

# Footsteps

## Fun, Fitness, Friendship

Volume XXVII Number 1

January/February 2026



Hello Trailblazer Members,

I'm looking forward to a new year filled with walking and friends. Our annual club banquet is on Jan 17th and I hope to see many of you there.

During 2026 we need to keep promoting our club and America's Walking Club - AVA. Walking as a group attracts attention and new members. People gravitate to the social connections and also many feel safer in a group. Current members can start growing our club by bringing guests to any of our events.

There are 4 ways we can structure group walks:

- Rotate through our year round events (YRE) and seasonal events (SE) with the stamp at those designated locations.
- Use a Traveling Guided Walk (TGW) sanction stamp for a whole year to host smaller group walks at locations not used on other routes.
- Plan an AVA Community Event Weekday Guided walk (ACE-WG) designed to recruit new members by doing fun walks, guided walks, meet ups etc. These are free walks with no stamps but are still covered by AVA's national insurance policy.
- Traditional Event (TE) walks have designated Start Points open for a couple hours to allow you to begin your 5K or 10K walk at your leisure.

This has always been so confusing for me to differentiate these types of walks. That is why we have a Coordinating Committee with Sandy as the chairperson to figure it all out.

If that is not enough abbreviations for you, let me throw one more your way: the Online Start Box (OSB), allowing members to find, pay for, download, and complete walks digitally through the AVA website, often using phone maps, for fitness and exploring new areas.

In some ways, AVA remains a secret society with our own language that no one else knows. So thank you all for being members of the NWFT and continue asking guests to accompany you on the walks in a context that is easier to understand

~Lori

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





## Sandy Speaks

Happy 2026 to all!!!

Let's start the year by thanking all of our volunteers who make our walks Fun, throw a little Fitness in, welcome all in Friendship and sometimes add a little Food to our events.

Do you know what it takes to put together a walk? It starts with an idea formed by Coordinating Committee members or suggested by a board or club member. Then an actual start point must be found. This can be a little difficult, especially when the Food part is involved. If it is a shelter in a park, the shelter must be rented. We often need to fill out paperwork to get permission to walk in the park or even on city streets. The parks and/or city often want their information included in the AVA insurance which is another step to be included in sanctioning the walk. If you go on the AVA.org website and look at any of our events, all of that info involved adding the information to the website (sanctioning the event). This is a 6-8 page process that takes 30-60 minutes to complete. It includes directions to the start and descriptions of the walk in addition to the date, times, POC (which we usually do not know when the sanctioning is completed), designing the stamp and more. Then you have to wait for the Regional Director to approve the walk. Next is mapping out the walk. A great help for this is Plot-a-Route which we use to map out the walk. This can be done on Plot-a-Route and then driven and then walked to assure the walk is everything we want it to be. Or sometimes it is walked first, then mapped out. And the weather does not always cooperate for this stage since we are usually getting the walks organized in December. Of course, we want to be sure folks show up for our walks. An awful lot of work has gone into bringing the event to fruition. So, we need to get the word spread to members and nonmembers alike. Thanks to our great media folks, we have our newsletter, yearly brochure, website, Trail Mail, and



Facebook to spread the word as well as the great emails we get from our president. Then comes the day of the event. Have you ever been there early enough to see all of the stuff unloaded before the start of the walk?

Especially our food events and Holiday Lights walk. All of that stuff is stored and transported by a few members. Our volunteers man the stations needed during the event then pack up everything at the end. A successful event has us all going home in a great mood. If we have very few walkers, it can be a little sad for those of us who have worked so hard to put the events together. So help us out—volunteer or come and walk. We would love to see more faces.

We do have all of our walks scheduled for 2026 with all but one sanctioned, approved and on the website. We have some really great events scheduled! Look for a complete list at the annual dinner. Get them on your calendar so you don't miss any of them! Hope to see you soon!

Happy Trails!

~Sandy



## Walks Coming Up in 2026

**March 7**

**Soup Walk**

South Omaha Trail Candlewood Church, 5051 F St.

