

Please provide YOUR Newsletter Inputs—
Travel, Comment, Pictures, Topics
to Dan Barnett at
dnlcssb@aol.com

Upcoming walks this quarter:
July 18, August 1, 15 & 29, September 5 & 19
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MID-FLORIDA MILERS NEWSLETTER

Comments from the President

by Cathy Metherell, President

WAF 35, Big Thank You and A walk through history of Mid-Florida Milers walk location's part 1.

Planning for Walk Around Florida 35 is underway with Suncoast Sandpiper's as the host club this year. The theme is "A Park Odyssey" in the Bradenton Florida area. Registration is open for both the hotel and weekend events and can be found on the Mid-Florida Milers web site and in this newsletter. We also will have information on our upcoming club walks too.

I want to thank all of you for putting your trust in me to continue as your president for the next two years. Thank you to all of you who are contributing your time to the Mid-Florida Milers.

With it being the 250th birthday of the United States and 37th year of the Mid-Florida Milers walking club, I thought I would write about the locations of our walks working my way from north to south.

The Mid-Florida Milers started walks in the Villages in 2016 at Lake Sumpter Landing and then Spanish Springs. Early 1970s near Spanish Springs two businessmen, George Schwartz and Al Tarrson, developed Orange Blossom Gardens in northwest Lake County. After Tarrson sold his share, Schwartz brought in his son Gary Morse. They aimed to create a version of Del Webb Sun City outside Phoenix AZ. in central Florida. The area was officially renamed "The Villages" in 1992. Land was acquired in Marion and Sumpter counties for development. Between 2010 and 2019 The Villages was the top master planned

community for sales in the USA. There are now 5 town centers and 56 golf courses with more in the works. Golf Carts are the main transportation in The Villages. The Villages covers an area from CR 42 in the north down south past the Florida Turnpike. Thank you Jan Van Vlack as our walk point of contact for the Lake Sumter Landing and Spanish Springs walks.

Travel down US 441 to Maitland Blvd Extension and go east toward I 4 to the next walk location. Maitland Fl. is one of the oldest municipalities in central Florida which started out as an outpost in 1838 on Lake Fumecheliga (now Lake Maitland) during the second Seminole Indian War. The city was named for Captain William Seton Maitland who was killed at the Battle of Wahoo Swamp. Maitland was the third Orange County town to be incorporated in 1885 and became a city in 1959. Some of the oak trees you walk by have been there almost 100 years. There were lots of citrus groves around the area. On the north side of Maitland Blvd. there was still a working grove I would pass while working on the west side of I 4. When you walk through Lake Lily Park, part of the path was Old Black Bear Trail that went from Montreal Canada to St. Petersburg Fl. The city opened a new city hall and Independence Park along Independence Lane. The city hosts a Farmer's Market most Sunday mornings and Movies in the Park during cooler months at this location. There is a SunRail stop in Maitland. Maitland spans areas from neighborhoods in the east crossing over I 4 where you find many office buildings. Until a few years ago The Orlando Magic executive offices were located there. Thank you Tom Carter as our Maitland walk point of contact.

Traveling south on 17/92 is the city of Winter Park. Earliest residents were Muscogee Creek and Choctaw Native Americans. The first European to inhabit the area was David Mizell who bought an 8-acre plot of land in the area of Lakes Virginia, Mizell and Berry which was called Lake View and latter called Osceola. A post office was opened in the area near the current train depot. When the railroad was built in the 1880s, Loring Chase and Oliver Chapman bought land to plan the community as a resort for snowbirds, promoting it for its health benefits. Buildings had to meet architectural standards for approval and one of the first was the town hall. Seminole Hotel was first to be built in 1886 on what is now Kiwi Circle on Lake Osceola. Orange groves were planted in the area. Rollins College was founded in 1885 by Congregational Assembly as the first private university in Florida. Town of Winter Park was incorporated in 1887 and later as a city in 1925.

Presidential visits over the years include Chester A. Arthur, Grover Cleveland, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Barack Obama. The Winter Park Library was founded in 1885 by 9 women located on 1503 Interrelation Ave. Mrs. Elizabeth P. Hooker, head of the committee, was tasked with finding a location for the library on New England Ave. In 1937 a separate library was opened for black residents in Hannibal Square by Dr. Edwin O. Grover president of Rollins Collage at that time. Over time both libraries came together as the current location now known as Winter Park Library and Events Center on W Morse Blvd.

Winter Park is known for peacocks that were brought as a pair to the city by Jeanette Genius McKean and her husband Hugh from a trip to Asia in the 1950s. Hugh McKean was president of Rollins College during 1950s. The peacocks roamed the estate of Charles Homer Morse, the grandfather of Jeanette Genius and escaped to the surrounding areas including downtown Winter Park but now are mostly confined to a nature preserve located along lakes Virginia, Mizell and Berry. You can see this preserve from the lake path at Rollins College. There have been times while doing the Winter Park route that I heard peacocks in the distance. Peacocks have been reported in some areas of Orlando and Maitland. The city

updated the city seal to include the peacock in the early 2000s.

