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The Sokol Festivals "SLETY"

From Marie Provaznik: Her Life and Contributions to Physical Education,
by PETE DUSEK, JR.; Cleveland, OH; Copyright 1981

"The Slet was a national holiday, and an international festival for all Sokols, including those from other Slavic nations and from foreign countries wherever Czechoslovakians had emigrated" (BROWN & SOMMER, 1969, p. 11). Numerous enthusiastic volunteer instructors and directors in the units of small villages and large cities prepared thousands, literally, tens of thousands of gymnasts for the celebration, which was the culmination of their daily efforts in the gymnasiums. All were united by a single idea, to serve their nation. The enormous staff of self-sacrificing and unselfish women came under the firm leadership of Marie Provaznik, director of women, Czechoslovak Sokol Organization, from 1931 until her defection in 1948 (*name of source withheld by request*).

(As of 1981) There have been eleven Sokol Slets. Sokol Prazsky sponsored the first in 1882. Festivals in 1891, 1895, 1901, 1907, and 1912 came under the auspices of the Czech Sokol Organization. Those in 1920, 1926, 1932, 1938, and 1948 were directed by the Czechoslovak Sokol Organization. At the time of

the first Slet, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Slovakia were provinces under the despotic rule of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Festivals from 1920 to 1938 were held in a free Czechoslovak Republic, and the eleventh Slet in 1948 took place after the communist coup (KUDRNOVSKY, 1979; PROVAZNIK, 1980).

Slets had an immense influence on all aspects of public life in Czechoslovakia. The ultimate goal was to gather the entire citizenry at regular intervals for a reaffirmation of their ethnic identity and patriotism, and to serve as a reminder to the people of the necessity for cooperation and the subordination of personal, individual interests for the benefit of the nation.

Beginning in 1882, a series of cultural events were conducted simultaneously with each Festival. There were gala performances at the National Theater, the press brought forth poems and articles by prominent authors, and commemorative books were published. Many outstanding musicians arranged accompaniment for the mass calisthenic drills and composed Sokol marches to the

works of well-known writers. Architects, artists, and sculptors all contributed in some measure to each occasion.

Festivals also had an impact on the economy. For example, the eleventh Slet in 1948 brought a net profit of 100-million crowns (PROVAZNIK, 1975-1977).

The first Sokol Slet surpassed even Tyrs' expectations. on Sunday, June 18, 1882 after the morning rehearsals, an impressive parade struck out from the Institute of Higher Education in Technology and proceeded through the capitol to Strelecky Island. At its lead was Tyrs on horseback along with a mounted escort, followed by 1,512 Sokols representing seventy-six units of bohemia and Moravia, as well as visitors from Poland, Yugoslavia, and the United States. The program was personally directed by Dr. Miroslav Tyrs, who developed a mass calisthenic composition consisting of simple body movements in stationary position, that were performed by 720 men. there being no musical accompaniment at that time, Tyrs conducted the number by striking a

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AMERICAN SOKOL ORGANIZATION

6424 West Cermak Road
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Telephone: 708.795.6671

FAX: 708.795.0539

E-Mail: Editor@American-Sokol.org

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From Your Editor...

I would like to thank Pete Dusek for sharing his manuscript for publication in these pages. It is quite lengthy and will be presented in several installments. I hope you find it as interesting as I did – let me know what you think. Happy 2000!

NA ZDAR!

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

CALENDAR of EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- 13 Sokol Detroit Winter
Gymnasticale
- 19 Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky
Mostaccioli Dinner
- 20 Sokol Stickney Pancake
Breakfast
- 20 Sokol Greater Cleveland
Winter Exhibition
- 20 Sokol Detroit Annual
Membership Meeting
- 26 Sokol South Omaha Vecirek
for Members
- 26 Sokol South Omaha Girls'
Gymnastic Invitational
- 27 Sokol New York Annual
Membership Meeting

