

AMERICAN SOKOL

Publication of the American Sokol
Educational & Physical Culture Organization

"100 YEARS - PUBLICATION
SOKOL AMERICKY"



MERRY
CHRISTMAS
1982

PHYSICAL FITNESS
THROUGH GYMNASTICS

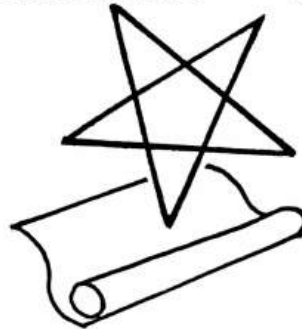


HAPPY HOLIDAYS

TOWARD NEW HORIZONS
XVI AMERICAN
SOKOL SLET
JUNE 26th-30th 1985



AMERICAN SOKOL ORGANIZATION
1983



XVI SOKOL SLET
JUNE 26th-30th 1985



HOLIDAY GREETINGS



PHYSICAL FITNESS
THROUGH GYMNASTICS



1865
SOKOL
TOWARD NEW HORIZONS



1986

1886



SOKOL
GREETINGS



AMERICAN SOKOL

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Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 5 — Sokol Los Angeles
Mikulášská — St. Nicholas Dinner Dance

DECEMBER 11 — Sokol Los Angeles
Výroční — Annual membership mtg.

DECEMBER 31 — Sokol Brookfield
New Years Eve Party

JANUARY 16-17 — Central District
Gymnastic Skills Improvement Clinic — all levels

FEBRUARY 7 — Sokol Berwyn
Bohemian-American Concertina

FEBRUARY 7 — Sokol/Sokolice Detroit
Winter Gymnastical

FEBRUARY 13 — Sokol Berwyn
Spaghetti Dinner & Raffle

FEBRUARY 13 — Sokol Brookfield
Annual Spaghetti Dinner

FEBRUARY 13 — Sokol Los Angeles
Valentinská — Dinner Dance

MARCH 26 — Sokol St. Louis 3 "D" Dinner,
Dance, Dough to Benefit Sokol Camp
Swimming Pool

CENTRAL DISTRICT EXHIBITION DATES:

JAN. 30 — Česká Siň
MAR. 4, 5 — Brookfield
MAR. 6 — Naperville (Central High)
MAR. 12 — Tábor
MAR. 19 — Stickney
MAR. 26 — Berwyn
APR. 9 — West Suburban
APR. 16 — Special Number Competition
MAY 13 — Milwaukee
MAY 15 — St. Louis

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AMERICAN SOKOL

VĚSTNÍK AMERICKÉ OBCE SOKOLSKÉ

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DR. MIROSLAV TYRŠ

SOKOL TASK, AIM AND GOAL

Translated by Voltaire H. Žižka

Edited by Paul Sivak and Charles Bednar

(Continued from Oct. issue)

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM...

The true Sokol Critic is not interested in personalities as much as he is in issues. Not "who" is involved, but "what". The man derives genuine pleasure from every task well done, and does not fail to compliment the doer. He is cheered by every evidence of improvement. The good of the whole is dearer to him than the glory of the individual, and he brings to the Sokol the spirit of real altruism. Such a Sokol critic is a member whom we should highly honor, for he is invaluable.

In a similar spirit, life within a Sokol unit may resemble an endless contest — a contest wherein each participant is pitted in a match of ability, to see who can do the greatest good for the Sokol! The ingenuity and peculiar talents of each member should be utilized in this noble combat. Each true Sokol will rejoice not only on seeing the fruits of his contribution, but also at the deserved success of his "rivals".

This spirit of brotherhood, and its purposes, cannot and must not be hindered by material poverty or inadequacy. Of course, where a greater measure of prosperity abounds, the results should be more noticeable than in a poorer community. Although elsewhere man's vision may not carry him further than the frontiers of his state or country, let this not be said of the Sokols. Our interests should transcend national frontiers. We should strive to acquaint ourselves with the work and accomplishment of other lands in the field of gymnastics and culture in general.

The true Sokol always bears his organization in mind. Not only does he strive to understand the many phases of the Sokol movement, but in studying the work of other societies and other nations he compares it with that in the Sokol. Inasmuch as the fruits of his research will be dedicated to the good of the Sokol, it is only right that his fellow-members assist in making such studies possible. On his return from an extended journey, for instance, the Sokol representative should discuss his experiences, especially those having to do with the difference in methods, making comparisons with the Sokol customs. Naturally, his observations should not be limited to the field of gymnastics and physical culture, but should include everything of importance and interest. Such informal discussion groups, in which a spirit of tolerance and intelligent curiosity exists, have their value.

Allow me to caution my brother Sokols that we should show neither disdain nor disinterest in a matter merely because it has a foreign source, or because up to this time it has been unknown to us. neither should we stand so low as to underrate matters because they are of domestic origin and extol everything that comes to us from abroad. Both extremes are to be avoided because they are irrational.

Rather, when our attention is called to some matter new to us, emanating from beyond our frontiers, let us examine it fairly. If we doubt that the available data are sufficient to help us form an intelligent opinion, let us suspend final judgment. If, however, there is merit in the matter or method, let us adapt it to the Sokol movement, and adopt it for the good of our cause.

To be continued

'Constitution Recalls'

"Do not recall my weaknesses when I need all my strengths."

— John Hancock

"You cannot expect 13 clocks to chime at the same time."