In 1972 agricultural agent Henry Swanson sent a letter to the editor warning Orange County Mayors of over development and Winter Park had the highest risk level for sinkholes in the county. In 1981 water levels were lower than normal in the Florida limestone aquifer. May 8th a sinkhole opened at the corner of Denning Dr and Fairbanks Ave. A large sycamore tree fell in at the home of Mea Rose Williams. Over the next two days Williams house, five Porsches at a repair shop, Winter Park municipal pool, and a large portion of Denning drive were swallowed up by the sinkhole. In the end the hole was 320 feet wide and 90 feet deep. Several Porsches were pulled out of the hole before dirt and concrete was poured in to stabilize the hole. The hole is now called Lake Rose. I was one of many tourists to visit the sinkhole when I was visiting for a family wedding in June of 1981 and remember seeing the pool slide hanging on the side of the hole.

A grove of orange trees were planted at what is now Palmer Ave and Temple Grove St. They were introduced in 1894 from Jamaica and named for William Chase Temple a citrus grower. Temple oranges are a hybrid between sweet orange and mandarin and have a sweet tart taste and very juicy. Due to its thin skin, Temple Oranges are not suitable for shipping and are only available February and March.

Rollins College has been a part of Winter Park and central Florida almost from the beginning. Rollins is the 4th post secondary and 1st private college in Florida, opening November 4, 1885 near its current Winter Park location. The college was established by New England Congregationalist as a liberal arts college. Lucy Cross called the mother of Rollins College, encouraged the Congregational Church to locate a college in Florida. The college was named for Alonzo Rollins a Chicago businessman who made a substantial donation. Many of the buildings are of Spanish and Mediterranean Revival architecture. Rollins is one of the southern Ivy schools joining the likes of William and Mary, Swanee, Washington & Lee and Vanderbilt to name a few. Some notable alumni include Fred Rogers, Nobel Prize winner for chemistry Donald

J. Cram, Buddy Ebsen, Glenda Hood, and Elin Nordegren.

There are Amtrak and SunRail stops at the train station. west of Central Park which is a gathering place for events throughout the year. Thank you Michael Kirchner as our Winter Park walk point of contact.

To the south of Winter Park is the city of Orlando, where the club has three walks. The Orlando North walk starts at Marks Street Senior Recreation Complex. Orlando Downtown and Orlando South start from the Beardall Senior Center.

The Marks Street building was designed Howard M. Reynolds and built by F. A. Peppercorn during a land boom of the 1920s. The school was opened from 1925 to 1967 as Marks Street School with the same Principal Miss Ethel M. Cornwright. Magnolia Special Education School moved there from 1967 to 1971. From 1971 the building was used as a textbook depository for Orange County Schools. The weight of the massive crates caused major damage to the foundation and interior of the building. The building was left vacant until a grassroots group urged the preservation of the school. From 1981 to 1984 the facility was renovated to become Marks Street Multi-Purpose Senior Center operated by a non-profit Board of Management. In 1989 the building was transferred to Orange County Parks and Recreation and renamed Marks Street Senior Recreation Complex in 1994. There are many programs for seniors that include exercise classes, crafts, yoga, and a game room. A few politicians have visited Marks Street senior Center over the years. Thank you to John Hunter being our Orlando North walk point of contact.

The Beardall Senior Center opened in 1920 as the Delaney Elementary School. It was designed by Frederick Homer Trimble with Prairie Style/Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. In 1983 the Orange County Public School sold the property to the City of Orlando. After renovation, the building was rededicated on Nov. 13th, 1986, as the Mayor William Beardall Senior Center who was the 26th mayor of Orlando from 1941-1952. Over 100 clubs meet there for many events. The building is listed on the registry for historic

buildings. Thank you JoAnne Cross as walk point of contact for the our Orlando Downtown and Orlando South walks.

The city of Orlando is 4th most populous city in Florida and as of 2025, it is the 20th most populous metro area in the US. Orlando International Airport is the 7th busiest in the US and 18th busiest in the world. Most visitors come to enjoy the theme parks; however, Orlando is also known for its museums and performing arts too. One thing you may not know is Orlando has a coffee culture to rival Seattle WA.

In 1823 The Treaty of Moultrie was signed creating a Seminole reservation that covered central Florida. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced the Seminoles to leave and make their way to Oklahoma. Enforcement of the Treaty of Payne's Landing, led to the Second Seminole War. A fort was established as Fort Gatlin due to nearby fresh water and a main trail and the railroad. The fort was named for John S. Gatlin, who was an Army physician. White settlement started in 1842 and in 1843 Aaron Jernigan a cattleman from Georgia settled on land west end of Lake Holden. A stockade was built on the Northside of Lake Conway during Third Seminole War for protection.

