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## THOUGHT STARTERS

from Bro. Jerry Milan,  
ASO Educational Director

"There are a powerful  
lot of strings to a  
man's life: apron, heart,  
purse and harp."

## From Your Editor...

Still no sign of photos for publication from the Sokol USA Slet in Philadelphia. I can't believe not one member took one picture they would like to share. I've also just scraped the bottom of the pail to eke out this issue, so I'm in desperate need of articles from all the units I know are out there somewhere. You're all doing something - tell us about it! All this begging is getting a little old.

### NA ZDARI

Sis. Patricia Satek  
46 Northgate Road  
Riverside, IL 60546-1639

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

### OCTOBER

- 6 Berwyn/Cicero, Illinois,  
Houby Festival Parade  
18-20 A.S.O. District Directors'  
Conference  
19 Sokol Brookfield 65th  
Anniversary Dinner  
19 Sokol Minnesota Harvest  
Dance  
20 Sokol Milwaukee Recognition  
Dinner  
26 Central District Girls' & Boys'  
Track & Field Meet  
27 Sokol Minnesota Pork Dinner

### NOVEMBER

- 2 100th Anniversary of Sokol  
New York's Sokol Hall  
3 Central District Annual  
Meeting  
10 Sokol Minnesota Pancake  
Breakfast & Bake Sale  
22-24 Milwaukee Holiday Folk Fair

### DECEMBER

- 1 Sokol Detroit Czech  
Christmas Dinner Party

**XIX AMERICAN SOKOL SLET**  
*Catch the Spirit!*  
June 25-29, 1997  
Chicago, Illinois Area

**A.S.O. FAX: 708-795-0539**

## 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.*

# BRO. WALDAUF PROVIDES FOOD FOR THOUGHT AT SOKOL USA 100TH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET

Following are the thoughts of Bro. Jan Waldauf, former President of Sokol Canada and quintessential Sokol. Bro. Waldauf is one of the best modern Sokol philosophers, as you can read in this speech he presented at the Sokol USA 100th Anniversary Banquet in Philadelphia, July 5, 1996. (Reprinted from *Sokol Times*, August 8, 1996.)

I am honored to have the opportunity to address this anniversary banquet and share with you some thoughts on Sokol.

The 100th anniversary of the Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol of the United States is a happy occasion to review with justifiable pride its many achievements during the past century.

Our review must start with the founding, 104 years ago, of the first Slovak Sokol society in the world – in the United States, fully 26 years before it was possible to establish Sokol in Slovakia, after the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. All previous attempts to establish Sokol in Slovakia were harshly suppressed by Hungarian authorities who feared, with just reason, the democratic spirit of the Sokol idea

It was appropriate that the Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol of the United States was founded in 1898 on the 4th of July, for Sokol's philosophy is in complete agreement with the lofty ideals of liberty and democracy in the U.S. Declaration of Independence

proclaimed 220 years ago here in Philadelphia.

American Slovak Sokols did much to strengthen the national awareness of Slovakia, while still part of Hungary, by sending to their homeland accounts of life in freedom in America, Slovak newspapers and books published in the United States and especially by visiting Slovakia following their attendance at All-Sokol Slets in Prague, particularly those held in 1907 and 1912. Slovaks, searching for their national identity, were greatly encouraged in their efforts when they saw that their brothers and sisters in the United States did not forget their homeland and proudly acknowledged their Slovak ancestry and heritage.

Let me now highlight a few milestones of the history of Slovak Sokol in the United States:

- The great support, financial and moral, during the First World War to the Czech and Slovak liberation movement led by Thomas Masaryk, Edvard Benes and Milan Rastislav Stefanik, and the volunteering of 1,056 American Slovaks for service in the Czechoslovak legion in France. Incidentally, the state of Pennsylvania was also the venue for the historic Pittsburgh Agreement of May 30, 1918 setting out principles of a union between Czechs and Slovaks in a common state.

- The exciting activity and constant growth in the twenties and thirties,

evidenced by several memorable Slets and exhibitions, numerous instructors' courses, summer camps, the building of Sokol halls, the participation in ever greater numbers at All-Sokol Slets in Prague in 1920, 1926, 1932, 1938, the steady growth of insurance activities and the acquisition of a national headquarters building.

- The valiant effort during the Second World War in defense of democracy against the onslaught of Hitler's Nazi Germany and its Pacific ally Japan, the unwavering support given to the Czechoslovak government in exile, the many Sokols serving with great distinction in the U.S. armed forces.

- The successful rebuilding of the organization after the war, when the unprecedented mobility of Americans significantly changed the ethnic makeup of many cities, resulting in the gradual disappearance of Slovak neighborhoods and the transformation of the originally purely ethnic organization into an American one, reflected also in the adoption of the "Sokol USA" designation.

