

Happy Wanderers Club History Report – 2021

by John McClellan, President

The Happy Wanderers had continued success in 2021, despite the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. With traditional events limited most of the year, we nonetheless managed to execute Walk Around Florida (WAF30) and celebrated 2021 as our 30th year of operation as a member club of the American Volkssport Association (AVA) – *America’s Walking Club!*

The calendar year opened with only 58 early renewals, after an ending membership of 129 in 2020. By the March meeting we were back to 97 members on our roster. Annual retention remained between 60-65% during the pandemic. Until the pandemic wanes, the club is continuing to monitor membership, but are not overly concerned with these numbers. 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 ACE “fun walks” at Halifax Marina in Daytona Beach, and our first Sunday group walk of club year-round trails was in Ormond Beach. On 7 January we held the first General Membership meeting of the year. Club opening funds balance for 2020 was \$4,758.83. Our 2020 holiday food drive netted over \$200 in cash and gift cards, along with over \$200 in food items, to help needy families. In 2021, we are updating all our YRE boxes with the new AVA logos and adding a “QR” code that links to the club website. Club webmaster David McCarthy, provided a presentation on our new website, completed during the pandemic. On Saturday 23 January, the club visited Blue Springs State Park for our annual group walk there during the Manatee Festival, with a total of 32 walkers for this seasonal event (SE.)

The club Executive Council held their first meeting on 4 February and filed its annual report with *SunBiz* (State of FL) online. Club store manager Janet Stone made a presentation to the board on her ideas for 2021 offerings and need for website support. Planning efforts for WAF30 were resumed, with the considerable head-start that the 2020 postponement now afforded. Plans to make training presentations on the duties of a walk box POC and on how TEs are run, were discussed. As the new start point for Sanford (Historic Visitor’s Center) require map & directions updates, this may be the club’s next OSB upload. On 27 February, we held our first traditional event of 2020: a guided bike ride on the rail trail from Green Springs Park in Enterprise, FL – our 2d time using this trail. (The event was postponed 2 weeks due to weather.) 14 participants enjoyed the 13/25 km routes.

At the 4 March General Membership meeting held at VFW 3282, guest speakers Dr. Shawn LaCourt and student intern Ryan Sod, from Palmer Chiropractic Clinic, shared a presentation on how the chiropractic clinic can provide relief for walking injuries, analyze your walking gait, and help you maintain healthy walking routines. Club members also voted to approve the proposed changes to AVA’s national bylaws and accompanying minor changes in the club Bylaws. WAF30 hotel reservations were re-opened, and the dinner will be \$35/pp. Planning continues for 4 walks and a swim. With the continuing pandemic and vaccinations only just starting, the Charleston Bus Trip was postponed to 2022. Club

elections are scheduled for next meeting in May. The position of Vice President will be open. On 7 March, the club hosted 22 extra walkers at our Port Orange YRE for the city “Get Fit” program – our 3rd year supporting the event. (The pandemic limited the normally larger size of the program.) On 27 March, the club supported the First Coast Trail Forgers traditional “odd year” visit to Washington Oaks State Park. For AVA National Walking Week (1—7 Apr), the club included 2 walks, on 3 April at Hontoon Island and then on 7 April at Venetian Bay.

The April Board meeting was held on 1 April, no fooling. Club leaders discussed the continuing pandemic, with vaccines now available and club members beginning to get vaccinated in the last few weeks. Treasurer Leslie Stone agreed to be our club Delegate at the AVA Biennial Convention in June. The club will order light rain jackets with our club logo to sell. Discussion about a possible 30th anniversary walk led to a decision to instead hold the BBQ picnic with the Daytona Tortugas in August (season expected to be open by then) and celebrate the anniversary there. The WAF30 committee met in March and updates included tasks for each club and a 2d meeting hosted at the hotel in May. Construction along the Sweetheart trail in downtown Daytona forced us to modify the Friday walk route.

The club recognized IVV World Walking Day on Wednesday 5 May at Nova Park in Ormond Beach. IVV Certificates were available. Our 6 May General Membership meeting consisted of the club’s bi-annual elections along with the regular business. Membership stood at 104 and a quorum was present. There was an average of 26 walkers on Wednesday evenings for the last two months. Sandy McArthur ran (unopposed) to succeed Dan Spink as Vice President, while Dan accepted nomination as a club At-Large elected member. 2021-23 officers are:

President:	John McClellan
Vice-President:	<i>Sandy McArthur</i>
Treasurer:	Leslie Stone
Secretary:	Alice Partlow
At-large:	Gloria Pratt
At-large:	<i>Dan Spink</i>

Dan Spink received an AVA Meritorious Service award certificate for his 7 years of service as club Vice President. Club members Marilyn Caskey and Teresa Saltzer have taken over the duties for the Daytona Beach walk and for the Sanford walk. A hands-on workshop covering the volunteer positions needed when we hold a Traditional Event like WAF 30 was held by the President with all in attendance.

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 Madison, WI from 26 June – 3 July. A total of 9 Happy Wanderers attended this year’s convention. Membership stood at 109 for our General Membership meeting on 8 July, with an update from the AVA Biennial. Our club brought home 5 publicity awards (for photos) thanks to Leslie Stone and Sheila McClellan. WAF 2019 in Venice won 1st Place for multi-event weekends. Our Sanford YRE is now available via the AVA Online Start Box (OSB). The physical box will remain active.

11 members attended the club's annual Planning Meeting on 7 August, with expectations of returning to more normal operations in 2022. The 3 new members (Marilyn, Gail and Steve) in attendance helped the board put together ideas and event calendars for 2022. On Thursday 19 August, the Happy Wanderers celebrated the club's 30th year anniversary at the Daytona Tortugas Baseball game with a great turnout and a good game. Club President John McClellan read the AVA certificate with 30-year streamer and presented additional awards to the 2019-21 term officers, and webmaster David McCarthy.

