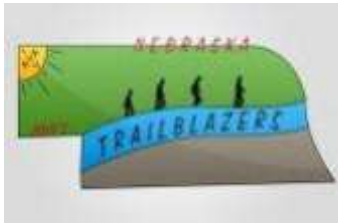


Footsteps

Fun, Fitness, Friendship

Volume XIX Number 1

January/February 2018



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For the latest on events and news visit our website:
<http://www.netrailblazers.club/>

or like us on Facebook



The Prez Sez...



Reflecting back on the past year, there are many examples of what made it so remarkable. The Meet and Eat initiative is an innovative success. By keeping up with societal trends, social media was leveraged to spur an unprecedented turnout of nearly 700 participants in a single walk. Members were rewarded with national level awards from the American Volkssport Association. We had the vision to develop and the courage to take on an ambitious and immensely successful three-day event—outside our local area! Hopefully everyone is proud of where we are and feels good about what we have accomplished!

Our success is owed to the all the contributions, both large and small, of our members. Key to our success in 2017 was the stellar leadership from our officers Lee Frantz, Larry Boehm, Tricia Abel, and

Butch Spaulding as well as Committee members Diane Fenlon, Sandy Spaulding, Jeanne Miller, Sheila Goeltz, Karen Dix and Julie Brown. All of these individuals did a lot of excellent work and facilitated the great work of our members.

There is a lot of positive momentum moving into 2018. As with every year, responsibilities change but the pursuit of excellence remains. By working together, we will continue to be a premier club leading the charge to help the AVA live up to its billing as “America’s Premier Noncompetitive Sports Association.”

~ Bryan



The (former) Prez Sez...



WOW,
FANTASTIC,
PHENOMINAL;
and yes, in all caps. Julie

asked me to do a farewell article to sum up my year as president, and I realized that any one of those words could describe the year all by themselves. **HOWEVER** (and that is also in caps), it was not me that made 2017 an amazing year of walking accomplishments for the Nebraska Wander Freunde Trailblazers (NWFT). It was every member in the club who as, AVA promotes, believes Volkssporting is about Fun, Fitness and Friendship. I really believe it is the members who have been planning and sanctioning walks, doing pre-walks, keeping minutes, marking and hosting walks, tracking our income and expenses and understanding the national organization—for years—that are the glue that hold this club together. In our club, one critical component to our success is The Committee!

The members on our planning committee have decades of experience and leadership in all things Volkssporting, and make the work of President so doable. And, in addition to The Committee, we could not survive without all the volunteers who help at every event. If you helped with any Year-Round Event or Traditional Event, Meet 'n Eat, or collection of soup, pies and warm clothes you've made this year more complete and are special to all of us. Not many clubs could pull off a year with a four-day event planned around a Solar Eclipse, that may or may not be visible, and then a few months later coordinate 689 walkers at a Christmas Lights walk. That organization and management can only come from members—not from a President. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for making 2017 a great year for our club.

I encourage you to come to our annual dinner on January 20th. This is the celebration of things past, things present and things to come in one of

the best Volkssport Clubs in the nation. Introduction of our new officers President Bryan Taylor, V.P. Larry Boehm, Secretary Jill Champley, and Treasurer Butch Spaulding, announcing our Walker of the Year, and presenting AVA Meritorious and Commendable Service awards will highlight the evening of fun, fitness, friendship (and food).

Thanks again to all the members of the NWFT, *The Great Plains Walking Club*, for a wonderful 2017.

~ Lee





Sandy speaks

What can I say? This has been a remarkable year. Our numbers reflect some great events and unusual activity. Of course, our summer Eclipse events were quite an undertaking and gave us over 700 walkers. Our year round numbers have been high for almost every walk this year.

In fact, let's talk numbers. We have 11 year rounds. Nine of those year rounds have had more walkers than last year. Ashland has not had as many walkers since 2010 when it was brand new. Chalco had its second highest number in the last ten years, which is really amazing since we did not do Trail's Day this year. Council Bluffs and Hanscom Park had the highest number since 2011 when the national convention was in the area. Fremont Historic almost equaled the last two years added together. North Platte had more walkers this year than any other year we have kept records for. Omaha Historic was helped by a Tater Tours group coming through giving it double its normal numbers. If you are a numbers kinda person, what it adds up to is 659 year round walkers. The last highest number was in 2011 during the convention when we had 565. How many kilometers is that? Between 3,295 and 6,590 depending on whether the walkers walked 5 or 10 km.

