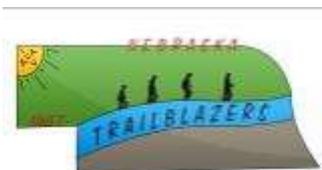


Footsteps

Fun, Fitness, Friendship



The Prez Sez...

It is my pleasure to be writing this message as your newly elected club president. I consider it an honor and a privilege to be a part of such a wonderful group of people. I am still a relatively new member to the club, however in a short amount of time I have already made some wonderful new friendships.

Our most recent club event took place on Saturday December 5th of 2020. This final Traditional Event (TE) of 2020, saw beautiful temps and eager club members make the trek to Seward, Ne. for the Christmas City of Nebraska Walk. Thirty club members from the Omaha, Lincoln and Council Bluffs area were among the participants. Among those attending, were seven new NWFT members from the original Lincoln Volkssport Club (LVC) A warm NWFT welcome to all of our new members! If you were unable to attend, please check out the amazing photos which are now posted on our Facebook page.

To start the new year off, please do plan to attend our annual dinner meeting on Monday January 11th from 7:00 to 7:40 pm. Since we currently are not able to meet face to face, the Zoom™ meeting format will replace our normal annual dinner format for 2021. During this meeting we will transfer the gavel to the new president, meet our new board, and also give out awards and announce the 2020 Walker of the Year. A forthcoming email with a ZOOM™ link to the meeting will be available soon.

To say that 2020 was a challenging year for us all, may possibly be an understatement. However our resilient NWFT Trailblazers do have an impressive lineup of walks in place for the forthcoming year to settle us back into a familiar and comfortable routine. Soon before the last snow thaws, it will be time for our first Traditional Event (TE) of the new year. The Soup and Butterflies Walk

(our annual soup walk) will take place on Saturday March 6, 2021. This event is located at St. Columbkille Sacred Heart Center, 543 N. Jefferson St in Papillion, NE. Arrive anytime between 9am-12noon, and walk at your leisure, returning back before 3pm. As an added COVID-19 mitigation measure, please take advantage of our e-Registration for this event, and pay when you arrive. You may pre-register for this event by using the following e-registration link for this walk: <https://forms.gle/FwWUTLWjH7ZWVjGV6>. Please bring two cans of soup to this walk. After the walk, and subject to health department guidelines, please join your fellow walkers for some soup and get to know your new friends better. The remaining soup cans are to be donated to the local food bank. COVID-19 mitigation strategies for this event will be forthcoming in a future email.

As a reminder, our 2021 Walk booklet can be downloaded on our website at www.netrailblazers.club. This booklet contains valuable walk information, with a detailed list of our eight Traditional Event (TE) walks for the 2021 year. Also included are our 2021 COVID-19 protocols for our traditional walks. In addition we have included a comprehensive list of our club's Year-round and seasonal events.

As I conclude this article, my first for the 2021 Footsteps Newsletter, I do so with excitement and anticipation for the upcoming new walking year. I look forward to the new year, a new year filled with hope. A hope that all of us can spend more time together enjoying a healthy, (socially distant) happy and active new year on the trails!

Please stay healthy, stay safe,

~Steve

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For the latest on events and news visit our website:

<http://www.netrailblazers.club/>





Sandy Peaks

Have you been wondering what the numbers looked like for the Walk 20 in 2020 state park initiative? I can only give you a partial rundown, but the numbers are pretty impressive and saved us from having a year with almost no walkers. For actual Volksmarchers, we posted numbers totaling 578. Lake Manawa led the pack with 97. Lake Anita followed close behind with 84 and Prairie Rose with 79. Lewis and Clark and Waubonsie tied with 68. Lake of Three Fires edged out Stone with 61 and 60 respectively.

