

Reflections on the

**XII
ALL-SOKOL
SLET
PRAGUE
1994**

*This month's issue is dedicated to recollections of the
XII All-Sokol Slet in Prague, Czech Republic, July 1994.*

American Sokol

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From Your Editor...

Well, I didn't receive too many new photos of the Prague Slet, but the number of recollections and articles directed my way did prompt me to dedicate this entire issue to one topic. Please take time to read all the submissions, because they will give you a feeling of how important the Slet was to so many people. It will make you sit up and take notice, if you haven't in a while, of what a unique and wonderful organization we are lucky enough to all be a part of.

NA ZDAR!

Sis. Patricia Satek
1922 S. 57th Avenue
Cicero, IL 60650-2143

CALENDAR of EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 19 Sokol KHB Arts & Crafts Show
- 19 Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky Junior Dance

DECEMBER

- 3 Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky St. Nicholas Dance
- 3 Sokol Greater Cleveland St. Nick's Dance
- 3 Sokol Minnesota Christmas Party
- 4 Sokol Detroit Czechoslovak Afternoon Dinner Party
- 10 Central District Boys' Competition/Girls' Rhythmics

DECEMBER

- 15 Sokol Detroit Children's Christmas Party
- 16 Sokol Ceska Sin Men & Women Christmas Party
- 31 Sokol Greater Cleveland New Year's Eve Dinner Dance
- 31 Sokol Minnesota New Year's Eve Party

JANUARY

- 21 Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky Mostaccioli Dinner
- 28 Sokol Ceska Sin Winter Exhibition

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OUR SOKOL CREDO

To build a healthy and beautiful human body,
To cultivate a harmonious and total person,
To develop firm character, a well-rounded disposition and
A love of truth and justice;
To produce strong, lovely and honorable people,
That is the goal of a Sokol education.

*Recollection is the
only paradise from
which we cannot be
turned out.*

❖ *Jean Paul Richter*

Reflections on the XII ALL-SOKOL SLET PRAGUE 1994

THE FALCONS COME HOME
SIS. JOAN SEDLACEK, SOKOL MINNESOTA

In 1948, the Sokol marched in defiance. In 1994, we marched in jubilation. It was a victory celebration. A time of joyful tears. The flags of many nations flew in Prague that sunny Sunday afternoon. The falcons had come home.

As we tried to keep our lines, the people surged to meet us, to shake hands and to cry. The old people were there. Those who had marched in 1948, in 1938, in 1932. People who never believed they would see the Sokol march through Prague again. But we were there! The young people were there. Those who had only known the forced attendance of the communist parades, until they declared their own future in 1989. The children were there. Exchanging smiles and handshakes with increasing enthusiasm. We were there. The Czechs and Slovaks, Americans, and Canadians, Australians, Russians, Poles, Swedes, British, French, Germans, Austrians, Swiss, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs, South Africans and Argentinians. We were there - Sokols all.

We stepped off. The parade uniforms, the Slet uniforms and the national costumes in a flowing, sweeping mass of color. Down Vaclavske Namesti, past the Narodni Divadlo and along the Vltava. The statues of Karlov Most and Karel IV saw us go by and too soon we arrived in Staromestske Namesti under the watchful eyes of Jan Hus.

Twenty thousand strong, our voices raised, "At Zije Sokol. Nazdar!" The responding "Nazdar!" echoed through the streets and off buildings that have heard so much sorrow. We marched on cobblestones that felt Nazi boots and Russian tanks. On the street, from hotels, restaurants and shops, from eye level to the fifth floors, hands, scarves and flags waved, calling, encouraging and thanking us.

A reviewing stand was along the Vltava. Did we need the officials when we had the people? Sokol has always belonged to the people.

The parade ended in Staromestske Namesti. As flag after flag, obec after obec, country after country entered the square, to be met by those who had gone before, the many acres filled to overflowing. Filled with joy. Filled with tears. All along the way, tourists asked, "Who are you? What's the parade for?" They could understand the parade and the flags. They couldn't understand the tears. How do you explain 46 years of waiting and hoping for a day that might never come, and yet, was here.

Nothing could overshadow the emotion of the parade. Nothing, not even time, will dull the memory. Could the Slet equal or surpass it? We would have to wait until the bells chimed, telling us it was once again time to follow the flags on the step of Sokol history.

