks, which is a far superior program. As other systems are upgraded, they will be directly connected with the event reporting system for faster service. Chris Zegelin gave a demonstration of the proposed layout for future quarterly reporting with all club events on one page and the ability to print an invoice. Mike Green is working with the existing ESR database to clean it up and prepare for migration to a new system. The new stamp equipment and delivery cost just under \$6000 this year, while issue of new 2018 slugs would have cost over \$5000. This was a great cost savings as we project expenses into the future.

8. 2019 Special Programs: Congratulations to Bev Havens and the Albany Fitwalkers on the selection of the Carousels Across America. Their proposal was the top selection, with Little Free Libraries the second program for 2019. Both will be exceptional additions to the Special Programs.

9. Peace Poles: The Program Committee recommended 2019 be declared: "The Year of the Peace Walk" with walks passing existing peace poles or hosting walks with communities to plant new peace poles. The recommendation was not passed out of concern for alignment with an international peace movement that could affect our nonprofit status. However, the Board encouraged this concept to be looked at for Special Programs and clubs are encouraged to individually look at peace pole walks as a fun and educational activity. For more info: <http://www.peacepoleproject.org/index.html>.

10. 401K Program: About 250 walkers have joined so far and are having lots of fun watching their achievements accumulate through an online platform. You can still register at any time during the year to try the system and record your steps/distance. For some this is the future, while for others our existing achievement programs will remain in place.

11. ED Report: I've forwarded the Executive Director's report from the meeting. It is a good summary of the national office's activities and a guideline for determining who to communicate with on various issues.

12. Texas IML 2019: The Volkssporters in San Antonio, Texas, are bidding for an International Marching League event in 2020. The IML application is a lengthy process and requires a good showing when the evaluators participate in 2019. If your travel plans to TX can coincide with the 22-24 Feb 2019 event, they will greatly benefit from a larger group of participants.

13. Olympiad/AVA Convention 2021 Issue: Our bid to host the 2021 Olympiad in Washington, D.C is a big deal if we get it. That year we're required to have an AVA convention, which raises questions about funding and excess travel demands for club representatives. The Board is looking at our bylaws and will work this to sort out the best solution. Our AVA President is spending time in Europe this year to lend support for attracting both of these events.

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14. **Crazy Horse 2018:** The Board has committed to staff a table at the event to help promote our program to the thousands of participants who don't realize who we are. If you plan to attend, you might consider helping during a portion of either day. Let me know if you're available to help.

15. **NEC Voting Update:** The Board approved the process of allowing votes on single issues per monthly meeting for issues that have been vetted at a prior meeting. This will allow faster advancement on critical issues from the Strategic Plan.

Happy Trails!

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