— B. Franklin



MEMORIES — NOT TROPHIES are what Sokol is about

The Sokol Greater Cleveland Recognition Day Committee chaired by Sister Elsie Khol, planned a gala affair on October 4, 1987 at Bohemian National Hall — Cleveland, Ohio to honor members of 50 years or more and past presidents. Under the guidance of mistress of ceremonies, Sister Alice Khol, and master of ceremonies, Edwin Jirousek Jr., the afternoon celebration was opened with these words:

“Though our motto proudly states Neither Profit Nor Glory, we believe it is important to look back and pay tribute to the past presidents who provided us with sound leadership and guidance, and to those long-time Sokol members who, for over 50 years, dedicated themselves to the ideals and principles of the Sokol Movement.”

Those Sokol members honored represented 5,593 years of Sokol membership. They were:

- 1909 — John Drsek
- 1912 — Christina Kunasek, Frank Pliska
- 1914 — Anna Pliska
- 1917 — Rose Sykora
- 1918 — Mildred Drsek
- 1919 — Joseph Krejci, Martha Serpan, Mary Sima
- 1920 — Marie Nejedly, Anne Oldham
- 1921 — Rose Habr, Frank Hoyer, Mae Kuchta
- 1922 — Katherine Bazant, Bertha Cihula, Josephine Kletecka
- 1923 — Bertha Cerny, Emily Hoch, Ruth Perlik, Ludvik Rychtera

- 1924 — Frank Cihula, Anna Hoyer, Jerry Jirik, Jerome Pokorny
- 1925 — Vlasta Fairaizl, Libbie Kosin, Vera Majer, Helen Sorm
- 1926 — Josephine Bartunek, Josephine Kratky, Joseph Mottl, Mary Whiteman
- 1927 — Bela Hering, Anastasia Kiml, John Kubasta, Elsie Mastny, Alfred Politzer
- 1928 — Edward David, Gus Hanacek, William Hlavin, Frank Kavan, James Kratky, Eliska Machalicek, Alice Zeman
- 1929 — Elsie Curry, John Galik, Emilie Hanacek, Emil Hoch, George Stribrny, Julia Stribrny, Florence Troyan, Anna Veverka
- 1930 — Edwin Jirousek, Edward Khol, Thomas Suchy
- 1931 — Marie Cermak, Henrietta Chaloupek, Frank Havranek, Marie Hrabik, Ann Svoboda
- 1932 — Arthur Marvan, Caroline Slocum, Charles Svehla, Betty Stribrny, Rose Strobl, Anna Verkner, Helen Vondrasek, Lillian Zeman
- 1933 — Alby Galik, Charles Hantl, Rose Schmidt, Mildred Zizka
- 1934 — Joseph Bittner, Mary Fortier, Elsie Khol, Dorothy Martanovic, Karel Vavra
- 1935 — Robert Jirousek, Theodore Kunasek, Edward Lacina, Gizella Panka, Miro Pliska, William Stepnicka
- 1936 — Rudolph Perina, Bessie Pobuda, Mildred Ptak, Vaclav Sorejs, Frances Vencl, Vlasta Zajic
- 1937 — Jerry Chadim, Mildred Darovec, Rose Psenicka, Evelyn Zidlicky

Past presidents honored were:**SOKOL CLEVELAND-ČECH HAVLÍČEK —**

Nelson Gedeon, Frank Kavan,
Mathew Martanovic

SOKOL NOVÁ VLAST —

John Galik, Bob Kasper, Premek Kocian,
George Kotlan

SOKOL TYRŠ —

Richard Franks, Robert Jirousek, J. J. Vencel,
Karel Vavra, Lad Voris

SOKOL GREATER CLEVELAND —

Karel Vavra, John Dusek

Ann Veverka, Sokol member since 1929, wrote the following letter to the Sokol 50 Year Recognition Day Committee. This letter speaks for all honorees and their "special" day.

To members of the Sokol 50 year Recognition Day Committee:

"I would rather have a few kind words from the bosom of a friend,

Than flowers strewn around my casket when my days on earth must end.

I would rather have a handshake from one I know is true,

Than tears shed 'round my casket when this world I bid adieu.

Bring me all the flowers today whether pink or white or red,

I would rather have one blossom now than a truckload when I am dead."

The above lines were a bit altered, apologies to the unknown author.

The heart strings of those with membership of 50 years and plus in the Sokol Membership rejoiced, as they met with their families, friends and Sokol Family on the afternoon of October 4, 1987, at our beloved Česká Národní Síň, now known as the SOKOL GREATER CLEVELAND, INC. home.

The sun cast it's warm spell early in the day and before 12 noon the parking lot was a maze of automobiles, parked or waiting to be parked. Friends of long ago, tumbled from the open doors of these cars and many were the outbursts of surprise when one recognized a friend of yesteryear. Entering the monumental columns of the building, one immediately sensed the warmth, excitement and hospitality radiating from within.

The Honorees were met at the door with a warm handshake, a caress, pinned with the traditional red and white carnation, and personally escorted to their designated tables. That twinkle in the eye, or familiar characteristic of those, whom you had often thought about, often wondered whether you would ever meet again, suddenly gazed at you from across the room. A hearty handshake, a warm embrace once again rekindled the days of long ago.