SOKOL PARADOXES

EDITORIAL BY EVA PLEKOTOVA IN CESKY DENIK, JULY, 4, 1994

Translated by Bro. Alex Wynnyczuk, Sokol New York

When the Sokol Parade moved through Prague on Sunday, July 3, younger eyes were viewing it with amazement, while the faces of the middle generation seemed to show a mild contempt. Despite the heat and discomfort of the day, a remarkable number of those who remembered past Slets arrived from all over the republic at least to set it – to be present. These people were touched with emotion and were holding back their tears with great difficulty. And when on Tuesday, in Strahov stadium the sound of the Sokol march “V Novy Zivot” is heard – Josef Suk composed it for Sokol Slets – it will be as the parade was on Sunday, a touching moment. It will be a special experience, as well as a moment of relief, after too long a period of darkness. It will be the hope for a return to a world in which words like honor, character and responsibility toward oneself and society have meaning. If one asks the question why so many Czechs from abroad came to Prague, even wearing uniforms that may look silly to some, the answer should be clear: they knew why. Unfortunately, it is here at home that many cannot understand that Sokol was and is something that we need so badly in our current situation.

Sokol was not a physical education organization in the sense that it is understood here today. Physical fitness was only a foundation for everybody to become a useful member of the whole society. In the capitalist, or as we would say nowadays, democratic Czechoslovakia, decent people of all social classes had, thanks in part to Sokol, a feeling of pride in themselves for a job well done: worker in his factory, a farmer on his land, a teacher in his school, a store owner in his shop. Sokol was helping all of them to create a feeling of self-esteem, because it was erasing social differences. A boy or a girl from a most humble family often became a recognized star thanks to his or her abilities, while a rich spoiled child had to fight for his place in the group. In Sokol they all learned from childhood that nothing is free. Nobody would even consider cheating because it would mean a loss of respect by others and thus one's own self-respect. This ethic, of course, is still valid today in that Europe into which we want to return so badly.

The tears that will flow with the revival of the tradition of Sokol Slets will not be caused by sentimental memories, as probably a large part of the middle generation that was brought up by the communist educational system would like to think. These tears will flow to honor those values to which our society has to return, because they are part of our historical tradition and in order not to balkanize the future of its children. That part of the middle generation which became a victim of nihilism faces an unenviable challenge. Either it will comprehend its ignorance, which is very difficult without knowledge of historical connections, or its own children will abandon it. This is because these children will not understand fully the syndrome of life behind bars. They have already open before them the gates to the whole world and to all roads of learning.

SIS. EMILY HOPPE, SOKOL WOMEN OF LITTLE FERRY

Prague is a wonderful, beautiful, very old city. There were so many things to see and do, we could not do it all. We saw the Hradcany, the Old Town Square, the astronomical clock, Tyn Church, the Powder Tower and walked across the Charles Bridge. We attended a special performance of the Bartered Bride at the National Theater. Some of us went to Kutna Hora, Karlovy Vary and Karlstejn Castle. Some met teary-eyed relatives.

Those who marched in the Sokol Parade all agreed it was a very moving experience.

The Slet was a marvelous exhibition. Even Vaclav Havel was there. There were so many Sokols from all over the world getting together for a splendid performance. And at the end, we were treated to a skydiving show. It was sad to say good-bye to Prague, truly a “Golden City.”

BRO. EDWARD SABADOS, PRESIDENT, SOKOL DETROIT

The air was filled with anticipation, wonderment and excitement. Without a doubt, it was all positive and upbeat. From the first step taken into Strahov Stadium, the parade through the streets of Prague, the performance of the American Folk Dance number at Tyrsuv Dum by the American Sokols, to the actual Slet itself at Strahov Stadium, these events will be forever memorable.

The parade through Prague was especially moving. The meeting place was Wenceslas Square, from the statue of the horseman at the top of the hill, to as far as the eye could see – the Sokols in their parade uniforms lining up. Side streets were packed solid, banners held high, flags waving in the breeze – there were an estimated 20-25 thousand marchers. The American Sokol Organization was positioned a third from the front, with a contingency of 500 members. Spectators on the sidewalks numbers 4-5 deep and at this point were not overly impressive. As the parade began, to our amazement, when we turned the corner onto the next street, the crowds swelled to such great numbers that we had to break ranks from 9 abreast to 4 abreast. Spectators were hanging out the windows waving, sidewalks overflowing and spilling out onto the streets as the marchers went by. The crescendo of Nazdar! Nazdar! Nazdar! and America! America! Thank You America! filled the next two and a half miles with a deafening sound. The outpouring of warmth, feeling, brotherhood and sisterhood was there – touching, hugging, shaking hand, men and women crying alike, there were no dry eyes, we were all proud, proud to be Sokols - and we held our head and hearts high. To all that were present, this was a significant emotional event. This was Sokol history being reborn

The Slet was a 2-day affair at Strahov Stadium. From the spectators point of view, watching the performers was as if the movements were fields of wheat moving with the gentle breeze. Impressive - yes; moving - yes. The numbers kept ones eyes glued to the field in wonderment and amazement. Much could be said and written about the Slet. The ones who travelled there have stories of their own and are eager to tell them. Just ask them. From all of us that went, it could only be summed up as "incredible" and "fabulous."