At the 2 September General Membership meeting the club stood at 114 members. Two new AVA special programs, Rails to Trails and Town/City Halls were announced for the club to assess before the start of 2022. Continued planning actions for WAF30 included three scheduled worker's walks and the volunteer roster to be opened by 15 September. The annual holiday Food Drive and whether we'd hold a year-end holiday party were also raised for discussion. The club later surveyed all members on their planned attendance at any indoor holiday function. 9 riders attended our second guided bike ride of the year on Saturday, 11 September at the Rotary Park trailhead in Edgewater. The event earned the club two new members.

As the 7 October Board meeting rolled around, the preparations for WAF30 were mostly on track. The volunteer roster filled up fast – a great sign of a strong club. Many new Happy Wanderers volunteered at a major event for the first time. Hotel room-nights were well ahead of our contracted numbers, but we were behind on registrations for the Saturday night banquet dinner. This eventually became an issue with *the Plaza*, who insisted we reach the full 80, and not 80% or 64 - as the contract seemed to indicate, to retain our "free" meeting space. The clubs worked at it and we got 78, 2 short, then agreed to pay the full 80 and hold them for day-off sales. There was also an issue with sales tax paid vs. the contract (in advance) when the club is sales tax free in Florida. Eventually, both disputes were resolved. The November General Membership meeting was held early on a Tuesday, before WAF30. Membership was reported as 123. Plans to walk with the Mid-Florida Milers on "Black Friday" had to be cancelled when they postponed the event. Instead, the club would visit their Ponce Preserve "fun walk" for #optoutside.

Walk Around Florida (WAF30) was held from 5-7 November in Daytona Beach, Ormond Beach and New Smyrna Beach, FL. Day 1 brought all-day rains and high winds, making the beach walk in Daytona miserable for about 20 participants who braved the storm. By Saturday morning, the weather had cleared, and the remaining events were held without incident. Thanks to the hotel catering chef, our dinner was moved upstairs to a fabulous banquet hall and the program went very well. The raffle of 3 club baskets helped offset additional costs in this pandemic year, and overall - the event was attended by close to 100 participants, with total participation of 409. Participants enjoyed the Smyrna Dunes, Central Park and One Daytona events, and many who didn't walk on Friday, went back and did the Daytona Beach walk later.

The annual Veterans Day group walk was held on Thursday, 11 November on the north 5k route. Once again, members paused at the Memorial Grove to offer personal remembrances of Veterans in their lives. On Friday 26 November, many regulars attended our 5th straight walk on "Black Friday" in coordination with the AVA #OptOutside initiative. This year, the event was at Ponce Preserve.

As is our tradition, the club's Holiday Food Drive in association with the Presbyterian Church of Port Orange was held in December, with our members donating \$325 in cash/gift cards and 266 individual food items. The club cancelled its annual Christmas Party due to the ongoing pandemic, and likewise did not hold the New Year's Eve afternoon dinner. In 2021, we did hold the NYE afternoon fun walk on a new route – walking from Riverside Park to the Sugar Mill Gardens, where we visited the club's donated bench (from 1991) and remembered any departed members. Sadly, we learned later this same day that long-time member, Marianne Gray, had suffered a devastating stroke and later passed on 2 Jan 2022. Marianne will be remembered for her many years supporting the club.

We ended the year with club membership of 134: up +5 from 2020. Paid participants for all YRE were 1,513 (including the WAF30 YRE) and TE were 330 – with 2x guide bike rides (22) and 318 on WAF30: 3 walks and 1 swim. Our total participation of 1,843 is up +191 from 2020. Our 2021 closing balance was \$5,734.74 and our AVA FY Financial Report has been signed and submitted.

After a successful 30th year, the Happy Wanderers are well postured for continued success in 2022.

Attachments:

- 1 – 2021 Walk #s
- 2 – 2021 Financial Summary (*separate file*)
- 3 – 2021 Membership Roster (*separate file*)

2021 Happy Wanderer Event Participant #s:

Traditional Events

- 13 Enterprise – Bike; 2/27
- 9 Edgewater – Bike; 9/11

WAF30 --

- 22 Swim 11/3-11/4
- 99 Smyrna Dunes – Walk; 11/4
- 99 Central Park – Walk; 11/4
- 98 One Daytona

340 participants; Ave. Walk = 99; Ave. Bike = 11 Swim: 22

Year-Round Events

- 32 Blue Springs SP (SE 581)
- 98 Cocoa Beach (YR 634)
- 179 Daytona Beach (YR 1134) *w/WAF 30 (+91)*
- 111 DeLand (YR 440)
- 98 Flagler Beach (YR 1904)
- 51 Hontoon Island SP (YR 549)
- 105 Mt. Dora (YR 726)
- 94 New Smyrna Beach (YR 1129)
- 78 Ormond Beach (YR 977)
- 84 Palm Coast (YR 1885) *good increase in 2021*
- 16 Palm Coast *Bike* (YR 1874)
- 96 Ponce Inlet (YR 725)
- 149 Port Orange (YR 1132) *high – w/Get Fit +*
- 17 Port Orange *Bike* (1853)
- 35 Port Orange *Swim* (YR 1351)
- 137 St. Augustine (YR1128)
- 80 Sanford (YR 1510)
- 53 Savannah, GA (YR 1366) *some improvement*

1,513 participants; Ave. Walk (15): 101; Bike(2): 17 Swim(1): 35

Total: 1,843 paid