

AMERICAN SOKOL

VOL. CIV. - NO. 12

DECEMBER 1983

PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN SOKOL
Educational and Physical Culture Organization



1983

WELCOME, DEAR CHRISTMAS TREE

*Welcome, dear Christmas tree!
You blossom for us again
full of lights, full of ornaments
in this Christmas time.*

*Each of your lights joyfully
announces that Christ was born,
the Savior of the world.*

*Your green branches,
in the winter and summer,
announce that from Bethlehem
hope blossoms for us.*

*And your decorative blossoms
stand for the love
which Christians have
for little Jesus.*

*Lord, please hear the grateful
voices of your children,
and repay them with gifts of
eternal value for their own.*

FITNESS
GYMNASTICS

AMERICAN SOKOL

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436

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388 Shenstone Road Riverside, Ill. 60546

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EXECUTIVE BOARD ASO.
Jackie Kourim, Secretary
6424 W. Cermak Road Berwyn, Ill. 60402
Tel.: 795-6671

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at ASO Office

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Calendar of Events

DEC. 31 - SOKOL SAN FRANCISCO
New Year's Eve Dance

DEC. 31 - SOKOL LOS ANGELES
New Year's Dance

DEC. 31 - SOKOL DETROIT
New Year's Dance

DEC. 31 - SOKOL BROOKFIELD
New Year's Eve Dinner-Dance

DEC. 31 - SOKOL MINNESOTA
New Year's Eve Party

DEC. 31 - SOKOL STICKNEY
New Year's Eve Dance

DEC. 31 - SOKOL NEW YORK
New Year's Eve Party

DEC. 31 - SOKOL ST. LOUIS
New Year's Eve Party

DEC. 31 - SOKOL SOUTH OMAHA
New Year's Eve Dinner and Dance

JAN. 21, 1984 - SOKOL STICKNEY
Candlelite Bowl, Berwyn Bowl

FEB. 4, 1984 - SOKOL ST. LOUIS
Barn Dance

FEB. 4 or FEB. 5, 1984 - SOKOL NEW YORK
Sibrinky

FEB. 11, 1984 - SOKOL MINNESOTA
World Bohemian Euchre Tournament, CSPS Hall

FEB. 12, 1984 - SOKOL MILWAUKEE
Jaternice Dinner

FEB. 19, 1984 - SOKOL DETROIT
Winter Gymnasticale

FEB. 19, 1984 - SOKOL BALTIMORE
11th Annual Sibrinky

FEB. 19, 1984 - SOKOL STICKNEY
Pancake Breakfast

FEB. 19, 1984 - SOKOL GREATER CLEVELAND
Winter Gymnastic Exhibition

FEB. 25, 1984 - SOKOL MINNESOTA
Sibrinky

MAR. 3, 1984 - SOKOL BROOKFIELD
Exhibition

MAR. 24 and 25, 1984 - SOKOL GREATER
CLEVELAND - Vcelka Play

MAR. 24, 1984 - SOKOL BALTIMORE
Dozvuky

APR. 7, 1984 - SOKOL NEW YORK
Annual Exhibition

APR. 28, 1984 - SOKOL GREATER CLEVELAND
Night in Prague

MAY 18, 1984 - SOKOL MILWAUKEE
Exhibition and Awards

JUN. 3, 1984 - SOKOL GREATER CLEVELAND
Summer Gymnastic Exhibition
Oddfellows Fresh Air Camp

JUNE 21-24, 1984 - TORONTO SLET

AUG. 5, 1984 - SOKOL GREATER CLEVELAND
Sokol Picnic
Oddfellows Fresh Air Camp

COPY FOR PUBLICATION

MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 10th
OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH

AMERICAN SOKOL

VĚSTNÍK AMERICKÉ OBCE SOKOLSKÉ

Ročník - Vol. CIV

December - 1983 - Prosinec

Číslo - No. 12

Sokol Educator

Traditions in Czechoslovakia

The devil and the angel walked ahead, signaling the approach of Sv. Mikuláš on December 6th, the feast day of St. Nicholas. The devil rattled his chains, the angel wrote with a quill pen as Sv. Mikuláš asked children if they had said their prayers, and whether they had been good or bad. Then on Christmas Eve, according to the legend, good children received nuts, candy, fruit and gifts. The others received old potatoes.

Sv. Mikuláš, who lived in the 4th century A.D., and became one of the most venerated saints, was Bishop of Myra, the capital of Lycia, an ancient province of Asia Minor, now Turkey. He was especially noted for his charity. And, of course, he was the first Santa Claus.

Most of the Christmas trees are decorated with handmade ornaments using walnut shells and pralines wrapped in colored papers with finely cut and curled edges.

Czechoslovakian Christmas tree ornaments include the specialty of eggshells decorated to look like strange fish or representations of the angel who accompanied St. Nicholas. Gaily colored pinwheels resembling falling snowflakes or twinkling stars are suspended by a thread. Gilded walnuts and many varieties of bells are hung in clusters on bright ribbons to create an interesting tree. A small creche is often placed at the base of the tree.

Christmas games are often candle customs. One such game entails players placing tiny candles in nutshells and lighting them. The shells are then floated in a tub of water. The player whose candle burns the longest is the winner.

In ancient times, finding a good husband was of paramount importance to girls, and many holiday games revolved around predictions of just whom a girl would marry. For example, girls drew sticks from a pile of kindling wood. A long stick drawn meant a tall husband, a thick stick meant a stout husband, and so on.

Melted lead was dropped into a pan of water and the shape the lead took as it cooled was a forecast of a future husband's occupation. A branch of a cherry tree was broken off at the beginning of Advent and placed in a pot of water in the kitchen to keep it warm. The twig usually burst into bloom at Christmas time to make a festive house decoration. A flowering branch was considered an omen of good luck. The girl who

tended it was supposed to find a good husband within the year if the branch bloomed exactly on Christmas Eve.

Traditionally there was caroling in the streets and in the homes on Christmas and dancing and eating after the fasting period, which ended on Christmas Eve with a special dinner. Christmas was, and still is, a time for conversation, and it is customary for those who have quarreled during the year to forgive each other publicly.

Carolers go from house to house carrying miniature Bethlehem scenes and giving informal concerts. It was customary to invite them in for a glass of wine, and vánočka, a sweet roll filled with almonds and raisins. Little boys dressed as The Three Kings also went out singing for treats.

A very great blessing was to be received if the children slept on a bedding of straw and hay on the floor under the Christmas tree, or under the table on which the tree was placed. This custom allowed them to take part in the grace and privilege of the Lord's poor and humble birth.

At Christmas time a large carp will be prepared in four different ways. Best cuts are covered with flour, dipped in egg, covered with bread crumbs and fried.

Lesser cuts of the same carp are baked a la black with dried prunes and served again with dumplings mixed with butterfried cubes or white bread or crescent rolls.

The third menu, a la blue (na modro), is made in plain gelatin as "rosol" and served cold with salad.

The head and tail of the very same carp, wrapped in white cloth, are boiled and the stock is made into soup by mixing with finely cut carrots and other vegetables from the garden and served with croutons.

