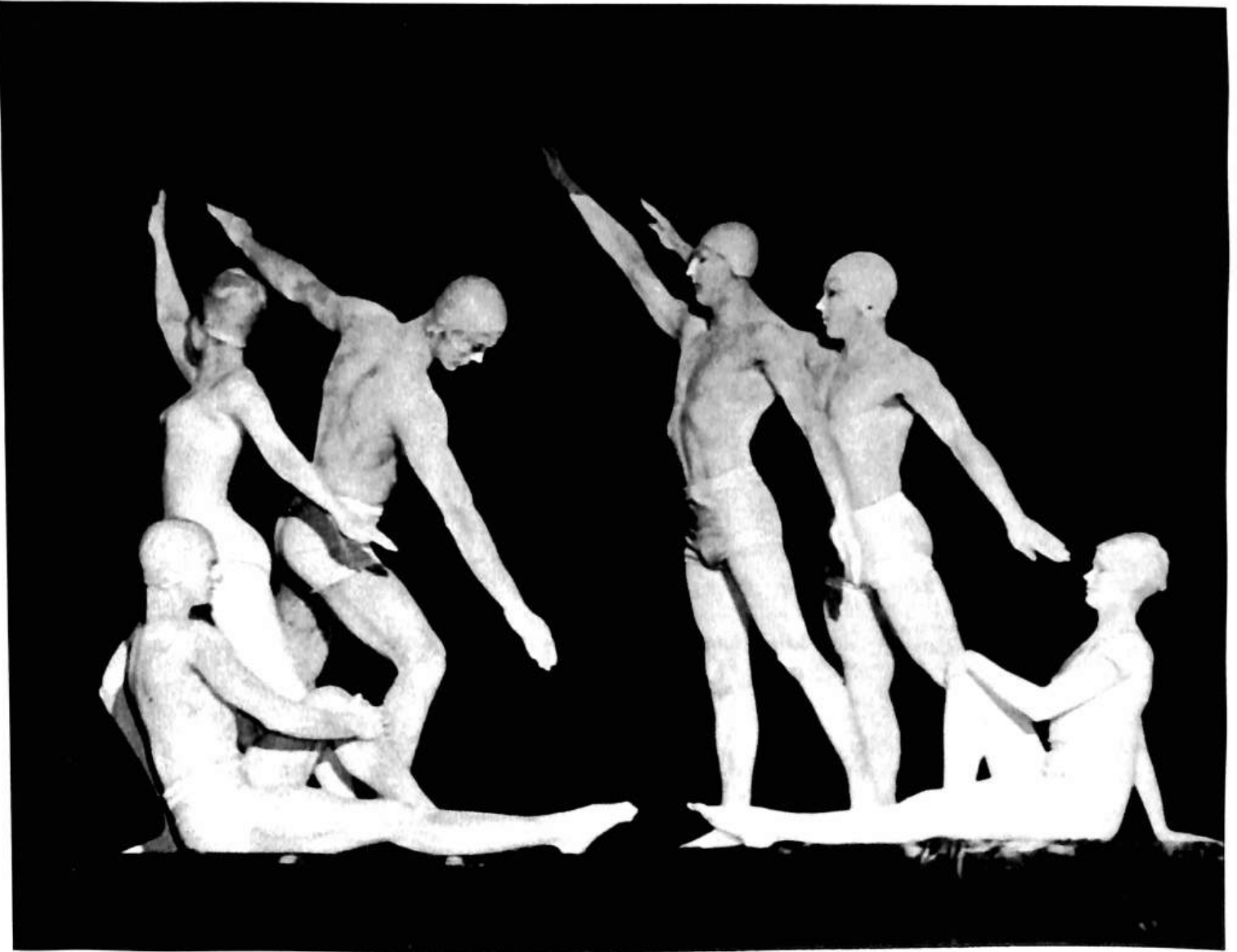


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*~Archival Photo~*

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## From Your Editor...

I'm back in business, farther behind than I've ever been, but committed to catching up and staying on track. I need your help to let me know if you've sent something in for publication that has not appeared, because although I'm happily typing away, I'm not to a point yet where I'm organized. Your indulgence, as ever, is appreciated.

**NA ZDARI!**

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

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

### FEBRUARY

- 5 Sokol Detroit Winter  
Gymnasticale
- 12 Sokol Tabor Pancake  
Breakfast
- 12 Sokol Karel Havlicek-  
Borovsky Exhibition
- 25 Sokol Karel Havlicek-  
Borovsky 10K Giveaway

### MARCH

- 4 Sokol Stickney Exhibition
- 11 Sokol Tabor Exhibition
- 17 Sokol Naperville Exhibition
- 25 Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky  
Exhibition
- 29 Sokol Havlicek-Tyrs  
Luncheon & Card Party

### APRIL

- 1 Sokol Brookfield Exhibition
- 8 Central District Special  
Number Exhibition
- 29 Northeastern District  
Competition

### JUNE

- 4 Northeastern District  
Exhibition
- 17-20 ASO NATIONAL  
CONVENTION, Lisle, IL  
Hilton Hotel
- 19 ASO Convention Banquet
- 22-25 Sokol Canada Slet, Toronto

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*Moderation is a  
fatal thing; nothing  
succeeds like excess.*

❖ Oscar Wilde

### 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.*

# WHY I WANT TO BE A SOKOL INSTRUCTOR

I attended the graduation of the Instructors' Course at Sokol Woodlands in Barryville, NY (August 1994). Three students read their essays on "*Why I Want To Be A Sokol Instructor.*" Two of these were from Sokol New York, so of course I was very proud. The third is from Sokol Washington and everyone was so moved by the essay I felt we certainly need to share his, if not all three essays.