- The resolute condemnation and rejection of the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in February 1948, followed by a subsequent decision not to attend the XI All-Sokol Slet in the same year.

- The difficult task of upholding Sokol ideals, jointly with the American Sokol Organization and

*Continued on Page 4.*

## WALDAUF FOOD FOR THOUGHT *(continued)*

with the Czechoslovak Sokol Abroad, during the four decades of suppression of Sokol in Czechoslovakia by communists.

- The steadfast support provided to Czechoslovak Sokol Abroad, established as the temporary successor and representative of Sokol dissolved by communists in Czechoslovakia and active participation at all seven Sokol Abroad Slets in Vienna, Zurich, Montreal, Paris.

- The joy when, following the collapse of communism, Sokol again revived in Czechoslovakia; the sadness when the country split into two separate republics and two separate Sokol organizations, compounded when Sokol in Slovakia divided further into two separate organizations.

- The exhilarating experience of meeting with Sokols from all over the world at the XII All-Sokol Slet two years ago in Prague and finally, the pleasure of being able to welcome representatives of Sokol in Slovakia and the Czech Sokol Organization at this Slet and tonight's banquet.

Indeed, the past one hundred years have been most eventful and exciting. The Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol of the United States can look back with justifiable pride on its enviable record of successful activities and achievements in its first century.

But all that is by now history. What of the future?

We live in an age of unprecedented changes, with political and

economic boundaries that have been in place for generations being redrawn constantly and the changes being accelerated with seemingly ever greater speed by the revolution in the information technology. The world around us, changing from the smokestack economy to an information-based one, is characterized by computers, communication satellites, the Internet.

Many changes, caused by the global restructuring of economies, are accompanied by painful adjustments, loss of jobs, the demise of companies and whole industries and the rise of others. Their impact, affecting all nations, literally everyone, forces business organizations, governments and societies the world over to rethink their role.

These changes have not spared Sokol. The world is changing, so must we! We too must rethink our role. But rather than feel threatened by the impact of these changes, we should use them to our advantage. But to do so, we must first reject the premise that anything which challenges the existing order is bad.

When Tyrš established Sokol 134 years ago, he broke new ground and rose to the challenge of his time. He had a theory, a vision, he created ingenious tools for the implementation of his bold new vision and he had the courage and tremendous perseverance to carry on with his new ideas against great odds, against a hostile government, at times also against many of those around him.

As we approach the new millennium, we too must have a vision and the courage and perseverance to carry it out. We must also honestly determine and evaluate whether we have not become too complacent with our methods and practices, proven and successful in the past, put perhaps no longer adequate for the present and possibly no longer fully relevant for the future. It is imperative that we recognize and analyze our shortcomings and weaknesses and concentrate on identifying and utilizing all our strengths.

Yes, Sokol has a noble, wonderful idea, a proven system and method, an enviable record of achievement. However, we cannot – must not, remain tied to the past, no matter how successful, no matter how glorious, we must never be complacent, but must take all necessary steps and measures to assure Sokol's survival and continued relevance in the future.

We must never see or accept existing practices as permanent. The whole world is changing, adopting and competing. And countries and societies that stand still are destined to fall behind. If we don't adopt the rhythm of the new age, if we become rigid in our ways, our organization will become brittle and will inevitably break.

Let us follow the example of Tyrš and have the will and courage to apply modern means to the implementation of our vision, to make it appealing to new members, to make it attractive to youth, to

*Continued on Page 5.*

## WALDAUF FOOD FOR THOUGHT *(continued)*

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assure that Sokol ideals flourish as successfully in the next century of Sokol USA as in the century just concluded. Let us constantly seek improvement, search for new methods, innovative ways and means to better and more effectively achieve our goal.

Fortunately for us, we can build on the unquestioned and proven strengths of the Sokol idea given to us by Dr. Tyrs. An idea which has repeatedly withstood the harshest tests devised to destroy it – the hostility of the Austro-Hungarian empire, the brutal persecution by Nazi Germany and the equally brutal oppression by the communist Evil empire. The Sokol spirit is alive, well and strong, as evident from the revival, bordering on the miraculous, of Sokol in countries where it was banned for long decades by communists. The Sokol spirit lives, but to realize its full potential, it must be freed from constraints imposed on it by complacency, by practices no longer adequate for today's changed world, by our timidity to take decisive actions required to achieve its full potential.

Our contacts with other Sokol organizations indicate that we face similar challenges, have similar problems and similar needs. We all face a static or declining membership, we have difficulty attracting youth, we need more and better trained instructors, we need to modernize our facilities, we need better management of our affairs and we are woefully ineffective in

promoting and publicizing our activities and goals.