**Mar. 14**

**Pi Day**

On the RiverFront

**April 17-19**

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

Friday, April 17-First Avenue Trail, Dinner at Quaker Steak & Lube

Saturday, April 18-River's Edge and Bob Kerrey Bridge, Museum Tours

Sunday, April 19-Nebraska City

**May 18-24**

**Walking Week**

Monday, May 18-First Avenue Trail Parks & Paths Volunteer Program

Tuesday, May 19-5:30 p.m. Stinson Park/Aksarben ACE event

Wednesday, May 20-10 a.m. Dundee area starting at Memorial Park

Thursday, May 21-Little Italy Walking Tour

Friday, May 22- Wall that Heals, Westfair, Council Bluffs

Saturday, May 23-Standing Bear

Sunday, May 24-Shelby, Iowa

**June 6**

Car pool event to Crazy Horse in South Dakota

**June 14**

Gifting Table at the RiverFront to celebrate AVA's 50<sup>th</sup>

**July 4**

Seward

**September 5**

Rock Valley School

**Sept. 12**

Lake Manawa

**Oct. 10**

Lake Cunningham

**Nov. 7**

**Pie Walk**

NeighborGood Pantry, 1712 Charleston Dr., Papillion

**Dec. 12**

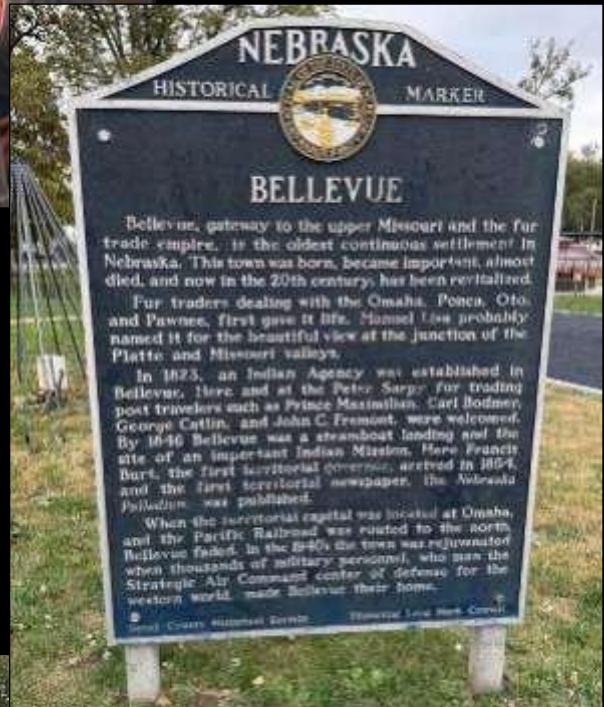
**Lights Walk**

Will start at KANEKO



# Pie Walk

# Bellevue



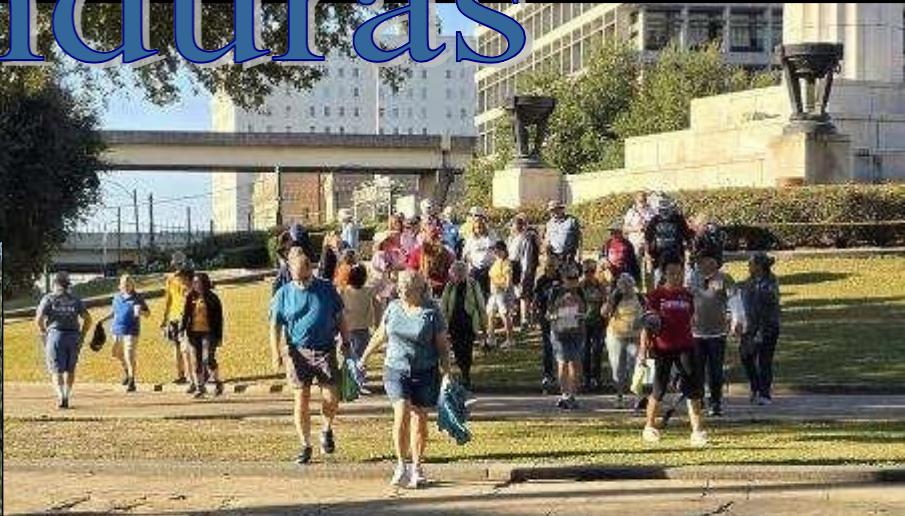
# Pie Walk

## Bellevue



# AVA Cruise

# Honduras



# AVA Cruise

# Honduras



# AVA Cruise

# Jill's Birthday

# & On the Boat

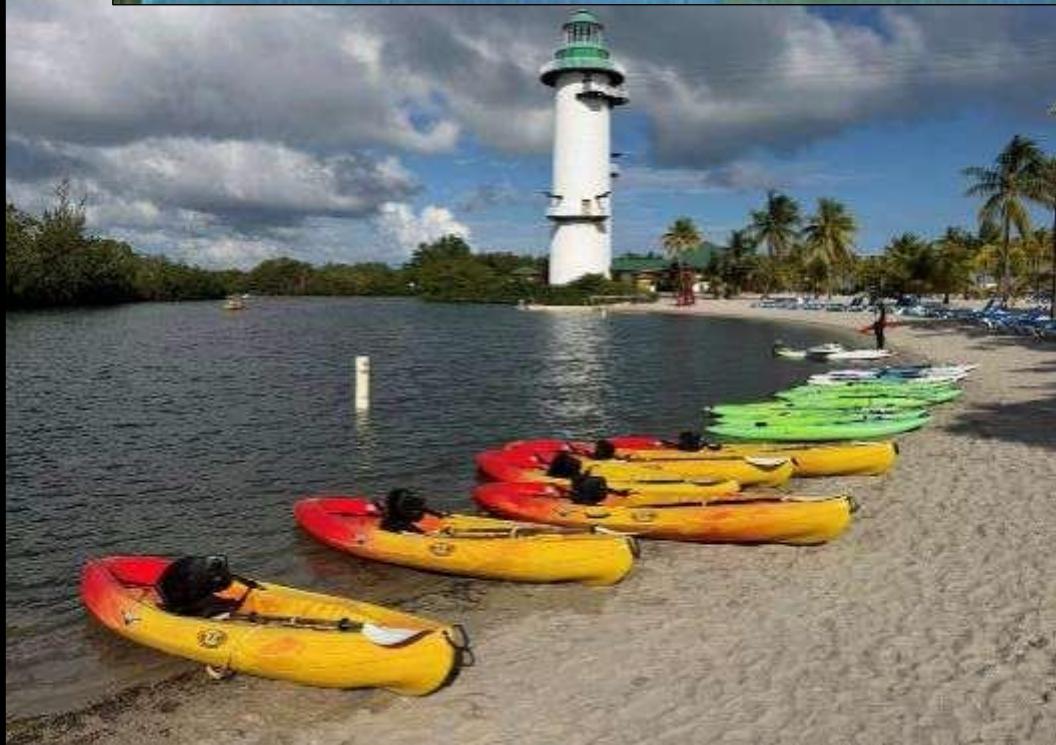
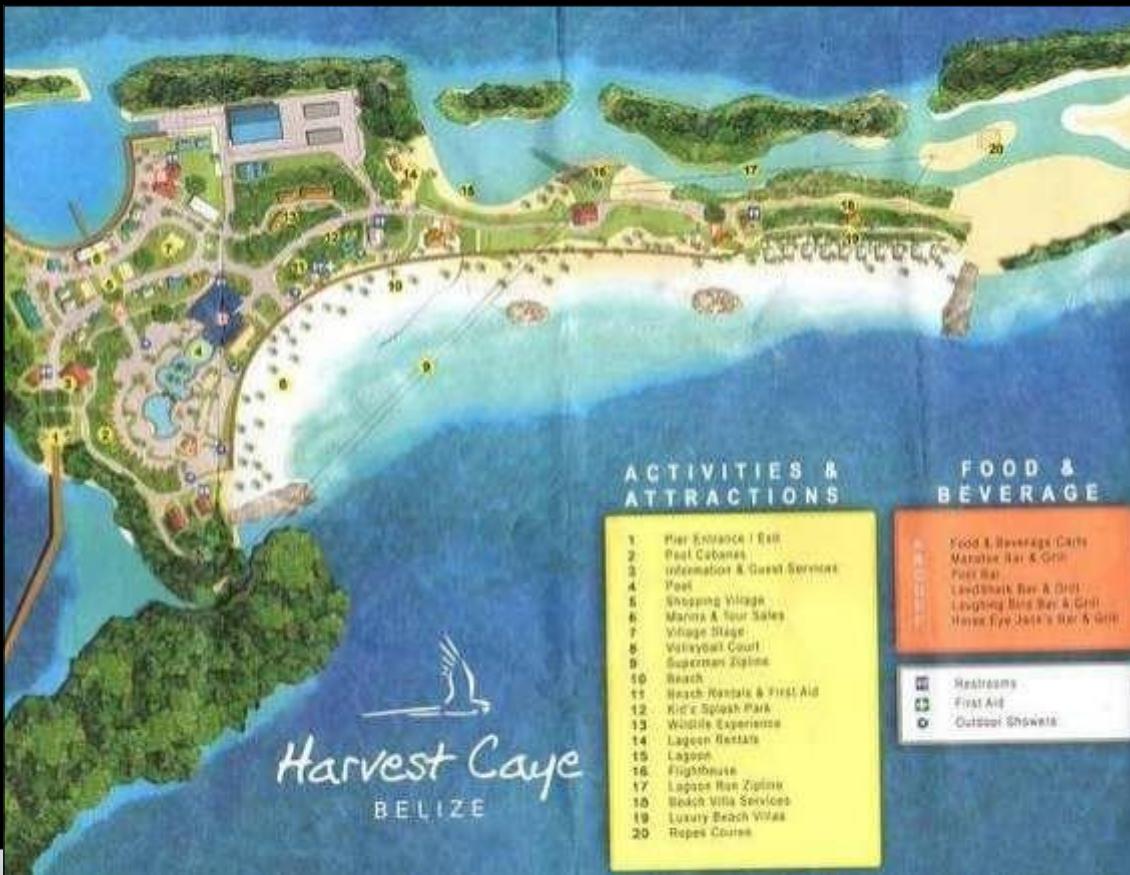