SIS. NANCY CHLODNICKI, SOKOL WOMEN OF LITTLE FERRY

The parade was an emotional experience. Thousands turned out – in wheel chairs, on crutches and able-bodied. They waved handkerchiefs and cried; they wanted just to touch us and wanted our American flags. I could actually feel the unbridled joy in their hearts and cried with them. The thrill of seeing Sokol again was foremost on their minds. There were many marchers in their various uniforms; it must have been quite a sight. Wish I could have watched the entire parade as well as march.

The Slet was spectacular. We had excellent seats – only about 15 or 20 feet away from President Havel. The stadium is the largest in the world and as many as 3,000 performers were on the field at a time. Considering the short amount of practice time, there were only a few times the lines wavered a bit. Always having been on the field when I attended a Slet, I had no idea how beautiful it is for spectators. Each group had its own special enchantment. The tiny tots on the field with their parents were a joy to behold. It was great seeing the whole family involved.

A couple of days after the Slet, we went to Cestin with relatives and visited other relatives who live in the house where my grandmother was born. Yes, we always took our shoes off! Their hospitality was overwhelming.

The trip was such a wonderful experience. The memories and emotions will remain with me forever.

IVAN KLECKA,
COUNSELOR FOR PRESS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS
AMERICAN EMBASSY, PRAGUE

On July 1, 1994, the COS greeted the foreign Sokol delegations at a rally in the courtyard of Tyrsov Dum. Ivan Klecka, Counselor for Press and Cultural Affairs (American Embassy), delivered the following address:

Seeing you all here takes me back a half century. When I was a young boy in Chicago, where I was born, I would go with my parents to Sokol functions in what was known as Pilsen Park, a sort of cross between a beer garden and a village green where we Czech-Americans would hold besedas. There were some short speeches, then people would dance, some people would sing and everybody seemed to be friends. I was maybe ten years old. It was fun.

My mother was born in Prague, on the second floor of a house that's still standing in Vinohrady, on the corner of Vinohradska and U Vodarny. My father was born in Hodonin. They came to America separately after the First World War, met and married there and half a century later, here I am. I know about the ties between Czechs and Americans.

My father was proud to be a Sokol. He joined your organization not

only for the gymnastic exercises and the comradeship, but to help create a free and independent Czechoslovakia. He carried on your traditions even after that job was done, after he came to America in 1920 to make a new life for himself. I, in turn, was very proud of my Sokol father then, and I still am now. I have his cap, his Sokol feather, I'm wearing one of his Sokol pins from the year of my birth. Seeing you here to day reminds me of that pride, of that tradition which I like to think that I share with you.

But that was then, and now is now. A very turbulent half century has passed. I believe that Sokol ideals still live. But the Sokol identity has to be reborn from the seeds that people like you have save overseas and now have an opportunity to sow again in the land of their origin.

Your harvest will not be easily gained. Times have changed. These fields have been cruelly trampled for almost three generations. The ground will take a lot of plowing and cultivating. The Sokol seeds will take much dedicated nurturing and perhaps the initial harvests will be meager.

But from some of you which I have

already talked to, I sense that a dedication, along with an ingenuity and an adaptability that could make it all work again. For instance, some of you have suggested that established Sokol communities in America could adopt a chapter in a Czech community, could help build a meeting place, could reestablish that sense of direct personal involvement in real people as well as a cause. I know of a group in Olomouce that very much wants to get in touch with a "new" Sokol organization, if I can put it that way, to help Czech students learn more about America, about Czech/American relations and perhaps how to study in American schools or visit for some weeks with Czech-American families.

If that dedication for a new beginning is indeed true, you have come with the right spirit. We can remember the past, but we must look to the future, whether we're talking about being Sokols or about anything else in life.

I welcome you to Prague on behalf of the American Embassy, on behalf of what your presence means to me personally and what it could mean to the future of young Czechs. I wish you well.



New President Assumes Leadership Of USA Gymnastics

Kathy Scanlan became the new President of USA Gymnastics on August 1. She replaces Mike Jacki, who resigned the position in late 1993. She has a widely established reputation for excellence in leadership and management of complex organizations. She has extensive experience in budget development and control, project direction, and government relations. She has successfully worked for government, non-profit organizations, and private industry.

- During World Cup Soccer, Scanlan oversaw the west coast venues and was the chair of the Finals Week Council for the concluding events in Los Angeles.
- Scanlan brings with her a wealth of event-related knowledge. She was the executive director for the World University Games in Buffalo, New York. She was responsible for the management of the games. The Games involved 5,000 athletes and 600 officials from 135 countries competing in 12 sports. Scanlan was hired just 10 months prior to the start of the Games and contributed to a remarkable turnaround of the event.
- Prior to the World University Games, she was Executive Vice President of the Seattle Supersonics where she directed the business operations for the Seattle National Basketball Association franchise.
- Scanlan was the Executive Vice President of the 1990 Seattle Goodwill Games Organizing Committee. She was responsible for the overall conduct and presentation of the 17-day international athletic competition, the Goodwill Arts Festival, and the Goodwill Exchange.
- She has also worked for the City of Seattle in many capacities including: Deputy Director for the Seattle Center, Business and Operations Manager for the Woodland Park Zoo, Director of Management for the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department, and Budget Analyst for the Office of Management and Budget, City of Seattle.

