

Happy Wanderers Club History Report – 2019

by John McClellan, President

The Happy Wanderers had another successful year in 2019, our 28th year of operation as a member club of the American Volkssport Association (AVA) – *America's Walking Club!*

The calendar year opened with 89 membership renewals after an ending membership of 129 in 2018. Some members returned later in the spring/summer after lapsing. Retention is down from a recent high of 82% in 2016, mostly due to the nature of the "MeetUp.com" audience who tend to join but then lapse after one year. Reasons cited for not returning included: our time schedule not being conducive, and some members who re-located out of the area. Most of those not returning gave no specific reason, and follow-ups were made throughout the spring.

We started our normal schedule of Wednesday night "fun walks" (now AVA Community Events [ACE]) in Ormond Beach and our first Sunday group walk of club year-round trails was in Sanford. On 3 January we held the first General Membership meeting of the year. Club opening funds balance was \$4,560.90, and other normal business was conducted. Club President John McClellan traveled to Greenville, SC to support the Upstate Pathfinders for a Martin Luther King multi-event weekend from 19-21 January. The following week (24 Jan), club volunteers including VP Dan Spink staffed an information table at the City of Port Orange Employee Health Fair. On Saturday 26 January, the club visited Blue Springs State Park for our annual group walk there during the Manatee Festival.

The club Executive Council held their first meeting of the year on 7 February and filed its annual report with *SunBiz* (the State of Florida) online. On 9 February, we held our first traditional event of 2019: a guided bike ride on the rail trail from the Rotary Park trailhead in Edgewater, FL. 14 participants enjoyed the 13/25 km routes. Several club members traveled to Gulf Shores in the "Flora-Bama" panhandle for a multi-event weekend for President's Day 15-18 February, and the following weekend to San Antonio, TX for the 3rd annual "Texas Trail Round-up" weekend. TTR is vying to become an official International Marching League (IML) event in 2020.

On 3 March the club hosted 58 extra walkers at our Port Orange YRE. These participants were part of the Port Orange 10-week "Get Fit" program and our walk was the kick-off event for this Parks & Recreation program – our first year supporting the event. At the March General Membership meeting, City Council candidate (special election) Lee Barreiro spoke to club members. Lee was running to replace council member and Deputy Mayor, Bob Ford – a long-time supporter of making Port Orange more walkable. The club was at 96 members after completing 2019 renewals. The club also discussed the upcoming AVA elections and the AVA biennial convention in June. Leslie Stone agreed to serve as the club's convention delegate. President John McClellan opened discussion of where to host WAF30. The consensus proposal is to stay right here in Daytona Beach. Several club members supported the First Coast Trail Forgers traditional "odd year" visit to Washington Oaks State Park on Saturday 23 March.

April saw several club activities to include our annual baseball and barbeque night with the Daytona Tortugas at Jackie Robinson Ballpark on City Island in Daytona Beach on the 12th.
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Once again, all in attendance enjoyed the food and the game. The next day, club volunteers manned an information table at the County Fairgrounds for the Volusia County School Employees Health Fair – our 2d straight year attending the event. The following Saturday 20 April was our annual group walk and picnic at the Hontoon Island State Park YRE. Windy weather once again made the cooking a challenge, but a good time was had by all nevertheless

Our May General Membership meeting consisted of the club's bi-annual elections along with the regular business. Membership stood at 105 and a quorum was present. Our current slate of officers was re-elected without challengers:

President: John McClellan
Vice-President: Dan Spink
Treasurer: Angela Clavelo
Secretary: Alice Partlow

Vice President Dan Spink told the club upon accepting that this would be his last term as VP. Soon after the elections, Treasurer Angela Clavelo informed the club's Executive Council that she would be unable to continue her duties in the next term, due to family medical obligations. Angie agreed to complete the quarter and current term of office through the end of June. Shortly after, John assumed the Treasurer duties temporarily and for several weeks while the club looked for a full-time replacement. Member-at-Large Leslie Stone later agreed to move to the Treasurer position, and a transition of those duties took place with Leslie appointed Treasurer as of 20 Sep 2019.

The club celebrated IVV World Walking Day on Wednesday 8 May at Nova Park in Ormond Beach. IVV Certificates were available to the first 10 participants who requested one. In June, Summer "ice cream" walks started again on Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. and continued through August. The big event over the summer though was the AVA Biennial Convention in Albany, NY. A total of 10 Happy Wanderers attended or volunteered at this year's convention and club member Fred Sheets was inducted into the AVA Volkssporting Hall of Fame at the AVA Banquet and Awards ceremony. Fred has a long list of contributions dating back 30+ years at all levels of the AVA – to include helping to start the Florida Volkssport Association and serving as its first President.