# AVA Cruise On the Boat

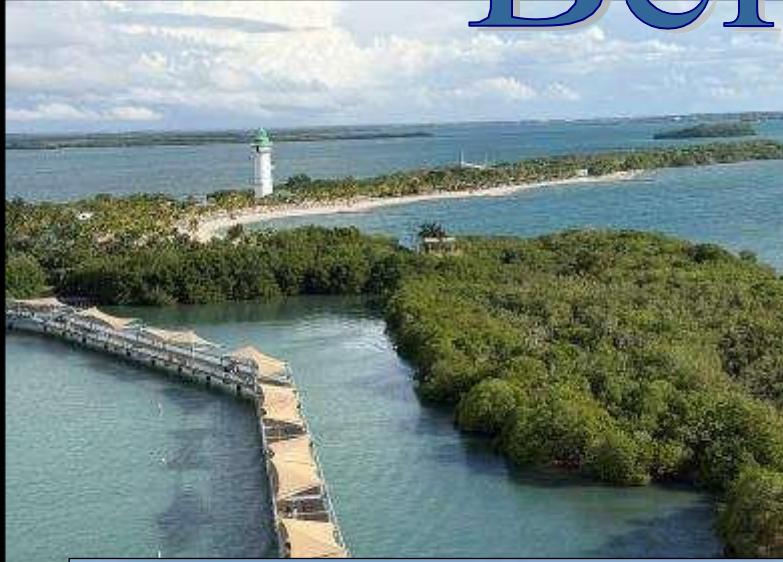


# AVA Cruise

# Belize



# AVA Cruise Belize

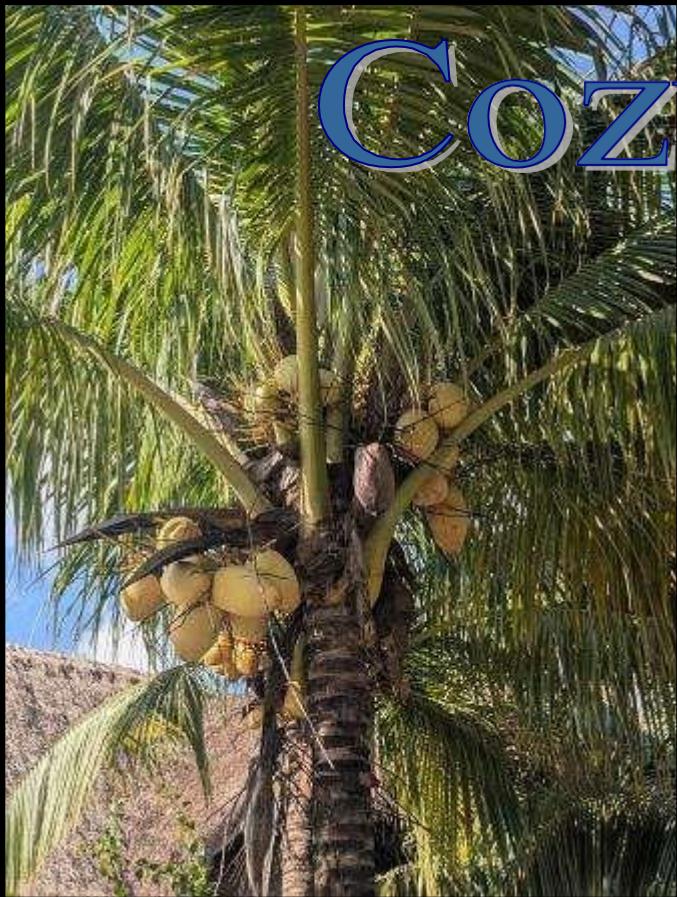


# AVA Cruise Cozumel



# AVA Cruise

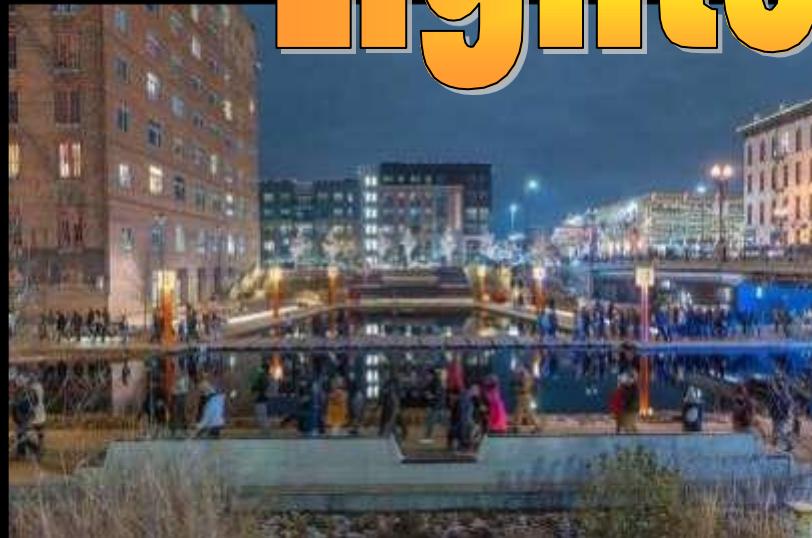
## Cozumel



# Lights Walk



# Lights Walk





## Mark your calendars: Upcoming Events!!

### Jan

- 1 Jordan Creek Mall, Des Moines, IA ..... Iowa's Walking Club
- 12 East Towne Indoor Mall Walk, Madison, WI ..... Dairyland Walkers
- 26 East Towne Indoor Mall Walk, Madison, WI ..... Dairyland Walkers

### Feb

- 14 Jordan Creek Mall, Des Moines, IA ..... Iowa's Walking Club

### March

- 7 South Omaha Trail, Omaha, NE ..... Nebraska Trailblazers
- 15 St. Patrick's March Madness, Lawrence, KS ..... Sunflower Sod Stompers
- 28 Beaverdale Trails, Des Moines, IA ..... Iowa's Walking Club

### April

- 18 Treetop Trails of Council Bluffs, an AVA Signature Event, Council Bluffs, IA ..... Nebraska Trailblazers



## NWFT Officers

President  
Lori Sue Anderson

Secretary  
Dave Brown



Vice President  
Joyce Sobczyk

Treasurer  
Jill Champley

## Meeting Speakers

February TBA

March TBA

April TBA

May TBA



## Meeting News

Our next meetings will be February, March, April and May at Maple Ridge Retirement Community, 3525 N.167 Circle, Omaha, at 7 p.m. There will be a short program and a short business meeting followed by refreshments. Just a reminder that the club meetings are the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month at 7 p.m. with some exceptions: no meetings in January, July or August, and it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

## Club Dues

Dues are \$10 for a single membership and \$15 for a family membership. Anyone who joins later in 2026 will have their membership pro-rated so that it expires 12/31/26.

Please send to: NWFT  
PO Box 8147  
Omaha NE 68108

## Send in Your Newsletter Info

To place info/articles/photos in the next newsletter,



email: sienna518@gmail.com

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