Kathy and her family have just moved from Seattle to Indianapolis to begin her new position. She enjoys cooking, reading, skiing, and jogging; and is also interested in the arts.

The American Sokol Organization would like to welcome Kathy Scanlan to the gymnastics community and wishes her good luck in her new position.

Sokol USA Convention

Sokol USA held a successful national convention August 22-24, 1994. The American Sokol Board of Instructors would like to congratulate Sokol USA's newly elected national officers:

President - Bea Walko
Director of Women - Gail Wallach
Director of Men - David Walko
1st Vice President - Stephan T. Tomko
2nd Vice President - Mildred Chilla
Secretary - Milan Kovac
Treasurer - Judith A. Smith
Finance Committee Chairman - Jan Sopoci
Fraternal Activities Chairman - Christine Yatchyshyn

We look forward to continued cooperation and good will between our two organizations.

1993-94 Annual BOI Report Western District

Competitions

Our District Children's Competition was hosted by Sokol Cedar Rapids in April. We held divisions of competitions for girls and boys according to ability and used the USGF routines. 108 girls and 15 boys competed. All around and individual event awards (medals & ribbons) - 10 places deep were presented. Participation certificates and ribbons were given to all participants.

The units of Cedar Rapids, Crete, and South Omaha held annual unit competitions for all their classes. Trophies, medals, and/or ribbons were presented as awards.

Sokol South Omaha hosted an annual meet with Sokol Crete in April for Jr. Girls. Sokol South Omaha had eight girls and four boys compete in USGF meets in the area. They has the following compete in Nebraska State Championships: (girls) 2-Level 5, 6-Level 6, 2-Level 7, (boys) 1-Class II, 1-Class V, 2-Class VI.

Sokol South Omaha hosted its 20th Annual Sokol Invitational compulsory meet for both boys and girls.

Exhibitions & District Slets

Our District Slet was hosted by Sokol Omaha in June. We had five units represented (Cedar Rapids, Crete, Omaha, South Omaha) with 46 Jr. Girls, 8 Jr. Boys, 10 Women, 5 Men competitors. An additional 15 women and 7 men drilled in the calisthenics from Cedar Rapids, Crete, Minnesota, Omaha, & South Omaha. We also had 9 Jr. Girls and 1 Woman in the Rhythmic competition.

Sokol Cedar Rapids gave tumbling exhibitions at Houby Day in May and also at unit meetings. Sokol Omaha girls performed an exhibition at Bergan Mercy Care Center on Mothers Day. Sokol South Omaha held their annual exhibition in May in conjunction with their unit competitions.

Courses and Clinics

A District Judging Clinic was held in February with USGF clinician Carol Houlton from Omaha. The clinic covered the Level 2/4 routines and was attended by Sokols Crete, Omaha, and South Omaha.

Sport and Athletic Programs

Sokol Minnesota held volleyball throughout the year.

Guest Appearances

Sokol South Omaha's Beseda Dancers performed at six functions in the Omaha area.

Use of American Sokol Programs

Cedar Rapids, Crete, Minnesota, Omaha, and South Omaha all participated in the American Sokol Gymnastic Skills Program and tests.

Other District & Unit Activities

District BOI meetings were held during the year with as many units attending as possible. All units attended the annual and semi-annual BOI meetings.

Sokol Cedar Rapids, Crete, and South Omaha held monthly unit BOI meetings.

Sokol South Omaha held monthly Gym Club meetings for their juniors (included history, singing, and dancing).

Recreational activities for gymnasts from various units included Halloween treats, Christmas parties, photo days, sleepovers.

Sokol South Omaha held a Parent Orientation for all new gym parents in August; administered their Physical Fitness Test in November with awards to those passing; gave their

Sokol Knowledge Quiz in December (after weeks of short speeches on Sokol given by Sokol members or parents) with ribbon awards to those achieving a perfect score.

Sokol Cedar Rapids held a Children's competition banquet.

Sokol Crete held various activities including: flea markets, cake walks, and garage sales.

All units undertook fund-raising projects ranging from a pork suppers, to pizzas, pies, cookbooks, t-shirts, calendars, candy and bingo. Some units held gymnastic-a-thons, cartwheel-a-thons, and also pancake breakfasts, dinner dances, and helping at unit functions, and aluminum can recycling.