Mosquito County was renamed Orange County, and a courthouse was built where the History Center is today and streets were laid out from there. First post office was opened in 1850 and relocated downtown in 1956 and is still there today. After the Civil War and during reconstruction there was explosive growth in population. Orlando was incorporated as a town July 31, 1875, and became a city in 1885.

Central Florida was a hub for the citrus industry until the great freeze in 1894 and 1895, much like what central Florida experienced in February 2026. Citrus production moved south to the Lake Wales area when the era of Citrus Barrons was king. This was the start of promoting Orlando as a popular resort area and the rest is history. Amtrak and Sunrail both stop at the Orlando Train station.

During the land boom of the 1920s some of the first neighborhoods were created. The train station

was built in 1926. Soon after, Orlando Army Air Base and Pinecastle Army Airfield were built for army personal training during WWII. After being stationed in Orlando, many military personnel returned to raise families in the area. Both bases were transferred to United States Air Force in 1947. Pinecastle Air Force Base (AFB) was renamed after Col. Michael N. W. McCoy commander of 320th Bombardment wing who was killed in a crash north of Orlando in a B 47 Stratojet Bomber. McCoy AFB was the largest employer in Orlando before Walt Disney arrived. In 1956 Martin Marietta, now Lockheed Martin, built a plant in the city. Orlando AFB. was transferred to the U S Navy with 1 of 2 Navy Nuclear Power Schools and a Naval Warfare Center Training System Division. McCoy AFB was transferred to Orlando International Airport in 1976, and the Orlando Navel Training Center was closed in 1999 and is now the Baldwin Park neighborhood. The Naval Air Warfare Center moved to Central Florida Research Park near UCF in 1989.

The historic core of Orlando can be seen from the central business district around Lake Eola west to Lake Lorna Doone, College Park; North Quarter where Marks Street Center is located to South of Downtown (SODO) location Beardall Senior Center is located. Area around Colonial Dr and Mills Ave is sometimes called Little Saigon because for the many Vietnamese who relocated after the Vietnam War. The airport is located in the city of Orlando and toward the south is Lake Nona where Medical City is located.

There are 19 skyscrapers in downtown Orlando and the tourist district. Due to the location of the Orlando Executive Airport, a building can be no taller than 441 feet. The former SunTrust Tower is the tallest building in central Florida.

One of the jewels of Orlando is the Harry P. Leu Gardens on the shore of Lake Rowena. Leu Gardens is a 50 acre semi-tropical and tropical garden shaded by 200-year-old oak trees. In 1936 Mr. and Mrs. Harry P. Leu purchased the house and garden. The Leu's brought back exotic plants and camellias from their travels around the world. The house and gardens were deeded to the City of Orlando in 1961. The Leu House is on the National Historical Register. One will see a mix of temperate and tropical plants such as azaleas, bromeliads, camellias, citrus, flowering trees and shrubs, and palms to name a few. As a teaching garden, most plants are labeled with their name. There are also classes where one can learn about plants.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our Year Round Event (YRE) sponsors. Your gift allows us to continue providing great walks for all of us to enjoy!

Look for Part 2 of the location history for Mid-Florida walks in the next newsletter. I will be cover more about Orlando and the tourist area to Celebration down the Florida east coast from West Palm to Key West. See you out on the trail.

Membership Report by Dave Piatt, Membership Chairperson

As of 6/17/26 we have 43 memberships and 62 members. This compares to 51 memberships and 76 members as of 6/17/25.

Membership continues to be down compared to last year, but we are starting our membership renewal campaign, and I am hoping we get a strong renewal rate. See the membership renewal article in this newsletter.

Please come out and join us on some of our upcoming walks where we explore parts of Central Florida.

Membership Renewal

We are a little later than last year starting our membership renewal campaign, but the process is the same as last year and just as easy! Mid-Florida Milers membership runs from July 1 to June 30. The costs for renewing now are \$15 for a single person membership and \$25 for a couple or family.

How easy is it to renew my membership? If none of your contact information has changed, then all you need to do is to pay your membership fee at one of our walks and tell them nothing has changed. Or if you are not going to be at a walk soon, then mail a check payable to Mid-Florida Milers and tell us it is a membership renewal, and nothing has changed.

Mid-Florida Milers
P. O. Box 4575
Winter Park, FL 32793

If you need to make some changes to your contact information or you are joining for the first time, then you should send in a completed membership form. The link below will download the membership form.

MFM Membership Form

With your help, our membership drive will be a big success!

Routes and Trails Topics by Dan Barnett, Routes and Trails

The quarter of July 1 through September 30 has many exciting volksmarching events planned. Include is one Traditional Event at the Black Hammock Trailhead.

Due to July 4 being a holiday, MFM will NOT host a walk on the first Saturday of the month as we usually do. **Happy 250th Birthday America!**

WAF 35 will take place 6-8 November in Bradenton, Florida. Registration is now open. Here is the [WAF 35 Flyer link](#) and the [Registration link](#). We will be sending out the volunteer sign up later this summer.

