

## President's Corner

Happy New Year! I hope you all had happy holidays. I'm sorry to say there won't be an After-Holiday WnM party this year. We had some trouble getting a place and ran out of time. I know it's disappointing. You'll have to hang on to your regifting Yankee Swap items for another year! I have made a note to start looking for a place in July if we have to for next year.

Did you donate to the Big Give this year? For those who don't know, the Big Give is a fundraising campaign AVA runs every year. Clubs and individuals can give money. If you gave to the campaign last year, AVA will be sending you 2 thank you coupons good for a free walk each. You turn them in when you sign the log book, just like any other payment. The coupons will expire on March 31, so if you received them, use them as soon as you can. You can use them when you walk on your own or on a group walk or at the Soup Walk on March 28.

## Picture Time!



Marianne Marshall

*Clockwise from left: Some of the Concord group for OptOutside after Thanksgiving; Wellesley group walkers in December; a sunny winter day in Sandwich on Jan. 13*



Marianne Marshall



Keith Harlow

by Mary Frink

Speaking of the Soup Walk, I am in charge of food coordination this year! I know it's about 2 months until then, but it's never too early to start thinking about what you can bring. We'll accept soup, bread, appetizers, dessert, and salad. Coffee is also appreciated by the volunteers who start early morning. The club will provide paper goods. I will remind everyone again when we get closer, but start planning! The soup walk is a great way to get yourself walking after being stuck inside for the winter. I know some people walk no matter what, but I'm not fond of walking in the cold. Sometimes there are even flowers which are welcome after stick season when the trees look like sticks and everything is brown.

Stay warm and be careful when walking when it's icy.

## Come Friends, Let's Walk

- ❖ *Sunday, Jan. 25 Group Walk: Boston Special Places 10:00 am*
- ❖ *Saturday, Feb. 7 Group Walk: Lowell 10:30 am*
- ❖ *Sunday, Feb. 15 Group Walk: Boston Freedom Trail 10:00 am*
- ❖ *Saturday, Feb. 21 Group Walk: Providence 10:30 am*
- ❖ *Saturday, Feb. 28 Group Walk: Hyannis 10:00 am*

*See club or AVA website for starting location details on these events. For group walks, please aim to arrive 15 minutes earlier to sign-in. Winter group walk schedule may change based on weather and road conditions. Please contact POC to check if unsure.*



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# Volunteer of Honor: Pat Damiani

by Marianne Marshall

From August 2010 to late 2025, Pat Damiani made sure the Walk 'n Mass schedule was filled with group walks of our seasonal and yearly events. By sending out a calendar at least once a quarter showing available dates for hosting a group walk, Pat made sure there were no conflicts and that every POC had an opportunity to select a date that worked well for them. Included in the schedule were her Hyannis and Sandwich seasonal walks since January 2007, and the Sandwich bike since 2010. For being POC for three events, staying on top of the schedule and prompting POCs to anchor a date, Pat made sure there were multiple occasions for people to walk and enjoy getting together. Thank you, Pat, for keeping the Sandwich and Hyannis events open for 18 years and for 15 years of reminding and encouraging POCs to schedule group walks.



Beate Hait

## Thank You

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# Early January Group Walks Recap

by Marianne Marshall

It's only January 10th and two group walks have been completed. The six people who participated in our annual walk of Back Bay [on January 1] enjoyed a mixed bag of light snow flurries and wind at first but then were treated to some clear, enjoyable walking weather. Mrs. Mallard and her ducklings wore an assortment of scarves and hats, and the few ice sculptures across from the Boston Public Library and City Hall plaza were still in good shape due to the colder temperatures this year.

In Newton on Jan. 10, there were nine people who crossed no streets and still completed a 5km route in the Newton Cemetery and Arboretum behind the start point in the library. Four people then went on to complete the 10km route which consisted of new directions as well as some familiar roads and sights from walks of previous years.

Hopefully, the weather will cooperate and future group walks will entice people to come out and enjoy meeting up with new and old friends as they walk the routes and fill out their 2026 WnM Challenge cards.