Sandra Benak - Directors - Bud Benak

1993-94 Annual BOI Report Southern District

Gymnastically Active Units: Corpus Christi, Zizka (Dallas), Karel Havlicek Borovsky (Ennis), Ft. Worth, Houston, Taylor, West (all Texas). Gymnastically Inactive Unit: Yukon, Oklahoma

We held two District BOI meetings - our Spring meeting in February and our Annual meeting in August.

Our new unit of Taylor is doing well and has a growing membership. Gymnastic classes have been under the leadership of . Shae Hennessey a member of Sokol Ft. Worth, attending college at the University of Texas near Taylor. Sokol Taylor participated in the compulsory meet in Ennis and had a Large delegation compete at the District Slet in Dallas.

Three units - Dallas, Ennis, and Ft. Worth - participated in the XIth All Sokol Slet in Prague. Four men played on the ASO volleyball team; 16 men and women performed the Loyal Guard Calisthenics; 2 additional marched in the parade.

Our District Men's Director, . Rome Milan is serving as a vice president of the Gymnastic Association of Texas (GAT). He will serve as president elect for the coming year. Many of our units were represented at the GAT Convention. Our District Director of Women, Sis. Sylvia Laznovsky, received a Distinguished Service Award from GAT, acknowledging her 34 years of service as Southern District Director.

Competitions

Most units held unit competitions/mini-slets in preparation for the district Slet. Ennis hosted a compulsory competition for girls with Taylor, West, Ft. Worth, Ennis, and Dallas participating.

Units continue to compete in USGF, high school, and TAAF (Texas Amateur Athletic Federation) competitions. Participants were primarily from the men's department of Sokol Ft. Worth and from the women's departments of Sokols West and Ennis.

Both compulsory and optional gymnastic competitions were held at the District Slet. Competitions were also held for special numbers, rhythmic, team marching, and mixed volleyball teams. Certified judges, who donate their time, are used for apparatus events with Sokol judges covering calisthenics and marching. A special marching competition is held during the grand assembly of the Slet exhibition with an award presented to the unit presenting the 'best overall appearance'. This year's winner was Sokol West.

Exhibitions and District Slet

Sokol Ft.Worth presented a special exhibition at their 80th Anniversary Celebration.

The Ft.Worth and Ennis units hold annual exhibitions. All units present exhibitions in their units for such events as the Christmas program, membership dinner, and other special occasions. They also participate in civic events in their communities. Sokol Houston performed at festivals in their area, including Trader's Village Octoberfest. Sokol West performed 2 exhibitions at the West Fest Labor Day weekend. Ennis presented an exhibition during the National Polka Festival weekend in May. Sokol Corpus Christi presented an exhibition for their Sister Sokol President who was visiting from Prerov.

Our District Slet was hosted by Sokol Zizka, Dallas in June. All activities were held at Sokol Zizka. Optional competitions were held on Friday evening. Compulsory competitions were held Saturday morning with Rhythmics and group marching competitions and volleyball championships being Saturday afternoon. The Awards Dance was held Saturday night. Rehearsals, track and field events, and the Slet program itself were held on Sunday. The program included prostrna for all classes, four special numbers, apparatus, and a relay race. There was a special presentation of the Loyal Guard number by district gymnasts attending the Slet in Prague.

Our district supported Sokol Karel Havlicek Borovsky, Ennis representation in the USA Gymnaestrada Showcase in Indianapolis, in October. This was the first event of its kind to be sponsored by USA Gymnastics. Sokol KHB is preparing a number for presentation in Palms Springs, California, in October, 1994.

Courses and Clinics

Sokol Fort Worth hosted the Southern District Instructors Course last June with 15 students attending. Head instructor was Rome Milan. Additional instructors were Wade Garrett and Lori Laznovsky. Student instructors were Shae Hennessey, Stephanie Patton, and Kevin Bates. Mila Milan served as secretary. In addition to the regular course offerings, certification was also offered in the USA Gymnastics Professional Development Program (PDP) and Safety Certification. Additional adult students attended the safety certification course.

Some units held individual clinics/workshops as they felt the need.

The District Directors attended the USA Gymnastics Coaches Congress and USA Gymnastics Championships in Nashville in August. Additional BOI members from Sokols Ft.Worth and Ennis also attended. Jerry Milan, Janet Kalat, and Chuck Kalat also attended the ASO School Board meeting held at the Coaches Congress.

The district continues to encourage weekend courses geared primarily for adults not available for one/two week courses. Instructors from within the District are utilized with guest coaches from area clubs. Sokol Houston hosted a clinic with Sokol Corpus Christi invited, with instructors from Ft.Worth and Ennis.

The district continues to partially financially support unit instructors to take the USA Gymnastics Safety Certification Course; units to send students to district /national instructors schools; and units to purchase technical gym materials.

The district encourages the District Directors and Unit Directors to become professional members of USA Gymnastics by paying 50% of membership fees.

Ennis was represented at the Prague calisthenics workshop held in Cleveland in March. The district sponsored a

Loyal Guard workshop in Ft.Worth with Sis. Ellie Babka From Sokol Berwyn/Slavsky.