The tasty dinner catered by the Novotny establishment was promptly served to the delight of everyone and promptly at a given time the room was stilled as the voice of our president called the

assembly to order, welcomed those present and the program commenced. With the presentation of the flags, the singing of the national anthems, we were on our way to a most pleasant afternoon. Our master of ceremonies unraveled memories of the good old days when..., recalled, the activities in the various units, competitions, rivalry, and today's united effort for a common cause. The narrator's ability to bring a simple smile, a hearty laugh, and tears, yes,... tears, to many an eye, warmed the soul.

Presentation of Past President, special numbers from the past, both men and women, turned time back to the days of the "SLET", many of them, in the country of the Sokol origin.

Then came the real pleasantries... every member able to be present, called and presented by our two master of ceremonies, was recognized, escorted to the front for presentation of his/her certificate, applauded for his/her dedication through the years, and escorted back to their table. Those unable to be present, were represented by a family member or dear one and applauded with the same sincerity. Those who are no longer with us, who had left their mark in the annuals of Sokol were not forgotten. A tribute to our many departed and dedicated members was traditionally remembered. May their honorable deeds and many contributions to the Sokol Way Of Life be long remembered.

In tribute to all Sokols, led by our well known vocalists, with the participation of the audience, we heralded the end of a perfect afternoon singing "Spějme Dál".

Photographs were taken of the Past Presidents as were photos of the entire group of Honorees for posterity.

To summarize Recognition Day:

On behalf of all those honored on this day, it was a memorable occasion for every one, Honorees, their families, friends and Sokol Family. Our everlasting 'Thank You' to the committee who brought so much happiness and sunshine to the 'Other Generation'. We have not been forgotten and continue to live in the hearts of the Sokol Movement. We have shared with you and you have remembered and recognized a truckload with us.

**ZDAR! ZDAR! ZDAR!
NI ZISK, NI SLÁVA!**

**HELP
OUR SOKOL
GROW**



With a Lions's Might and a Falcon's Flight



JOINT RESOLUTION

The President of the United States issued a proclamation declaring June 27, 1987 as "National Sokol Day in the United States". In the House of Representatives on June 10, 1987, Mr. Gaydos introduced the following joint resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service.

Expressing the sense of the Senate and the House of Representatives that the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation declaring June 27, 1987, as "National Sokol Day in the United States".

Whereas, the Sokol, an association of Americans whose ancestry hails from Czechoslovakia and who are dedicated to gymnastics, physical fitness, equality of the sexes, freedom, and democracy, is celebrating the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of its existence with a national festival, called the XX Sokol USA National Slet, on June 27, 1987, in the Washington, District of Columbia Armory;

Whereas, the Slet will be attended by thousands of gymnasts, young and old, men and women, from many parts of the United States who, like Sokol's founder, Dr. Miroslav Tyrš, strive for "A sound mind in a sound body," for "no personal profit or glory";

Whereas, the Sokols since their inception have always been firm believers in democracy and were a very important element in the struggle of the people of Czechoslovakia for their freedom during World Wars I and II;

Whereas, the Sokols were one of the first organizations in the United States which promoted gymnastics; and

Whereas, the first Sokol unit was established in St. Louis, Missouri on March 14, 1865, and since that time they have always firmly supported the principles of democracy, human rights, and excellence in all endeavors without compromise; Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation declaring June 27, 1987, as "National Sokol Day in the United States."

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SILOU LVA VZLETEM SOKOLA

AMERICAN SOKOL ORGANIZATION

GYMNAST

DECEMBER 1987

Editor: Frank H. Michalek — 10 S. 020 Lorraine Dr., Hinsdale, Illinois 60521



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and a
Very Productive New Year

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GYMNASTICS SAFETY USGF Safety Video Available!

*Executive Director's Report
Mike Jacki*

In our continuing efforts to upgrade the safety awareness in our sport, we are trying to bring new and exciting programs to our coaches and clubs. Our newest and perhaps most exciting endeavor is a safety video that will be available this summer.

This project has been almost two years in the making from the initial discussions to our current position with most of the project completed. The idea was to determine the most effective way to present safety concerns to our clubs, coaches and athletes. The exciting medium of video will accomplish these goals in a graphic and illustrative manner. In addition, we have added to the excitement and impact of this video by using some of our sports most recognizable and knowledgeable personalities. The participants include Bart Conner, Kathy Johnson, Peter Vidmar, Abie Grossfeld, Greg Mardsen, Judi Avener, Bela Karolyi and others!

The film is instructional in nature and also gives strong identification to the many safety concerns and issues that are of great significance in providing warnings to those participating in gymnastics. There will be recommended procedures for showing the video to club members, coaches and parents. Also, it will provide the club with an excellent method to verify that safety information has been provided to the participants, coaches and even parents of the athletes.

The entire video has been reviewed, evaluated and closely read, word for word, by a variety of gymnastics, education and legal experts. It is truly a "state of the art" method to teach people about gymnastics safety and safety awareness.

The delivered price is \$39.95. USGF Professional members, individuals who are Safety Certified by the USGF and USGF Member Clubs will be able to purchase this film for the delivered price of \$29.95. Orders can be sent or called in to the USGF Merchandising Department.

We are enthusiastic about the Safety video and we encourage all gymnastics professionals to join in helping us spread the world-of-GYMNASTICS SAFETY: FIRST, SECOND AND ALWAYS!