Christmas Eve supper might include pearl barley soup with mushrooms (černá kuba), fried carp in black sauce or fruit gravy, fruits and decorated cookies.

Christmas dinner might include giblet soup with noodles or another soup, roast goose with dumplings and kraut, braided coffee cake, kolaches, fruit and nuts and coffee.

The Czech Book - Pat Martin compiler, is coordinator of the Czech Village Assn. of Cedar Rapids

Czech Foodlore and Folklore

The Czechs, along with Moravians and Slovaks, have a long and rich tradition of food, festivity and folklore. It is not very difficult to find food mentioned along

with great battles, magic creatures or heroic deeds in Czech mythology. As a matter of fact, even the famous Charles Bridge in Prague is said to have been constructed of eggs and cheese. Petr Parléř, architect of the bridge, built in 1214, sent a message to all Czech villages that eggs needed to be mixed into the mortar to make it strong enough to hold the bridge together for all ages. So all villages sent eggs to the capital city, and each village tried to outdo the others by sending more than was required. The citizens of the village of Unhošť sent some milk along with their eggs, but the milk turned into cheese before it was mixed into the mortar, hence a bridge made of eggs and cheese. Indeed Charles Bridge is still standing today, strong as ever, as a testament to good food being put to a very good use.

Another myth is about a king and his three daughters. Now this king decided to test his daughters in order to find out which one loved him most. He asked them to answer the question: "If you could give your Father only one thing, and you could choose from everything in the kingdom, what would be the most precious thing you would give me?" His eldest answered that she would give him, "All the gold in the world." "Silver," said the next daughter. The youngest smiled and answered that she would give her father, "Salt." The king was outraged! Was it possible that his daughter loved him so little that she would give him only a common, ordinary kitchen spice? Then the king tried to live without salt in his diet. Very quickly he realized that salt was far more important than all the gold and silver in the world. And so even to this day it is customary to greet a visitor in a Czech home with a slice of dark bread sprinkled with salt.

A Czech Christmas

If you asked a Czech to choose the one outstanding holiday, the one that is really set apart from all the others, the one which pushes Czech ladies into a whirl of activity, the men into long nights building this, or polishing that, and the children into behavior patterns that could only be described as saintly - well, that person wouldn't have to choose at all - he or she wouldn't even have to think about it - for only one holiday could possibly fit this description, and that of course is Christmas.

The Czechs go "all out" for Christmas. Things get off to a good start with the traditional house cleaning at the beginning of December. This is no ordinary house cleaning, but rather a week-long effort to use up as many bottles of ammonia, cans of furniture and floor wax as one can, and if at all possible, go through at least one broom. Why was all this cleaning necessary? After all, there will be much activity in the house - many people coming and going, much baking and cooking, tree trimming, house decorating, gift wrapping, etc., and of course all this would only serve to mess and dirty things up.

The Christmas holiday season officially begins with St. Nicholas Day (December 6th). This marks the start of baking "vánoční cukroví" — Christmas candies and sweets. These are baked late into the night and put

away in large boxes and stored on top of hard to reach cabinets to make sure that no uninvited fingers start in on them until shortly before Christmas. Each household has its special goodies which it proudly shares with other families and friends. Part of the holiday includes visiting friends and celebrating together.

Although Czechs celebrate both Christmas Eve (štědrý večer) and Christmas Day (boží hod), most of the festivities take place on Christmas Eve. Several days before the eve of Christmas "serious" preparations begin. A tree is bought, secretly brought into the house and hidden away in some cool, dark place - usually the basement. None are allowed to see it until after dinner on December 24th. On December 23rd people make their way into the streets to buy the traditional Christmas fish - carp - for dinner. Several days before the 24th huge wooden barrels magically appear in the cities, and the barrels have live carp swimming around in them. Carp is farmed in southern Bohemia and shipped to the large cities around this time. The prospective buyer points to the fish he or she wants and the fun begins. College students usually sell the carp and the most difficult part of the job is trying to catch the fish. Most often the carp is taken home alive and allowed to swim in the family bath tub until it is killed on the morning of the 24th.

The night before Christmas Eve all hands are busy with last minute preparations. Some are wrapping gifts - others are decorating the house - still others are putting the potato salad that will accompany tomorrow's fish together, and finally, someone is making vánočky - Christmas bread made of a rich butter dough, full of nuts, raisins and candied fruit. The evening before Christmas Eve is one night that no one dares go to bed until every last detail has been taken care of. No one wants to be too busy on the 24th of December - after all, it is a day to be enjoyed by all as much as possible.

The morning of Christmas Eve is spent in trimming the tree and preparing dinner. Only the head of the household trims the tree, and only he or she can see the tree until that magic moment when Ježíšek, the Christ child arrives. Ježíšek always comes after dinner, after all have finished everything that is on his or her plate.

Around five o'clock in the afternoon things get hectic. Christmas goodies need to be set out on plates - the tree must be absolutely ready for viewing, the last gifts have to be wrapped, the table must be set, and the children looked after. The gifts are not put under the tree just yet - that mysteriously happens around 6 o'clock.

Dinner begins exactly at 6 o'clock. Members of the family stand and pray together, and then when Mother gives the signal, all sit down at the same time to dinner. Once all are seated, no one else is allowed to get up, no matter what! In some Czech families there is a custom of putting a small coin under each person's plate to symbolize wealth in the coming year. It's usually a crown piece (similar to our penny), and that crown piece is carried around by each person for good luck.

Children beg their parents to take small helpings so that dinner can come quickly to an end. All that is put on the plate must be eaten before the family can go

together to the Christmas tree (and of course to the many brightly wrapped boxes). When dinner is finally over all stand at the same time and wish each other a Joyous Christmas "Šťastné a Veselé Vánoce". Then comes the embrace and finally all rush to the tree. Then the gifts are distributed. After all the gifts have been opened the family sits and enjoys a quiet evening. Some join their friends and neighbors and sing Christmas carols - others attend midnight Mass. And so, a Czech Christmas comes to a close.

Good homemade food is an important part of every Czech household. The midday meal is the largest meal of the day, usually including the famous Czech specialty "knedlíky" (bread dumplings) with meat and gravy. Both breakfast and dinner are light.

Food shopping in Czechoslovakia is done quite differently from the way it is done in America. Some of the new sections of large cities now do have shopping centers similar to the ones that we have here; however, in the downtown sections and in smaller cities one would have to go to several shops before getting all of the shopping done. Shops would include the bakery, the general store, the butcher shop, the green grocer, and possibly the liquor store. Needless to say, food shopping is a long, time consuming process.

Breakfast includes tea or coffee, dark rye bread, sweet butter and jam or honey. On special days or Sundays, "koláče" - a filled sweet roll - make up the main part of breakfast. Leftovers are often incorporated into the dinner meal. It is not unusual to have a "sladká večeře" or a "sweet dinner" once a week. This could be anything from fruit dumplings in the summer to a jam filled omelet in the winter. Friday was traditionally a meatless day, so this was usually the day of a sweet dinner. Sunday dinner (the midday meal) is always special because along with good food, it is a time for all members of the family to be together, to talk and relax, to catch up on the events of the passing week.