Sports and Athletic Programs

Due to interest in volleyball, units host several tournaments throughout the year. Perhaps the most popular is the weekend tournament hosted by Sokol Corpus Christi in late July. A regular indoor volleyball tournament is held on Saturday with a beach tournament and party on Sunday.

Guest Appearances

The District annually performs at Czech Day at the State Fair in October. All classes participate.

Individual units perform at such events as Czech Fest, Kolache Festival, Oktoberfest, National Polka Festival, West Festival, Trader's Village, Heights Festival, etc. All units are called upon to perform at churches, schools, rest homes, and at activities held by the fraternal organizations in our area.

Sokol Houston presented a program for the Czech Heritage Society.

Use of American Sokol Programs

The District continues to encourage the use of the Gymnastic Skills Program.

The Merit Award Program has been utilized yearly. Our awardee this year is Stephanie Patton of Ft.Worth. Lori Laznovsky of Ennis received a renewal.

We utilize the Special Assessment Program funds primarily for district courses and travel of Directors to clinics such as USA Gymnastics Congress.

Other District and Unit Gymnastic Activities

All units hold Christmas parties, Halloween parties, Easter Hunts, monthly birthday parties, and have programs for special occasions.

Many of our units take a Summer break. Others hold a few special Summer sessions.

The district continues to maintain its membership in GAT (Gymnastic Association of Texas). West and Ennis have membership in TAAF (Texas Amateur Athletic Federations).

Jerry Milan continues his successful senior co-ed class at Sokol Ft.Worth.

Corpus Christi, Dallas, Ennis, and Ft.Worth have Sister Sokols in the Czech Republic -- Prerov, Brno, Havlicek Broad, and Kunovice, respectively.

The district BOI has coaches shirts imprinted with "American Sokol - Southern District Instructors Staff". Coaches 'on the floor' at competitions or programs are encouraged to wear these shirts.

Sokol Ennis made its gym available for the local special olympics gymnastics team.

Sokol Houston tiny tots prepared video of tots Slet Exhibition.

Fund Raisers

Sales of Talon Mugs continue. Units had many fund-raisers this past season. These included craft fairs, entertainment book sales, spaghetti and chili suppers, raffles, auctions, lock-ins, kolache and strudel bake sales, garage sales, t-shirt sales, tupperware sales, passbook sales, candy sales, etc.

The Future

Our 1995 District Slet will be held in West, the first weekend of June.

A 1995 District Instructor's School is being planned.

Sylvia Laznovsky -- Directors -- Rome Milan

What Does Sokol Mean to You? -- continued

The American Sokol annually awards Merit Award Scholarships to deserving Sokol members attending accredited colleges. Part of the application process is the applicant's written response to that question. Below are the responses from the remainder of this year's applicants continued from last month:

What Sokol Means to Me

I have been a member of Sokol West Suburban for the last fourteen years. I have participated in many Sokol events including unit exhibitions, central district slets, national slets in Montreal, Omaha, Indianapolis, Toronto and Chicago. I have also been fortunate enough to attend three instructor courses. Finishing off the highest level advanced kurs second in my class. I currently instruct our units first and second class boys teaching them gymnastics, calisthenics, marching, discipline and having fun. I have also been active in our units BOI and in organizing unit exhibitions. All this has given me the sound mind and body that is the goal of Sokol. Recently we have changed our units name to Sokol Chicagoland after merging with several other units in the attempt to put up a new building.

What Sokol Means to Me? Sokol means family, my instructor Frank Michalek has become like a second father and Mike Michalek like another big brother. Sokol has given me the ability to meet some true Sokols like brother Frank Michalek, brother Bob Liptak, brother Rome Milan and countless others. Sokol means values of hard work and discipline, Sokol is my family, Sokol has challenged me and I now know that I can raise to any challenge to soar like a true Sokol.

Tom Stahulak -- Sokol Chicagoland

What Sokol Means to Me

Sokol has been part of my life for over fourteen years. When I think of Sokol many things come to my mind. I recall many hours a week, attending class, assisting other classes, learning apparatus routines, calisthenics, and special numbers. I gained self-confidence as I became skilled on tumbling and apparatus routines. Sokol is definitely a place to learn. I grew up with Sokol and it's ideas. The people I met became my mentors as well as my friends. Also through Sokol, I met people from across the United States and Canada. When I attended the National Slets, I visited places that I may not have otherwise seen. Sokol has broadened my life and has given me memories that will last a lifetime. I believe that Sokol inspired me to become a better person.

Gina LoGiudice -- Sokol Tabor

What Sokol Means to Me

Two great words I associate with Sokol are home and family. Anywhere there is a Sokol and Sokol Brothers and Sisters, I feel welcome. They are always there to lend a hand whenever they can. Sokol has given me friends to last a lifetime.