MFM Club Officers/Committees	
President	Cathy Metherell
Vice President	Paul Erickson
Secretary	Sharon Axelrod
Treasurer	Dan Barnett
Newsletter	Dan Barnett
Membership	Dave Piatt
Publicity	Veronica Palacios
Routes and Trails	Dan Barnett
Operations Support	John Hunter/Tom Carter
YRE Coordinator	Jenny Thomas
Volunteer Coordinator	Sharon Axelrod
Website	Dave Piatt

I hope to see you at all of our great walks this quarter.

NOTE: At our May Membership Meeting, it was decided to have our walk registration time to be from 8:00 to 8:30am for our walks for this quarter. In October our registration times will be 8:30 – 9:00am except for the Disney Springs and The Villages walks.

Walk Information

Q2 Mid-Florida Milers Walks		
18 Jul	Winter Park, AmTrak	8:00-8:30 am
1 Aug	Celebration #1, Starbucks	8:00-8:30 am
15 Aug	Oviedo, Black Hammock Trailhead	8:00-8:30 am
29 Aug	Universal, City Express Hotel By Marriott	8:00-8:30 am
5 Sep	Maitland, Walgreens	8:00-8:30 am
19 Sep	Orlando Downtown, Beardall Senior Center	8:00-8:30 am

DATE	Q2 Other Florida Upcoming Traditional Events	REGISTER
8 Aug	First Coast Trail Forgers, Fuller Warren Shared-Use Path (The Sup), MD Anderson Cancer Center, Jacksonville, 5/10K walk	Register 6:30am, walk at 7:00am
15 Aug	Happy Wanderers, Bounce Rock Skate Roll, Astro Skate of Ormond Beach, 250 US Route 1, Ormond Beach, (No distance provided)	Registration 2:00 pm
22 Aug	First Coast Trail Forgers, Old Ortega, Stockton Park, 4021 Ortega Blvd, Jacksonville, 7/11K walk.	Register 6:30am, walk at 7:00am
19 Sep	First Coast Trail Forgers, Palencia, 154 South End St, Palencia, St Augustine, 7/10K walk.	Register 7:30am, walk at 8:00am
	For information on other group walks in Central Florida, please visit (click on) the below club's websites or Facebook pages	
	Happy Wanderers Happy Wanderers Walking Club Webpage Happy Wanderers Facebook Page	
	First Coast Trail Forgers First Coast Trail Forgers Walking Club Webpage	
	Suncoast Sandpipers Suncoast Sandpipers Webpage Suncoast Sandpipers Facebook Page	

MFM Member Milestone Achievements			
Name	City	Events	Distance
Dan Barnett	Merritt Island	2200	25000
Paul Erickson	Orlando		10000
Courtesy The American Wanderer, June 2026			

<u>YRE Walk</u>	<u>YRE Walk Monitor</u>	<u>YRE Walk Sponsor</u>
Celebration #1	Howard Daughtrey	Jenny Thomas
Celebration #2	Howard Daughtrey	Veronica Palacios
Maitland	Tom Carter	Rosemary/Ron Barna
Orlando Downtown	JoAnne Cross	Paul Erickson
Orlando North	John Hunter	John Hunter
Orlando South	JoAnne Cross	Sharon Axelrod
Orlando I-Drive	Paul Erickson	JoAnne Cross
Orlando Disney Springs	Paul Erickson	Letty/Bob Zook
Orlando Universal	Paul Erickson	JoAnne Cross
The Villages - Lake Sumter Lndg	Jan Van Vlack	None
The Villages - Spanish Springs	Jan Van Vlack	None
Winter Park	Michael Kirchner	Howard Daughtrey
Delray Beach	Online	Dan/Nancy Barnett
Ft Lauderdale	Online	None
Key West	Online	Sharon Predham
Miami Beach	Online	Cathy Metherell
West Palm Beach	Online	Dan/Nancy Barnett

Note: We are renewing our club's YRE for the next fiscal year. We truly appreciate the above individual's sponsoring the respective walks. If you are inclined to renew your sponsorship, please provide \$40 for each walk at one of our next walks or send payment to Mid-Florida Milers, PO Box 4575, Winter Park, FL 32793. Thank you!!

AVA BOARD CHAIRMAN MESSAGE by Carl Cordes, AVA Board Chairman

Here we are at the halfway point of our 50th Anniversary celebrations and walks. The signature events thus far have been outstanding with significant publicity generated locally with the public and city officials. I suspect some of you are finding that wasn't as hard as you thought it would be. Take the lessons learned from these signature events and turn them into your normal playbook for future traditional events every year. The rewards of new walkers, new members and new friends will grow and continue the legacy of your clubs. Most importantly share your experience and lessons learned with other clubs in your area, state and region to help them discover the path to revitalize their efforts and growth.