Bob Marshall



Bob Marshall



Bob Marshall



Bob Marshall



Bob Marshall

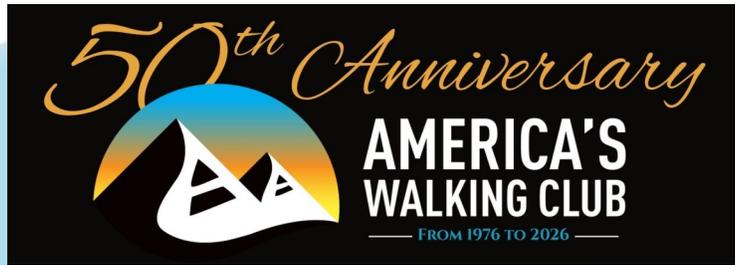


Marianne Marshall



Left column: Newton group pictures  
Above: Boston Back Bay group walk on New Year's Day

# Bulletin Board



Keep up on all the **AVA 50th Anniversary Signature Event** details using <https://ava.org/50th-anniversary/>

A list of the 17 signature events is provided with the celebratory Word Search [on page 5] in this newsletter.

## An AVA 50th Anniversary Signature Event: Atlantic Region Conference

Thursday, March 19 to Sunday, March 22, 2026

Learn more & register: [www.walkvirginia.org/atlantic-region-conference-2026](http://www.walkvirginia.org/atlantic-region-conference-2026)

## Next Club Meeting Monday, March 2

6:30 pm

Stop & Shop  
40 Franklin Village Drive  
Franklin, MA 02038

Up the stairs past  
Customer Service Desk

## Do you have a most memorable walk or volksmarching travel story to share?

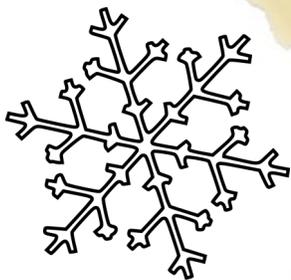
Send it to [footnotes.editor@gmail.com](mailto:footnotes.editor@gmail.com) for possible publication in a future edition of **Footnotes**.

## Newsletter Submissions to:

[footnotes.editor@gmail.com](mailto:footnotes.editor@gmail.com)

Deadline for next issue: Feb 21st

Reminder: While we do schedule winter group walks, safety remains a high priority. Therefore, if **severe weather conditions** (e.g., ice, frigid temperatures, torrential rains, etc.) are forecast for a group walk date, please check the club website for updates or contact the POC. If you choose to receive email reminders from our Email POC Brian ([brianptimmons2017@gmail.com](mailto:brianptimmons2017@gmail.com)), you can also stay better informed if/when cancellations are announced.



## Meeting Information about Boston Group Walks in 2026

Because having solely OSB option may deter some members from walking the Boston routes, I am planning to offer each of the three Boston YREs as group walks with in-person registration, payment, and physical stamp several times a year. One can always do these walks anytime one wishes via OSB. However, when group walks in Boston are announced, walkers may sign in and pay in person to get the stamp on site.

For group walks of **Freedom Trail** [like on Feb. 15] and **Back Bay**, we will meet in the seating area in the center (under the dome) of Quincy Market, behind Faneuil Hall.

For Boston **Special Places** (also called **Hidden Gems**) group walks [like on Jan. 25], we will meet on the second floor of the Prudential Building across from the US Post Office.

I look forward to seeing you in Boston soon!