Our regular event numbers have actually been down a bit this year. With the exception of the Light's Walk, we have had about 50 less walkers for our regular events than last year. Some related to weather, some not. This may be what the Committee works on next year. Of course, this was all offset by the Light's walk. We learned the power of social media this year when we had 689 walkers from 66 different towns and cities descend on our start tables. It was an amazing phenomena. Our volunteers did a great job of organizing and keeping everyone moving. I heard that the dock workers at the Sienna Francis House exclaimed "That is a lot of toilet paper!" when the 967 rolls that were collected were delivered. We also collected 300 pairs of socks, 250 pairs of gloves, 200 hats, 80 scarves, 4 new winter coats, 12 pairs of children's socks and 60 Misc. items, including toiletries and other sundry items. Plus the extra 23 packages of cookies.

So, total number of walkers for the year: 2,366! Our average number of walkers per year for the last 10 years: 870. All I can say is WOW! This one will be really hard to beat.

The Committee has gone out in full force from saving us money with a new format for the flyers, promoting

walks with Meet Up, using social media to promote our events, updating our website and, of course, putting on that amazing group of walks during the eclipse. Do you know who these committee members are? They all deserve a huge pat on the back for their hard work this year. They are, in politically correct alphabetical order, Julie Brown, Jill Champley, Karen Dix-Johnson, Diane Fenlon, Sheila Goeltz, Jeanne Miller and Sandy Spaulding. They spent many hours brainstorming, organizing, preparing and implementing. I am proud to be part of this great group. We will welcome a couple of new members to our committee this year. Stephanie Elrod and Nancy Lane have both consented to join us, bringing some new ideas to the table.

Thanks also go to our great leadership. Lee has been a fantastic president. As he retires, he has found a great replacement in Bryan Taylor. We will all give Bryan our support and appreciate that he stepped up. Tricia has been a grand secretary. She will be taking a year off to finish her schooling, but has promised to come back in 2019. Our new secretary will be Jill Champley. She will do a wonderful job. And our Treasurer, Butch, who has overseen our finances for many years, will finish out his last year in this position before he takes on a bigger role as the Regional Director in 2019.

We say goodbye to 2017 and look forward to an exciting 2018! We hope to see all of you on the trails!

~ Sandy

Meet & EAT		2018
Jan	20	8:00 a.m. Westroads—meet at play area outside Dick's Sporting Goods Lunch at the Food Court
Feb	17	Carpool to Des Moines for Skywalk. Meet at 7:00 in various spots (TBA) around Omaha/Council Bluffs for carpools.
Mar		No Meet and Eat
Apr	21	Shelby YRE, Meet (and eat) at the Corn Crib in Shelby IA Time TBA

Jim & Sheila's Excellent Adventure

The day after our Lights Walk on we flew to Germany via Atlanta for a short visit to the German Christkindlmarkets. In the past we have enjoyed the markets in Nurnberg and Berchtesgaden. Both locations are in the Bavaria part of Germany—Berchtesgaden down south in the Alps near Salzburg and Nurnberg in the north.

Berchtesgaden is our favorite location ever since our first visit there in the 1960s. The town is built between three mountains, at the confluence of two rivers, so most of the city is constructed on the sides of the mountains. The flat part contains the bahnhof (rail station), fire station, brewery, and the main road in and out of the city. The gasthaus in which we stayed—actually a bed and breakfast—is but 300 meters from the bahnhof. We have been staying there on our visits ever since the 1960s. In the summer of 1971, we joined with three other senior NCOs from Jim's Vietnam tour on a mini-reunion. Kids were included.

We arrived in Munich via air at 9:30 on Monday. At the airport we had our Eurail pass activated and took the S-bahn into the main Munich station and caught a train south. We changed trains in Freilassing where we entered the mountains and on to Berchsgaden. We went immediately to our bed and breakfast where our hostess, Birgit Nagle, awaited our arrival. After freshening up we walked up hill to the city center. The business center is quite small, containing a few small streets lined with shops and businesses and restaurants. These streets are of cobblestones and for several years have been blocked off for motor vehicles. For Advent season the streets are lined with fresh Christmas trees and many stalls selling tasty food, gluwain, and gifts for the season.

On December 5, which is St Nicholas Day, we enjoyed seeing 'him' arrive in the market area. A platoon of German soldiers had come down from their mountain location to escort the short parade. First came donkeys with a pair of baskets on their backs; then about a dozen Buttmandl—strawmen—each looking like a large bundle of straw and only a strange face showing. Next the Kramper with ugly looking masks. Last, a sleigh (with wheels for lack of snow) with St. Nicholas. On the night of December 5, German children put their shoes outside the door hoping for goodies but those who weren't good could expect straw.