Safety Information, Research & Ideas

*Bill Sands
University of Utah*

THE EDGE OF THE ENVELOPE

Gymnastics training and performance involve a great many things that go beyond the simple execution of skills. The gymnast and coach apply a great deal of themselves to the process of training and performance. Each must use good judgement, apply

talent, focus determination, and develop commitment. One of the individual characteristics essential in good coaches and gymnasts is pride, ego, or a sense of self worth. Coaches and gymnasts must believe in themselves, and what they are doing.

Sometimes we tend to go a little overboard in pride and ego. Like so many things, we tend to believe that more of a good thing must be better. The bigger the ego, the bigger the pride—the better. Unfortunately, this can lead to problems. One of the ways that coaches build pride is to teach gymnasts to do more and more difficult skills. This is often apparent in our pride of having a gymnast perform a new and difficult skill for the first time. Coaches can often be seen to look about to see who noticed. Gymnasts do the same thing. They perform a difficult new skill and then they expect to be rewarded.

We often seek this "thrill" of achievement by working more and more difficult skills. We try to push the "edge of the envelope." We try and push performance to the edge of our capabilities. Where is the edge of the envelope? As with most things, it depends. The edge of the envelope might be considered to be the 100% performance capability of the gymnast. This can be considered by absolute highest level of performance the gymnast is capable of, at the moment. The edge of the envelope is obviously different for a class III and an elite. The edge of the envelope can be quite different from one class II gymnast to another class II gymnast. Of course, the envelope should steadily become larger while the gymnast learns and progresses. It is important for each coach and athlete to determine the edge of the envelope so that it is not exceeded. When the gymnast goes beyond the edge of the envelope he/she is at a greater risk of injury. Moreover, the closer the gymnast is to the edge of the envelope the more at risk he/she is.

What I would like to offer is that the gymnast should not perform or compete anywhere near the edge of the envelope. The edge of the envelope should be gently touched only during training, with long painstaking progressions, deep and soft foam pits, thorough and extensive conditioning, careful psychological preparation, complete understanding of mechanics, and indepth preparation of alternatives. When you push the edge of the envelope you are very likely to make mistakes. These mistakes should not be costly; they belong in training where mats are thick and soft, pressure is reduced, and many safe attempts can be undertaken.

In short, you should train to 100% of your ability, but you should perform or compete at about 80%. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Often times gymnasts compete with far too much difficulty for their ability. And, of course, this is relative to the learning level of the gymnast. A young novice gymnast has a much lower 100% ability level than an experienced class I gymnast. But, the principle still applies. The fact that most injuries occur during the transition from skills to routines, and during the early portions of the competitive season,

indicates that gymnasts are being asked to perform at levels they are not quite ready for. A conditioning principle states that you should not increase a conditioning load more than 5% per week to avoid overtraining (pushing your envelope too far). Yet we often make very abrupt and far reaching changes on a daily basis with gymnasts. Let's try and nudge the edge of the envelope, compete with skills we can do easily and safely, and perhaps we can avoid injury, have more fun, and perhaps become more consistent. The old idea of putting difficult skills in a routine that are not quite learned to "force the gymnast to practice them" simply does not work.

Wait until the gymnast can safely perform the skill without difficulty through many repetitions before placing it in the routine. Give the gymnast plenty of time to accumulate many repetitions of the skill in combinations before routines, and many routines before competition. Try not to change routines completely from one competition to the next. Try not to get carried away with difficulty for the sake of itself. Consider that a standing tuck back somersault done alone on floor exercise would not be considered good composition, but it is done on balance beam all the time. Why? When it is not any prettier on balance beam than on floor exercise—because of its risk. Find places to reduce the risk rather than increase it. Unnecessary release skills on uneven bars usually amount to more likelihood of falling rather than a higher score. Simply, do what the gymnast can do well and consistently.

Gymnastics Safety: The Coaches' Corner

Robert Cowan

USGF Men's Program Administrator

REVIEW OF SPOTTING TRENDS

In the early days of gymnastics (the time before pits), spotting was a means to an end and oftentimes was a substitute for good progressions, a knowledgeable coach or a safe environment. The muscles flexing, smiling young coach with quick hands became the new quickdraw artist of the Old West.

It did not take too long for the gymnasts and the coaches to come to a realization that this crutch or shortcut was a two-edged sword that would come home to haunt them at a competition, when the athlete was required to do the skills "alone."

Spotting today is becoming almost a lost art and even clubs without pits do not spot as much as they used to. This article is not intended to promote a return to the days of yesteryear, but rather to re-evaluate and reinforce the merit to spotting as an integral part in the overall learning process.

Therefore, let us examine two separate scenarios:

a. Spotting in a gym with pits—A logical teaching progression in a gym with pits as related to tumbling or vaulting, would be to teach the new skill into a foam pit with good progressions and

sufficient attempts to warrant a move to the next step. Step two would involve the adding of mats (one at a time) to the pit thus hardening the surface and beginning to apprise the gymnast of the impact potential of the skill. As the attempts succeed, more mats are added or firmness is achieved, eventually ending in a surface similar in height and resilience to a competitive floor, yet still retaining some additional safety. This progressive approach lends itself to a "no spotting concept." However, some coaches will still stand-in or spot at a competition for safety sake, even though their athletes have never been touched in the learning of the skill. This requires a more knowledgeable coach, who uses good progressions, patience and repetition as his tools, rather than "juggling".