The magnitude of tasks required to deal with our needs may be overwhelming for our separate organizations and our world-wide Sokol community would undoubtedly benefit most from a joint approach to their solution. At the threshold of the new millennium, perhaps the time is ripe to convene, possibly under the auspices of the World Sokol Federation or the Sokol Forum, a General Assembly or Congress of all Sokol organizations, to identify and establish common goals and principles and, through utilization of our pooled resources, expertise and experience, chart a common course of action for the 21st Century. But at the very least, we need to talk to each other, not at each other or past each other.

Let us acknowledge that we have reached a fragile moment in our history, one in which we could lose much by our failure to recognize our true state of affairs and by our lack of resolution and reluctance to act timely and decisively.

Our history teaches us that a basic tenet of the Sokol idea is constant progress and one of its virtues, one of the reasons we succeeded so well, is its capacity to adopt new methods and practices without compromising the ideals on which it is based.

That is our heritage and our foundation for success. In it lies our future. We still have the opportunity, a unique, possibly even historic opportunity, to remake Sokol in our

own image as a modern people. But the remaining time for doing so is growing shorter with every passing day. Let me add, however, that while we should have no illusions about the difficulty and magnitude of our task, I am profoundly optimistic that the spirit which carried Sokol for generations is still there. That we still have the spirit that cares and dares.

Sokols in the United States are indeed fortunate to live in the land of the free – as we have been so eloquently reminded at yesterday's Independence Day celebrations. And all of us are indeed fortunate to belong to an organization whose ideals are timeless and represent all things noble and worth living for.

Let us therefore reaffirm our dedication and commitment to Sokol and let us act to assure its survival and further expansion – for our own benefit, for the honor of those who came before us and dedicated their lives to Sokol and for the benefit of those who will follow after us.

In saluting the first century of Sokol USA we congratulate you on your many achievements with our best wishes for an even more successfully second century. And as we all prepare to enter the new millennium, we do so in the hope that it will bring humanity closer to achieving goals express in this country by Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln – and for Sokols by our founders Tyrs and Fuegner.

Thank you – Na Zdar!

# NEW YORK SOKOL HALL 100 YEARS OLD 1896-1996

"It is one of a vanishing species, an element of the ethnic Upper East Side that used to be the stronghold of Central European nationalities. The New York Sokol's building at 420 East 71st Street is one of the survivors, a two-story intermission amid a growing forest of high-rises." (The New York Times, August 13, 1989.)

Immigration to the United States from what is now the Czech Republic and Slovakia (formerly Czechoslovakia) increased in the 19th Century, in part because of its domination by Austria-Hungary. Sokol had been established in Prague in 1862 despite Austrian objections – the physical regimen of gymnastics was a mild form of resistance, as if training an army-in-waiting.

Sokol New York was established in 1867 and at first was on East 5th Street, in the heart of the Czech community. But more immigration and the establishment of the largely Czech cigar industry in the East 70's in the 1880's led many Czechs uptown.

The Sokol joined with other Czech groups in seeking to build a large hall, which was ultimately opened in 1896 at 325 East 73rd Street as the Bohemian National Hall. But as plans were being drawn, Sokol New York members, feeling shortchanged over the amount of space they would have in the building, split off to build their own structure. It, too, opened in 1896.

Membership was then about 500, but plan for a four-story hall were too ambitious and the architect, Julius Franke, compromised at a two-story structure built for \$50,000 in just a few months. Franke was to become better known as the architect of the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist building built in 1901 at Washington Place and Green Street, where 146 workers died in a fire in 1911, partly because of skimpy exits.

On July 12, 1896, the cornerstone of New York Sokol Hall was laid in the presence of a large crowd. The New York Times reported, "All the houses along First and Second Avenues, from 67th up to 75th Street, were decked with flags and streamers, the red and white banner of Bohemia mingling everywhere with the Stars and Stripes."

The new 71st Street building, Sokol Hall, was elegant but not showy, a simple Renaissance style facade of beige brick and terra cotta five bays wide with a projecting granite portico. Two large tablets on the facade read, "Erected in MDCCCCVI" and "Czech gymnastic Associations."

Inside, the new building offered a cafe, a ladies' room, a restaurant and wine cellar, but the central feature was the Great Hall, 50 feet wide and 115 feet deep with a stage for concerts and theatrical performances. The Sokols had been able to acquire unusual 145 foot deep lots; most lots go only to the center line of the block, 100 feet

in. Three lots, 420-422-424 East 71st Street, measuring 75 feet x 145 feet, were purchased for a sum of \$13,500.