Membership stood at 110 for our General Membership meeting in July, and Vice President Dan Spink reported an average of 23 walkers at Wednesday night "fun walks" in May and June. Maureen Higgins spoke to the club about holding a bus trip to the Charleston, SC area in Spring of 2020 and a committee is being formed to plane this outing. Volunteers for a committee to plan the annual Christmas Party were also sought. The brochure including pre-registration form for WAF29 in Venice is now available. Discussions on location for WAF30 next year continue to be focused on the Daytona Beach area, with suggested walks

at the Smyrna Dunes in NSB and Central Park in Ormond Beach. The club's next guided bike ride will be in September and discussion about doing a Halloween walk in Cassadaga / Lake Helen resulted in Secretary Alice Partlow signing on as a co-coordinator for the event. On Saturday 3 August the club held the annual Planning Meeting to review club performance from 2018 and consider programs and ideas for next year. 3

At the September General Membership meeting the club stood at 115 members. Updates from the Planning meeting were presented, and the members decided officially to go with Daytona Beach for our WAF30 location. The annual holiday Food Drive will start 20 November and continue until the club Christmas Party on 20 December. 9 riders attended our second guided bike ride of the year on Saturday 14 September at the Lake Monroe trailhead to the Spring-to-Spring rail trail in Debary. Late in October (SAT 26 OCT) the club returned to a favorite site from some years ago, reviving a version of the Cassadaga / Lake Helen Halloween trails. 30 participants enjoyed the trails and finished just in time before the showers came! Then on 30 October, club volunteers staffed our last information table for 2019 at the Edgewater Benefits Fair for their city employees.

Walk Around Florida (WAF29) was held from 1—3 November in Venice, FL. Club attendance and volunteerism was strong once again, with Happy Wanderers in charge of the overall volunteer workers roster, and the guided Bike Ride on Saturday morning. More than 100 people attended WAF29 including a contingent of about 15 "meet-UP" walkers from a walking group in Sarasota on the Sunday morning event. The following week we welcomed back some of our winter "snowbirds" at the November General Membership meeting. Membership was reported as 123. Discussion included our annual Holiday Food Drive, the club Christmas Party, and upcoming events in early 2020. The annual Veterans Day group walk was once again held on Monday evening 11 November by using the existing Port Orange YRE 5k trail. Once again, members paused at the Memorial Grove to offer personal remembrances of Veterans in their lives. On Friday 29 November, 30 volkssporters participated in our 3rd straight walk on "Black Friday" in coordination with the AVA #OptOutside initiative. This year, the event was at DeLeon Springs State Park.

As is our tradition, the club's Holiday Food Drive in association with the Presbyterian Church of Port Orange was featured in December and once again members donated generously. For the 5th straight year, the club held its annual Christmas Party in the Banquet Room at VFW Post #3282 – this year on Friday, December 20th. The event was planned by Alice Partlow, Leslie Stone and Sheila McClellan. 45 members and guests attended an enjoyable evening including conversation, games, dinner, and singing/dancing.

We ended the year with club membership of 132 – +3 from 2018. Participants for all YRE were 1,302 (including a small number of "free" walkers) and TE were only 83, for an overall total of 1,385 – up 104 from 2018. After a successful 28th year, the Happy Wanderers are well postured for continued success in 2020.

Attachments:

- 1 - 2019 Walk #s
- 2 - 2018/19 Financial Summary
- 3 - 2019 Membership Roster

2019 Happy Wanderer Event Participant #s:

Traditional Events

14	Edgewater – Bike; 2/9
9	Lake Monroe – Bike; 9/14
30	Lake Helen – Walk; 10/26
30	DeLeon Springs – Walk; 11/29
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83	participants; Ave. Walk = 30; Ave. Bike = 12

Year-Round Events

24	Blue Springs SP (SE 581)
89	Cocoa Beach (YR 634)
105	Daytona Beach (YR 1134)
111	DeLand (YR 440)
84	Flagler Beach (YR 1904)
61	Hontoon Island SP (YR 549)
107	Mt. Dora (YR 726)
70	New Smyrna Beach (YR 1129)
93	Ormond Beach (YR 977)
53	Palm Coast (YR 1885)
16	Palm Coast <i>Bike</i> (YR 1874)
77	Ponce Inlet (YR 725)
141	Port Orange (YR 1132) <i>high – w/Get Fit +58</i>
20	Port Orange <i>Bike</i> (1853)
22	Port Orange <i>Swim</i> (YR 1351)
98	St. Augustine (YR1128)
92	Sanford (YR 1510)
39	Savannah, GA (YR 1366) <i>very low</i>
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1,302	participants; Ave. per Walk: 83; Bike/Swim: 19 3 – 2019 Membership Roster