We noticed many tour buses lined up in a parking area which had brought visitors from afar for the celebration. All the stalls were very busy selling merchandise. Most people had a colorful mug of gluwain in their hands. At the Golden Bear gasthaus we enjoyed a bowl of oxtail and vegetable soup with dark bread and a tall glass of beer.

After a restful night and some fresh snow on the ground, we walked a short distance to the tourist office—opposite the rail station—and registered for a 5km volksmarch. IVV sanctioned, too. The trail took us on an old railroad bed out to Koenigsee and the lake. The surrounding mountains feed the lake which empties into the Ache River and flows

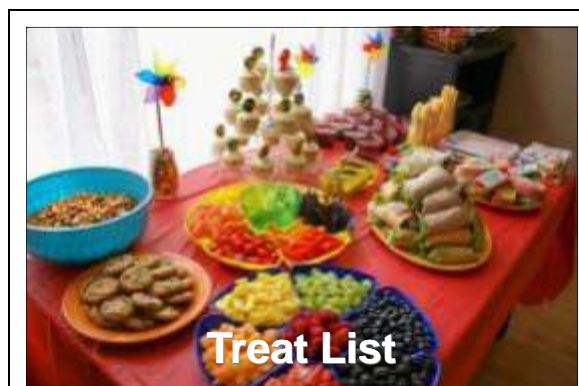
rapidly to Berchtesgaden. In Koenigsee we stopped for fresh apple strudel and coffee. The day was cloudy and chilly with a dry cold at about 32°.

After our hearty breakfast (juice, cereal, brotchen (hard rolls), fresh cold cuts of meat and cheese, a soft boiled egg, jelly and butter, and coffee or tea) the next morning furnished by Birgit, we checked out and went to the bahnhof and boarded the 0930 train to Freilassing where we changed to a faster train to Munich. In Munich we found an ICE (intercontinental express) train to Nurnberg. The ICE travels very fast, about 80mph or so. It made just one stop. We noticed the many hops fields north of Munich. Hops is one of the main ingredients in beer.

In Nurnberg it was a short walk to our hotel. After checking in, we walked a short block or two and entered which was once the walled city. The walls are still there but there are no longer gates. Within the walled city are now many hotels and shops and businesses which lead to the Nurnberg Christkindl market which we think is the best Christmas market. The market itself is in a square in front of a huge church, the square about the size of a half football field. This area contains many stalls selling bratwurst, gluwain, lebkuchen, small gifts, fruit bread and lined with people. Many people. They come from all over Europe to attend this market. In front of the church is a small stage which feature singing groups throughout the day. On this day we heard a young children's choir singing. Along the street to the market would be a brass quartet playing Christmas and classical music, a singing group, a lady playing seasonal music on a violin. Everyone enjoying the cold and most with a steaming mug of gluwain in their hands. The atmosphere of sounds and smells was captivating.

After three days in Berchtesgaden and two in Nurnberg it was time to leave. Saturday morning we boarded another ICE train to Munich, the S-bahn to the airport. We overnighted at the huge Munich airport so we could get an early flight Sunday. There is a large outside (but covered) area at the airport where another Christmas market was going on. There was a small skating rink set up, a few colorful stalls, Christmas trees—right outside the large McDonald's (they serve beer).

~Jim and Sheila



Sign up for treats at the annual dinner
Watch for the list in the next newsletter!

Wyuka Cemetery Walk



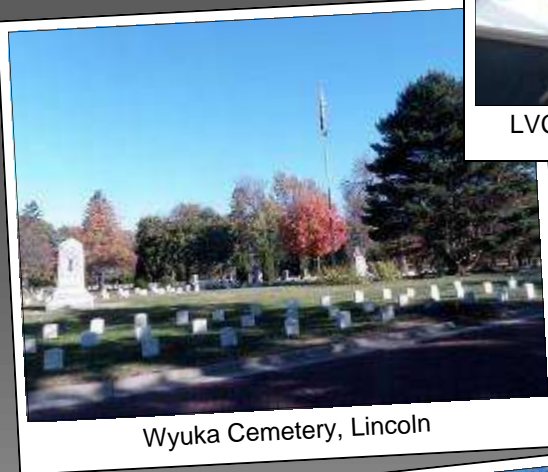
Start table—see the costume!!



Brr...it was chilly at the checkpoint!



LVC President & Assistant at Finish Table



Wyuka Cemetery, Lincoln



Colorful Marker



Big markers...