Old photographs show a space full of gymnastic equipment, ringed by a great oak gallery and painted like a European concert hall – marbleized columns and elaborate stencil and decorative work on the walls.

The hall would be a centerpiece of the Czech and Slovak community in New York, offering dinners, theatrical events, concerts, dances, bazaars, a comfortable social club in addition to our Sokol physical culture program.

The first public Exhibition in the new building took place on October 22, 1896. The Board of Directors gave the instructors 4 days in which to practice calisthenic drills of all categories. On November 20, 1896, Sokol Hall was ceremoniously opened to the public.

The following telegram was received from Prague from the mother Sokol Organization:

"LET UNITY AND  
BROTHERLY LOVE  
ALWAYS DWELL  
IN YOUR GYMNASIUM."

On November 2, 1996, Sokol New York celebrates the 100th Anniversary of their beloved Sokol Hall.

~ Reprinted from the Sokol New York  
Newsletter. Written by Sis. Irene Mergl.



**AMERICAN SOKOL NATIONAL INSTRUCTORS SCHOOL  
HOSTED BY SOKOL SOUTH OMAHA  
1996**



Units represented at this year's National Instructors School were: Sokol Detroit (2); Sokol Greater Cleveland (7); Sokol Naperville (2); Sokol Chicagoland (3); Sokol New York (2); Sokol South Omaha (5); DA Sokol (8).

Fourteen beginner students, nine intermediate students, and six advanced students spent two weeks intensively studying the Tyrs System of Gymnastics.

Each student was given two practice teaching opportunities and their performances were evaluated. The scores for these teaching assignments showed that each unit had sent their very best students to the school and these units should benefit greatly with these new instructor resources when their new Sokol season begins.

The students were an intelligent and energetic group. Sokol songs in Czech could be heard as the groups moved from class to class. Their creativity was evident by the calisthenics, marching, and special numbers that they composed.

The staff would like to congratulate each student and the Unit that sent them for such high quality Sokol morals and goals. Tears, of course, were shed as the flag was lowered for the last time at graduation ceremonies but more importantly, "See you next year in Chicago" rang out as the students departed for home, newly made Brothers and Sisters forever!

Nazdar! Vojmir Benak - School Director

## **HOP, SKIP, & JUMP YOUR GYMNASTS INTO TOP SPORTS FORM WITH THE MAGIC OF THE ROPE**

Historians have proven rope jumping to be an ancient activity, used by Egyptians, Greeks, and Aborigines as a form of recreation. Today it has evolved into a sport, fitness activity, and viable sports cross training technique for all sports.

Rope jumping is a combination of circular and vertical motion. The body acts like a projectile and is subject to all laws of projectile motion. The rope represents a flywheel subject to all the laws of rotary motion.

A progressive rope jumping program offers many benefits to both the mature and immature gymnast. When integrated properly during the gymnastic training cycles, rope jumping can serve as a safe, challenging, fun, and viable cross training technique that facilitates in the development of motor capacities, strength and conditioning, prerequisite for successful skill performance.

### **SKILL DEVELOPER**

#### **Vertical Jump**

Rope jumping can be performed as part of a low intensity phase of a plyometrics program 2 times per week to improve the vertical jump, for development of explosiveness, and power.

#### **Balance and Kinesthetic Awareness**

Safe and proper jumping techniques will improve the strength of the muscles in the foot that contribute to balance for the takeoff and landing phase. Landing properly on the balls of the feet aids in shock absorption and lowers the body's center of gravity for greater stability.

#### **Coordination, Rhythm, and Timing**

Rope jumping involves two different motions (translatory and rotary) which improves coordination and contributes to the overall gymnastics performance.

#### **Gripping Strength**

In rope jumping, the rope has a natural tendency to pull away from its arc (centrifugal tendency). This force can be counteracted by a firmer grip (centripetal force). The faster you turn the rope, the greater the centrifugal tendency and the firmer the grip becomes to counteract this force. As a result, fast turning of the rope improves gripping dynamics of the hand and carries over to a more effective under, over, and eagle grip in gymnastics.

## **TOTAL BODY CONDITIONER**

### **A. Warm-up**

Use rope jumping as a 2 - 3 minute warm-up to raise the body temperature and warm all muscle groups of both the upper and lower body. Rope jumping allows for an easy transition into calisthenics and stretching exercises.

During gymnastics practice and competitions, gymnasts can jump rope to stay active and keep muscles warm. This reduces the risk of injury from cold muscles.

### **B. Circuit Training**

Use specific jump rope techniques at 30 second stations to develop quick explosive movements and anaerobic power. The intensity level should simulate a live gymnastics performance.