Nonvolkswalkers had two options on how to obtain maps for these routes. I do not have the numbers from the Iowa Parklands website, but the numbers from the DNR website are really impressive. These are listed as "Hits". Let's start with the smallest numbers. Waubonsie had 443. Lake Anita had 455. Stone Park had 467. Prairie Rose had 477. Lewis and Clark had 534. Lake of Three Fires had 573. The incredible one was Lake Manawa with 11,151 hits. That is massive and way over any of the other state parks. Maybe a YRE should be considered.

If you haven't had a chance to look over the new brochure for the walks in 2021, we have some incredible walks coming. Hopefully, with the vaccine on the horizon, we will be able to relax and enjoy these well-planned walks. Check out the new seasonal walks starting in April. The Wabash Trace is a nice shady walk out and back on great surface. The Omaha Veterans and Libraries is an online startbox and has EIGHT veteran monuments and TEN Little Free Libraries. We have also added a few of the walks that Lincoln had sponsored. We will sorely miss that club, but will attempt to keep some of their great walks such as the Lincoln downtown YRE, Seward YRE and Nebraska City seasonal. And our traditional walks are all great walks.

After a year like no other, I hope you have all been healthy and happy. We hope to see you on the trail in 2021.

~Sandy

Where it all Began...

Our very first volksmarch took place in Gelnhausen, Germany on the first Saturday of September, 1971. At the time I was first sergeant of a communications unit in Frankfurt. Sheila read in the Stars and Stripes a couple days prior an item on something about a volksmarch. We thought that would be a good exercise event for us and Kurt and Paul, then 13 and 11, respectively. This volksmarch was called the Barbarossa March in memory of Emperor Frederick from the 12th century. He had a red beard which means 'barbarossa' in Italian.

One of my platoon sergeants volunteered himself and some of his men to accompany us to Gelnhausen for the event. His troops carried the unit guidon and wore their field uniforms. As a group we had about 20 and registered as a group.

The trail was in the foothills of the Spessart mountain range and went up and then came back down. And it was 13km!! Our first walk and it went over 8 miles! But we and Kurt and Paul and the troops enjoyed the outing. At the finish they enjoyed it even better for there was a free bowl of ham and bean soup. They had to buy their own beer.

At the finish we picked up some brochures for future walks and decided to take on another walk the next day. After that we were hooked on volksmarching.



~Jim and Sheila



Covid-19 Protocols

We truly value every one of our walkers and the volunteers that make our walks happen. In order to minimize the risk of infection, we've adopted the following procedures at our walks. These procedures may be altered if CDC guidelines change.

- **MASKS ARE REQUIRED AT THE REGISTRATION and FINISH TABLES**, per AVA guidelines. Please keep your mask on as you gather before and after the walk. We also require **6' Social Distancing** in those areas.
- Our volunteers will be gloved and masked. We will sanitize supplies and the workspace as needed.
- Register ahead of time, using our convenient eRegistration. If you cannot use eRegistration, a paper Start Card will be available for you to complete. Please bring your own pen to do so.
- Bring payment in an envelope, using exact change or a check (made payable to NWFT). \$3 per walker.
- Credit Walkers: Leave your books at the Start Table to be stamped while you're walking. Collect them at the end; they will be placed in alphabetical order on the table.
- Collect your trail map and off you go! Once you're walking, folks from different households should maintain at least a 6' social distance (your arm is about 3' long). Masks can come off while walking so long as that distance is maintained.

When you return and you're ready to socialize, that will take place in an open area after the event. For outdoor socialization, please bring your own lawn chair.



Meet Jim Webb



I joined the Trailblazers in Fall 2017, and attended walks in Plattsmouth and in Omaha (the pie walk, and the Christmas lights), but had not yet attended a club meeting. In Feb 2018, I slipped on a small piece of black ice and fractured my left acetabulum – the hip joint. I spent the next seven weeks in rehab at Brookstone Meadows in Elkhorn. About the 2nd or 3rd week of my stay, my wife, Diana, brought me several (a dozen or more) envelopes addressed to me, with Omaha area return addresses. As we opened them, we realized they were get-well cards from Trailblazers members, most of whom had never met me! They were filled with warm wishes, and we both were very touched by the thoughtfulness of these folks, and became very motivated to become active members of this group. As soon as I was physically able to do so, Diana and I attended our first meeting and became hooked on the group, and have remained so to the present day.