Central Europeans are noted for their holiday celebrating. The Czechs, Moravians, and Slovaks are no exception to this. Holidays are times of family reunions. Cookie and cake baking, house cleaning and decorating, story telling and general fun making. The two main holidays that the Czechs celebrate are Christmas and Easter. In addition to these there are special days that each family, city or village commemorates on its own. The special days that are celebrated in a family would include birthdays and name days. A city or village, on the other hand, has a patron saint all its own and always celebrates the special day that is known as the holiday of that particular saint. The festivities include much music and dancing, in addition to wonderful food.

By Zora Kurka Christlock
Sokol Minnesota Cook Book

ASO EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Regular meeting of the American Sokol Organization Executive Board, Tuesday, October 25, 1983 was brought to order at 7:31 p.m. by President Roy Zitny;

pledge to the flag was given. District minutes received and reviewed; May 21st, quarterly meeting, Pacific; September 28th, Central; September 28th, Northeastern; October 2nd, annual meeting, Western.

CORRESPONDENCE: From Sokol Greater Cleveland, or concerning SGC, (nine letters); grievances from Sokol Houston, plus answer; letter to Sis. Lorine Hallio, concerning voting processes; letter from Sokol West, voting denied in the Southern District meeting; Central District, Bro. George Vytlačil, President, informing us that a new unit is being formed in the Naperville area. From Steve Banjak, concerning the drawings for the Sokol manual. Bro. Roy Zitny, invitation to the United Latvian Assn. celebration on November 11th, will try to attend. Two newsletters of interest, Sokol Ceska Sin and Sokol New York. Denni Hlasatel, ad for the 65th anniversary of the founding of the free nation, Czechoslovakia, approved.

DIRECTOR OF WOMEN - Sis. Marie Ptacek: Our Directors' Conference was held October 14, 15 and 16 at the Holiday Inn, Brentwood-Bel Air, Los Angeles, California. Paul and I attended, as well as our 1st assistants, BOI secretary and all women district directors. We met on Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday morning. The Pacific District and Sokol Los Angeles were very gracious hosts. We feel the Conference was very successful and fruitful. Minutes will be distributed at our next Executive Board meeting. Most of us were able to attend Sokol Los Angeles' Moravian Day program at their hall on Sunday afternoon. Our 1985 Slet will now be foremost on our minds. A committee has been named to check out more sites for the Slet and competitions. It's also time to think about a theme and logo for our Slet. Sis. Florence Palas, former Pacific District Director, is one of 5 candidates being considered for the USGF Hall of Fame.

DIRECTOR OF MEN - Bro. Paul Lebloch: The District Directors strongly recommend that the next American Sokol school be in 1984 instead of after our 1985 Slet. They recommend Sokol Woodlands Camp. If the camp is available, the course would be held immediately after the Slet in Toronto. All expenses incurred by the course ASO would be reimbursed through student tuition. We will call a meeting of school board members to draw up a final draft for publication of all school material. Sis. Zabka is checking a USGF modern rhythmic artists to do the Sokol Manual illustrations. Sis. Chris Yatchyshyn was advised of this at the USGF Congress of Coaches. Bro. Banjak feels we should go ahead with the manual as is if an illustrator is not found.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN - Bro. Fred Kala: Presented a complete report as to the number of Sokol members in each district and unit. It is as complete as possible with the information that we have available. A copy of each district report will be given to each Educational Director at their conference. A copy of the report will be sent to each district president along with the minutes.

EDUCATIONAL CHAIRMAN - Bro. Stanley Barcal: Took care of all correspondence, no approvals for purchases needed. Preparing for the Educational Directors' Conference this coming weekend. Will have

dinner at Klas' Restaurant on Saturday evening. Will need a check for the evening, approved.

PUBLICITY - CZECH - Bro. Jerry Rabas: Nothing to report. Was asked to follow through on preparing the ad for the Denní Hlasatel, for the 65th anniversary of the founding of the free nation, Czechoslovakia.

PUBLICITY - ENGLISH - Sis. Vlasta Zitny: Nothing to report at this time.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY - Sis. Mildred Pinc: The financial report for September, 1983, was prepared and copies were distributed to Executive Board members. Three certificates will be maturing within the next month, they will be re-invested at the highest possible rate. A roster has been prepared and sent to Sokol Slavsky. Only one unit has not paid their dues for the year, they have been notified several times, suspension will be inevitable. Notices have been sent to Sokol T. G. Masaryk members regarding dues. Response has been very good. The third quarter federal and state taxes have been filed. Two replacement checks with problems have been received and taken care of. Donations to the Future Sokol Leaders' Fund and the Library/Archives Fund were read for the month of September. A special note was made that the Library/Archives Fund received a \$3,000.00 bequest from the will of Sis. Mildred Prchal.

TREASURER - Bro. Bob Barcal: No report, on vacation.

UNIFORM - OFFICE - II. VICE-PRESIDENT - Sis. Betty Prener: Activity in sale of uniforms seems to be picking up. Two orders received from the Western District (2 units) equaled approximately one-sixth of our inventory. As fast as orders are shipped we order merchandise to replace same. On the whole payments are being made promptly. Preparations are being made for the District Educational Directors' Conference this week-end. Office has been nicely cleaned and spruced up, repairs made where necessary. All seems to be in readiness.

EDITORIAL - SECRETARY - Sis. Jackie M. Kourim: Working on finishing up the November issue. Christmas seal mailing is being worked on, only three devoted people on this task but it is going beautifully. Donations are also coming in already and we are very pleased with the results. Still handling large volumes of mail, it was unanimously decided that all letters will be acknowledged, but will be put in a file to be handled at the Convention. Will be checking the 100 year old units before the convention, will order the placques from George Blum.

I. VICE-PRESIDENT - Bro. George Basta: Nothing to report at this time.

PRESIDENT - Bro. Roy S. Zitny: Busy answering numerous letters and phone calls at this time.

NEW BUSINESS - 1985 Convention and Slet: The proposed Slet committee was given and approved. A kick-off meeting will be held in early January. ASO Slet instruction sheets will be sent to all chairpeople. Would like to have a logo and slogan by the meeting time. It will be our 120th anniversary.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Jackie M. Kourim, Secretary

ASO Financial Report

OCTOBER 1983

RECEIPTS:

Dues	\$ 4,347.25
T. G. Masaryk	180.00
Dividends and Interest	269.79
"Highlights of Czech History"	2.25
Song Books	2.50
Educational Booklets	3.00
Christmas Seals	478.50
Donation (anonymous)	25.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 5,308.29
ASO Uniform Division - Rent, salaries, etc.	574.47
	<hr/>
Transfer of funds from savings to checking account	\$ 5,882.76
	15,000.00
	<hr/>
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$20,882.76

DISBURSEMENTS:

ADMINISTRATIVE

Salaries - Office employees	\$ 745.54
FICA & FWT for Sept. 1983	183.32
IWT - 3rd qtr. 1983	78.37
Rent, Janitor services, phone, electric	847.10
Repairs to office machines	95.00
Repairs to office floor	3.65
Postage and UPS charges	36.10
Postage for Christmas seals	600.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 2,589.08