Through Sokol, I have learned that determination, hard work, and teamwork are necessary to succeed. By being able to coach gymnastics, Sokol has taught me responsibility, dedication, and leadership skills. I am enthusiastic when coaching, because not only am I able to teach them new skills and about Sokol, they also teach me things.

I am proud to be a Sokol and to be a part of what Sokol represents. Sokol has taught me many things which will benefit me throughout my life and I am extremely grateful for this. I hope that someday I can return to Sokol everything Sokol has given to me.

Stephanie Patton -- Sokol Fort Worth

PLAN ON ATTENDING THE SOKOL CANADA SLET

IN TORONTO JUNE 22-25, 1995

THE CALISTHENICS BEING PLANNED ARE THOSE PERFORMED IN PRAGUE.

IT WAS THE BELLS... SIS. MIRKA DONNER, SOKOLICE TABOR

The date was Sunday, June 26, 1938 – Prague – Strahov Stadium. Almost 17,000 (exactly 16,800) Junior Girls lined up to march through the main gate to perform their calisthenics as a salute to their native land. I was one of them. Seven sad, gloomy years of brown terror followed. Occupation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany. Universities closed. World War II.

Ten years later, 1948, after the liberation and rebirth of Sokol, I was there again – this time in the shadow of the red terror. 32,000 women were ready to perform their best with disregard for the red “nobility” occupying seats that had been previously reserved for beloved leaders of their nation. This time, the intermission last 46 long years.

In July, 1994, I was there again. The number of participants was much lower, but it was the same gate and the same clock on the left side of the assembly field. I looked around wondering which of us was sharing the same memories. Suddenly, the tolling of church bells resounded through the fields, signaling the opening of the program – the Prague bells from one of the most beautiful cathedrals in the world – St. Vitas. There are four of them in the tower. It takes 15 bell-ringers to ring them, to climb the 300 stone steps to reach them.

The biggest and most famous bell is Zigmund, a couple of hundred years old. His weight is 18 tons (his “heart,” the clapper, alone weighs 1700 lbs.); diameter: 3 yards; height: over 7 feet.

Because of his magnitude, sound and celebrated status, he is tolled only on special occasions – in the past for coronations of Bohemian Kings, now for elections of Presidents. The holidays of Christmas and Easter also are celebrated with his wondrous tone. The red system did not like the sound of bells, so they were silent.

And now, all four bells were ringing for us, for our Slet. It was the sound of resurrection.

MROS - SLOVENIAN SOKOL

Among the many foreign delegations attending the XII All-Sokol Slet were newly reactivated Sokol organizations from former Communist countries, i.e., Poland, Russia, Bulgaria, Lusatian Slavs of former East Germany and Slovenia. Bro. Rome Milan received a letter from a young Slovenian Sokol who participated in the volleyball tournament with the American Sokol Excerpts of his letter follow:

Now I'll tell you something about Sokol in Slovenia. Sokol in Slovenia was founded two years after one in Praha and that was in (1863-1865) I guess. As we entered the new Yugoslavia in 1943-1945, the Communists abolished it.

And so our Professor Marko brought out the idea one day last November that we could develop a Sokol movement in our school. Actually, it was like this: Our Drama Club in school made a show, a presentation of life in Slovenia in the 19th Century. Our poets, our writers, our musicians, everyone was presented. Professor Marko got the job to find 10 guys who could present Sokol movement in the late 1800's. He found the guys in our volleyball team and so we trained the Sokol exercises for the presentation. We got the shirts and the pants, flags, etc. And we did a great job. The audience was astonished and we became stars.

Then we learned more about the Sokol and we started to enjoy. We weren't Sokols on paper, we still have no organizations, but when we saw you all in Praha, we became Sokols in our hearts. We got the idea, what Sokol movement is and who Sokols are and now we're willing to maintain the idea of our grand parents.

Slovenian Sokol will rise back on its feet and will rise to the clouds, because we will be its wings.

Nazdar! Mros

FAITHFUL GYMNASTS ENSURE THAT SOKOL WILL LIVE ON

The 1994 Slet was tiny in comparison with 1948's, but it was still judged a success.

by ROSS CROCKFORD, PRAGUE POST

After 46 years, it was a miracle that it happened at all. But the 12th gathering of the members of the patriotic athletic organization Sokol turned out to be successful enough to ensure the organization's future for some time to come.

Over 47,000 people turned out to watch Sokol members perform synchronized gymnastic routines on the fields of Prague's Strahov Stadium on July 5 and 6, 1994. Ticket sales hardly paid the cost of holding the festival, but with the help of several corporate sponsors, the organizers will be able to claim they nearly broke even.

But Dr. Josef Zabransky, the deputy chairman of this year's festival, preferred to measure the festival's success in terms other than financial.