It is also conceivable that the coach would occasionally spot the athlete from the edge of the pit, or by stepping onto the matting in the pit, to allow the athlete to get the feel of them stepping in. Also, some skills, such as Tkachevs, Yeagers, etc. on Unevens or High Bar, could also utilize an overhead belt system.

b. Spotting in a gym without pits—Assuming that the old "throw and go" philosophy is dead in this gym, a logical progression with good reinforcement of correct execution would be utilized through the initial teaching phases of all skills. Thus, each skill is the beginning of a new skill, not an end unto itself. With this being the case, the coach is able to spot the new skill in a more or less "catching" mode, rather than actually manipulating the gymnast through the skill, thus affecting their spatial awareness in a negative manner. The most beneficial, learning type of spot for the athlete is a hands-on spot from the coach. This is also the most difficult. Other forms of spotting, with belts, both traveling and stationary overhead, are good progressive means of teaching skills. However, spotting in a facility which has no pits is not a substitute for good teaching progressions.

In fact, spotting is never a substitute for good teaching progressions and logical skill development.

Review your teaching concepts and analyze which system is best for you. You will become a better coach as a result and your gymnasts will definitely perform better.

Self Improvement Gymnastic Clinic in San Francisco, August 1987

Those who did not attend missed an event which would make them forget everything but gymnastics and fun for three consecutive days.

As soon as we gathered at noon on Friday in the San Francisco Sokol hall, brother Joe Vrzalik from Baltimore lined up 23 participants from San Francisco, Fresno and Los Angeles. In order to make them appear like real Sokols, he started the clinic with marching tactics. In a very short time, they all looked like a well organized group. A warm up

lasted about one hour and was so strenuous that I was wondering if all the students would endure the clinic till Sunday. The remaining two hours before the sight seeing tour were used for vaulting and basic floor exercises.

The sight seeing tour lasted five hours and everyone said it was gorgeous. During a sunny, but cool afternoon, the bus climbed several hills from where we had magnificent views of the city of San Francisco. Brother Vrzalik made perfect handstands for our cameras, with the Golden Gate, the downtown skyscrapers and the San Francisco Bay in the background. What a guy!

We continued to the Golden Gate Park to visit the bust of T. G. Masaryk, and ended at the Fisherman's Wharf. The students got some money from the "chief cook", sister Meier, to buy dinner, and were allowed to stroll around. Fisherman's Wharf is a perfect place for entertainment! Fortunately, noone got lost in the big crowd.

Back in the Sokol Hall at 9:15 p.m., we welcomed our second instructor brother Brad Durham from Fort Worth who started to teach right away. He is the one who attracts attention and wins friendship of the students without allowing any sloppiness.

All Saturday, from 9:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., with one hour recess at noon, there was continuous movement on apparatus, practicing basic skills. The instructors showed so much strength and skill in spotting the gymnasts! Everybody was sweating, but no young gymnast skipped anything. Some of our unit instructors were watching and taking notes.

We all participated in the Sokol idea and history lessons given by Brad. He does not speak any Czech nor is he of Czechoslovak descent, but knows pretty well how to teach our native songs.

For a change, the students split into the groups and had half an hour to prepare a skit. They were ready on time and really excelled. One skit was called "Fantasy", the other "Reality". "Reality" showed a parody of a Sokol class (instructors holding sticks, pupils full of bandages etc.), "Fantasy" tried a pantomime to the song of "Šla Nanyňka do zeli" which ended with tumbling and pyramids.

Saturday ended with a so called "Burn out" exercise on several stations, where the moves (running, jumping, pull-ups and push-ups are repeated for two minutes each). It is a very effective exercise, and should be used in all our classes gradually. You really can burn your fat out if you keep going.

I really had doubts if the students would be fit on Sunday for an other strenuous work out, but they looked ready for the balance beam, tumbling and horizontal bar. Then they had a test in Sokol idea and history and we all joined them for singing. It was enjoyable to listen to the songs of our youth. Even the little Los Angeles Korean Sokolettes could be heard singing: "...letí nad matičku Prahu, od Moravy letí k Váhu".

During the clinic, many friendships were initiated and addresses exchanged. Special thanks to Sokol

San Francisco for hosting it and feeding us for three days. Our cooks were great!

With the help of competent instructors, the goal to make Sokol gymnasts of all three units enthused for more activity was achieved. *Jiri Liska*

"WHAT SOKOL MEANS TO ME"

Awardees 1987-88 Merit Award

Debbie Unijewski — Sokol Slavsky — Central District

To me, the Sokol Gymnastic Organization is not like your typical local gymnastic place. It is more than just hard core gymnastics. It is a place to have fun, have friendly competitions, and meet new friends. It's a place where families can take part as well, not only in helping their children in classes but also take an active part in deciding how to run the gym, and how to make it better for its members.

Sokol is a place for everyone. No matter if you are five or ninety-five, Sokol has something to offer. It's a place that not only provides physical knowledge, like gymnastics, volleyball, rythmics, and of course, calisthenics, but also provides mental knowledge of its beginning, heritage and customs.

In my fourteen years of being an active member of Sokol Slavsky, I consider the people that I have met to be more than just friends, but like a second family, a family that I care about and worry about. I believe that the Sokol tradition is something that every child should grow up with, and I'm sure happy that I was able to.