BOARD OF INSTRUCTORS

Salaries	\$ 391.94
FICA & FWT for Sept. 1983	71.18
IWT - 3rd qtr. 1983	31.83
Editor "Sokol Gymnast"	30.00
Additional copies "Sokol Gymnast"	29.00
Postage, UPS charges and phone	31.42
District Directors' Conference	5,061.60
	<hr/>
	\$ 5,646.97

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

Salaries	\$ 90.21
FICA for Sept. 1983	13.14
IWT - 3rd qtr. 1983	7.98
Tape and duplicating	21.00
UPS Charges	4.72
District Educational Directors' Conference	217.20
	<hr/>
	\$ 354.25

SOKOL PUBLICATION

Postage "American Sokol"	\$ 317.56
Editor "American Sokol"	100.00
Printing "American Sokol"	998.64
Mailing List changes	162.32
	<hr/>
	\$ 1,578.52

MISCELLANEOUS

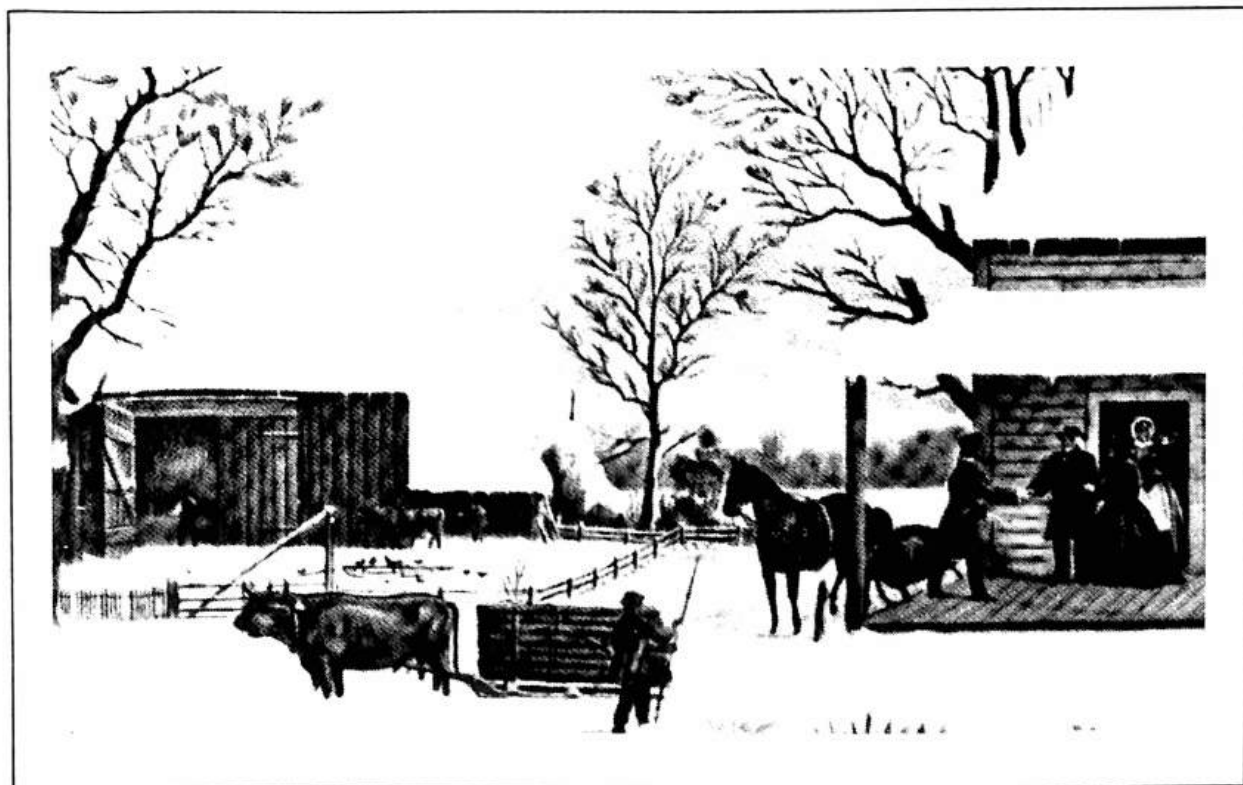
ASO Uniform Division - Salaries, FICA, FWT, Sept. 1983	
IWT -3rd qtr. 1983 and phone	\$ 399.26

AMERICAN SOKOL

SOKOL GYMNAST

DECEMBER 1983

Editor - Edward Linhart - 1820 Ridgeland Ave., Berwyn, Ill. 60402



TO ALL AMERICAN SOKOL MEMBERS

*Season's Greetings
and Best Wishes for the New Year*

AMERICAN SOKOL B.O.I.

ADVANCE PARALLEL BAR EXERCISES

The following diagrams are exercises for High Division Junior Boys and Men. Practice with supervised instruction is essential.

1. From a full arm support, cast back into under arm support and front uprise to full arm support.

2. From an under arm support, swing forward and roll back, release and regrasp of hands and extend body to handstand.

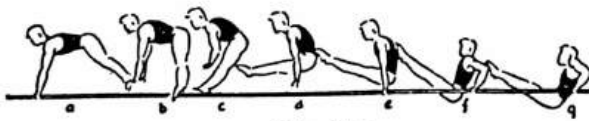
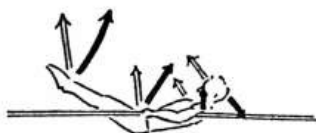
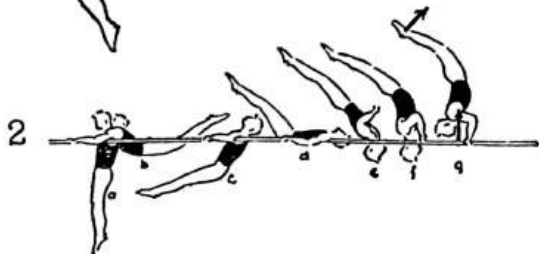
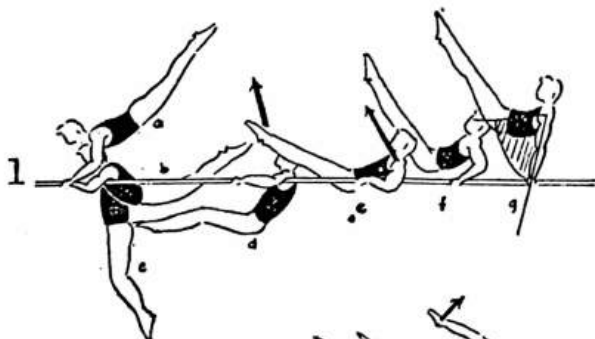
3. From an under arm support, swing backward and uprise to handstand.

4. From a full support on forward swing stradleg cut over both bars to bent arm support, dip swing backward to handstand (May be executed from a back uprise).

