



From the President

John McClellan

Welcome to 2022 with the Happy Wanderers, our 31st year in AVA: America's Walking Club! Thanks for joining or renewing your membership and supporting our club.

We've got some new events coming up early this year, so please check our website and social media. On Saturday February 12th there will be a walk or bike ride at Chain-of-Lakes Park in Titusville, followed by a pot-luck picnic. Volunteer sign-ups are on our website – we need people to work the event and to bring side dishes, deserts, or drinks. On Saturday March 5th is our visit to Ravine Gardens State Park in Palatka where we haven't walked since 2018! We expect members of the First Coast club in JAX to join us for the Azalea Festival there, and we have rooms blocked for Friday night (the 4th) at the Quality Inn & Suites Riverfront, at a reduced rate. Call (386) 328-3481 if you want a room and say, "Happy Wanderers." We'll need volunteers for this traditional event as well.

AVA National Walking Week will be the first week in April and we'll have two events – our regular Sunday and Wednesday schedule. There will not be a walk on Easter Sunday, but that Saturday we'll visit Hontoon Island State Park – always an adventure! The weekend of Friday, April 29th—Sunday, May 1st is the club's long-delayed bus trip to Charleston and Savannah! Then on Saturday June 4th we'll be visiting Princess Place Preserve in Palm Coast, for National Trails Day.

As we pass the 2d anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, the club continues to operate with your health and safety in mind. We recommend that all participants be vaccinated and ask that any unvaccinated participants continue to be respectful of others by wearing masks and maintaining social distance during pre-walk registration time. All of our pandemic measures are on the website.

Sadly, as the year started, we lost one of our long-time members, Marianne Gray, who passed on January 2d after suffering a stroke. Marianne volunteered with the club for many years, organizing our annual visit to the Daytona Tortugas, and always helping out where needed. Marianne was 80, and is survived by her husband Larry; daughter, Lori of Port Orange; son, Steve of Mt. Dora; two grandchildren in Minnesota; and, a sister Ortrud, brother Georg, and nephew Mirko, all of Germany. My thanks to all the club members who turned out at the memorial service.