### **C. Maintaining Condition of Injured Gymnasts.**

Rope jumping can be implemented into a rehabilitation program for injured gymnasts. Basic and low impact jumping techniques should be introduced to minimize impact. Rope jumping also serves as an excellent conditioning tool to maintain fitness level until participation in gymnastics activities can be resumed.

### **D. Efficient Calorie Burner.**

In the sport of gymnastics maintaining and performing at a certain weight is of primary importance. Medical authorities rate rope jumping among the top three aerobic activities for highest caloric expenditure per minute. According to research, the average 150 pound person, can burn 12 calories per minute, at a jump rope rate of 120 turns per minute which is equivalent to 720 calories per hours.

## **HOW TO IMPLEMENT ROPE JUMPING TRAINING CYCLES**

### **Pre Season**

Time should be devoted to the gymnastic development through drills, such as jump rope circuit training and plyometrics.

### **In Season**

Rope jumping can be used as a warm-up, conditioner and to maintain skill level.

### **Off Season**

Coaches should require all gymnasts to practice the basic jumping techniques. Practicing a total of 10 minutes, twice a day can help to master jumping in a short time period.

## **JUMPING SURFACES**

Jumping on soft surfaces develops leg strength, whereas jumping on harder surfaces develops explosiveness.

## ROPE JUMPING TECHNIQUES

1. Choose a rope length for your height. Stand on one foot and pull handles along side to reach armpit.
2. Choose a good surface: gymnasium floor or mat.
3. Jump in cross trainer shoe.
4. When jumping hold rope with a firm grip, with elbows close to sides. Make small circles with wrists while turning rope.
5. Keep torso relaxed, head erect, and look straight ahead and not down to keep balanced.
6. Jump with light knee and ankle motion, Jump only high enough to clear the rope.
7. Master the bounce and running steps before attempting the sports training jumps, to reduce risk of injury. Coaches: Have your gymnasts practice these jumps on their own 1 to 2 times per day for 5 to 10 minutes.
8. Remember the key to effective jumping is to be light on the balls of your feet.
9. Stretch calves before, during and after each jumping session, to avoid muscle soreness and injury. This is especially important for novice jumpers.

by Olympian Buddy Lee

## IT WAS A GALLANT EFFORT!!

Although the American Sokol Tug-A-War and Relay Teams were not victorious this year at the Sokol USA Slet in Philadelphia, their efforts are appreciated.

### Tug-A-War Team

Jack Drobny	Gr. Cleveland
Martin Barty	Gr. Cleveland
George Kulhanek	Tabor
John Bazata	Brookfield
Mike Michalek	Chicagoland
Bo Priatka	Baltimore
Greg Vondra	Stickney
Paul Hall	Tabor

### Relay Team

Annie Gilbert	Berwyn/Slavsky
Jay Vondra	Stickney
Julie Procop	Gr. Cleveland
Chris Reenock	New York



XIX American Sokol Slet

**"CATCH THE SPIRIT"**  
**LET THE PREPARATIONS BEGIN!!**  
1997 American Sokol Slet  
Manuals with text and music for  
all calisthenics exercises, folk  
dance, artistic gymnastics  
competitive exercises, and  
rhythmic competitive exercises  
have been distributed to the  
Directors of all active units.  
**GET STARTED EARLY!!**

**GOOD LUCK  
ON THE  
NEW SOKOL SEASON**

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**HOPEFULLY THE OLYMPICS  
WILL MAKE IT  
BIGGER AND BETTER  
THAN EVER**

## **Time for a Tune-up**

### **Use the Fall Enrollment Period to Review Club Safety Policies and Programs**

For most Club Owners and Program Directors, the fall enrollment period represents an exciting time of growth and renewal. This is typically the peak enrollment period as many new clients are welcomed into club activities and programs. In preparation for the fall, new classes are offered, curriculum is revised and refined, new staff members are hired and trained, the facility itself is cleaned, painted and otherwise spruced-up to offer a new face to your program.

For clubs offering competitive gymnastics--team tryouts are conducted, goals and objectives are identified, meetings are held, and all look forward to the new competitive season.

Studies in psychology have identified the "Hawthorne Effect" where ANY changes in the work environment seemed to result in positive feelings, increased motivation and increased output by the workers involved.

The fall enrollment period is a perfect time to conduct a TUNE--UP of your Club's safety procedures and take advantage of the positive feelings that result from change in program offerings and facility. Listed below are some safety factors/considerations that you may wish to include on your Fall Safety Tune-up Checklist:

### **Facilities**

Conduct a maintenance check of all equipment--mats, boards, gymnastics apparatus, pits, etc.

