

# Exit Survey Comments

## Section 1. Information and Registration

*How easy was the brochure to understand? The vast majority (92%) found the brochure to be clear. The following suggestions/comments were made.*

- Make the registration per item/activity instead of one huge price. (2)
- Overpaid by error.
- Vegetarian lunch option not made explicit on registration form.
- Start from scratch - registration form has always seemed unclear.
- I did have a few questions but it just is a bit hard with so many options. Can't be helped. And everyone answered the questions I did have.
- Complicated. The form itself is tricky to get thru. A lot of information in a small space.
- Brochure did not have clearly marked address for the hotel, nor driving directions from US 75.
- The walks (start/finish) was difficult to understand.
- I had to read them both several times to coordinate for the responses.
- For pre and post walks it needed more information. Not everyone has access to computers.
- Form itself was clear, but it would have helped me remember the pre-registration deadline if that date had appeared in bold on the cover of the registration packet. I would have registered for the total package if I hadn't been caught by the very early deadline of May 1.
- I use a blackberry. It would be great to be able to download an outlook-importable set of convention times. Email me if you don't understand this. [W2bos@arri.net](mailto:W2bos@arri.net)
- Be sure brochure is available as early as possible.
- This was our first convention. I wasn't sure about signing up for workshops. I can't sign up for just a single workshop? Also, as a senior citizen, I could have paid \$1.50 for a day's DART Pass instead o \$25 for the whole week.
- I'd like to be able to sign up for parts of days for individual workshops or sessions.
- I dislike being forced to pay for socials that I don't have energy to enjoy.
- Provide more options of packages that do not include all social events.
- Allowing a delegate to attend and vote without having to pay for the whole package, ie socials.

## Section 2 Walks

*Specific walk comments:*

### Joplin

- Well marked. (3)
- Liked the trail section in the woods (2)
- Best walk
- Very well organized and friendly people.
- Out and back provided opportunity to see and talk with other walkers.
- Prefer circular route - not out and back on same route.
- Falls and bluff walk were nice. Walking on the road wasn't quite so good.

### Wichita

- Poorly marked. (3)

- Use Arrows! (2)
- Don't use blue ribbons.
- Significant lack of ribbons made walk very confusing to follow.
- Map 1/c route highlighted
- Make sure there are enough maps and workers at the walks
- Needed better organization. (2)
- The young people stamping were very efficient.
- Did not know start point had changed from original. (2) A sign at the original start point would have helped along with notices in TAW and walklist.
- Measured 12 1/2 km on our pedometers.
- Ran out of directions and start cards at beginning. Some of our group started without directions but since route ribbons/signs weren't plentiful, they were kind of confused. One person got lost but walk itself was nice.

### **Sulphur**

- Glad it was marked but needed more confidence markers.
- More ribbons, better map. Color the route
- My favorite of the pre-walks. Well organized. Friendly people.
- Out and back provided opportunity to see and talk with other walkers.
- Prefer circular route - not out and back on same route.
- Why couldn't the earlier start time be announced the day before in Wichita?
- Liked being on trails.
- National Recreation area was nice.

### **Downtown**

- Air conditioned! (3)
- Best walk
- 5 km should have been more inside buildings.
- Enjoyed what we were able to walk.
- Liked this walk.
- Great. The directions were the best I've ever seen on a walk.
- Person who wrote the directions for the downtown Dallas walk should receive a special award for excellence.
- Liked the air-conditioned buildings with lots of food places and restrooms on the downtown Dallas walk.
- Directions were easy to understand, even with all the ups and downs, ins and outs. Nice walk, even with being asked, twice, to leave the checkpoint building.

### **Fort Worth**

- Little shade but enjoyed history
- Nice city walk
- Loved the water park.
- Liked highlights versa just walking in sun

### **White Rock**

- Too hot
- No museum evident
- Didn't like walking on busy 4 lane road shoulder
- Very nice area

- Needed more markers on the 17 km walk.
- Liked this walk.
- Shade was welcome.

