

Volksmarching Through the Years

My husband Frank and I started volksmarching in Colorado. The first walk we did was at Indian Hills in the mountains outside Denver in 1979. Some friends who had volksmarched in Germany invited us along. Boy, were we in for a surprise! Not being in shape at all, I must say that was the longest day of my life because back then you had to do 10 kilometers and 10 kilometers in the mountains was really tough! But from that day on, I was hooked. We have walked in every state but Alaska and we have attended 17 Conventions. I'd like to tell you about a few memorable ones (in no particular order):

- 1) The 1985 Convention in St. Louis where we did a guided walk with Scott, our 4-year-old son, in a Radio Flyer wagon. Ever run with a wagon? We ended up being the last ones done and almost got lost (no marked trail).
- 2) The 1995 Convention in Portland was by far the most fun. We really enjoyed the cute kilometer distance signs by the different clubs on all the walks and the awards were beautiful suncatchers.
- 3) The 1993 Convention in Austin where the backs of my legs got so sunburned I couldn't sleep at night. To this day, I don't wear shorts on walks – HA! The tile awards were very pretty and the free SAS barbecue at their ranch was awesome.
- 4) The 2009 Convention in Richardson where it got 105 degrees every day. We thought by getting to the walks early in the day it would be cooler (like in Colorado!) – Wrong!
- 5) The 1999 Convention in Muncie where we got to walk on the INDY 500 track. That was a real treat, except for Tim, our son, getting yelled at to get off the cement wall. He was 11. The Garfield patches were adorable!
- 6) The 2005 Convention in Cherry Hill, New Jersey where you have to turn right to go left, but the Dunkin' Donuts there had the best chocolate lattes ever. The walks were pretty cool too.
- 7) The 2011 Convention in Des Moines where the first walk slipping and sliding in the mud was great fun. I loved their theme with the "cow" and the walks were great. Seeing where Buddy Holly died and where the Music Man made his music was fantastic.
- 8) The 1991 Convention in Baltimore, which we helped put on, with 18 events in 6 states. I was the sales chair and I sold so many state bars, it would make your head spin. And as they say, what goes around comes around, as we have now committed ourselves to putting on the Billings Convention in 2017. Oh boy, are we dumb or what??

I could go on and on, but I don't want this to end up being a book; just wanted to give you a little taste of what volksmarching has meant to me. I can't believe I have been at it this long, but I have enjoyed every minute of it and am in far better shape now than when I did that first walk. Plus, our boys got to see places they never would have imagined (even though they griped about it the whole walk – Are we done yet? How much further? Why do we have to do this?) and as a family we created some really great memories.

So thank you AVA for 40 Wonderful Years!

Sherry Sayers
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