"After such a long time, it was hard to know whether the public would be interested in coming out to watch people exercise together," said Zabransky. "But the turnout proved that people still care about Sokol." The number of participants this year hardly came close to the half-million who performed at the last Sokol festival in 1948, just before the organization was outlawed by the communist regime. But no one could question the dedication of this year's performers.

Many of the 23,000 who joined in this time came from Sokol chapters

in countries as far away as Australia and the United States. The oldest gymnast was 87 and the youngest only three and a half.

Zabransky hoped that by the time of the next Slet, to be held in six year's time, "the name of Sokol will be as nationally well-known as it was in the past," and that the number of members (now 180,000 worldwide) will have doubled.

In the meantime, Sokol leaders plan to broaden the appeal of their exercise programs and recruit more young coaches to work in the many gymnasiums across the country which have been restituted to the organization.

Many Czech politicians turned out to watch the gymnastics at Strahov, including President Vaclav Havel,

who met with émigré Sokol members earlier in the week.

On July 10, Havel admitted in his weekly radio address that he had doubts whether the Slet would succeed, but he said he had been "very pleasantly surprised, enchanted and even moved." To him, the most touching moments occurred during the performance of the older "Faithful Guard," some of whom had been imprisoned by the communists for holding Sokol memberships.

"They displayed their love of their country and of its freedom," said Havel, who is also a Sokol member. "They were participating because they considered it right and proper, and without thinking about whether they would profit from it."



Photo courtesy of Bro. Joe Machek, Los Angeles, CA

CZECH SOKOLS, ONCE BANNED BY COMMUNISTS, HAIL THEIR REBIRTH

by DAVID ROCKS – Special to the Chicago Tribune

PRAGUE, Czech Republic — Majka Chroustova acknowledges that by the time some people reach age 70, they might feel a little too old to march into the world's largest stadium with thousands of others and do gymnastics.

But if more were to do so, she says, the world would be a better place. "The only way I wouldn't have come today is if I were dead," said Chroustova, one of some 22,000 participants this week in the first mass meeting of the Sokol athletic club in 46 years.

The Sokol club—a Czech nationalist athletic and gymnastic organization—was banned by Czechoslovakia's Communists after they seized power in 1948. Since communism fell here nearly five years ago, the Sokol ideal has again flourished—often with the help of foreign Sokol groups formed by Czech émigrés and exiles.

"This is the rebirth of the organization," said Fred Kala, President Sokol Berwyn, and one of nearly 1,000 foreign participants in this week's ceremonies hailing from as far away as Argentina and Australia. "It's important because it's so historically tied to the democratic process of this nation." Sokol ("falcon" in Czech) was formed in 1862 to raise the consciousness of Czechs as a nation at a time when their lands were still part of the Hapsburg Empire. Sokol's founders believed the nation couldn't survive without a physically, mentally and morally

fit population—and the way to achieve this was through sports, especially gymnastics and calisthenics.

By 1938, the groups last mass meeting before World War II, Sokol had swelled to more than a million members in Czechoslovakia and thousands more abroad.

When Germany occupied the country, the Nazis banned the movement because of its ties to Czech nationalism. Sokol was revived in 1945, only to be outlawed again in 1948 by the Communists, who saw such a popular organization as a threat.

Although this week's ceremonies are tiny compared to the postwar meeting, Sokol organizers have done their best to make sure the event has gotten maximum visibility in the Czech capital.

Thousands of Sokols marched through the city center in a parade Sunday, cheered by tens of thousands of onlookers. All week the brilliant blue, purple, pink and green uniforms of performers have brightened the city's streets and squares.

While Sokol has long been a training ground for many top gymnasts and other athletes, the emphasis at the mass meetings is on participation rather than competition.

Sokols ranging in age from preschool to retirement have taken to the field to march in rows and columns, form squares, circles, diamonds and triangles, do mass calisthenics and gymnastics for

thousands of spectators.

The elderly were evident en masse at this week's events, but many young people seem to prefer MTV to mass calisthenics, ripped jeans to the elaborate Sokol costumes and beer drinking to group gymnastics.

"Sokol has to find a new mission. We have to fulfill the needs of today's youth," said Stanislav Doulík, who heads the Czech Sokol Organization. "We can't just dictate that we have to do this sort or that sort of calisthenics. We have to give them things that interest them. To that end, the group has added new disciplines such as rock dancing, karate and judo to its traditional menu of gymnastics and calisthenics.

Some also question whether this country should have a strong nationalist organization at a time when nationalism is wreaking havoc all over Europe.

Sokols insist that the kind of national spirit fostered by Sokol—despite the flag waving and anthem singing that accompanies their demonstrations—is more healthy than the false "internationalism" encouraged by the country's former communist leaders.

"This is a time when nations are returning to their roots," said Zlata Kozakova, who has written extensively about Sokol history. "Sokolism is one of our national roots. This can create a renaissance of the spirit of the nation."

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