~ Norma Zabka

## WHY I WANT TO BE A SOKOL INSTRUCTOR

*Milos Toth, Sokol Washington*

When, in 1989, Communism in Czechoslovakia collapsed, I was 27 years old and had never heard about Sokol. I have been involved in sport since I was fourteen. I competed in karate, later I was a karate instructor, judge and a member of our regional karate committee. I also run marathons.

Under the Communist regime, sport organizations did not suffer. They were sponsored by the government. Every year they received money for their activity. It sounds nice, however it was perfect example of how the Communist government buys and controls people who participated in any sport.

The year 1989 was very important in Czechoslovak history. After 41 years, Communism was overturned

and changed by democratic government. Among the first things that people in the new country could enjoy was the possibility to travel wherever they wanted. In my case, I could run the Vienna Marathon in Austria and later, in 1990, the New York City Marathon.

In 1991, I came to the USA again. I was studying English at George Mason University and now I study Computer Science at George Washington University. I met people from the Czechoslovak community and through them I learned about Sokol and started participating in Sokol Washington activities.

It was quite a big surprise for me that such a big organization as Sokol exists thanks to people who voluntarily work for their organization. I became a member of Sokol Washington and joined Sokol activities, such as volleyball, gym classes and social entertainments.

A committee from Sokol Washington came to me with an idea to send me to this instructor course so I could help with gym classes. I like all kinds of sport and I find gymnastics very attractive.

In Sokol Woodlands Camp, thanks to instructors such as Bro. Bryan Pracko, Sis. Ellen Kovac, Sis. Nadia Nakonecnyj and Sis. Karen Ondira, I learned much more about Sokol. I understand differences between sport that is under

communist control and sport performed according to Tyrs' ideals. My free choice is Tyrs' choice. Perform sport because "by staying active, we get stronger." I like Sokol. I like Tyrs' ideas. This is why I want to be a Sokol instructor. I want to participate in Sokol activities, help anybody who needs help, teach things that I already know and do that voluntarily, only because I believe that giving something without expectation to get something back is one of the nicest things that any human being can do.

## WHY I WANT TO BE A SOKOL INSTRUCTOR

*Christopher Reenock,  
Sokol New York*

Good instructors are a key to helping the Sokol organization throughout the world grow and prosper. These teachers help to instill knowledge and discipline into their gymnasts. I wish to do this very same thing when teaching my students back in New York.

By growing up with Sokol since birth, I have learned about the Sokol way. That is, I understand how Sokol works and I understand the dedication needed in becoming a Sokol instructor.

Through many years of gymnastic training, I have seen many teachers come and go from our Sokol Hall.

*Continued on Page 10.*

# CZECHS and Balances

*Vaclav Havel chats  
about democracy and  
dances to the blues.*

By Jon Anderson, Chicago Tribune Staff Writer  
Reprinted from Chicago Tribune, October 7, 1994

"The beautiful thing about life is that it always brings surprises," Vaclav Havel, the world's hippest head of state, used the other day as he slid onto a soft sofa in his suite at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and chatted about his life, his hard times, his philosophy and the challenges of his current role—president of the Czech Republic.

Havel was nursing a bad back, but showed no signs of strain. He sipped a glass of Heineken beer and smoked three Camel cigarettes. He'd been up late the night before, after a long flight from Prague and a trip to Rosa's Blues Lounge that was a private as it could be riding in a limousine and accompanied by a squad of nervous Secret Service agents.

"Breakfast of champions?" asked a reporter. "Czech medicine," Havel murmured, a slight smile raising the sandy mustache that covers his upper lip.

He is, on one level, a very serious

man, prone to giving speeches about "the theme of civilization as a context for contemporary politics," as he defined his intellectual thrust in one recent address.

He is also, according to one of his Chicago buddies, a lousy dancer.

"We were listening to Magic Slim and the Teardrops and somebody come over from the bar and asked him to dance," said Jan Novak, an Oak Park writer who met Havel when Novak helped with the "Valmont" screenplay for director Milos Forman, a friend of Havel's since both were children in Prague.

It had been Novak's suggestion that Havel take an informal late-night tour of Berwyn "for head cheese and other Czech foods," drive to Oak Park to see Ernest Hemingway's childhood home and then stop at Rosa's.

The president's plane, battling headwinds, was two hours late into Chicago, scrubbing all stops but

Rosa's, where the group settled in for two hours to listen and dance, while Secret Service agents lined the bar, many with fingers in ears to block out the sounds of the blues.

"It was good to see a president dance," Novak said smiling.

Havel, playing with a gold lighter, dapper in a pin-striped blue suit with maroon tie and matching breast-pocket handkerchief, chose his words carefully.

"I have always been happy when I felt was succeeding in my efforts. I have had depression when I did not have that feeling," he said. "The truth is that being president carries a greater measure of responsibility."