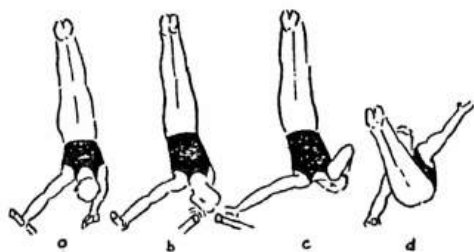
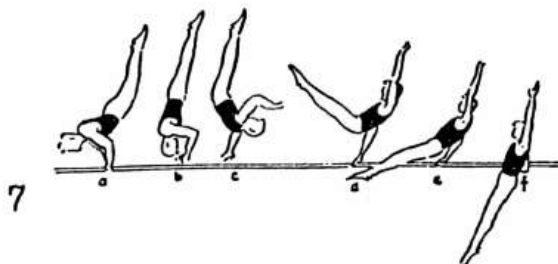
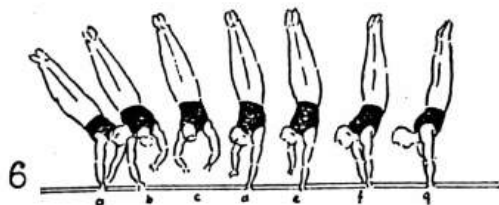
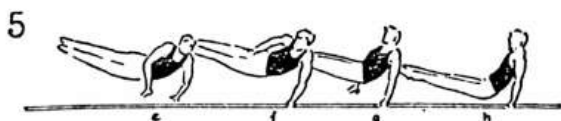
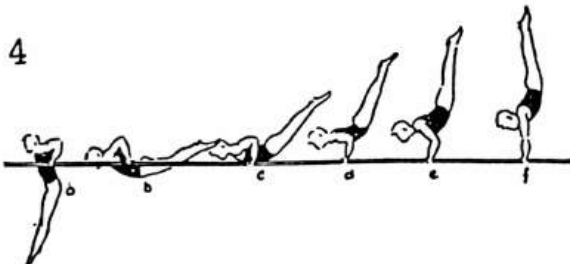
5. From an under arm support, back uprise with 180° turn L or R to full arm support.

6. Swing to handstand and immediately with a simultaneous release of hand turn 180° L or R (hop off bars) to regrasp bars in handstand.

7. Pictured in diagrams are 2 views of the front somersault off the bars to stand on the ground.



Obv. 30a



Strains, Sprains, and Nerve Compressions

by Dr. ROBERT KERLAN

A question from an athlete: *About six months ago, while doing stretching exercises, I somehow pulled the hamstring muscle in my left leg. It was quite painful, and it took several months to heal. Now I seem to have pulled the hamstring muscle in my right leg.*

Can you tell me what I am doing wrong? Also, can you explain the difference between a pulled muscle and a torn ligament?

In all likelihood you are suffering from recurring compression of the sciatic nerve in your back, not a muscle or ligament injury. Pain from compression of the sciatic nerve often mimics muscle and ligament injuries, and the fact that both legs have been affected indicates that the problem originates in your back. However, you can't be sure about either this diagnosis or how to treat it until you are examined by a physician.

The correct terms for muscle and ligament injuries are *strained* muscles and *sprained* ligaments; *pull* is a vague and improper term. In a strain, damage is done to the muscle and/or the tendinous tissue that initiates movement in the joints. In a sprain, the ligament—the straplike tissue that support the joint—is injured.

Sprains and strains range from a simple stretching of the fibers with no tearing (grade one) to a tearing of some of the fibers (grade two) to a tearing of most of the fibers (grade three) to a complete tear of all the fibers (grade four), which in a ligament requires surgery and in a muscle may or may not. When most people talk of a "pull", they are referring to a grade-one strain.

—Dr. Kerlan

Slet of Sokols Abroad

The next Slet of the Sokol Abroad to be held in the summer of 1986 will be held in Zurich, Switzerland.



Purpose of recreation

Physiologists tell us that when we are completely tired we need rest or sleep, but that when we are only partially tired we can get relaxation and even recuperation by doing something different from the thing we have been doing. The musician does not keep the strings of his instrument taut all the time; the drummer has learned to loosen the calfskin head of his drum when it is not being beaten; the athlete knows better than to try continuously to break his record. And so in the same sense none of us can work all the time at sustained pressure. Recreation offers a variety of activities that in turn offer change. And in change there is relaxation. Recreation is meant to uplift and uphold, not to tear down and destroy. Recreation cheers the human spirit; it is a *re-creative* tonic for a tired body and weary soul. More than that, it is an avenue for self-expression—an outlet for eager muscles and eager impulses. Recreation helps us to relax from the constant tension of attending to our work. Thus refreshed, we find the mental stability so needed in these days of a highly complex and complicated society.