Repair or resolve all equipment problems--this may mean "retiring" some over-used equipment or purchasing new equipment.

Take a good look at the physical plant (both inside and outside) with an eye to safety considerations--the parking lot, access areas, waiting room, heaters and air conditioning, fire extinguishers, lighting and other electrical, drinking fountains, rest/locker rooms, etc. Clean-up and fix-up -- your clients will notice the changes!

Safety signage -- exit signs, Safety Posters, Warning and Caution signs. Are the club rules and policies posted and visible?

If you have bus or satellite programs with day-cares, school systems, etc. you should

carefully review equipment and facilities utilized with these programs. Express your concerns with contracted individuals or organizations and develop a plan to resolve any problems.

### **Staff Concerns**

Are all staff members Safety Certified?--Be sure to display your staff's Safety Certification Certificates!

Which staff members are CPR Certified? Will at least one staff member with CPR training be available during all class and team periods?

Consider additional staff training in Basic First Aid.

Are staff members PDP accredited? If so, display their Certificates.

Conduct at least one staff training session regarding your Club's Safety Policies and Procedures.

As staff members prepare new lesson plans, are they considering safety concerns?

Staff members should receive regular training in new teaching methods, technique, rules changes and club policies--some of this may be in-service and other through workshops, clinics and Congresses.

If you use independent contractors to conduct special programs for your clients (dance, karate, cheerleading, etc.), be sure to determine that all of their credentials and insurance are updated. Review contracts.

### **Records**

As new students enroll and previous students return, be sure to update all of your important records, including:

Waivers and releases.

Do you have a procedure for verification of pre-participant medical exams?

Individual participant data--addresses, emergency contact phone numbers, Medical Consent Forms, special health considerations, etc.

How and where are these records filed? Do key staff members know how to access the information should a medical emergency occur?

For competitive programs, you will need to establish plans for registering your athletes with USA Gymnastics in sufficient time before the first sanctioned competition...Don't wait, you might be too late!

*Gymnastics Safety Update*, Number 3, 1993, Steve Whitlock Director of Educational Services and Safety.

# MY MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE IN SOKOL

Central District Essay Contest Entry by Chris Jana, Sokol Ceska Sin

This year is my most memorable experience in Sokol because it is the first time in 25 years that I am not involved in Sokol. Sure, I've helped my unit by selling entertainment books and Easter candy and by volunteering my time at our Winter exhibition, but I'm not only not participating in a class, I'm not teaching any classes either.

I returned to school this year to work toward a degree in Food Technology. Hopefully, an education will help me keep my job in this era of corporate downsizing. I like school, but it will take three to four years to accomplish this goal.

I really miss my kids. I had been teaching the Junior

Girls class for the past several years. What a great bunch I had! They were always so full of energy and fun. We used to have the best time at the end of class by playing games in our dark, spooky hall or eating ice cream treats.

And talk about performers. Even though I did my best to prepare them for competition, I was still unsure how they would perform before each meet. I'm sure I was more nervous than all of my kids put together. But they always came through and showed me how silly it was to be worried for them. Last year, after a tremendous struggle with routines throughout the season, all three of my teams that competed at the

Slet took a first place trophy! I have never been as proud as I was when I saw those beautiful smiling faces after all the hard work that we put into those routines.

As every instructor knows, teaching is hard work. I used to complain when I had to learn a new calisthenics or new routines for my kids. The thing that made me grumble the most was making up a number for exhibitions. One or two of my kids and I would spend hours finding music and thinking up motions that everyone in the class could perform well. One year, it took from September to January to get our routine down pat, but it sure was a crowd pleaser. We used black lights on a darkened

stage and the kids all had on white hats, gloves and slippers that we painted with different colors of glow-in-the-dark paint. Again, they came through when I had my doubts. The number was terrific, and we had fun doing it too. Much more fun than the studying I'm doing now.

The point behind my reminiscing is that I wish I had stayed in school the first time, so I could be teaching my kids now. Please don't make the same mistake I made. Go to school, stay in school and finish school! You'll never regret it. I know I'll be back at my gym eventually, but it saddens me to have to miss all this time with the kids I had. I miss you guys.

# MY MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE IN SOKOL

Central District Essay Contest Entry by Carla Strnad, Sokol St. Louis

Choosing the most memorable experience in teaching Sokol classes is much too difficult, as there are so many ongoing, wonderful and fulfilling aspects involved. Teaching has reinforced and brought to the surface feelings of great pride in watching my students grow up in the wide realm of Sokol ideals and rich traditions so important in forming a solid foundation for personal growth. This personal growth is then

extended to the entire Sokol family and beyond. I was brought up in the solid Sokol ideals and to see this repeated in the girls I teach is the greatest source of satisfaction for me as a teacher.