"Even before I was president, I gave a great deal of thought to the broad aspect of things. The same has remained true during my presidency. That is why my speeches may go beyond the usual television statements. I was not surprised when communism fell. The communists thought they understood everything, that they could tell what would happen."

Life, he noted, doesn't work out that way.

"We have made a great deal of headway," Havel said. "We have had free elections twice. We have established basic demons, with checks and balances, though there is room for improvement in the area of political culture." But, he noted, "we are in a special situation. Communism, as Milan Kundera once wrote, is a regime of forgetting. With freedom, our society has begun to rediscover itself, its history. The continuation of this is important. It helps with our self-identification."

He talked of the Czech Republic's hopes of joining NATO: "Because of the values we share, we feel part of the West." Of Russia: "Efforts should be made to establish friendly relations, but Russia should not have the right to advise where nations should belong." And he talked of his country's difficult past, including a current controversy over whether to open the files of Czech citizens who may have cooperated with communist security oppressors.

"It's not right to say, 'Let's forget the past.' We need to know history. It would not be healthy to forget. But I'm not going to indulge in needless witch hunts," Havel said, though there were times, he admitted, when his own oppression led him to believe that his life was in danger.

Once, he was taken to prison in handcuffs, while suffering from pneumonia. Another time he was sent to work as a laborer in a beer factory. He was jailed twice more, then later allowed to serve as a stagehand in a theater, though forbidden to write. His plays and essays, many of them filled with humorous parables of life under communism, were banned, though he was allowed to receive royalties from their performances abroad.

"It's true," he said, "that I might have been in danger in prison \_ my health. But I took it as a matter of fate. What will happen, will happen."

He never thought of leaving the country.

"In fact," he went on, "emigration was offered to me a number of times by the Communist authorities. There were efforts to blackmail me to leave. They said my relations would be jailed. But I felt I had to

stay at home. I had started something and had to continue. I believe one does not flee from a battle he has begun. But I'm not in any way angry with those who did leave the country. It's a matter of individual choice."

#### A FACTORY JOB AND A MERCEDES

Havel had a strong sense of personal theater. There is a story that, while working in the beer factory, he was permitted to use his foreign currency earnings at a state store which sold only luxury items. He bought a Mercedes-Benz. "It's true," he said. "Conditions were strange."

Now 58, Havel, whose father and uncle ran a film studio, started publishing articles in literary and theater magazines at the age of 19. His first play, "The Garden Party," was produced in 1963, followed by "The Memorandum" in 1965 and "The Increased Difficulty of Concentration" in 1968, the year Soviet troops put an end to the regeneration process known as the Prague Spring. He wrote essays, helped organize committees for the defense of the unjustly prosecuted and, after the collapse of the communist regime, was twice elected president of the Czechoslovak Republic.

In January 1993, he was elected as the first president of the Czech Republic. One of his missions is to reconnect Czech expatriates with their homeland, as he made clear here at a black-tie dinner sponsored by his host in Chicago, the Mid-America Committee, a group of business executives who promote stronger trade and cultural ties with foreign countries.

"As a political or cultural figure, Havel has no Western equivalent. He is the nation's philosopher-king," observed a recent assessment in *Esquire*. "Because Stalinism forced him to live so rough for so long, in and out of prison for 20 years, there's a strong, dirty, rock and roll streak running down his back. He exists somewhere in the broad ground defined by Elie Wiesel, Thomas Jefferson and Keith Richards."

Havel also has become a good friend of the Dalai Lama, one of the first official guests he invited to Prague after he first took office.

"It was a most interesting visit," Havel recalled. "Probably I was the first head of state to receive him, though afterwards others did. Some in my country thought it might hurt our trade ties with China, but that didn't prove to be the case. We talked of spiritual matters, the condition of civilization and Tibet and I took part in a meditation."

#### A DRIVE TO CONTINUE

In his speeches, Havel has leaned heavily toward a rediscovery of a more spiritual world, at a time when, as he put it, "the abyss between the external and the internal, the objective and the subjective, the technical and the moral, the universal and the unique constantly grows deeper."

Once, writing about his childhood, Havel said he always felt like an outsider, like "a heavy little boy."

"Sometimes, at the very bottom of my soul, this feeling remains present," he said. "I take it as a challenge, a driving force to continue. I should add that I don't

*Continued on Page 11.*

# S O K O L

*by Bruce Garver, Chairman  
of the History Department at  
the University of Nebraska  
(1990)*

Czech society in 1862 was divided by class and nationality conflicts, personal rivalries and animosities. It too was the year Sokol – an ethnic Czech fraternal organization – was founded.

The founders—Jindrich Fugner and Miroslav Tyrs – believed that no one could take pride in or satisfaction from achievement in business or the arts unless he was simultaneously working to advance the welfare of his fellow citizens.

They dedicated Sokol to the task of recruiting members from all walks of life and to the proposition that members could better themselves only through fellowship and working to better the national community. This was a tall order.

But since its founding Prague, Sokol became the largest of several patriotic and benevolent associations founded by Czechs after the advent in 1860-61 of constitutional rule in the Hapsburg monarchy. The Hapsburg family ruled Austria-Hungary, which included what is now Czechoslovakia.

Consistent with its motto, “let us strengthen ourselves,” and its aim of developing “a sound mind in a sound body,” Sokol sought to build members’ self-confidence, physical and intellectual prowess, love of country and commitment to community service.