Another area we need to desperately improve (return to normal) is attendance at our Biennial Conventions. Aside from the General Membership Meeting to conduct the business of AVA, it is an B opportunity to gather in fun, fitness, and friendship from all regions of the AVA Nation. The low attendance makes it difficult to break even on costs whereas convention used to be a significant O boost to operations budget. In addition, it limits what we can do to enhance your experience and lower costs at the Convention.

So you probably guessed by now I am going to ask you to start planning now to attend the AVA 2027 Biennial Convention in Springfield A MO June 28-July 3. Note this is after the Luxembourg 20th Olympiad June 16-19 for those that want to attend both. If you want to help with the planning, contact Jerry Wilson at convention@ava.org. The Convention Committee will work diligently to keep costs A D R E reasonable without sacrificing quality. Look for more details, including pre- and post-convention activities in future TAW editions. And one more request. When registration opens, sign up as soon as

possible. The earlier you register the better we can adjust to enhance your convention week and manage expenses.

AVA'S MOBILE WALK APPLICATION PROGRESS by Henry Rosales, AVA President/CEO

The User Interface / User Experience work which included, research, interviews, and a survey, for the AVA's walk application have been completed. The primary goal for this research was to determine what AVA's walking community needs from a mobile app and what to develop first. The researchers talked directly to walkers, club leaders, and AVA employees. A survey was also conducted yielding over 300+ member responses across 46 states. The result was a quantitatively ranked feature set and a functional mobile prototype for version 1 of the app development

Based on the research, the AVA can benefit from a walk application because:

- AVA has a membership growth problem that a well-designed app directly addresses. Non-members are already walking, already interested, and one good experience away from joining.
- The research confirms strong feature appetite across all segments, including members who are less tech-forward.
- An app gives AVA a modern, visible presence in a space currently dominated by general and competitive fitness apps that don't serve the organized walking community or demographic.
- Version 1 can realistically serve current members, retain long-time walkers, and recruit new ones all from a single product investment.

The research foundation is complete and the next steps are:

1. Continue to fundraise for the Development Phase;
2. Recommend a Developer for Board approval;
3. Complete an IP licensing and revenue sharing agreement for clubs who want to opt into the walk app;
4. Set a timeline for completion of version 1 of the walk app.

Fundraising for development of the walk application is ongoing. Applications totaling \$130,000 have been submitted to AARP, Alfred H. & Janet L. Lander Family Foundation, Mays Family Foundation, and the San Antonio Area Foundation. Exploratory meetings were held with the University Health System and the LIFT Fund.

COMING SOON! NEW AVA MEMBER BENEFIT WITH VENUSTAS!

Venustas is an online merchandise store that sells heated apparel. AVA members will soon be able to purchase apparel from Venustas and enjoy \$30 off on their first purchase plus a \$10 gift card. Members will have to log into their my.ava.org account and click on the Member Deals link.

The AVA will also earn a 10% commission on every sale made through our membership link.

COMMEMORATIVE CHALLENGE COIN FOR SALE by Erin Grosso, AVA Finance Director

Join us as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary and 40 years of partnership and walking with the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation.

We have been given a unique opportunity to offer a special Commemorative Challenge Coin featuring both milestones. This double sided coin is available for \$10 and can be purchased by contacting Marian at marian@ava.org.



HOT OFF THE PRESS! by Diane Howell Evans, Programs Committee, Chair

Three new AVA Special Programs beginning January 1, 2027, were announced at the June 5 AVA Board meeting in Rapid City, SD. They include:

- Craft Beers
- Historic Places of Worship
- Historic Route 66 – Celebrating 100 Years

For more details on each of the upcoming 2027 Special Programs check out the AVA Future Special Programs website at: cb.ava.org/futureprog.php

After reviewing the information for each of the new 2027 Special Programs, clubs should consider if any of their YRE/Seasonal walks they are renewing for 2027 have qualifiers for these new special programs and update the sanction as needed.

COME TO SPRINGFIELD IN 2027 by Jerry Wilson

Turns out there are 93 populated areas in the United States named Springfield. The location you should have your eyes on in 2027 is Springfield Missouri. According to the US Geological Society the Springfield area in Missouri is the largest of the 93, followed closely by Springfield in Massachusetts, and Illinois.

Now is the time to start planning your visit to Springfield Missouri in 2027. The walking week and convention dates are June 28 - July 1. Pre-convention walks are being planned for the preceding weekend June 26 - 28. Post-convention walks and activities are being planned for July 2 - 4. Save these dates.

More information will be coming soon. Watch AVA.org, future Checkpoint and The American Wanderer articles.



WALK AROUND FLORIDA 35: A PARK ODYSSEY BEGINS OSCAR SCHERER STATE PARK by Alice Lawrence, John McClelland, Cathy Metherell

The Happy Wanderers, Mid-Florida Milers, and Suncoast Sandpipers will launch Walk Around Florida 35 (WAF35): A Park Odyssey on Nov 6 in Oscar Scherer State Park, once home to a Florida Volkssport Association (FVA) Year Round Event (YRE). The FVA was the governing body for Florida volkssport clubs.