David Satek — Sokol Slavsky — Central District

The meaning of Sokol has changed for me in the past year. Since attending my first year of college, the meaning has changed from being involved in everything from class, competition, fund raisers and the Junior Board to thinking about the dreaded high bar, remembering bake sales and paper drives and imagining the calisthenics. It has gone from going to class two or three times a week to coming home from college on various weekends to participate in a class. The meaning has also changed in that I've gone from a half-way reliable Junior to more of a highly responsible person in Men's Class. Case in point is at the National Slet in Toronto, I had to listen to a chaperone while in Washington D.C. I was the one looking over the Juniors as a chaperone.

Though there has been a great many changes, one thing has stayed the same: Love. The love of Sokol and what it stands for. The love the brothers and sisters which keeps the organization going. The love between the friends made at this special organization. And finally the mutual love and respect of the older and younger generations.

This one word, Love, sums up the general feeling of Sokol and what it really means to me.

EUROPEAN ROOTS: A History of R.S.G.

(Part 1 of 2)

By Nora Hitzel

A review of the roots of a sport provides a measure to evaluate and analyze progress. Because of the deeply-rooted European rhythmic gymnastic program, and a nurturing process that has gone on for many years, the strong stems have produced magnificent flowers. The United States program was a seed only 16 years ago with no roots. However, in an amazingly short time, the stems have started to grow and the buds are beginning to blossom.

In 1969, Frank Bare, the USGF executive director, sent Mildred Prchal, long known by the gymnastics community for her dance and choreography skills, to the IV Modern Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships (MRG) in Varna, Bulgaria, as an official observer for the USA. The event Prchal watched featured 42 individual competitors from 14 European States and Cuba, Japan and Korea. Fifteen teams competed in the group competition. Upon her return, she convinced the USGF leadership that Modern Rhythmic Gymnastic (as it was then called) had a future in the United States.

Sixteen years prior to her visit, the first MRG World Championship was conducted in Budapest. Twenty-eight contestants from 18 countries competed in only two events — optional exercise without apparatus, and optional exercise with apparatus. Two years later, in 1965, a compulsory exercise without apparatus was added to the program. In 1967, the rope event was added as a compulsory exercise. In Varna, the ball was added as a compulsory event. The ribbon event was not included until 1971; and the club event was the last addition in 1973. The exercise without apparatus was ultimately dropped from competition because it had become too "theatrical."

Prchal organized the first instructional clinic in MRG in Barryville, New York, during the summer of 1970. Approximately 20 participants learned the fundamentals of apparatus work — including a group exercise with tennis balls. Of real importance was that the Barryville clinic brought together the nucleus of leadership that would be responsible for the early stages of growth. Included were Prchal, Annelis Hoyman, Nora Hitzel, Norma Zabka, and Maria Bakos. Those born in the United States were really beginners, having no previous training other than very basic activity work. It was fortunate then, and more so later on, that a number of people who settled in the United States after immigrating from countries more advanced in the sport, were willing to share their knowledge. Maria Bakos, from Hungary, was the first.

In 1972, the USGF sent Prchal and Hitzel to an International Judging Clinic in Bulgaria. Both spent their days in judging lectures and technique train-

ing, and Hitzel learned the compulsory club routine that would be used in the 1973 World Championship (the target date the USGF set for entry into the sport).

At this point, the United States did not have any gymnasts. Prchal recruited Sarah Brumgart, a very successful artistic gymnast who possessed great dance skills and flexibility, and Kathy Brym, a recent immigrant from Czechoslovakia who was experienced with the apparatus. They, along with Hitzel, began serious training in Chicago. Bakos also started training gymnasts in the New York area, including Ellen (Garlicki) Nyemcsik and her daughter, Andrea; while Helena Greathouse, a native of Czechoslovakia, also began coaching a few girls on the West coast.

Another National MRG Clinic was organized in Chicago in August of 1972. Prchal enlisted the services of world renowned ballet dancer John Kriza, a former member of the American Ballet Theatre who had also been a former student of hers. Bakos taught the group her body-wave techniques. Prchal and Hitzel taught apparatus technique. Prchal had, by this time, put together the USA's first compulsory book, derived from an older Czechoslovakian MRG program, which was published by the USGF. These routines were also taught at the clinic.

In order to provide an opportunity for the new rhythmic gymnasts to compete, the first National Championship was organized in 1973. Sixteen gymnasts competed in three events: exercise without implement, ribbon, and hoop. No formal training had yet been designed for judges, but the panel recruited from the artistic judging ranks declared Sarah Brumgart the all-around winner, with Kathy Brym in second place, and Lyn Cindy Jones (a gymnast trained by Marion Duncan of New Zealand) in third. The all-around scores ranged from 4.95 to 26.60. Brumgart and Brym were selected to represent the USA in the MRG World Championships.

At this time rhythmic equipment was not available in the U.S. Prchal raided the *Sokol* gyms around the country for clubs that would meet the competitive specification, and the girls made their own ribbons using fishing-pole ends for sticks and ribbon purchased at fabric stores. Their hoops were old, thick wooden ones from Germany that splintered and broke every time they hit the ground.

After five months of intense training, the five-person USA delegation headed for the 1973 MRG World Championships. Prchal, Brumgart, Brym, Hitzel, and Dr. Don Morrison the pianist, left Chicago as excited pioneers, outfitted for travel by Sears and Roebuck and competition by Zwickel.