Slets, or festivals, were established as public demonstrations by Sokol members of the accomplishments in athletics, especially gymnastics and in various arts and crafts.

The gymnastic exercises were designed primarily by Tyrs, who admired the arts and athletics of ancient Greece and Rome and the extent to which their cultivation had fostered civic pride and responsibility. Tyrs was a professor of art history.

Fugner was a wealthy businessman and philanthropist of international experience. His daughter, Renata, participated as a child and young woman in the first women’s Sokol auxiliaries. She married Tyrs in 1872 and survived him by 53 years to become the grand matriarch of the Sokol.

The Sokol grew rapidly in membership and established units in all parts of Bohemia and Moravia by the end of the 1800’s.

A national Slet in 1891 featured 17,500 gymnasts and attracted nearly 10 times that number in observers. By 1913, the Sokol in Bohemia and Moravia had 130,000 members. By 1929 in Czechoslovakia, nearly one-third of all adult Sokol members were women and about half of the children in Sokol were girls.

Meanwhile, Sokol ideas and practices had been adopted by Czech and other Slavic immigrants in the United States and by most other Slavic peoples in Europe.

Czech immigrants in the United States founded their first Sokol in St. Louis in 1865, just three years after the Sokol’s founding in Prague. Sokols soon appeared in other states inhabited by large numbers of Czech-Americans.

In Nebraska, for example, Sokols appeared in Crete in 1874, Omaha in 1877, Wilber in 1880, South Omaha in 1888 and four other cities. Women established independent Sokolices in Omaha in 18989, in South Omaha in 1902, in Schuyler and Crete. The Catholic Sokol in Omaha dates from 1883.

*Continued on Page 7.*



AMERICAN SOKOL ORGANIZATION

# GYMNAST



Editor: Chuck Kalat -- 2401 Bluebonnet Dr., Richardson, Texas 75082



Merry Christmas  
and  
Best Wishes  
for a  
Happy and Successful  
1995

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## Safety Awareness Is.... Planning

There are many popular names for the planning process: Business Plan, Strategic Plan, Master Plan. Call it whatever you like, this process is a critical step in the initiation of safe, efficient, and fun sports programs. Many club owners felt that they have little time, if any, to devote to this process. My best advice to them, and to anyone in an administrative position is this -- take as much time as you need to develop a comprehensive plan, then through the course of regular business, modify and adapt the plan to meet the needs of the changes in our industry. A wise coach told me once that it really doesn't matter how good your plan is, but it's the execution of the plan which develops true champions.

Concentrate on the planning process first. Then as you follow that plan, realize that it will naturally be modified and adapted over time.

The summer months give sports administrators a great opportunity to plan. That is the time when most coaches solidify their schedule and training plans for the coming season. Use this "break" to schedule several sessions with key administrators and coaches in your facility to develop and record major goals which drive your program. These goals should be sufficiently broad so they represent major program activities, for example:

- ◆ "X-Y-Z Gymnastics will provide the personnel, resources, and facilities necessary for the development of physical and psychological sports skills of three to five year old participants."

Next, assign the director of each program area the task of elaborating upon these broad goals. Specific objective, operational plans, and staffing requirements will be necessary in order to achieve the goals established in the initial planning stage. Encourage each participant in the planning process to write these statements in measurable terms -- who, how many, when, and so forth. These statements should address specific activities, groups of apparatus, and club programs.

Thirdly, expand the objectives, plans, and requirements to include specific tasks which will ultimately be required to successfully achieve the objectives, plans and requirements. These tasks will guide the daily operation of the business. The tasks should be divided among staff members. This enables each staff member to clearly see what it is that they must include in their individual lesson plans.

### What Does This Have to do with Safety?

Plan for safety. You may want to incorporate a safety statement into your mission. This will demonstrate your commitment to providing the best possible experiences for youth sport participants. While some may consider this a paranoia, realize that as a gymnastic professional, you may tend to overlook a variety of fundamental safety principles that we all assume as a natural part of the sport. Most parents, participants, and new coaches have not yet learned to appreciate what an important role safety plays in gymnastics. When you make safety part of the planning process, from the top of the chart, then you have taken a key step in fulfilling your duty to properly plan the activity.

Set goals for safety. The ASEP course asks participants to write goals for a variety of areas including legal. Most gymnastics coaches tend to write a safety awareness goal. Setting goals for safety awareness also assists us in fulfilling our duty to properly warn participants of the inherent risks in the sports activity.

Incorporate safety into every lesson. As a physical education major in college, one of my primary responsibilities in planning lessons was to include "safety tips." These short statements were used to introduce or reinforce a rule or principle of conduct which would ultimately make the activity more safe and more enjoyable for the students. By including these statements in each lesson plan,

instructors and coaches are making permanent record of their concern and knowledge of the key safety awareness factors for each activity.

Safety awareness is part of your business. How can an ill-planned, poorly administered activity be healthy, fun, and safe? Planning is an integral part of safety awareness, and therefore is a necessary activity which the "reasonable and prudent" gymnastics professional will take the time to complete in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

Yes, this takes a great deal of time and effort, but once you accomplish this planning task, you will have the blueprint for effective business operation today, tomorrow, and long into the future.