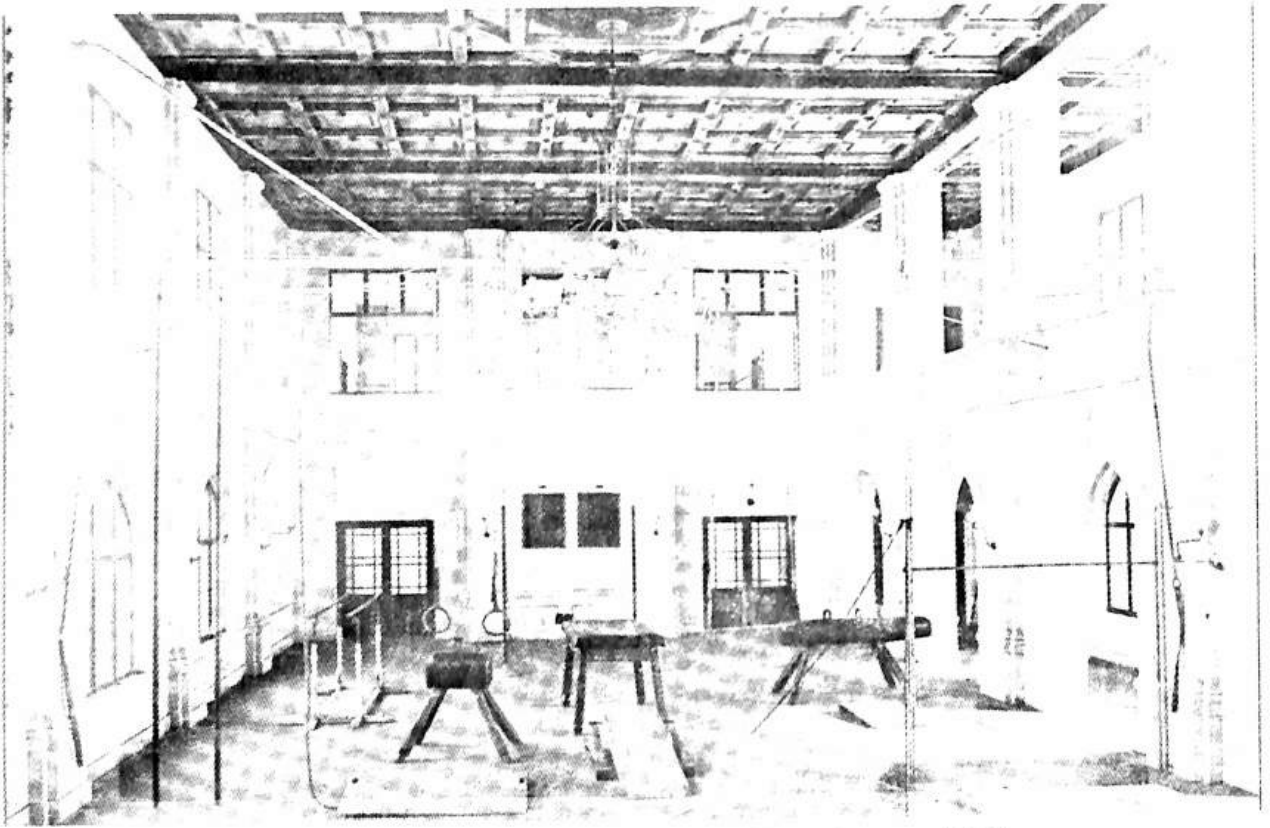
National Sokol School 1984

The American Sokol Board of Instructors plans to convene a National Sokol Instructors school at Sokol Woodlands Camp, Barryville, New York State. It will be held directly after the Slet of Sokol Canada in Toronto, Ontario, June 21-24, 1984. Plans call for a two week Sokol Kurz. More information to follow.

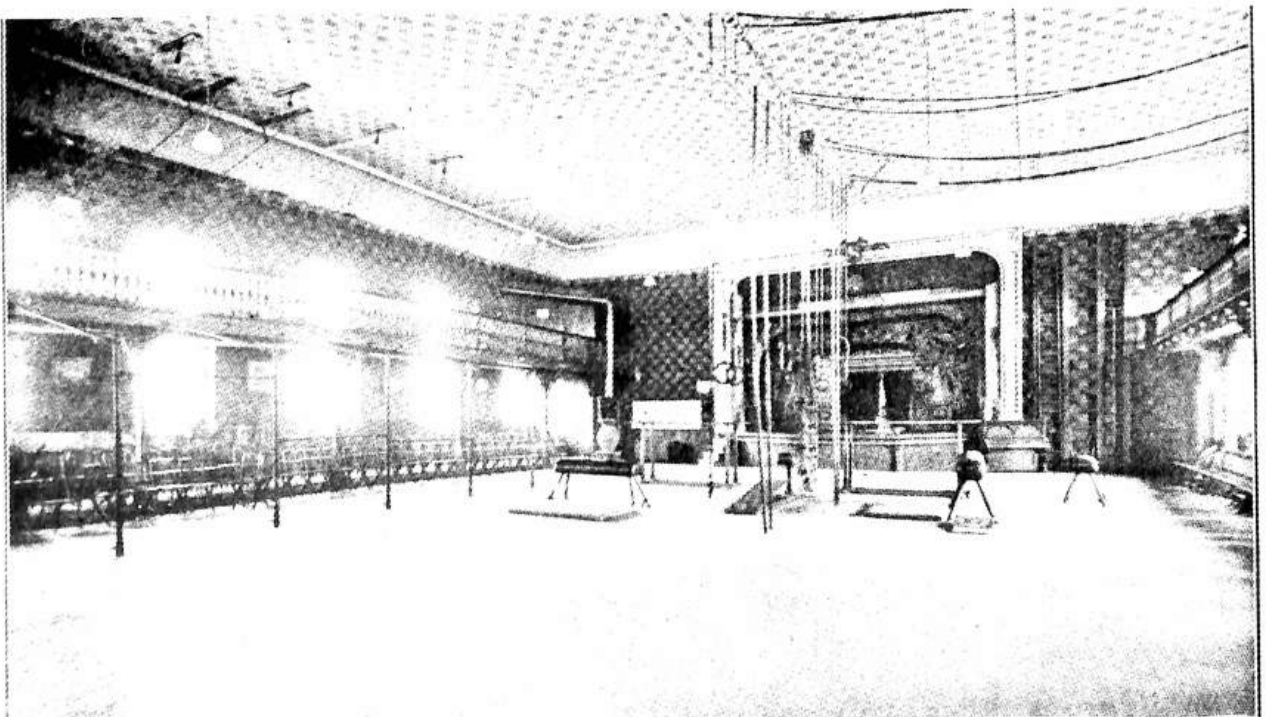
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SOKOL GYMNASIUMS OF THE PAST



Picture of old hall of Sokol Nĕm. Brodě, Bohemia in year of 1905.



Gymnasium in the old building of Sokol St. Louis, Mo., the oldest Sokol unit in the United States, wherein activity started on May 23, 1865.

Merit Awards	2,400.00
Special Appropriations	10,549.12
Future Sokol Leaders' Fund postage	11.20
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	\$13,359.58
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$23,528.40
Balance brought forward:	
Western National Bank of Cicero - Checking account	\$ 4,978.61
Receipts - October 1983	20,882.76
	<hr/>
	\$25,861.37
Disbursements, October 1983	\$23,528.40
	<hr/>
	\$ 2,332.97

FUTURE SOKOL LEADERS' FUND**October 1983**

In memory of Bro. Anton Bares - Ada Bares and Myra Ripkey	\$ 20.00
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LIBRARY and ARCHIVES FUND**October 1983**

In memory of Sis. Mildred Prchal - Jerry M. Kaspar	\$ 35.00
Sokolice Renata Tyrsova	25.00
Bertha Cerny	25.00
From the last will of Sis. Mildred Prchal	3,000.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 3,085.00

Donations are tax exempt

BE PROUD OF YOUR SOKOL ORGANIZATION

Each generation has its group of hard and dedicated workers. We only live in our generation and seldom do take the time to think of those departed members who gave their time to preserve the Sokol idea that was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1862 and transplanted into the United States in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1865. Our past workers had the satisfaction for preserving what they accomplished for the future generation. Our St. Louis Sokol can be justly proud that they have served our American-Czech Community for over 118 years. The Sokols have done this on their own initiative without any special handouts from the city, state, or federal government, but upon their own resources and the help of Sokol friends. Sokol has brought up our American-Czech youth all these years based on Miroslav Tyrš, the founder of the Sokol idea. What you have gained through active effort in physical training, preserve by clean and moral living. You never see any delinquents in our gymnasium, as we instill good habits and qualities to develop the finest principles of good citizenship. Our men and women have served in the armed forces and the Red Cross in times of need. For 60 years our Sokol Camp has been in existence and those childhood days and memories will never be forgotten. Yes, brothers and sisters the sweat, joys, tears, and work has been worth it to preserve our Sokol organization. Yes,

times change, people change, but the Sokol slogan still remains the same, "Neither profit, nor glory". So let this generation continue to work and preserve what our past Sokol generation gave us.