-Carol Giesecke, POC of Boston YREs

# 2026: AVA 50th Word Search by Monica Hait

Find the bolded locations & words/phrases from the AVA 50th Signature Events

T	E	X	A	S	T	R	A	I	L	R	O	U	N	D	U	P	A
E	K	R	A	L	C	D	N	A	S	I	W	E	L	F	O	S	W
R	O	U	B	J	O	I	N	O	T	N	A	N	A	S	Z	P	O
W	V	E	S	R	O	H	Y	Z	A	R	C	A	B	U	L	E	R
A	T	E	R	R	E	H	A	U	T	E	O	M	O	T	A	T	E
M	I	S	X	C	O	U	N	C	I	L	B	L	U	F	F	S	G
C	S	T	W	O	Y	K	R	S	Y	S	E	S	L	G	O	T	D
I	P	H	G	L	R	R	E	K	T	R	T	O	D	R	C	O	I
R	E	G	A	O	A	T	C	L	M	O	L	M	E	U	S	O	R
U	C	I	T	R	S	O	N	I	V	N	W	I	R	B	I	F	B
O	T	L	L	A	R	F	E	C	B	O	A	N	C	S	C	F	C
S	A	N	A	D	E	A	R	K	H	H	Y	D	I	M	N	I	A
S	C	E	N	O	V	P	F	S	E	V	E	N	T	A	A	L	N
I	U	T	T	Y	I	M	G	R	L	A	O	N	Y	I	R	S	I
M	L	H	I	B	N	A	U	O	E	T	R	O	Z	L	F	E	K
Y	A	C	C	S	N	T	J	U	N	E	H	T	D	L	N	L	C
T	R	A	R	Z	A	R	A	T	R	Y	D	S	E	I	A	L	A
H	I	N	E	N	V	C	W	E	D	A	F	O	N	W	S	I	M
G	E	H	G	U	X	B	I	N	Y	H	L	B	M	J	A	R	S
I	C	I	I	T	E	A	S	T	O	R	I	A	T	O	X	V	U
M	S	E	O	L	A	R	O	U	N	D	F	L	O	R	I	D	A
A	H	W	N	C	O	N	F	E	R	E	N	C	E	N	T	W	G

- AVA 50th Anniversary Signature Event
- **Boulder City, NV** – AVA Chairman’s Anniversary Celebration
- **San Antonio, TX** – **Texas Trail Roundup** IML
- **Williamsburg, VA** – **Atlantic Region Conference**
- **Council Bluffs, NE** – North Central Reg. Miles of Memories Across the **Mighty Missouri**
- **Johnstown, NY** – Northeast Region Revolutionary Event: Walk the Story that Changed the World
- **Black Hills, SD** – **Crazy Horse** Memorial
- **Terre Haute, IN** – Mid-America Reg. Conf.
- **San Francisco, CA** – 50 Works of Art for 50 Years of Walking
- **Colorado Springs, CO** – **Rocky Mountain** Rendezvous
- **Boston, MA** – **AVA 50th Anniversary Walk**
- **Mackinaw City, MI** – **Mackinac Bridge** Walk
- **Astoria, OR** – Northwest Reg. Conf. Walking in the **Footsteps of Lewis and Clark**
- **Arlington, VA** – **FreedomWalk** Festival IML
- **South Central Roundup Halloween Kicks** on **Route 66**

- **Dayton, OH** – **OWF Honors Veterans**
- **Helen, GA** – **Weihnachten Lights Spectacular**
- **Tampa Bay, FL** – **Walk Around Florida**

## December & January Meeting Highlights by Marianne Marshall

**Meetings held Dec. 1, 2025 in Franklin, MA and Jan. 5, 2026 via Zoom.**

**Activities:**

- Due to scheduling difficulties, there will be no after-holiday party.
- The soup walk in Holliston, MA on Sat., March 28 is also a memorial walk for Chuck Lipson. Please let Mary Frink know if you plan on bringing any food to share.

**Sunshine:** Get well card sent to Kathryn Piffat and a congratulations on retirement to Bea Hait.

**Walk Coordinator:**

- WnM Challenge cards were mailed with 2026 yearly/seasonal booklets. Earn 50 points as described on Challenge card and submit completed cards at a WnM event to walk for free.

- Wandering Wheels Volkssport Club bus tour Sept. 21-28. Plans are being put in place to walk Hyannis, Oak Bluffs, Provincetown, and Concord.
- AVA signature event in Boston Fri., Aug. 28 and Sat., Aug. 29. WnM coordinating location for Meet & Greet, and lay out walk route.
- North East Regional Weekend is May 15-20, 2026 in Lake George, NY.

**AVA—November & December Checkpoints:**

- Big Give raised \$91,360 for AVA in 2025.

**Upcoming Club Meeting:**

Next meeting Monday, Mar. 2 to be held at 6:30 pm at Stop & Shop in Franklin.