*Dave Moskovitz, USA Gymnastics Safety Update  
Volume 9, #1, 1994.*

### Sokol Canada Slet Toronto, 1995

Sokol Canada has announced a tentative event schedule and the associated venues:

- Slet office, main accommodations (June 22-25): Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel - Toronto - East, Scarborough, Ontario
- Gymnastic Competitions (June 23): Seneca College -- 8 miles from Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel
- Youth Program (June 23): Masaryktown -- 3 miles from Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel
- Slet Dance (June 23): Birchmont Park Arena -- next to Birchmont Stadium
- Rhythmic Gymnastics Competitions and Boys and Girls Competitions (June 24): Seneca College -- 8 miles from Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel
- Volleyball tournament (June 23/24): Scarborough Campus of University of Toronto -- 3.4 miles from Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel
- Victory Dance (June 24): Birchmont Collegiate Institute -- next to Birchmont Stadium
- Main Slet Day (June 25): Birchmont Stadium (same as the 1992 Slet) -- 7 miles from Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel

## Sokol Karel Havlicek Borovsky Participates in 1994 USA Gymnaestrada

The 2nd USA Gymnaestrada was held in Palm Springs, California, October 28-30th. The Gymnaestrada promotes general gymnastics -- a term describing the aspect of gymnastics that is leisure oriented and offers a wide range of activity for all ages. Sokol, with its classes for all ages, has long been recognized for this concept. A total of 14 groups representing Florida, Colorado, Washington, South Carolina, California, Wisconsin, Hawaii, and Texas participated. Sokol Karel Havlicek Borovsky (KHB), Ennis, Texas was the only Texas team.

The 25 member delegation representing the Texas Sokol unit included 18 performers aged 13 to 30+: Tina Avery, Greg Burns, Wade Garrett (Sokol Ft.Worth), Shay Hennessey (Sokol Ft.Worth), Kristi Kubin, Lisa Laznovsky, Lori Laznovsky,



Rhonda Liska, Cliff Mullican, Ryan Mullican, Kim Oates, Jessica O'Bannon, Stephanie Patton (Sokol Ft.Worth), Andy Poarch, Tina Pruski, Robert Toth, Trisha Vesely, and Lezlee Wester. The performers were accompanied by coach Lil Laznovsky and supporters Larry Laznovsky, Kathy Avery, Jerry Wester, JoAnn Wester, Gilbert Escobar, and Sylvia Laznovsky. Our Sokol group made a striking appearance during the Opening Ceremonies in their Texas flag T-shirts and shorts.

Rehearsals were held Saturday morning. Performances were presented Saturday afternoon. It soon became apparent that Sokol KHB would once again be a "hit" with everyone. After more rehearsals on Sunday morning, the group prepared for the USA Gymnaestrada Gala Showcase. A large audience was on hand to cheer the groups. The objectives of the Gala were: to promote the value and diversity of gymnastics to the public community, to increase participation in gymnastics irrespective of age, gender, or ability; to provide incentive and motivation for recreational gymnasts to display their talents; to provide an opportunity for sharing of knowledge, ideas, and new developments; and to assist in the general and technical education of coaches.

All numbers prepared for presentation at the Gymnaestrada were required to be 15 minutes in length with a five minute segment to be presented for the final gala. Sokol KHB was the only group selected to present their complete 15 minute program at the final event. The KHB number, written by Sis. Lil Laznovsky, had a western motif choreographed to country themes and western TV show themes. It included rhythmic with ribbons and ropes, dancing, tumbling, pyramids, and work on a 12 foot diameter metal ring. In recognition of the great diversity of the presentation and an excellent performance, the appreciative audience gave the Sokol KHB group a standing ovation.

During the weekend, all the Gymnaestrada participants were taught the 1994 mass number "Sing, Sing, Sing." As the only pioneer team present from the 1st USA Gymnaestrada held last year in Indianapolis, Sokol KHB was asked to demonstrate the 1993 "mass number" performed to "Seize the Day." Both the 1993 and 1994 mass numbers will be presented at the World Gymnaestrada in Berlin in 1995.

The Hawaiian Rhythms from Honolulu received the award for travelling the furthest. Rhonda Liska (KHB) received an award as the oldest performer. Sokol KHB and the Hawaiian Rhythms tied for the "Spirit of Gymnaestrada" award presented for the embodiment of the ideal of 'gymnastics for all.' Criteria for the award included the manner in which the group conducted itself during the activities and its cooperation. The Sokol group even helped break down the equipment after the program. They've had a lot of practice at this activity back home at the gym and did it willingly.

The USA Gymnaestrada was sponsored by USA Gymnastics (USGF) from Indianapolis and the local organizing committee in Palm Springs. USA Gymnastics is the governing body for gymnastics in the U.S. and will be preparing representatives from the U.S. to participate in the 1995 World Gymnaestrada in Berlin, Germany. This will be a historic event for the U.S. It is the first time the U.S. expects to take a large group of several hundred. The activities in Palm Springs were the second step in preparing delegations for the gala in Berlin. Sokol KHB has been qualified to represent the United States in Berlin. A final decision, by the group, to raise the money and accept the opportunity is still pending.

The fine group of teens and young adult performers are to be congratulated for a job well done. They worked hard, almost every weekend since the summer to learn and perfect their number. For those attending college, working, etc. countless trips to Ennis were required for practices. But once again, their efforts and hard work resulted in another successful and fun Sokol trip.