### **Uptown**

- Liked creek and cemeteries
- Just right.
- Nice city walk
- Liked the cemeteries. Also rode the free trolley

### **President's walk**

- Best Walk (3)
- Loved the shade and the park. (3)
- Was a relief from riding the DART
- Good intro into Richardson's pathway system - needed more.
- Nice area so close to the hotel.
- Trail marking on president's walk a bit confusing. Missing left turn arrow on first left turn.
- I missed an arrow at the very beginning of 10 km on President's walk and went 2-3 km out of my way.
- Well Marked
- Wonder about 5 km distance.
- Great checkpoint
- The President's walk could have used a different colored sign for doing the 5 km.
- Liked contrast to other walks.
- Liked the conservation area.

### **Bossier City**

- Some parts were good, some not so good.

### **Hope**

- The only real points of interest, as I recall, had to do with Bill Clinton. Fair walk. But the watermelon at the checkpoint was really appreciated.

### ***What did you like about the walks?***

- Variety of things to see and do. (39)
- Directions were very good (27)
- Planning walks along DART was a good idea. (17)
- Manned checkpoints and food there. (9)
- Friendly volunteers. (5)
- People at DART stations.(5)
- Easy access (4)
- Friendship.(2)
- We were able to visit with other DART riders and tell them about AVA. (2)
- Going to several different states to walk. (2)
- Include afternoon or evening walks. (2)
- Special Events incorporated. (2)
- Oranges and cold water very welcome and appreciated (2)
- Water features (2). Liked when they were different from year rounds.

- City - environment
- Seeing different greeters and manned checkpoints. Volunteers did a great job.
- City walks were pleasant because not just sidewalks and buildings.
- Featured walks but could do anytime.
- Info re: points of interest.
- Didn't have to drive to the start point.
- Water park. Dallas History Museum.
- Meeting new people.
- Offered early in the day.
- Choices when to walk.
- The volunteers were so helpful - especially Helen "The Hun" Hull and Sue Wolfson. I felt cared for.
- Helen Hull. She personally led a couple of walks and had great suggestions. Her enthusiasm is infectious.
- 5 km options
- A lot of thought regarding time/shade/history.
- I loved that you picked up directions for all walks at the start. You choose which order to do them in, distance etc.
- The scenery, history and company.
- Good variety of natural and urban areas.
- Help Phone numbers was a good idea
- Having YRE options was nice. We did 2.
- Nicely planned.
- Saw a lot of the area.
- The organization
- Volunteers or arrows were always available at strategic places - great job.
- Human arrows.
- They were shaded and done early in the morning.
- Scenery
- Had time to do year-round walks too.
- Directions in plastic bags in case of rain.
- A swim would be nice.
- Dallas Downtown allowed individual meandering and stopping at particular sites of interest. Fort Worth group walk stayed together and moved very quickly. Both had benefits. I preferred the former.
- The walks were well designed and conducted but you can't expect walks in Dallas to compare with walks in Colorado, Oregon and Washington national and state parks.
- Liked the walks in parks and by rivers and lakes.
- Got to meet lots of walkers from different places.
- Could do any day - no mass start or jam at finish.

***How could the walks be improved?***

- All walks should be marked. (7)
- Have well marked trails and start going back to real volksmarches.
- Use start cards so I can keep map. (7)
- Less concrete - more natural areas (5)
- Better maps (3)
- Write kilometers on directions. (4)
- This time of year plan for heat and shade. (2)