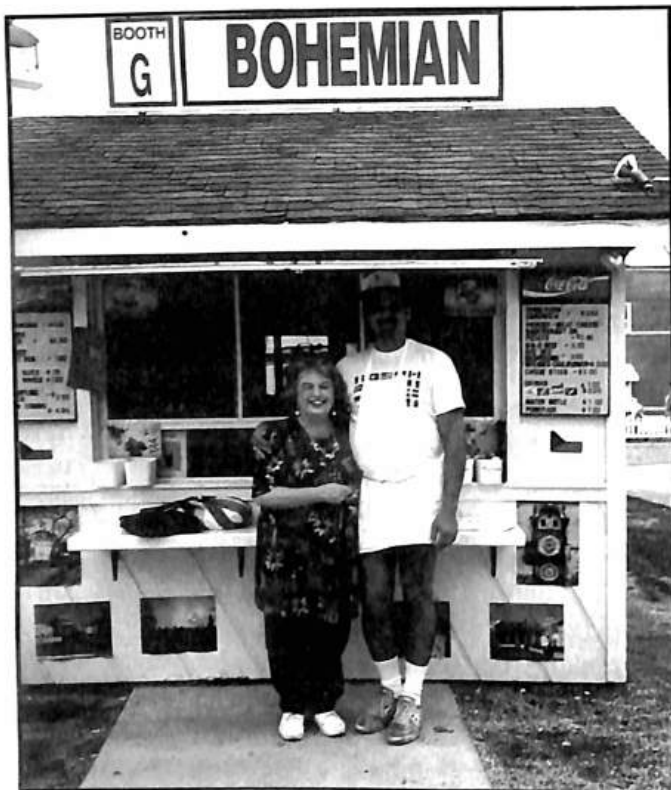
It gives me great pride to see the big smile and earnest effort on the girls' faces when they accomplish a skill and develop self-confidence in their abilities. It gives me great satisfaction to get the girls

inspired and proficient in the Sokol marching drills, singing the Czech songs and to see the happy and satisfied (relief, too) faces when we've completed another well-done calisthenics routine at Verejne or met and succeeded in the challenge of a Slet competition.

Our youth are, unfortunately, growing up in a complicated and volatile atmosphere. Sokol provides our growing children

with a healthy and safe environment that extends beyond the home. Lifelong friendships among Sokols reinforce the high standards of living that Sokol provides. I am gratified to be able to help continue this process by teaching our youth.

Besides being great FUN, Sokol ideals form a core of morals and sound development which, to instill in these children, gives me a constant memorable experience in teaching.



# A NOTE OF THANKS

**Editor's Note:** Sis. Kandi Ondrovic, Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky, suffered a serious injury to her Achilles' tendon during warm-ups for gymnastic competition at the Central District Slet this past June. She requested the following be published in the American Sokol:

Dear Sokol Friends,

I would like to thank everyone who helped cheer me up when I was down. I received so many cards, flowers, balloons and phone calls that I didn't have time to feel bad about my accident. Everyone was so nice and helped make my recovery even quicker. The doctor says I may not be able to do gymnastics again, but with all of your help and support, I will show him! Thank you all again. It means a lot to me and really got my spirits back up!

**NA ZDAR!**

Kandi Ondrovic  
Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky

Pat Michalski, Assistant to Illinois Governor Jim Edgar for Ethnic Affairs with Bro. Stanley Kysela, Sokol Tabor, owner of the Dumpling House Restaurant in Berwyn, Illinois, at the Ethnic Village at the Illinois State Fair. The Ethnic Village sponsors ethnic food booths and ethnic entertainment. The Dumpling House serves great traditional Czech entrees.

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The American Sokol Organization gratefully acknowledges receipt of the following donations in direct support of the American Sokol Publication. **NA ZDAR!**



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# Sokol's Cultural Responsibility

As Sokols, we regret the loss of gymnastic classes in a Sokol unit. We immediately label that unit as "inactive." On the other hand, how many of us consciously regret the absence of regular Czech or Slovak cultural activities in a Sokol unit? Do we label that unit as "inactive?" Do we realize that once our cultural ties are broken, we become just another athletic club?

Sadly, some units devote so many of their resources to gymnastics that cultural activities become the neglected pastimes of a few older non-gymnasts. Actually, the constitution and by-laws of the American Sokol Organization (ASO) compel us to strive for an equal balance between gymnastics and Czech culture. Three of the six formal objectives listed in our Purpose, Article 2, are clearly ethnic, cultural goals. Not once does the word "gymnastics" even

appear, only in the broader phrase "physical and moral training" in Section B. There are indeed five direct or indirect referenced to gymnastics in Article 3, Ways and Means of Attaining the Purpose, but none in the Purpose itself.