Thanks to the many supporters of our memorable event. It was a pleasure to once again be ambassadors for Sokol Karel Havlicek Borovsky and the entire Sokol organization.

Sylvia Laznovsky

## Provide Your Body with the Fuel It needs for a Good Workout

There's more to exercise than just the activity itself. The foundation for your workout must be laid before you hit the walking trail, aerobic's floor, or stair climbing machine. Aside from talent, training, and motivation, your diet is the single greatest influence on your fitness program.

The energy that your muscles use comes from the foods you eat, especially from products rich in complex carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads and cereals, pasta, and low-fat dairy products). During digestion, complex carbohydrates are broken down into glucose for absorption into the blood, and then converted into a starchy substance called glycogen for storage. A ready reserve of glycogen is stored in the liver and muscle tissue. When glycogen stores are low, fatigue sets in quickly. A diet with large amounts of complex carbohydrates (as much as 55 percent of total daily calories needed by your body) is essential for a regular exercise program.

### Time Your Meals

In addition to what you eat, when you eat also influences your exercise performance. During normal digestion, blood flow is increased to your digestive system. However, during exercise, blood flow is concentrated to your muscles — slowing digestion. If you exercise on a full stomach, your ability to exercise may be hindered by cramps, a higher exercise heart rate, and a bloated feeling.

Ideally, you should not exercise immediately after a large meal. This means holding off your workout for one to four hours, depending upon the size and content of the meal. Foods high in dietary fat take longer to digest.

### A Pre-Workout Snack

Many sports nutrition experts recommend a light snack about an hour or so before exercising. Of course, your pre-workout snack should consist of easily digested complex carbohydrates (e.g. sugar and honey). Candy bars and other sugary snacks alone may provide a quick burst of energy. However, when combined with exercise, they may cause a drop of blood sugar and increased fluid in the stomach in some individuals — causing weakness, nausea, and diarrhea.

### Fuel Up After Exercising

After working out, enjoy a meal or snack high in complex carbohydrates, such as a cup or piece of fruit, low-fat bread products, one to two ounces of pretzels, or crackers, and fruit juice. This helps restore your glycogen supply. A university of Texas study found that this is done most efficiently when the food is eaten within 30 minutes of completing your exercise program.

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## Central District -- 1993-94 Sokol Year

Active Units: Berwyn-Slavsky, Brookfield, Ceska Sin, Chicagoland, Milwaukee, Naperville, St. Louis, Stickney, Tabor; Cooperating unit: Lodge 306 - Sokol USA;

The Men's Board has just concluded another active and successful year. There are nine active gyms counting Berwyn/Slavsky as a combined unit. Also Lodge 306 of Sokol USA continued to function as, for all practical purposes, an additional District unit on the BOI level.

Most Sokols begin their classes the first week after Labor Day. Our first activity is Men's Volleyball. Bro. Pete Colagrossi ran the tournament, with games on Friday nights. Nine teams played a round robin, followed by playoffs with the top five teams in the

standings playing off for the "A" championship and the lower four for the "B".

In October, the District marched in the annual Houby Parade in Cicero and Berwyn. A scheduled Sokol show as part of the festival, however, had to be called off due to bad weather. That month, I attended some sessions of the District Directors' conference held in Chicago.

In November we ran a Track & Field meet for 1st and 2nd Class Boys. Bro. George Kulhanek ran the meet with some 117 competitors. For this meet, as with gymnastics, the boys are divided into four age groups: 6-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13.

Over Thanksgiving weekend a volleyball tournament was held at Sokol St. Louis with six men's teams participating.

130 total competed in the December Gym Meet. Bro. John Satek organized the meet, with Bro. Bryan Pracko as Floor Director. We tried giving out scores to the competitors right after judging—each competitor carried a score card on which the judges wrote their scores. No problems resulted. Individual winners received medals, teams - trophies.

Generally the months of January, February, and March are quiet as units prepare for their individual Exhibitions. There were tentative plans for a Progressions Clinic, however the instructors we wanted were not available and the Clinic was postponed until Fall, 1994.

In April we held the Special Number Exhibition at a local high school -- 15 numbers entered. There was no "competition" as such, but a panel of judges selected one number on each class level on the basis of their general crowd appeal and suitability to perform on an outdoor football field for the District Slet.

"Loyal Guard" was the calisthenics selected for general use by the senior class. The other Prague Slet senior cal's were taught as optional numbers. Sis. Ellie Babka taught "Karneval", Bro. Roy Zitny conducted a class in the "Men's cal". Both numbers were performed at several Exhibitions and at the District Slet.

In May we ran our Spring Gym Meet, with 115 gymnasts on all levels. Bro. Satek again organized the meet, with Bro. Dave Harlan and myself as Floor Directors. The meet ran quite well.

The District Slet was held Saturday, May 21 at Naperville Central High School (home of Sokol Naperville). A program of 6 cal numbers, 4 special numbers, a relay race, apparatus, and of course a grand march was presented on a beautiful evening. All District units except St. Louis were represented. Sokol Milwaukee sponsored a bus trip for their members and participants. The facility is excellent with easy access to gym apparatus and sound system. I cannot complement the members of my Board enough for their assistance in running this event.

The year's activities concluded with the Awards picnic the day following the Slet. The District introduced a new, custom made medal for all individual winners, imprinted with the Sokol emblem. A sticker is added to the back showing the individual placement.