# Wednesday Walks Wrap-Up

by Carol Giesecke

At a Walk 'n Mass board meeting last summer, Mary Suchodolski related to us how popular the Wednesday walks were for the walking club she belonged to in Florida. So we got a bit excited about experimenting with this idea, even though Wednesday was not convenient for most of the people in attendance at the meeting. In years past Keith Harlow had offered Tuesday walks successfully, but when his schedule changed, he had to discontinue them. I decided perhaps we could focus more on Meetup participants to advertise the walks and suggest a lunch location for those that wanted to add a social aspect to the walk. Since September and October are usually good months for walking in the Boston area, I made a plan to offer 4 Wednesday walks in those months, and asking the POCs of walks we hadn't used for a while, if they would be okay with me offering their walks. We would use the existing Start Box locations and have a suggested place to eat in advance. The walks I chose were Quincy on September 10, Lowell on September 24, Roslindale on October 8, and Boston Freedom Trail on October 22. In the case of the Boston walks, they are all set up as Online Start Box (OSB), so we had to come up with a meeting place close to Faneuil Hall, the start point for both Freedom Trail and Back Bay walks. Perhaps we can once again come up with a physical start place where we can place a walk box. We shall see.

For Quincy, POC Helen Tolbert was delighted that we did her walk. She met us at the Start Point with her little dog, Lucky, and sent us on our way. We had 4 walkers that day, 3 from Cambridge, MA, and Karen Plichta from Fall River. We all took the Red Line T to Quincy Center and the National Parks office Start Box is right across the street! We ate lunch at Crush Pizza next door to the Parks office.

For Lowell, we all had to drive, and it was a bit rainy, but it worked out fine. Marianne Marshall was in the process of taking over Lowell as POC, so she was able to join us. And Bea and Diane Peterson and our long time Meetup friend Phyllis Swartz walked that day, too. Bea and Marianne couldn't stay for lunch, but Diane and Phyllis and I found a great Greek restaurant – the Athenian Corner on Market Street – for lunch near the starting point.

The Roslindale walk proved to be a bit difficult because rain was predicted for that Wednesday. I made the decision to move it to Thursday, but then found out that the library start point doesn't open until noon on Thursdays. We made a pivot to meet at Fornax Bakery instead, but we were worried that not everyone would get that message. It was a very cold, windy day to stand outside the library, but POCs Paul and Linda were out there when I showed up a bit late! We found two Meetup people in the bakery and we were all able to walk together into the Arboretum for a beautiful but chilly walk!

For the Freedom Trail, two women from Middleboro – Cynthia and Barbara joined me. We walked just the 5km and had a good day for viewing all the historic sights.

All in all the Wednesday walks idea was a great experiment, in my opinion. I plan to offer Wednesday walks again this spring and also to team up with some other groups, like area senior centers, to see if I can find those who have time mid-week and who love to walk with others. I encourage anyone who has the time and interest to consider offering a mid-week walk. The more walks we offer the more likely we will grow our membership!

*Right: Karen P, Alida C, Carol G, and friend Dorothy finishing up the Quincy walk*

*Far right: Carol with Diane P, Phyllis S, Marianne, and Bea by one of the canals in Lowell*



Carol Giesecke

# AVA Cruise

by Karen Kolaczyk with contributions from Karen Plichta

Organized by AVA's Walking Waves, our Norwegian Cruise Line trip from New Orleans in November 2025 lasted six days, including three days at sea. On day one, Karen Plichta and I explored the ship and discovered an uninterrupted walking loop on Deck 8. Karen took full advantage—sporting our club T-shirt or the AVA 50th Anniversary T-shirt. Passengers seated along the deck quickly took notice and struck up conversations about the walking club. With nowhere else to go, they were a receptive audience, and Karen enthusiastically shared the benefits of walking and information about our club. One couple even mentioned plans to do the AVA cruise leaving from Boston in August 2026, and Karen happily gave them our club details.

We also found the ship's library, which offered daily Sudoku, crossword puzzles, and trivia sheets. Karen completed a scavenger hunt that required collecting signatures from ship employees of various nationalities—earning herself a deck of cards after a determined effort.

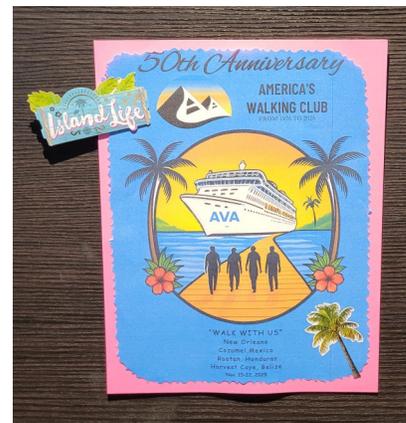
Our port walks began in Cozumel, Mexico, where heat and humidity challenged us. After an early wrong turn on the 5km route, I stopped with others, but Karen pressed on to complete her planned 10km. In Roatán Bay, Honduras, the lack of street signs and landmarks left us unsure of our route until we joined other lost walkers. Spotting our ship from a hilltop finally guided us safely back. On Harvest Caye in Belize—owned by Norwegian Cruise Line—we enjoyed a beautiful 10km walk through a butterfly sanctuary, spotting blue monarch butterflies and an iguana. I later learned Belize has over 400 islands, some privately owned by well-known figures, and that manatees migrate through the area.