- More special events identified on walk directions. (2)
- I prefer the traditional start, all on one day, not whenever you want. (2)
- Don't overlap pre/convention/post walks (2)
- I would prefer a daily walk with marked trails. Thanks for the daily feature.
- YRE's hard to attend without car.
- More nature trails.
- Pre/post walks should be more centrally located to convention.
- Have carpool signup sheets.
- Do President's walk on Monday evening with written directions so we could do again during week.
- Shorten travel times.
- Do not especially like to walk in cities.
- Pick a cooler time of year.
- Fewer directions.
- I stayed with a friend who took me to a DART Station. However, it didn't work out well for me to wear my walking clothes, do the walk, go to the hotel for the meetings and then dress up for evening events. Consider letting us wear our walking clothes to everything.
- Are they always in cities? The June heat was really bad. I did 5 km instead of 10 km.
- Color highlight the map routes and make maps bigger and more legible. (2)
- Couldn't be improved
- Better directions and/or markings on some.
- Have a swim and bike.
- Loved seeing town of Plano but don't think the results met expectations of participants or host club members.
- Keep in mind the weather.
- Get approval in advance to go through non-public areas.
- Emphasize that when it takes so long to get there that you'll be walking in the heat. I know it was stupid but that fact didn't sink into me. Emphasize that TRE has less trips back to Union Station even though you gave us a schedule with this info.
- Don't use dark blue ribbons as they are hard to see in vegetation. Bright colors are better.
- 5 km walks - use different colored markings.
- More orange slices.
- Helpful to have street name and directions of turn at beginning of direction line. For example: Left on Main to 15<sup>th</sup> St.
- Allow earlier start for volunteers so they can walk and volunteer.
- A few more visible workers checking the trails via cars due to the heat.
- A little more info-history, interesting tidbits, etc.
- I really like walks in the woods or at historic places but you have to balance this with transportation.
- Plano walk had no map. As a result we got lost. Aren't maps required for AVA YRE's?
- Would have switched Dallas downtown and uptown days. Museums were closed on Mondays.
- One more checkpoint on 17 km in White Rock.
- Several people at finish area didn't have enough experience, information. Two books of mine were stamped twice, one stamp on a second page. Kept hurrying me through, even though no lines and other volunteers idle.
- I liked the combination of the start cards with directions. One benefit for scrapbookers would be to make the start card a tear-off at the bottom of the sheet thereby preserving the directions and map for my scrapbook.

*If you did not participate in one or more walks, why not?*

- **Didn't have enough time for pre/post walks**
  1. Convention too long for my schedule (work) (6)
  2. Arrived late.
  3. Could not get away in time from home due to minor injury.
  4. Flew in, didn't have time or energy
  5. Time and schedule.
  
- **Pre/Post walks too far away.**
  1. Pre/post too far to drive. (4)
  2. Flew in so couldn't do pre and post walks.
  3. Distance between pre/post walks and convention.
  4. No car
  5. Didn't want to rent a car and drive that far
  
- **Pre & Post Walks inconvenient**
  1. Drove to convention stopping in state capitols to walk. Pre and post walks not on our agenda. (2)
  2. The pre&post walks were not in our travel area.
  3. Didn't drive in from the north - inconvenient
  4. Pre walks - did other walks elsewhere
  
- Illness/Injury (5)
- Volunteered and didn't have time for the walk (4)
- Too Hot (4)
- I tried to walk two walks but the heat and humidity were very hard on me (only walked Downtown Fort Worth and Plano)
- Visiting with family, missed post walks (2)
- Worked a booth (2)
- Time on site.
- Didn't want to ride the DART
- Had a hard time working in both Sulphur and Downtown Dallas
- There were two walks on Thursday, I only wanted to do one
- Fort Worth walk - afraid of the Trinity river bottom. I was almost assaulted by street people on YRE.
- Post walks charged \$3 for fun walkers as well as credit walkers. My spouse is a credit walker, I am a fun walker. We don't go to walks that charge the same \$ for fun walkers.
- I chose OKC over Suphur.

**Section 3. Business Meetings**

92 of the 133 survey responders attended some or all of the business meetings/workshops.

*What did you enjoy during the business meetings:*

- **Speakers**
  1. Speakers (6)
  2. Good presenters
    1. Speakers and subjects
    2. Keynote speaker (5)  
Jeff Crilley was excellent and set the tone for the convention.
  3. Guest speakers (3)