There was some difficulty during the year after Sis. Filipello resigned as Director. It was hard to work with the Women's BOI as a "Committee" with no central authority. At first I did not plan to continue as Director, however, after Sis. Filipello agreed to take the position again I decided to remain another year.

In conclusion it was a very good year. All the meets were well attended and ran well. The three "Slet" activities -- Special Number, Slet, Picnic-- were successful and profitable to the District. On the down side was Sokol Chicagoland's loss of their facility which hopefully is only temporary. I have a good Board I know I can rely on, and a great assistant in Bro. Dave Harlan. I'm looking forward to next year.

Joe Placek -- Men's Director

# SOKOL

(continued)

Czech-American Sokols generally adhered to the original goals, while modifying their programs to suit American circumstances. Instead of emphasizing nation-building and national autonomy, as did Sokols in Bohemia and Moravia, Czech-American Sokols cultivated ethnic solidarity and old world cultural traditions, while promoting good citizenship and public service in their adopted country. American Sokols provided physical and intellectual training and instruction in Czech language, history and literature.

Sokols also supported efforts of public schools to provide children with instruction in English, math and the arts and sciences.

In these and other ways, the Sokol, like most religious and secular organizations established by immigrants, helped preserve aspect of old world culture as it encouraged members to develop attitudes and skills that would facilitate participation in American commercial and political life.

Sokol was one of several fraternal and benevolent associations founded in the late 1800's by Czech-American free thinkers, who by 1910 constituted about half of the 500,000 first and second generations Czech-Americans.

these immigrants and most of their descendants had severed all ties with organized religion and cultivated in their fraternal lodges and Sokol units many of the activities – like fellowship and community service provided elsewhere primarily by churches.

Before 1918, the Catholic Church usually discouraged Czech Catholics from joining Sokols, primarily because of Sokol's identification with liberalism and nationalism in the Czech lands and its association with Czech-American free though in the United States.

In both places, Czech Catholics established their own gymnastics and fraternal associations, the Orel (Eagle) in the Czech lands, and the Catholic Sokol in the United States. Neither one ever rivaled the original Sokol in size or influence, the Catholic Sokol, for example, having only 1,650 members in 1920.

By 1926, with the signing of a pact between the Czech government and the Vatican, and with the continuing decline of anti-clerical sentiments among Czech-American free thinkers, more Czech Catholics began to join Sokols. Today, no conflict exists between the Sokol and any religious denomination.

During World War I, many Sokol members participated in the revolutionary movement for Czechoslovak independence. In Hapsburg-ruled Bohemia and Moravia, some Sokol members assisted in the underground

political and intelligence work for the revolutionary movement in exile. These tasks became easier after the United States declared war on Germany.

After the end of the war in 1918 and the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, Sokol units helped establish the authority of the Czechoslovak republican government in parts of Slovakia and in some of the German-speaking border areas of northern Bohemia and Moravia.

Sokols in Czechoslovakia and the United States reached the height of the size and influence during the 1920's and 1930's. In Czechoslovakia in 1929, the Sokol had 629,136 members, of whom 276,248 were children.

Membership in the Sokol Organization of America rose from 10,302 in 120 units in 1919 to 14,000 people in 125 units by 1927. The current membership is between 6,000 and 7,000. These peak figures were never surpassed, primarily because of immigration restrictions passed by Congress in the mid-1920's.

In World War II, as in World War I, the Sokols worked for Allied victory.

Meanwhile, Czechoslovak Sokols, banned by the Nazis in 1939, had either disbanded or gone underground to participate in the Czech resistance to German occupation or in the Slovak uprising against the puppet government of Slovakia.

The Czechoslovak Commun-

*Continued on Page 8.*

# CONGRATS, BRO. ED!

Congratulations are extended to Bro. Ed Pavoucek, who submitted the name "Sokol" in naming the Falcon contest sponsored by KETV in Omaha. There were more than 500 entries in the contest. Bro. Pavoucek's submission of "Sokol" was based on the Czech to English translation of "Sokol" to falcon. The name for our organization was adopted in 1862 in Czechoslovakia because of the falcon's independence, strength and fearless defense of its domain. The judges indicted it was a tough decision between three names: "Sokol," "Willa," after Willa Cather the Nebraska author and "Ahamo," "Omaha" spelled backwards. The name "Sokol" was selected since the Sokol organizations are active in the Omaha area and have made a worldwide contribution in many nations.

"Sokol," is one of three peregrine falcons hatched on June 18, 19

and 20 from eggs laid on May 15, 16 and 17, 1994 on the ledge of the Woodmen Tower in Omaha – a manmade breeding place established in hopes of increasing the number of falcons in the wild. The peregrine falcons are a protected species. "Sokol" was the lone survivor of the three hatchlings and we are happy she is a female and will hopefully reproduce more falcons to perpetuate her species' existence. "Sokol's" parents are dad "Sky King" (hatched in 1989) and mom "Kaycee" (hatched in 1992). "Sokol" has a black over red band with the lettering on the left leg E/E and a purple band on the right leg. She was to have been released to the wild from the Woodmen Tower sometime this past fall.

A framed print of "Sokol" will be presented to Bro. Ed Pavoucek, who in turn will donate it to the Sokol South Omaha Museum for display.