~Jim Webb

Zooming Our Annual Meeting

Nebraska Trailblazers is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Annual Meeting
 Time: Jan 11, 2021 07:00 p.m. Central Time (US/Canada)

Link sent to club members

Your NWFT club and many of its members contributed to the San Antonio, TX area Big Give. This event raised over \$100,000 for AVA.

Drum roll Please! 

NWFT gave enough money at the right time and won a free registration to the national conference—and we are giving it away to a club member.

See elsewhere in this newsletter for instructions.

Win a free convention registration and come join us in Madison!



Win a free convention registration and come join us in Madison!

Come to the 2021 AVA Biennial Convention in Madison Wisconsin. Convention dates June 29 (Tuesday) – July 2 (Friday). Pre-convention events are being planned for June 26 (Saturday) – June 29 (Tuesday), and a post convention event on July 3 (Saturday). Lots of walks, bikes, swims, “Cheesy” entertainment and lots of AVA information. If you have never attended a convention, now is your chance. It is always a great time!

Just send your name to our incoming president, Steve Burkland, at his email address, to be entered to win.

Don't wait, the drawing will be held at the Annual Meeting on Zoom on Monday, January 11. The meeting starts at 7 p.m.

You do not need to be present to win.



Madison AVA





Mark your calendars: Upcoming Events!!

***Many events have been canceled or postponed.
Check the calendar below to make sure your event is still scheduled***

January

2 Northtown Mall Walk, Blaine, MN Lake Country Wanderers

February

14 Presidents Day Eagles Walk, Lawrence, KS Sunflower Sod Stompers
20 William O'Brien State Park Snow Shoe Walk, Marine on St. Croix, MN.....NorthStar Trail Travelers

March

6 Soup & Butterflies Walk, Papillion, NE.....Nebraska Trailblazers
20 Castlewood State Park Walk, Ballwin, MO Gateway Milers

Send in Your Newsletter Info

To place info/articles/photos in the next newsletter,

 email: netrailblazers@gmail.com

 snail-mail: NWFT, PO Box 8147, Omaha NE 68108

Event Awards for Club Members		
	<u>Events</u>	<u>Distance</u>
Diana Whited	225, 250 275	2500
Donna Campbell	475	3000
Lee Frantz	475	3000
Butch Spaulding	2200	
Don Corrigan	1000	

NWFT Officers

President
Steve Burkland

Vice President
Jim Webb

Secretary
Dave Brown

Treasurer
Jill Champley

Speaker Schedule

TBA



Meeting News

When possible, we hope to be able to meet in person again. Changes may have to be made, but in the past, the meetings started at 7:00 p.m., with a short program before the business meeting. Just a reminder that the club meetings are the 1st Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. with some exceptions: no meetings in January, July or August, and it is the 2nd Monday in September. Don't forget that at each meeting, we have a drawing for a \$10 door prize. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be a club member to win this.

Changes to Club Dues

Information on the club dues structure for 2021 is as follows:

- Anyone joining now through 12/31/**20** still must pay for a full year.
- Any club member whose membership expires before 12/31/**20** still must pay for a full year.
- Anyone who joins in **2021** will join for free and their membership expires 12/31/**21** (a benefit that Lincoln members who join us will like).
- All club members current as of 1/1/**21** have their memberships expire 12/31/**21**.
- All club members in 2021 who wish to be club members in **2022** will pay \$10 individual or \$15 family due by the annual banquet in January **2022**.
- Anyone who joins later in **2022** will have their membership pro-rated so that it expires 12/31/**22**.
- Since club members who adopt a YRE/SE/Traditional Event have no annual dues, per our by-laws, they will receive 5-coupons valued at \$3 apiece for use only at our club events.

Renewal is \$10 for a single membership and \$15 for a family membership.

Please send renewals to: NWFT
PO Box 8147
Omaha NE 68108