NEW WAF PROCEDURE! On Fri, Nov 6, it will not be necessary to check in at the hotel prior to walking at this event. You may proceed directly to the park, walk, and then go to the hotel. See official flier for start times.

Note: park fees are: \$5 per car with up to 8 occupants and \$4 for single occupant vehicle.



A Florida scrub jay views its surroundings

Volkssports and Florida State Parks have a long history together. Over 40 years ago, Frank Demoli, an FVA representative, established a series of YREs in state parks throughout Florida. The YREs thrived, treating national and international visitors with an up-close look at the “real” Florida. With the dissolution of the FVA, the state parks program slowly shut down, although clubs still return to host walks on the old trails and even find a stray FVA sign here and there.

Organizers have been hard at work re-establishing a trail through the Oscar Scherer State Park scrub and pine flatwoods, using less sandy territory when possible. The park is home to a large variety of wildlife, including the American alligator, but the star of this rugged terrain is the Florida scrub jay, a threatened species found only in this state. For years, there have been initiatives to establish this as the state bird. The latest proposal gave it the title of State Songbird, yielding possible designation of State Bird to the American flamingo. Unfortunately, the Northern mockingbird maintained its hold yet again. Be sure to stop by the Nature Center, just steps away from the walk start. You may not see any scrub jays on the route but you can admire them in the center’s dioramas.

After the walk, head 20 miles north to WAF35 Headquarters, the Quality Inn Bradenton-Sarasota North for official check-in. You’ll receive a card with all the activities for which you registered and a WAF35

name tag, as well as a list of nearby restaurants. The lobby's Trojan Horse Taverna opens at 6 p.m. and will feature truly epic Mocktails.

Look for the brochure and registration form no later than Jul 1. They will be posted on suncoastsandpipers.org and facebook.com/WalkaroundFlorida35. In the meantime, check those sites for the latest details on hotel registration. For more information, contact Alice Lawrence at 727-542-9742/pipers@tampabay@rr.com

SUN KISSED GOLDEN BEACHES AND MARSHES by Holly Spaulding

Have you always wanted to explore the barrier islands off the coast of Georgia called the “Golden Isles”? The First Coast Trail Forgers (Jacksonville, FL) are excited to announce two new online start boxes on Jekyll and St. Simons Islands - two of the four Golden Isles.

Jekyll Island is the location of the Millionaire's Club established in 1888 during the Gilded Age in the United States. Only the wealthiest applicants were admitted as members. Members included J.P. Morgan, William Rockefeller, Joseph Pulitzer, Vincent Astor, and William K. Vanderbilt. In 1910 a group of millionaires met on Jekyll Island and developed a plan for the Federal Reserve to prevent periodic economic panics which caused bank failures such as the one that had just happened in 1907. The Millionaires Club is a National Historic Landmark with hotel rooms, a beautiful dining room and lounge. The club building is surrounded by individual get away “cottages” of the wealthy. The historical district faces Jekyll Creek along which our walk takes you. The 5K and 10K start at the Jekyll Island Golf Club where there is free parking. From there you walk to the historic district. The 5K walk explores the fascinating and beautiful historic district and returns to the golf club. After exploring the Historic District, the 10K continues along a walking path to the other side of the island. On the other side of the island walkers walk back toward the golf club along the Atlantic Ocean on a multiuse path. There are beautiful views of the dunes and ocean with plenty of restroom and covered areas to rest and enjoy the view. (Bring your bikes to ride the path around the entire island if you like.) Both the Georgia Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center and the Mosaic Jekyll Island Museum are on the walking route.



St. Simons Island, GA The St. Simons Island start point is in the heart of the charming shopping village. St. Simons is the largest of Georgia's barrier islands. The walk is along the Atlantic Ocean on a walking path which goes past the iconic St. Simons Lighthouse. Climb the 129-step cast iron spiral staircase to the top for stellar, panoramic views if you like. Enjoy the eclectic mixture of island panoramic views if you like. homes when the walk turns into the coastal neighborhoods. You will return along Mallery Street in Pier Village which is filled with shops and restaurants. When you return to your car, you may want to stop at the

visitors center which is near where you parked. You will find there a great selection of Eugenia Price novels. She is a prolific author of historical novels which take place on St. Simons Island.



SIMPLE HEAD-TO-TOE WELLNESS HABITS EVERY WALKING CLUB MEMBER CAN START TODAY by Patricia Sarmiento

Community walking club members across the U.S. often do the hard part, showing up for group miles, yet still feel run-down, stiff, or inconsistent between meetups. The challenge is that wellness advice can be time-heavy or scattered, and real schedules leave little room for perfect routines. Whole-body health habits don't need to be complicated to matter, especially when they're built as daily wellness routines that support energy, recovery, and comfort from head-to-toe. With a few steady, realistic head-to-toe health strategies, simple health improvements can start to feel noticeable.