Bro. Wm. J. Shana, Educational
Director - Sokol St. Louis

"Cedar Rapids Sokol Played Important Part in Growth of Czech Athens"

Many years ago when the late Czech senator and brother of the second president of Czechoslovakia Vojta Beneš visited Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he was amazed to learn that almost one third of the city's population are Czechs. He also learned how efficiently they blended with the American way of life. They were represented in business, industry, profession as well as in financial institutions and city and country administrations. On their own they built two Czech churches, a Czech school with Czech reading society owning a large library, a Bohemian savings and loan, two banks, two fraternal buildings, CSA and ZCBJ and of course our Sokol building in the heart of the city. From the very beginning the Sokols extended their activities far beyond the gym and physical fitness. In the organization of Czech dramatic society, Czech federation and Czech national cemetery Sokol members were always on the frontlines. In fact the very first cemetery burial was that of sister Emilie Straka, president of Sokolice Renata Tyrš. Sokol always supported all projects that benefited Czech heritage or the welfare of the city. The Sokol members, Wm. Stepanek and Milo Sedlacek served as city mayors and several others as commissioners and city officials. Learning all these accomplishments the late Vojta Beneš nicknamed Cedar Rapids "The Czech Athens" and two foremost historians the late Barthinius Wick and John Ely Sr. mentioned this fact in their history of "Czechs in Linn County". We who belong to the Sokol movement have reason to be proud of this participation in economical and cultural growth of our great city. And the best thing of all is that we are still going strong fulfilling our mission in the gym and beyond.

Br. T. B. Hlubucek, Sokol Cedar Rapids

From the President's Desk

Nothing in our dictionary's definitions of "fraternity", "sorority" or "family" actually conveys what Sokol is meant to be at its best. At best, in addition to healthy gymnastic and activity programs, Sokol should have an ennobling effect on our lives. Our lives should be better for having participated in our unit's programs and by experiencing and heightened awareness of our dedication to our country, our family, our freedom, our community, our unit and its members. These are the values presented by Tyrš and Fuegner over 120 years ago, and are not less important now than they were then.

When we see our place in the unit as those who would make a positive contribution in ways that, for us, are through whatever talents, time energies, and means possible, then we help our Sokol sisters and brothers and add fuel to the flames burning these many years. No organization can survive if its "takers" drain the strength, will and resources of its "givers" past a certain critical point. I know of no case where the opposite is true.

The recent passing of George Stanley Halas not only marks the loss to professional football of its most significant catalyst but, also, for those of Czechoslovak heritage, one of the most public symbols of the "American Dream". In his last year as a coach, though often criticized, Halas, was nevertheless, fondly alluded to by the press and TV media as the "Old Bohemian" with all that was positive in the reference: a man who was patriotic, family oriented, loyal to his city and team, courageous, determined, traditional and, oh yes, frugal. Through either our fathers, grandfathers, husbands, uncles, older brothers, etc., almost all of us knew such men in a personal way; so George Halas was not hard to understand.

It was fitting that Chicago's Sun-Times columnist, Mike Royko, who writes so honestly about his city, saw Halas as "... a classic Chicagoan. Like most of us he was an ethnic. He came out of a working class on the West Side . . . and worked his way toward success."

Halas' parents, Frank and Barbara, came to Chicago from Pilsen, Bohemia. His older brothers were Frank, Jr. and Walter and there was also his sister Lillian. For Czechs and Slovaks, his family and life couldn't have been, in his early years, more predictable. It meant hard work and sacrifice with an eye on the ladder rungs higher up, carefully and honestly reached with a careful sort of pride.

And finally, of additional interest, in his autobiography, *Halas on Halas*, he mentions the times he and his brothers spent with others, strengthening their bodies and their skills, at the Sokol hall attended by those from the Bohemian neighborhood near his home around 18th Street and Ashland Avenue.

Bro. Vic, Hubal, Sokol Minnesota - Slovo

Editors note: Excerpts from Bro. Hubal's article, the November issue of the Slovo, thought it good reading for "American Sokol" subscribers.

CHRISTMAS SYMBOLS - Mistletoe and Holly

The custom of decorating homes on festive days is world-wide. It is neither pagan nor Christian in itself, but rather, a natural expression of joy mingled with solemnity. It has been practiced in all parts of the world for thousands of years. After the time of the persecutions the Church soon approved and accepted the practice of decorating both the house of God and the Christian home with plants and flowers on the Feast of the Lord's Nativity. Pope Saint Gregory I (604) in a letter to Saint Augustine of Canterbury advised him to permit, and even to encourage, harmless popular cus-

toms which in themselves were not pagan, but natural, and could be given Christian interpretation.

The plants used traditionally as Christmas decorations are mostly evergreens: first, because they were the only ones available in the winter season; second, because from ancient times evergreens have been symbolic of eternal life.

The Mistletoe

The mistletoe was a sacred plant in the pagan religion of the Druids in Britain. It was believed to have all sorts of miraculous qualities: the power of healing diseases, making poisons harmless, giving fertility to humans and animals, protecting from witchcraft, banishing evil spirits, bringing good luck and great blessings. In fact, it was considered so sacred that even enemies who happened to meet beneath a mistletoe in the forest would lay down their arms, exchange a friendly greeting, and keep a truce until the following day. From this old custom grew the practice of suspending mistletoe over a doorway or in a room as a token of good will and peace to all comers. A kiss under the mistletoe was interpreted as a sincere pledge of love and a promise of marriage, and, at the same time, it was an omen of happiness, good fortune, fertility, and long life to the lovers who sealed and made known their engagement by a kiss beneath the sacred plant.

After Britain was converted from paganism to Christianity, the bishops did not allow the mistletoe to be used in churches because it had been the main symbol of a pagan religion. Even to this day mistletoe is rarely used as a decoration for altars. There was, however, one exception. At the Cathedral of York at one period before the Reformation a large bundle of mistletoe was brought into the sanctuary each year at Christmas and solemnly placed on the altar by a priest. In this rite the plant that the Druids had called "All-heal" was used as a Symbol of Christ, the Divine healer of nations.

The people of England then adopted the mistletoe as a decoration for their homes at Christmas. Its old, pagan religious meaning was soon forgotten, but some of the other meanings and customs have survived: the kiss under the mistletoe; the token of good will and friendship; the omen of happiness and good luck and the new religious significance:

The mistletoe bought at our Christmas board
Shall hang, to the honor of Christ the Lord:
For He is the evergreen tree of Life . . .

The Holly

To the early Christmas in northern Europe this plant was a symbol of the burning bush of Moses and the flaming love for God that filled Mary's heart. It's prickly points and red berries, resembling drops of blood, also reminded the faithful that the Divine Child was born to wear a crown of thorns.

When the earth turns brown and cold, the holly, with its shiny green leaves and bright red berries, seems to lend itself naturally to Christmas decoration. Its appearance in the homes of old England opened the season of feasting and good cheer. Today holly is not only hung at doors and windows, on tables and walls, but its green leaves and red berries have become the

universal symbol of Christmas, adorning greeting cards, gift tags and labels, gift boxes, and wrapping paper at Christmas time.

Medieval superstition in England endowed holly with a special power against witchcraft; unmarried women were told to fasten a spring of holly to their beds at Christmas to guard them throughout the year from being turned into witches by the Evil One. In Germany, branches of holly that had been used as Christmas decoration in church were brought home and superstitiously kept as charms against lightning. Another superstition claimed that holly brought good luck to men, and that ivy brought it to women. The holly, therefore, is always referred to as "he", while the ivy is the distaff plant.