MARCH

- 4-5 Western District Semi-Annual
Meeting
- 5 Sokol New York Exhibition
- 11 Sokol Tabor Exhibition
- 12 DA Sokol Biennial Convention
- 18 Sokol Brookfield Exhibition
- 18 Czech Heritage Festival -
Corpus Christi, TX
- 18 Sokol New York Roller Night
- 19 Sokol Stickney Exhibition
- 25 Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky
Exhibition

**ASO CONVENTION
APRIL 27-30, 2000
OMAHA, NEBRASKA**

**XIII ALL-SOKOL SLET
JUNE 26-JULY 2, 2000
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC**

THOUGHT STARTERS

from Bro. Jerry Milan, A.S.O. Educational Director

"Little things affect little minds."

~ BENJAMIN DISRAELI

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.

SOKOL GYMNASTICS ASSOCIATION OF WEST, TEXAS CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

The youngest unit in the American Sokol Organization, the Sokol Gymnastics Association of West, Texas, celebrated its 20th Anniversary on November 14, 1999. 800 members and friends of Sokol gathered in Lone Star Hall and enjoyed a chicken dinner prepared by the members, followed by a live auction. A large crowd then moved to the Sokol gymnasium next door for a very inspiring ceremony and gym program.

Bro. Jimmy Matus, President of the unit, welcomed everyone to this special event. He introduced Southern District President, Larry Laznovsky, who expressed the District's pride in the success of Sokol in West. Bro. Laznovsky also introduced national and district officers present: ASO Women's Director, Sis. Janet Kalat; ASO Assistant Men's Director, Bro. Chuck Kalat; District 1st Vice-President, Bro. Bob Podhrasky; District Women's Director, Sis. Lori Laznovsky; ASO Educational Director, Bro. Jerry Milan; District Treasurer, Sis. Mary Steinman; District Historian, Sis. Vlasta Laznovsky; Director Educational Director, Sis. Sylvia Laznovsky.

Bro. Matus presented 20-year membership plaques to the following brothers and sisters: Gladys & Jim Quilter, Lucille Price, Evelyn Cepak, Robert & Nicky Lednicky, Howard & Lanell Freund, Lil & Raymond Matus, Edwin & Yvonne Nors, Jan &

Marcella Vaculik, Georgia & Wendell Montgomery, Joseph Holasek, Maxine and the late Rudy Sefcik, Dr. George & Jan Smith, Daniel & Carol Moravec, and Jim & Edwina Matus.

The award for Bro. Holasek was accepted by his son, Raymond, who presented the unit a check for \$500. Bro. Holasek is 100 years old and has been very supportive of the unit since its inception.

Sis. Lucille Price, SPJST Lodge 36, presented the lodge's donation of \$7,000 to the unit. The gymnasts' parents presented trophies to Sis. Edwina Matus, Director of Women and Sis. Cathy Moravec, Director of Men, in appreciation of their dedication to their children.

Sis. Edwina Matus, Director of Women, received a special award in recognition of her outstanding leadership and dedication to the gymnastic program.

A group of approximately 70 little girls, junior girls, women, little boys and junior boys presented an exhibition of floor exercises, tumbling, uneven bars, balance beam, vault, rings and parallel bars. The well organized program and the skills exhibited by the youngsters were a tribute to their coaches.

Sokol in West was organized on October 7, 1979. The meeting was conducted by Bro. Jack McClure and other executive officers of the District. The units

first officers were: Pres., Bro. Rudy Sefcik; Vice-Pres., Bro. Julius Dubcak; Fin. Secy., Sis. Jo Ann Nors; Treas., Sis. Rose Uptmore; Recording Secy., Bro. Robert Lednicky; Educ. Dir., Bro. Joseph Holasek; Dir. of Women, Sis. Connie Kubacak; Dir. of Men, Bro. Howard Freund. The unit was officially accepted into the American Sokol Organization in February of 1980; the sponsoring unit was Sokol Zizka, Dallas.