QUICK SUMMARY: HEAD-TO-TOE WELLNESS HABITS

- Start each day with a simple morning stretching routine to loosen up before club walks
- Build restorative sleep habits to support recovery and steady energy for walking events
- Use practical stress management techniques to stay calm and present on and off the trail
- Follow basic skin care essentials and oral hygiene practices to protect overall health.
- Prioritize hydration throughout the day to support comfort, stamina, and well-being

SMALL WEEKLY RITUALS FOR HEAD-TO-TOE WELLNESS

Small, repeatable habits build “whole-body” wellness without adding pressure, especially when you are balancing trail meetups, club events, and everyday life. Pick a few that fit your routine, then let your walking community help you stay consistent over time.

Two-Minute Mobility Reset.

- **What it is:** Gentle ankle circles, calf stretches, and shoulder rolls before leaving home.
- **How often:** Before each walk.
- **Why it helps:** Looser joints can make hills and uneven trails feel steadier.

Bedtime Wind-Down Cue

- **What it is:** Dim lights and do a five-minute breathing practice before sleep.
- **How often:** Nightly.
- **Why it helps:** Better sleep supports recovery for tomorrow's walk.

Trail-Day Hydration Check

- **What it is:** Drink water at breakfast and pack a refillable bottle.
- **How often:** Daily, plus every walk.
- **Why it helps:** Hydration supports energy and helps regulate body temperature.

Face and Hands Cleanse and Moisturize

- **What it is:** Wash skin after outdoor time, then apply moisturizer.
- **How often:** After walks.
- **Why it helps:** It clears sweat and supports the skin barrier.

Two-Minute Oral Care Anchor

- **What it is:** Brush and floss, even on busy days when you feel tense.
- **How often:** Daily.
- **Why it helps:** Many have avoided dental care, due to anxiety, so tiny steps keep momentum.

WALK MORE, FEEL BETTER: USE THE CLUB TO MAKE IT STICK

Walking is one of the simplest outdoor fitness activities to build into a busy week, and a walking club makes it far easier to follow through because you're not doing it alone. Use the ideas below to turn your club calendar into steady, head-to-toe wellness.

1. Start with a “minimum dose” week: Pick two short walks you can complete even on hectic days, think 15–20 minutes on Tuesday and Thursday. Consistency supports the same goals you're building with hydration, sleep, and stress routines because your body starts to expect the habit. If you're motivated, add a third “bonus” walk, but protect the two basics first.
2. Let the group schedule do the decision-making: Choose one standing club time (like Saturday mornings) and treat it like an appointment. Community support boosts follow-through because someone notices if you're missing and you get built-in encouragement. If you can't make the main walk, message the group and ask if anyone wants a 30-minute backup loop, many members are also looking for low-pressure options.
3. Use a simple weekly goal with a real health payoff: Aim for a weekly total you can count, minutes, steps, or miles, and track it with whatever you already use (notes app, calendar, or a paper log). A practical target is adding 1 mile per week until it feels normal, then holding steady for a month. Harvard Health notes that walking five to six miles a week can help prevent arthritis, which is a strong reminder that small totals can matter.
4. Choose accessible trails on purpose (and rotate them): Build a short list of “default routes” that work for different bodies and energy levels, flat, wide paths; predictable footing; benches; and nearby restrooms. This keeps walks inclusive for new members, anyone returning from injury, and those pairing walks with other rituals like gentle stretching. Rotate one accessible route each month so no one feels like they're “holding the group back.”
5. Plan ahead for trail days so they stay fun, not stressful: Before any trail walk, check distance, elevation, surface, and likely weather, then match the route to the newest member's comfort level. The Road Scholar safety guidance on how to plan ahead translates well to local trails too: know the variables before you go. Set a clear turnaround time (not just a turnaround point) so the group finishes together and daylight doesn't become a pressure.
6. Make group walking events beginner-friendly by design: Offer “conversation pace” walks where the goal is steady breathing and social connection, not speed. Use simple roles, one person sets a relaxed pace up front and one person stays at the back, so nobody gets dropped. Bring the head-to-toe basics from your weekly rituals: water, a light snack, sunscreen, and a 3-minute cool-down stretch before everyone heads home.

COMMON QUESTIONS FROM WALKING CLUB MEMBERS

Q: What are some easy daily stretches that can improve overall flexibility and reduce muscle stiffness?

A: Try a 5 minute sequence: ankle circles, calf stretch on a curb, standing quad stretch, chest opener with hands clasped behind you, and gentle neck side bends. Hold each stretch 20 to 30 seconds and keep breathing slow, stopping short of pain. After a trail walk, add a seated hamstring stretch to settle tight legs.

Q: How can establishing a consistent bedtime routine enhance sleep quality and overall well-being?

A: A predictable wind-down tells your nervous system it is safe to power down, which can lower stress the next day. Aim for the same sleep and wake times most days and keep the last 30 minutes screen-free. Getting movement earlier helps too, since regular moderate exercise about 150 minutes per week can improve sleep over time.