# ◆ MEMORIAM ◆

Beatrice Vachek  
March 31, 1910-August 11, 1994

Sis. Vachek was one of Sokol Belcamp's charter members. She was born in Ceska Trebova, Czechoslovakia, the daughter of Josef and Karolina Hendrychova Kopecky. In 1939, she and her husband, the late Josef Alois Vachek, came to the United States to assist in establishing the Bata Shoe Company factory in Belcamp, Maryland.

She was noted for her baked goods, especially for her cookies, which she donated to local charities and fund raisers. She was an active member of Sokol Belcamp for many years.

Sis. Vachek is survived by her son, Sidney, daughter, Irene Henry, three grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Sokol Belcamp members extend their sincere sympathy to her family in both the U.S. and the Czech Republic.

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## SOKOL

*(continued)*

ists, after seizing power in 1948, tried to control the Sokol. That failing, they abolished the Sokol and attempted to foster the growth of the long-established communist gymnast and fraternal organizations.

During the "Prague Spring" of liberalization in 1968, former and prospective members of Sokol spoke of reestablishing that still

popular organization. But what promised to be a revival of Sokol idea and practices was cut short, along with other civil libertarian and patriotic ventures, by Czechoslovak Communist hardliners in the "normalization" of socialist society that followed the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The 41-year communist suppression of the Sokol in Czechoslovakia has left by default the free development of

Sokol ideas and traditions to the Sokols abroad, especially among Czechs and Slovaks in the United States and Canada.

To reverse a slow long-term decline in membership, these Sokols have not only adhered to the goals and practices first defined by Fugner and Tyrs, but have initiated changes to compete with other attractions in American society for the attention of youth.

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## WHY I WANT TO BE A SOKOL INSTRUCTOR *(continued)*

Most of these teachers, however, do not know anything about Sokol's background. These coaches do not understand Sokol and are not there to enrich children's minds on what Sokol means, but mostly to collect a paycheck. However, there are still many hard-working Sokol members who work together to keep this organization alive.

My goal after this Kurz is to follow in these people's footsteps to help Sokol. This goal helps me to strive harder, so that I will get the most that I possibly can out of this instructor school.

After seeing what is required of me when in the process of becoming a Sokol instructor, I know that I will go back to my gym and help my gymnasts not only become physically fit, but mentally fit as well. At this course, I have learned many valuable lessons that will help me to better help my gymnasts.

In years ahead, I will remember the tools that I have gained through this course. I will remember the leadership I gained by gymnastics and the powers of discipline, knowledge, teamwork and other values that will help me get farther in life.

I am very excited about going back

to my Sokol. I hope that the experiences that I take back from Sokol Woodlands will help me teach my gymnasts about not only gymnastics, but also about Sokol itself.

### WHY I WANT TO BE A SOKOL INSTRUCTOR

*Emanuella Grinberg,  
Sokol New York*

Why do I want to be a Sokol instructor? To tell you that I would have to tell you what Sokol means to me. I've been going to Sokol New York since I was 3 years old, I'm 13 now. I don't remember my early years, but I must have enjoyed them because I came back every year.

When I was a tot, I looked at the Sokolettes and thought, "Will I ever be as big as them?" Then, when I was a Sokolette, I looked at the Juniors and thought, "Will I every be as good as them?" Then, when I became a Junior, I looked at my Instructors and thought, "Will I ever be as smart as them?" Now is my chance to find out and I want to take it and find out.

For anyone who has been an active Sokol gymnast since childhood, becoming an instructor and going

to Kurz is a rite of passage, like a Bat Mitzvah or Confirmation. You are confirming your faith and devotion to Sokol by becoming an instructor for them. It takes a lot of practice and responsibility, but in the end you will get exactly what you worked for.

When I think about all that Sokol has done for me and I learn about the unique philosophy Sokol operates on, I realize how special the Sokol system is. I want to carry on the special system to all other Sokolads and Sokolettes, so that maybe they will realize what a unique organization they belong to and will be able to appreciate it more.

Not all of my reasons are completely selfless (by human nature, of course). One of the most important reasons is that becoming an instructor will help me gain more knowledge about the movements and steps. By coming here, I am learning progressions and facts to teach the children, but I am also learning how I can progress more and be better at some moves I am struggling with. Basically, I am teaching myself a thing or two. But most importantly, by learning how to teach myself, I am learning (as well as practicing) self-discipline.



**Tell me about a great  
Sokol instructor you  
know!** ~Pat Satek, Editor

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## CZECHS & BALANCES – VACLAV HAVEL (continued)

understand why I find myself in this most expensive suite in a Chicago hotel with a fine view of Lake Michigan. I feel I don't deserve it. On the other hand, I understand there is a point to why I am here."

With that, he ended the interview, to leave for Navy Pier and a lunch sponsored by the U.S.-Czech

Chamber of commerce and by the Sister Cities program which, in 1990, signed an affiliation linking Chicago with Prague.

"What happened to us in the last 50 years can never, and will never, happen again," Havel pledged, as most of the audience of 500 people in the ornate ballroom burst into

applause without waiting for a translation.

"Those in power branded those who left as traitors. But they were the traitors," Havel said. "We are a democratic country, with a democratic future. No one will ever divide us again, us in the Czech Republic and you in the rest of the world."



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