Sixty-three individuals from 25 countries and 18 Groups participated in the Championships. Brumgart finished 45th (31.25) and Brym was 49th (29.90). Though not in the top half of the group, the gymnasts had obtained personal victories. At the Championships they met Candace (Celigoy) Feinberg who, encouraged by her artistic coach Dale



BROTHER JOHN DRSEK

Honored For 79 Years Of Sokol Membership

On October 4, 1987 Brother John Drsek, 94, of Maple Heights, Ohio was honored by Sokol Greater Cleveland for his membership of 79 years to the American Sokol Organization. Congratulating him at the Recognition Day Banquet was Betty Hosticka, president of Sokol Greater Cleveland.

Before coming to the United States at the age of 14, Brother Drsek gymned in the Sokol boys' class in his native town of Horovice, Czechoslovakia. Upon immigrating to the United States, he joined Sokol Cleveland in 1908 which was formerly located on Plymouth Avenue in Cleveland. Among his fondest memories as a young gymnast were the Sokol trips to the Slets in Detroit with his gym partner the late Brother John Kiml.

As a master carpenter and construction builder, Brother Drsek put his talents to work in his later years. In the 1960's, he and his son Frank extensively remodeled Sokol Cleveland Čech-Havlíček located on Harvard and Warrensville Roads.

Brother Drsek continues to remain active. He generously donates his artistically handcrafted items of sturdy footstools, fancy bird houses, etc. to Sokol Greater Cleveland's Holiday Fair which is held every other year in November.

At 94 years of age, Brother Drsek is a picture of health. He resides in Maple Heights, Ohio with his wife, Mildred, who was also recognized for her Sokol membership of 69 years.

Congratulations Brother and Sister Drsek.

*Submitted by Sister Georgia Jencik,
Sokol Greater Cleveland*

EUROPEAN ROOTS

(Continued from p. 119)

Flanses, attended the meet as an observer. Since the newly formed Canadian MRG Federation had invited the U.S. to a meet later that year, Hitzel asked Feinberg if she wanted to compete with the USA team. She agreed; returned home to develop routines, and arrived in Chicago three months later with her first rhythmic routines and a plastic ribbon.

The Canadian meet in December of 1973 was a forerunner to the Four Continents Championships. Canada, New Zealand, Cuba, Mexico and the USA were scheduled to compete. However, Cuba and Mexico did not participate so the meet was small: only seven competitors. Bryna finished in 5th place and Feinberg, who only competed in three events, was 7th. The United States was now committed to MRG development even though only a handful of people knew what it was. *USA Gymnastics*

Help Our Sokol Grow

Sokol Greater Cleveland Czech Folk Dancers

IF YOU CAN DREAM IT — YOU CAN LIVE IT!
HORIZONS — EPCOT CENTER
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

In anticipation of the Sokol Greater Cleveland Czech Folk Dancers' 15th anniversary of their founding, the group auditioned and was accepted to perform at Epcot Center on July 29, 1987. On this special day, as the Epcot announcer introduced the Sokol dance group, a dream became a reality. The next 25 minutes were spent sharing their Czech heritage with Epcot visitors. The Sokol Greater Cleveland Czech Folk Dancers were recognized for their contribution to family entertainment by the presentation of a Walt Disney World Magic Music Day Plaque.

Co-incidentally, Walt Disney World was celebrating its' 15th birthday.

On August 16, 1987 the Sokol Greater Cleveland Czech Folk Dancers performed at the Second Annual Heritage Day at the Ohio State Fair — Columbus, Ohio. Along with other invited nationality groups, they met Governor and Mrs. Richard Celeste of Ohio at a special reception. Later, the group was presented a special certificate for their participation and representation of the Czech community. *See picture / back cover*



Dear Brothers
and
Sisters,
Friends and Supporters
of Sokol:

Every Sokol Slet is an opportunity to show how well we have prepared ourselves for the gymnastic competitions, as well as the tournaments. It is also an opportunity to strengthen old friendships and to form new ones.

Our 8th Sokol Canada Slet, however, has something more to offer. It is the location of the Slet itself, for it will be held in a place which has a very special attraction for most North Americans. It will be held in the city of Montreal, in the province of Quebec, where the English language — though widely spoken — is not predominant — where the official and first language is French. This fact, which gives the city a unique character, will also be reflected in the local organization of the upcoming Slet. The Slet events will be divided equally between the French "Universite de Montreal" and the English "McGill University".

We hope to see you all in Montreal, not only during the three days of the Slet, but also before and after. Do plan to stay longer in order to enjoy Montreal to the fullest.

WELCOME TO MONTREAL!

April in Paris and autumn in New York... well, why not June in Montreal — a city which combines the charm of Paris with the sophistication of New York...

Your June visit to Montreal will be not only an opportunity to participate in the VIII. SOKOL CANADA SLET but also to get to know a truly unique city.

Located on the banks of the mighty St. Lawrence river, with Mount Royal, the royal mountain, as a backdrop, and less than 80 km (50 miles) north of the U.S./Canadian border, the Montreal of today is the largest French speaking city in the world, outside of Paris. The first settlers who came here from Europe were French and the links with the past are strong and numerous. Yet Montreal is not really a French city, nor truly a North American one. To us who live here, it seems to combine the best of both worlds, the old and the new.

English, of course, is spoken almost everywhere, being the language of trade and commerce — so those of you who do not speak French need have no worries. And because Montreal, in its almost 400 years of existence, has attracted immigrants from all over the globe, you will find this reflected

in the daily life of the city as well, in its shops, churches and restaurants. There is a large Italian population — over 100 thousands — tens of thousands of Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Portuguese and Poles. The Czech and Slovak community is less numerous — only a few thousand souls. There are Chinese and Vietnamese, Koreans and South Americans, as well as many other nationalities. All of them have contributed towards making the word "Montreal" synonymous with "cosmopolitan".