4. Speakers enthusiasm
  5. Seeing Suzy Belle's presentation with her friends. (3)  
Suzy Belle was udderly entertaining.
- **Seeing Officers and Learning about AVA**
    1. Learning what's going on with the Association. (3)
    2. Learning how the AVA works (2)
    3. AVA business (2)
    4. Meeting the Executive Committee
    5. I just like to see whats going on and how the President and other officers react to business matters.
    6. Seeing RDs and President
    7. It inspires me to see and hear my leaders.
    8. Listening to AVA officers speak.
    9. Finding out who the new officers are.
    10. Committee reports.
    11. Information
  - **Awards (6)**  
Seeing awardees and hearing of their accomplishments
  - **How meetings were conducted**
    1. Stayed on time. (8)
    2. Kept to agenda. (3)
    3. Brevity (6)
    4. Short and precise/sweet (3)
    5. Well run (4)
    6. Orderly (2)
    7. Interesting (2)
    8. Conciseness (2)
    9. Well Planned & timed (2)
    10. Business meetings conducted in a professional manner but in a lighthearted atmosphere.
    11. Moved quickly and efficiently.
    12. Reports were in book and not read
    13. Concise, efficient handling of business.
    14. Did not linger - moved right along.
    15. Interesting and fast moving.
    16. They were run professionally with no wasted time.
    17. Started on time and finished early.
    18. Promptness
    19. Quick voting for slate of officers
    20. Organized and to the point.
    21. Quick process
    22. Humor

**General Comments:**

- Curt is an outstanding President and presiding officer.
- Balance of awards, info and AVA business
- Good Balance
- All of it

- Door prizes would be nice.
- Did not go. Had to pay to attend meeting.

## **Section 4 Socials/Food**

### ***If you did not attend a social, why not?***

- 20 of the respondents didn't attend any of the socials. 15 of those listed cost as the reason for not attending.
- Cost (6) (not including the 15 above). Also see "How Socials can be improved"
- Wanted to do other things (3)
- Had to leave (3)
- Skipped banquet to get to Louisiana
- Too late at night (2)
- Not enough energy (2)
- Food allergies (2)
- Not enough time
- Too many cliques
- Did not want to
- Never enough food
- Got caught by early pre-registration deadline and elected not to sign up a la carte on-site.
- Not here.

### ***What did you like about the socials?***

#### **General**

- Good Friends, old and new (34)
- Good food (11)
- Enough food (7)
- Getting to spend time with people I don't get to see except at conventions. (5)
- I love meeting walkers from all over the US and getting/sharing information with them.
- Love the convention feeling.
- Sharing experiences
- Very nice events - exceeded my expectations.
- Fun
- Cheerful gatherings
- Sitting down to eat.
- Good food, nice locale, good music.
- Good show of Texas hospitality
- Everyone was friendly
- The best yet. Great food and enough for all.
- Lots of good food and timely service.
- Not too crowded
- This convention sets the standard as far as lunches and meet n greet.
- The friendly volunteers and great food and decorations.

#### **Lunches**

- Weds. Lunch was exceptional. Friday was very good. (2)
- Weds - great food. A little too formal.
- Fantastic

### **Meet n Greet**

- Games to find names. (4)
- It was in the exhibit/silent auction hall (3)
- Liked wearing club shirts (2)
- Meeting people. (2)
- Liked the opening of the exhibits. (2)
- Good food (2)
- Liked gathering info on the sheet.
- Large round tables/smaller tables allowing people to stand nearby one another.
- Silent auction
- Food was good once they served it all.
- Not just standing and talking. The movement through the exhibits and silent auction made conversation with strangers easier than if just standing around in little groups.

### **Eddie Deens**

- Armadillo races (3)
- Good food (2)
- A fun place with good food but they did run out of dessert.
- Excellent

### **Banquet**

- Great food. (2)
- Entertainment super. (2)

### ***How could the socials be improved?***

#### **General**

- Too expensive (13)
- Comedian or magician (2)
- Cut down on the number and the cost
- Designated
- Eat earlier. Some of us come from different time zones and eating much later than normally would.
- Prefer sit down meals. No buffets
- Let me sit down. I'll pay extra to be served hot food and give me the choice to circulate.
- Keep bands at lower decibel
- Some greeting from the committee or president before we eat.
- Make them free.
- At least one drink should be free
- More time to talk with other participants - no music or ?
- Alternate days for meals so that lunch and dinner are on different days. The banquet is in an hour and I'm still full from your excellent lunch.
- Serve regular food, not gourmet
- Could have had a lighter lunch at this convention. How about trying a brunch, say 9-12pm after a 6 am start walk with no lunch offered.

#### **Lunches**

- Weds great. Friday buffet bad idea.
- Too expensive

- Lunch could incorporate a formal social aspect
- I like a more casual lunch. Weds was too formal. Friday was better. There weren't many restaurants nearby.
- Box lunches worked better at lunch as booth people could relieve each other.