Q: What simple mindfulness or breathing techniques help manage stress in everyday life?

A: Use “box breathing”: inhale 4 counts, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4, repeating for 2 minutes before work or a club meetup. On the trail, try a “name 5 things you see” grounding scan to ease uncertainty and bring you back to the moment.

Q: How can staying hydrated throughout the day impact my physical and mental health?

A: Hydration supports steadier energy, clearer focus, and more comfortable joints and muscles on walks. Set a simple cue like drinking several big sips when you arrive at work, before your walk, and when you get home. If you feel lightheaded, crampy, or unusually irritable, pause and drink, and consider electrolytes from food when sweating heavily.

Q: If I’m feeling overwhelmed and uncertain about my next steps in life, what resources can help me explore new healthcare career paths online?

A: Start with low-pressure exploration: career quizzes, informational interviews with nurses or clinic managers in your walking club network, and short online intro courses to test interest. If leadership appeals to you, look for accredited online programs, clear admissions advising, and transparent clinical or practicum expectations, including healthcare administration degree programs online. For emotional support while you decide, a primary care clinician or counselor can help you sort stress from true misfit.

BUILD LASTING WELLNESS THROUGH ONE SMALL HABIT AND WEEKLY WALKS

It’s easy to feel pulled between good intentions and a schedule that doesn’t leave much room for health. The steadier path is consistent health habit integration: a simple daily health commitment, repeated often, and reinforced by community support for wellness, especially regular walks that keep momentum realistic. Over time, those small choices become motivating lifestyle changes that support energy, sleep, and stress tolerance without needing perfection. One small habit, repeated with your walking club, becomes a long-term well-being strategy. Choose one habit this week and tell a club member so they can check in at the next walk. That kind of shared follow-through builds resilience and connection that lasts beyond any single season.

Pictures Q2 2026

These are from the Q2 events that I took or were provided to me. I urge those that carry cameras (i.e., smartphones) to take and submit pictures of our events and email them to me at dnlcassb@aol.com. Thank You!

4 April at Lake Sumter



18 April at Celebration #1





2 May at Disney Springs





Fred



Sharon, John, Jenny, Bernadette, Paul, Sharon, Tom





16 May at Meander thru old Orlando







Nancy



Dan



Jeanne, Bill, Nancy



Bill, Nancy, Jeanne, John at the Check Point



Nancy, John, Dan at the Check Point



Cathy presenting Certificate of Appreciation to JoAnne



Cathy presenting Certificate of Appreciation to John



Cathy presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Tom



Cathy presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Michael



Cathy presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Jenny



Cathy presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Dan



Cathy presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Sharon



Cathy presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Paul



Cathy presenting Volkssporter of the Year award to Susan and Kevin



Dan, Jeanne presenting Cathy the AVA Meritorious Service Award



Cathy presenting the Raffle winning to Sharon



Cathy presenting the Raffle winning to Dan

30 May at Orlando North



Registration



Registration



John, Dave



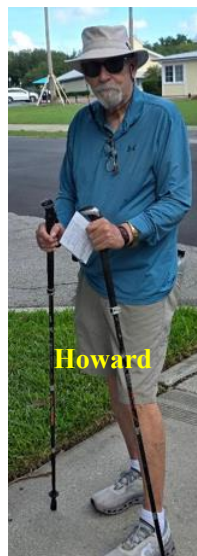
Kevin, Derek, Susan



Tom, John



6 June at Celebration #2





Raegan, Stevie, Lynda



Trace, Christopher

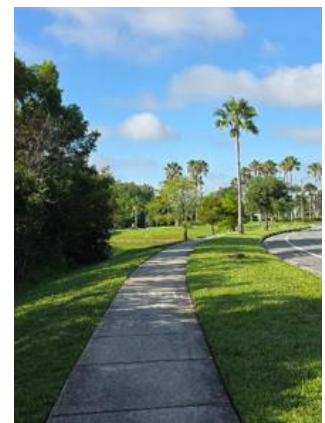


Dan



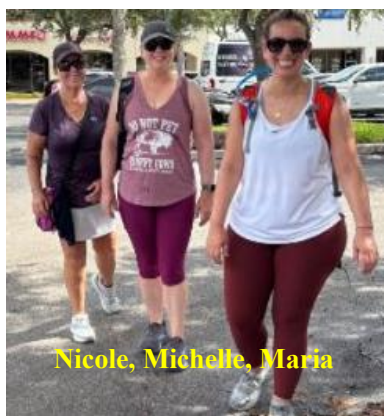
Quinn, Reese

20 June at **Eastwood Publix**





Tom, Jenny, John



Nicole, Michelle, Maria



Michael, Jane, Bernadette, Raul, Larry



John presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Courtney—Mark Street Senior Center



JoAnne presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Beca—Beardall Senior Center