...and little ones



Diane and a plethora of pies



Start Point

Will Walk for Pie!



Sandy stops to admire a burning bush



Pie walkers



Pie eaters

Opt Outside





Dave heads out with the 10k group



Fun walkers get their maps



Unloading walk supplies



Credit walkers at Start Table

A Night of Lights



Ann & Sheila sort donations



Sandy helps winners pick a prize



Jill gets ready to lead her 5k group while



Sheila sorts scarves



Crowds of walkers in the Landmark Bldg lobby



Walkers gather in the Landmark lobby

A Night of Lights



Mark your calendars: Upcoming Events!!

January

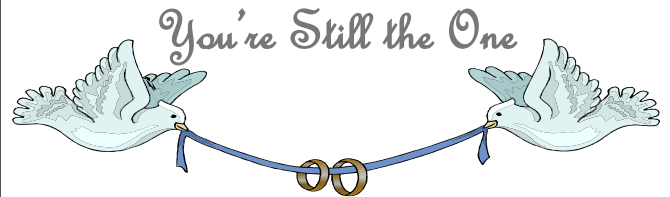
- 1 Des Moines Mall Walk..... Greater Des Moines Volkssport Assn
- 6 Blaine—Northtown MN..... Lake Country Wanderers
- 20 Meat & Eat, Westroads Omaha..... Nebraska Trailblazers
- 20 Annual Meeting/Dinner..... Nebraska Trailblazers

February

- 3 Pre-Super Bowl Walk, Minneapolis MN..... Lake Country Wanderers
- 17 Meat & Eat, Des Moines Skywalk Greater Des Moines Volkssport Assn
- 17 East Towne Walk, Madison WI Madison Area Volkssport Assn
- 18 Lawrence KS Walk..... Sunflower Sod Stompers
- 24 Walk at Mall of America, Bloomington MN Twin Cities Volkssport

Event Awards for Club Members

	<u>Events</u>	<u>Distance</u>
Jill Champley	30, 50, 75	
Donna Campbell	350	
Lee Frantz	350	
Karen Dix	600, 650	
Phyllis Olson	1300	
Norma Wessel	1300	



- Jan 11 Butch & Sandy Spaulding
- 13 Steve & Jeanne Miller
- 23 Claudia Dowling
- Feb 5 Jim & Sheila Goeltz
- 6 Dannie & Ellen Peters
- 11 Lee Frantz & Donna Campbell
- 19 Dana & Teresa Merrick

Happy Birthday to You!!!!

January

- 1 Susan Schwartz
- 3 Kaitlin Cashin
- 7 Barbara John
- 9 Wilma Damian
- 13 Dana Merrick
- 20 Gail Boggs
- 20 Cathy Ochsner
- 26 Marlene Sedlacek
- 26 Judy Seger



February

- 3 Kim Moss-Allen
- 8 Jim McGahan
- 19 Stan Fraas
- 20 Gretchen Fry
- 20 Becky Hepfner
- 23 Betty Golmanavich



is the location of our 2018 annual dinner on Saturday, January 20. Social time begins at 5:30 and dinner is at 6:00 with the business meeting following. The restaurant is located at 5022 S 108th St (108th & Q) in Omaha. Please reserve your spot by emailing the number who will be attending to bs1preznfwt@aol.com by January 12. Cost is \$12 for members, \$17 for nonmembers and includes drink, tax and tip. You can mail a check to NWFT, PO Box 8147, Omaha NE 68108 or pay Butch at the meeting. Hope to see you there!



NTB Officers

President
Bryan Taylor

Vice President
Larry Boehm

Secretary
Jill Champley

Treasurer
Butch Spaulding

Meeting News

The next club meetings will be February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7 and June 4, at Morning Star Lutheran Church, located at 331 S 85th Street in Omaha. The meetings start at 7:00 p.m. We try to have a short program before the business meeting. Just a reminder that the club meetings are the 1st Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. with some exceptions: no meetings in January, July or August, and it is the 2nd Monday in September. Don't forget that at each meeting, we have a drawing for a \$10 door prize. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be a club member to win this.

Membership Dues

September and October dues are now past due (check your mailing label—email message will be sent out as a reminder). Renewal is \$10 for a single membership and \$15 for a family membership. Please send renewals to:

NWFT
PO Box 8147
Omaha NE 68108

Newsletter Info

To place info/articles/photos in the next newsletter, please send by February 15:



snail-mail to: NWFT
PO Box 8147
Omaha NE 68108