### **Meet N Greet**

- Not enough seats/tables while eating. (12)
- Don't stagger food coming out.
- Hotel withheld quesidillas until the end
- Long lines, food was cold.
- Lines too long, food not ready, disappointed in selection.
- Needed more beverages
- Good food but pricey
- There could have been chairs along the wall.
- Need punch or soda
- Too expensive for mexican food
- Don't like tex-mex
- There was no water until someone asked for some.

### **Eddie Deens**

- Music too loud (18)
- Too expensive (2)
- Missed opportunity to line dance as a mixer
- Too hot
- Too expensive for BBQ
- Cheaper drinks. It is absurd to pay \$7 for a small glass of wine.
- Food served too late.
- Food was cold.
- Bad location.
- Don't like the jail stuff
- Fun but food was only ok. Good brisket, poor ribs.
- Good food but pricey
- I didn't see any instructions on where to go after getting of DART. We had to ask a worker at the station where to go. The food was good, a bit heavy on the meat side. The music was way, way, way too loud. Rules out conversing. I know the jail bit is a way to raise money, but I don't like it.

### **Banquet**

- Free drink tasted awful
- Didn't like food choices

## **Section 5. Conventions in General**

*What would you like to see/do at future conventions?*

### **Timing of Convention**

- Don't have convention in the summer in the south (6)
- Have convention on the weekend. (3)
- Convention should be held in a more temperate month. (2)

- Consider the temperature when deciding on the convention location. (2)
- Bylaws need to be changed (re: Convention in June). (2)
- Would really like to see a change from June to October or April.
- Have convention in spring or fall.
- Move convention to May. Too hot in summer in south. Most of my club didn't come because of the heat.
- Convention should be held in September or October or November

### **Workshops**

- Evening workshops so they don't interfere with walking
- Workshops (at least one or two) that feature local/regional/state history, geology etc. Dr Rose-Mary Rumsley was superior.
- Workshops repeated a second day or alternate time to the first time offered.
- Sometimes it is too difficult to do a convention walk and then get back in time for either the lunch or a workshop. In the past I've missed workshops because of getting back late. How about having all the meetings on one day with walks on the other days? Or would having the meetings on one day be too boring?
- More thought and planning to workshops. Some speakers were not informed as to what workshop was aimed at.
- Workshops were interesting but GPS had no relation to AVA walkers and how they could use GPS to make trails, maps, etc. So speakers knowledgeable about AVA.
- Break out sessions where we could talk about common themes and share experiences, publicity, growing clubs etc.
- More pertinent workshops.
- Especially enjoy educational and historical features and speakers.
- Workshops on things or products workers use. Sometimes 1 hour isn't enough. Maybe 2 long ones each day instead of 4 short ones.
- Give names and club or other affiliation of workshop presenters with an account summary of what will be presented.
- Hand out material at workshops
- No workshops before 2 pm. Regional meetings would have been better at 4 pm. Not all people were back from walking by 2 pm.

### **Exhibitor Hall**

- More exhibitor booths. (3)
- More clubs with booths - especially the local ones. (2)
- More exhibitors - no cost to companies, take 2% of sales.
- Give silent auction more space to improve displays.

### **Future Locations**

- I would like a convention in Florida with a pre-walk on Tortuga Island
- I would very much like to attend a convention in New England. Boston or Hartford CT or other in the six NE States. As a former convention committee participant I would be happy to help plan or execute such a convention. (Lives in MI)
- Better quality workshops
- Northwest or north central US.
- Hawaii
- Would like to go to the far NW or mid-north states - Montana or Dakotas. How about a convention during Crazy Horse time? How about Branson?

- Have a convention near Canada. Have a convention near enough to Crazy Horse so that can be walked.

### **Cost**

- Less cost
- Reasonably priced meet & greet
- Less expensive hotels. I understand this is the way we pay for convention facilities. Maybe there should be information about this so those that choose not to stay at the convention hotel realize how this affects the budget.
- Cheaper accommodations. Look at having on a college campus. (3)
- Maybe you noticed? Many people didn't stay at the convention hotel, campers and people on a budget, tight wads. Econolodge (\$44) or convention hotel (\$129). If the convention hotel was less expensive, more people might stay there and could all pay less for the meals and workshops. \$25 for lunch? \$65 for banquet?