In the United States the native holly has almost disappeared because of the selfishness of careless holly hunters at Christmas time. What is used here now is the European variety, with larger leaves and berries, which is commercially grown by farmers in this country. The California holly (Toyon) grows along the Pacific coast and has extra-brilliant flaming-red-colored berries, which are placed in Christmas wreaths of evergreen for decorations.

November-December, Children's Friend

On the Origin of Koledy

The following is a translation of an article entitled "Co je koleda?" (What is the koleda?) by Karel Konrád in *Dějiny posvátného zpěvu staročeského od XV. věku do zrušení literárských bratrstev*, (History of sacred Old Czech chant from the 15th century to the suppression of the laymen's choir brotherhoods). (Prague: V. Kotrba, 1893, pp. 17-24).

In 1426, a Benedictine monk of Břevnov Abbey, Jan of Holešov, wrote about the origins of the word and custom of *koleda*. According to him, in ancient times the pagan priest used to go around to the homes carrying the idol Bel on the first day of each month, which in Latin is called "Calendae." Doing this, they sang: "Dubec stands in the middle of the courtyard of Bel, Bel; Dubec stands in the middle of the courtyard." This monk (Jan z Holešova) concludes that this song must have been rather lengthy and that the people considered themselves fortunate that their "god" visited their home, thus promising good luck for the rest of the month. To express their gratitude they offered gifts to the idol Bel.

This custom was adopted by the Christian priests, but they carried the Cross of Jesus rather than the idol, and they recited "Christus velis." St. Adalbert (Vojtěch), as archbishop of Prague, limited this going around to the homes to once a year, specifying that it could be done on Christmas Eve and its Octave. He called this going around "colendisare" (instead of the old term "Kalendisare") from the Latin word "colere" which means "to honor, venerate" since they were honoring the Son of God on the day of His birth by visiting the homes. That is why we say "koleda" instead of *kaleda*. The Polish people still faithfully use the word "kolenda", since St. Vojtěch was later also an apostle to the Poles.

We are inclined to think that the Polish "kolenda" has the same origin as our "koleda". The monk of Holešov also mentions that the priests would go around the homes of the Christians together with the pupils on Christmas Eve and during its Octave, singing Christmas songs: "Ecce Maria genuit," "Judea et Jerusalem nolite timere", "Haec est dies", and others. These then were the first "koledy". Hlahovský in his hymnal published in 1622, page 89, states that in the time of Duke Břetislav and of Cosmas who was the ninth bishop of Prague, many people abandoned Christianity and returned to paganism. Therefore, after being admonished by the bishop, the duke ordered that priests and pastors visit every citizen or parishioner of theirs in their homes on Christmas Eve with a cross and relics of the saints, and while doing so, to take note which individuals came to kneel for kissing the crucifix or martyr's relics, and which ones, like enemies, would resist or hide and sneak away. This going around to the homes then became a custom — priests with pupils or teachers, sextons, or school officials — of singing "koledy" (carols) and accepting "poplatky" (fees). Thus the word "poplatky" eventually became identical with "koleda" meaning gift as well as song.

Instructions to the rector in Bor in 1413 say that he should "visit with relics on the eve before the Birth of the Lord according to custom." A Taborite diary of Bartolomej Zelenka dating from 1680, records that he went around in the month of December on "koleda **more antiquo**" (according to ancient custom). On a day of bitter frost, he visited 80 homes "in **cicuitu civitatis**" (in making the rounds of the city —). Even Kollár in his *Zpěvanky* says: "This custom (going on koledy) is an obligation of the pastor binding him to visit the homes of all his rich and poor sheep at least once a year." He says that the priest, rector, sexton, several singers, with sacks strapped to their shoulders, would walk from home to home through the town or village on New Year's Day, and that they would sing a religious hymn, usually "Rok nový zase k nám přišel" verse after verse and then would receive treats from their parishioners. As a replacement for a "mythological" song, Kollár reports the following as an ancient "koleda":

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Dobře je kňazovi | 2. Ale u Rektora |
| Ked' přijde Rok nový: | Přezna je komora, |
| Jde na koledu | Co rektor vyblačí, |
| A netrpí biedu. | Rechtorka vyvléčí. |

Kollár says the melody of the "koleda" "Rok nový zase k nám přišel" seems to him to be originally Slavico-pagan and just carried over into the Christian Church.

Pupils and school officials had their own koledy — different ones for different seasons. Officials for the season from All Saints to Christmas has seven; pupils from Christmas to Epiphany had one. This is evident from the prohibition of koledy in the year 1599 for reasons of protection against the plague — a prohibition issued by Jan z Lobkovic — saying that, since the season for koledy is about to begin officially with the feast of All Saints, there being eight of them with the pupils' one at Christmas, these should be forbidden in all three towns of Prague in view of the plague. . . . Instead, contributions for the support of poor students should

be remembered. A similar cancellation of koledy for the same reason of resisting the spread of disease was requested in 1582 by the schoolmaster, Václav Stomek, in Prachaticze.

The koledy custom persevered through the ages, of subjects singing koledy to superiors, and receiving treats became obligatory. At the church in Prague, the prelates and canons and other clergy sang koledy for the archbishop and the statute specified that he was to give prelates and canons 3 kopa; vicars, sacristans and other servants of the church 2 kopa, choral students 20; and bonifati 10 groats; however, only to those who personally came to the archbishop's residence and performed the koledy in his presence would the kopa be given. The time set for this was any day from Christmas Eve to Candlemas Day, February 2. Tomek in his **History of Prague** says that the clergy and pupils of the church sang koledy for the provost and dean and that each was to be given as his station in life indicated.

The collegiate canons at St. George even sang koledy for their abbes on the feast of the Three Kings. The abbes gave all the nine canons together a sum of 36 groats and wine or beer to drink without measure. It goes without saying the koledy were not limited to the city of Prague, but were sung in the villages and rural area throughout the whole country. (Konrad cites many examples to support this fact, including a record in 1600 of Prague school authorities requesting schools to continue the koledy custom and records of 1616, 1617 about koledy in the rural areas of the country.)

[Continued next month]

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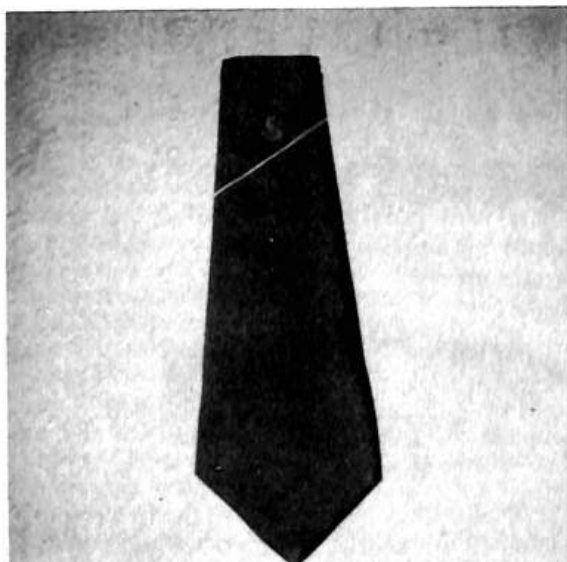
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