BLANCHE J. CIHAK

12-09-06  10-21-87

Sister Blanche Cihak was a lifelong member of Sokol actively participating not only in Sokol Town



of Lake, but also in the administration of the American Sokol Organization. For over sixty years Blanche gave generously of her time and talents to Sokol. In her early days she attended classes at Sokol Town of Lake and soon became involved in fund raising activity which included bazaars, dances, third class membership drives and organized the annual gourmet buffets presented just before Thanksgiving. She served

as President of Sokolice and for many years as Financial Secretary.

On the National level, Blanche held office as ASO Vice-President, 2nd V.P., Fin. Sec., Secretary, as well as several Slet Committee offices. In 1964 as Secretary with the American Stamp Committee, she attended the meeting with Postmaster General John Gronouski in commemorating issuance of the Sokol Stamp. Along with her husband, James L. Cihak, Sokol was at the top of their priority list.

Blanche also found time to support the Czechoslovak community organizations which included membership in the Czechoslovak National Council of America, Svobodná Obec, Bohemian National Cemetery delegation, Sokol Town of Lake Flams Club, Lodge Woodrow Wilson No. 377 CSA, Townites and many others. She was the Founder and President of Cihak World Travel.

Sister Cihak passed away on October 21, 1987 after a massive stroke. On behalf of Sokol Town of Lake and all Sokol members, our condolences go to her son, Edward, daughter-in-law, Susan and grandsons, Steven and James.

*George C. Vytalil, President,
Sokol Town of Lake*

ASO FINANCIAL REPORT

RECEIPTS: OCTOBER 1987

Dues	\$ 8,993.00
Convention Fund	40.00
Special Assessment	11.00
Dividends & Interest	145.81
Subscription to "American Sokol"	4.00
Resale of Jewelry	328.75
Postage	2.50
U.P.S.	12.89
Educational Booklets	21.50
Uniform Division	61.23
Miscellaneous	6.20
	\$ 9,626.88
Transfer of funds for Merit Awards	1,200
	\$10,826.88
A.S.O. Uniform Division — Rent, Salaries, etc. — 2 mos.	1,296.19
Total Receipts	\$12,123.07

DISBURSEMENTS:

ADMINISTRATIVE

Salaries - Office Employees	\$1,057.11
Salaries - Membership	243.00
F.I.C.A. & F.W.T. - September, 1987	214.68
I.W.T. - 3rd Quarter, 1987	78.07
Rent, Janitor Services & Supplies, Phone, Elec.	976.51
Office Supplies	5.56
Postage	73.73
Travel Expense	150.60
Jewelry (Stick pins)	2,777.72
Donation - CNCA Seals	10.00
Christmas Seals	1,386.24
Miscellaneous	41.50
	\$ 7,014.72

BOARD OF INSTRUCTORS

Salaries	\$ 594.38
F.I.C.A. & F.W.T. - September, 1987	88.24
I.W.T. — 3rd Qtr., 1987	41.89
Editor "Sokol Gymnast"	30.00
Add'l. copies "Sokol Gymnast"	58.00
Phone & Postage	29.71
USGF Congress of Coaches (F. Michalek)	300.41
Video tape	29.95
Dist. Directors Conference - File pockets	22.68
	\$ 1,195.26

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

Salaries	\$ 114.80
F.I.C.A. - September, 1987	14.02
I.W.T. - 3rd Qtr., 1987	3.68
Office Furniture	106.00
Postage	4.80
	\$ 243.30

SOKOL PUBLICATION

Printing "American Sokol" - Oct., 1987	\$ 982.04
Postage "American Sokol"	543.00
Editor "American Sokol"	125.00
Salaries & Delivery of Publication to PO	153.50
	\$ 1,803.54

MISCELLANEOUS

A.S.O. Uniform Division - Salaries, F.I.C.A., Sept., 1987, F.W.T., Sept., 1987 & I.W.T. - 3rd Qtr., 1987, Phone	\$ 499.40
Uniform Div. - Uniform Invoice payment included with ASO Dues check	61.23
FSLF - Merit Awards	1,200.00
FSLF - Postage	5.23
1989 Slet Expense — Bus for Dist. Dir. Conf.	52.00
	\$ 1,817.86
Total Disbursements	\$12,074.68

Balance brought forward:

Western National Bank of Cicero — Checking Acct.	\$ 1,778.67
Receipts - October	12,123.07
	13,901.74
Disbursements - October, 1987	12,074.68
	\$ 1,827.06

FUTURE SOKOL LEADERS FUND

OCTOBER 1987

In memory of Br. Jaroslav Tunkl, husband of Sis. Josephine Tunkl, President of Sokol Philadelphia — Sokol Philadelphia	\$200.00
In memory of Charles Machotka — Victoria (wife)	20.00
In memory of Br. Frank Vorel — Robert J. and Marlene Vondrasek	25.00
In memory of Sis. Blanche J. Cihak — Robert J. and Marlene Vondrasek	\$25.00
In memory of Sis. Blanche J. Cihak — Ann M. Barzyk	10.00
In memory of Sis. Blanche J. Cihak — Joe and Agnes Sotka	25.00
	\$305.00

* * *

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