### **General suggestions/improvements :**

- Have swims (2)
- Cool tec polo shirts instead of cotton.(2)
- Newsletters on convention web site. (2)
- Have a contest at the next convention on the club that has the closest match to their club's walking mascot or symbol. Have them parade at the last social and walkers present clap loudest for the winner or vote at social and leave form on table settings. A club member has to dress up for this contest.
- Didn't see opportunity to donation to convention or the Nature Conservancy. Was it there and I missed it?
- Coffee service at workshops or way to purchase coffee nearby.
- Silent auction needs to be announced in meetings. Each day remind everyone that it is there.
- Have a computer setup at registration showing slide of how to - where- when - etc.
- More interaction between people from different states (didn't attend any of the socials)
- Do not prepackage local information. Have available for people to pick up what they will use - too much waste. Have recycling at the hotel. We need to be a greener organization.
- Wider range of workshops
- Less politicking
- Lots of walks
- A photo category of people walking. We need for publicity purposes and website.
- More exhibitors with shoes, socks.
- It would be nice to have a list of nearby restaurants.
- Focus social around AVA awards (hat pins)
- Walk in historic and scenic places with business held to a minimum and controlled cost.
- More community involvement
- More involvement from National HQ or hire a professional to run.
- A workers walk scheduled during convention for convention volunteers from out of state.
- Consider the younger population with families that convention should be held in summer. We need to woo the younger generations.
- Need food places near convention hotel.
- Have a marathon as a pre-convention event.
- How about pre and post walks in other directions. Not everyone came from the east or north.
- Fashion show of Volkssport apparel

- More items in silent auction that are pertinent to volkssporting.
- Raffle off free registration to next convention or 2 nights at a local hotel near a volkssporting event, gift certificate for New Balance shoes.
- Have entire convention committee go to front at closing general meeting to be recognized rather than just reading names. They worked hard and need to see and feel our appreciation of their efforts.
- Allow time to get between walks, workshops and general sessions.
- Workshops - club sharing.
- Get Dale Hays to teach use of GPS and volkswalking. I think he is from Colorado Springs.
- Group event off site other than dinners. Perhaps a baseball game.
- Have fun and make new friends and keep the old.
- Enjoyed being able to do multiple states.
- Would have liked a convention patch.
- The finish table idea is very good - have it every day in the exhibit hall.
- Invite target groups to come and see exhibits and meet convention participants to learn about volkssporting, e.g. local senior groups or other local groups that expand our demographics. Get on facebook and linked in and link on web site. Connect with other demographic groups.
- Half day and evening for sightseeing or shopping.
- I'd like to see more 20's - 40's year olds here. There is not enough younger people here.
- Keep doing walks that give you a flavor of the area.
- Stay at hotel that provides an affordable early morning breakfast or is near a grocery and has fridge/microwave in rooms.
- More choices of off site food and amenities. We were isolated and unable to partake in more affordable services.
- Official program booklet. For clarity, print one day's schedule on one page. If cost and space a factor, print sponsors' list on different pages or "sell" space to regions/clubs for advertising.

### **General Comments**

- We really enjoyed coming for the walks, seeing Dallas, learning about Texas and meeting all you great Texans who worked so hard to make such a great convention for us and all the rest of the volkssporters here. This was our vacation for 2009 and it was great. Thanks for all of your dedication and the joy you shared.
- Really liked coasters and holder. Nice award. (2)
- Enjoyed reading about folks who worked on this.
- Silent Auction gave folks something additional in the exhibit hall. Thanks for a great all around job.
- Keep up the good work, everything seemed to be well organized.
- Thank you for all of your hard work.
- We like to get to know a place by volksmarching. I future convention sites have an advantage like DART, it might be interesting to us a transition from one leg of a volksmarch to another, assuming this is permissible under AVA rules.
- Beautiful hotel but don't know if I'll pay this much again for 6 nights. Maybe would stay fewer nights.