Why did our Sokol forefathers define our purpose in this manner? Why have so many Sokol conventions retained the cultural emphasis and omitted the term "gymnastics?" Can it be that they properly perceived gymnastics as but one tool for achieving our broader purpose? We must take care that we do not become so involved with the tool that we neglect our overall organizational objectives.

Few Sokols would accept a Sokol without physical culture, without any formal gymnastics program. Yet there is a difference between a gymnastics training class and the

well rounded Sokol class session as perceived by Tyrs and his followers. Cultural activities can be incorporated into the regular class program in the form of songs, folk dances, holiday celebrations, demonstrations of old time apparatus exercises and calisthenics and mini talks on Sokol and Czech history.

Regular cultural activities separate from the gym program are also mandated in our constitution and should be a part of every unit's offering to its members. A Sokol with no Czech language, song or history is just as much in decline as a Sokol with sparsely attended classes. The beauty of the Sokol program developed by Dr. Tyrs is that it addressed the "total person." If we lose either part of this whole program, we are no longer Sokol.

*~ Bro. George Kotlan, Sokol Greater Cleveland - Reprinted from the Sokol South Omaha Newsletter.*

## OUR GIFT TO AMERICA

*This article, written by former Central District Educational Director Vaclav Zenisek, recently appeared in the Sokol South Omaha Newsletter.*

Every nation in the world brought into America some part of its own characterization. We, Czechs and Slovaks, brought our "Sokol" idea. Isn't this something to be proud of?

The Sokol organization in old Czechoslovakia was at one time one million members strong. It was almost one tenth of the whole nation. Can we imagine the quality and moral strength of the United States to the whole world if every

tenth citizen would be a follower and believer of the Sokol ideals which are as good for America as they were for the small country of Czechoslovakia?

Dr. Miroslav Tyrs brought his idea to a small nation which was under the sovereignty of a powerful monarchy; but he had not realized that even a nation as big and strong as the United States of America should, in time of need, be thankful for an organization with such a moral and patriotic program.

Let us close our eyes and dream

ahead into the future, when there would be in the United States of America no one Czech-speaking person, but there would be a beautiful and strong Sokol organization, though only English speaking, which would be animated with Tyrs' moral and patriotic ideas.

It would be a gift which no other nation brought to America and only the name Sokol would be a reminder that it was brought from a small nation in the middle of Europe, which, though so small, gave to America what she needed most.

# Bro. Rome Milan Recognized in Sports Illustrated

The February 12, 1996 issue of Sports Illustrated magazine contained the following informational article spotlighting Sokol Fort Worth's own Bro. Rome Milan.

## THE ALL-WORLD TEAM

It is the best of names, it is the worst of names. In a single moniker, Paris London, the sought-after basketball phenom at Hamilton High in Memphis, unites the vastly different municipalities of Charles Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*. The kid isn't the only sports figure who gives a nominal geography lesson. Without getting direction from a certain 5'10" Florida A&M guard, we've put together a not so Scientific Map.

## THE GEO-ATHLETE

Orlando Antigua  
*Harlem Globetrotter*

Chad Austin  
*Purdue Guard*

Chili Davis  
*California Angels DH*

Rome Milan  
*International Gymnastics Official*

Cleveland Gary  
*Ex-NFL Running Back*

McKinley Boston  
*Ex-NFL Defensive End*

Charles Hudson  
*Ex-Major League Pitcher*

Quincy Watts  
*'92 Olympic 400-Meter Champ*

## WHAT'S IN THE NAME

No man is an island? This man is – plus he's a Sunbelt fun spot.

Out of Africa, into the honky-tonk

From California to Punta Arenas, more Pacific access than anyone. (Yes, we know it's Chile.)

What's his middle name, Florence?

This Rust Belter thinking of changing first name to Baltimore.

Mountain-grown tea parties.

A river (make that two) runs through him.

Beantown's boatyard 'burb meets inner-city L.A.

*Catch the Spirit!*

**XIX  
AMERICAN  
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**June 25-29,  
1997**

## CONGRATULATIONS!

*From the Ennis Sokol News, May 1996...*

Bro. Steve Chudej has received another Emmy nomination! The nomination is for his work as a costume designer on "Wishbone," which is broadcast locally on the local PBS affiliate. This is Bro. Steve's second nomination for costume design and costuming. In 1989, he won a Primetime Emmy for best costuming for "Pancho Barnes." He has also worked on feature films, such as "Born on the Fourth of July," "Raising Arizona," "For the Boys" and "Necessary Roughness," and others.



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