On sea days, we enjoyed trivia, shows, and dinner performances, including ABBA and Beatles tributes, comedians, a Fleetwood Mac retrospective, and The Choir of Man, an all-male musical set in an Irish pub that will tour the US, with a February stop at the Hanover Theatre in Worcester.

Overall, we hope that fellow passengers who saw us as purposeful walkers will be inspired to explore and join our club's walks before the August 30 sailing out of Boston.

For information about the August cruise, see [www.nwztravel.com](http://www.nwztravel.com) then click Groups and Events, select AVA's 50th Anniversary, and use the password **AVA50th** to access the group-rate cabins and cruise information.



Photos courtesy of Karen Kolaczyk

## Walk Coordinator Speaks

**Walk and Soup Social in Holliston, Sat. March 28** – We fondly remember and honor Chuck Lipson with this memorial walk (see info on Chuck in the brochure). Chuck was really good at stirring those soups to get them ready for serving!

Explore new views as we return to Holliston for our first traditional event of our walking season. One new 5km route takes walkers to Pleasure Point Beach on Lake Winthrop. In season, this beach is reserved for Holliston residents. Across the lake you can view Stoddard Park & Beach, where beach passes can be purchased in season. The second 5km route featuring the rail trail is one we've used before, but we will be walking it in reverse, so you get a fresh view of familiar sights in town. You may choose which loop to walk if you prefer to walk a single 5km distance.

After walking, share camaraderie while eating soups, breads, snacks, and desserts brought by fellow participants. In early March I'll be making calls to staff the Trail Marking and Trail Take-down crews and the Start, Finish, Check-point, and Specialties tables. Opportunities for setup, cleanup, and food prep are also available. You may certainly contact me before then to state your preference of where you'd like to help out. Please contact Mary Frink to let her know if you will be bringing food to share. No nuts, please, as our Start point is a nut-free facility.

**Year-Round Events** – Ten WnM events are available for your walking pleasure whenever they fit your schedule. In MA: Freedom Trail, Back Bay, Hidden Gems, Hyannis, Lowell, Newton Centre, Sandwich, Wellesley; in RI: Providence and Wickford. Some of these use the OSB registration process. When group walks are scheduled, you may arrive and register in person at the designated time and location. If you then prefer to walk on your own (I know some folks like to be able to stop to take photos, get a bite to eat, or visit a museum or other attraction rather than

by Beate Hait

remaining with the group), you may certainly do so. There's also flexibility at a group event regarding distance and getting together after the walk for lunch.

**Northeast Weekend – May 16-20** – Registration is now open (click the link at [ESCVwalks.org](http://ESCVwalks.org)) to walk where events occurred in New York that shaped our nation and changed the course of history. Walk locations: Johnstown, NY, features a parade and re-enactment; three walking opportunities on Sunday include Fort Ticonderoga, Crown Point, and Hamlet of Ticonderoga (Trekksers will love the Star Trek Original Series Set Tour); Monday in Schuylerville; Tuesday in Lake George Village; and Wednesday is ESCV's regularly scheduled Wednesday Walk in Round Lake. The host hotel is the Georgian Lakeside Resort. Mention code WALKNE26 for discount rate.

### Save the date for these traditional walks –

- ❖ Saturday, April 25 – Weston, MA
- ❖ Saturday through Wednesday, May 16-20 – Northeast Weekend in NY (see details above)
- ❖ Friday and Saturday, August 28 and 29 – Boston, MA – A Signature AVA 50th Anniversary Event to Castle Island & social gatherings. Details coming soon.

**Participation Challenge in 2026** – In an effort to spur you to get out and walk (or volunteer at a traditional event if you are taking a break from walking), you probably noticed the Participation Challenge Card that was included with the mailing of the YRE/SE booklet at the end of December.

Accumulate 50 points and submit that card in lieu of payment at any WnM event in 2026.