Contributions from Westfest, Inc., local banks, area businessmen and individuals enabled the unit to procure needed gym equipment. District equipment previously used by Sokol Yukon, OK, was moved to West. After conducting gym classes in a local school gym for 8 years, the new Sokol gym was completed in January 1989 and was dedicated on the March 5th to Bro. and Sis. Joseph Holasek of West and was named Sokol West Gymnasium.

In 1985, Sokol acquired the SPJST Lodge #54 Hall and started operating it as the Lone Star Hall, Inc. The many Sokols present at the 20th Anniversary Celebration left West feeling inspired to see the young unit of Sokol Gymnastics Association of West enjoying success. With the pride and determination that their membership and its leaders exhibit, they will meet the challenge of continued growth.

NAZDAR!

SYLVIA J. LAZNOVSKY Educational
Director, Southern District

KROJ FOR JOY

From The Prague Post, August 4-10, 1999, by Jana Pinterova

In Slovacko they work hard and play hard in the old-fashioned way.



When the Kyjovjaci throw one of their famous costume parties, they invite a couple of thousand friends and neighbors to come along. No wonder they do it only one year out of four.

This year marks the 15th time since 1921 that the people of Kyjov and 38 local villages have celebrated Slovacko rok, or Slovacko Year, in the second week of August, making it the oldest festival of local traditions in the Czech lands.

Visitors in the tens of thousands are expected in the small, onetime royal town in southern Moravian wine country to attend this extraordinary celebration of traditional music, dance and good wine that culminates Saturday, August 14 in a lavish parade of almost 2,000 local people, all dressed in their finest folkloric costumes.

"For us, ethnography is still alive. It's not like theater. It lives the whole year 'round," says Kyjov's mayor, Jan Letocha. "It's totally spontaneous and natural."

The uniqueness of the festival stems from its regional character and the richness of Slovacko's customs and traditions. Slovacko, or Moravian Slovakia, is an old name for this part of southern Moravia bordering Slovakia.

Almost every village around boasts its own special festive attire, or kroj. "There are 26 costume areas in our region," says Frantisek Synek, a longtime student of regional ethnography. "The basic cut is the same, but there are differences in the

look and ornamentation."

The characteristic red and blue colors of the costume are supposed to stand for the blue of the sky and the red of the local wine. "Today, the main reason for the festival is to keep alive the old traditions of the region," Synek says.

But it's not only at festivals that traditions are brought back to life. The rural character of the region has nourished the old ways.

Until relatively recently, local people made their living largely from agriculture, Synek says. "Also, the strong influence of the church contributed to the fact that traditions are kept here to this day."

In local villages, many women spend the winters patiently setting thousands of stitches to create the intricate designs on both women's and men's costumes. If not done by a patient grandmother or aunt, a woman's kroj complete with five underskirts can be made to order for a price around 18,000-20,000 Kc; the man's costume runs about half as much.

Kroj was not always only for show. According to an old Moravian legend, 15th-century King Matias disguised himself in the dress of a local woman as he fled back to Hungary after losing a battle.

On the final day of Slovacko rok, festively dressed men on horseback reenact the tale during the King's Ride. They elect one

man to be their "king," put on a girl's costume and clench a red rose in his mouth as a sign of silence. The riders visit the houses of local dignitaries, where they tell jokes in return for money.

More than just a big party and wine binge, this colorful, diverse festival also recalls the past wealth of the region. "People had property and ...wanted to express their social status" by wearing elaborate costumes, Synek says.

Mayor Letocha adds, "To be a member of a folk music group and to have a kroj is still a question of prestige here."

Addendum from Bro. Paul Lebloch: The first "Slovacko Rok v Kyjove" was held in 1921. It was organized to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Sokol Kyjov and began with a District Komensky Sokol Slet. Sokol Kyjov has a large Sokol hall, playing field and small park. The park has a statue of Miroslav Tyrs by sculptor Jan Znoj, which honors the 100th birthday of Tyrs in 1932. The "Slovacko Rok" is an unforgettable spectacle.

American Sokol Organization BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Meeting - October 9, 1999



FRONT ROW: Mildred Pinc, A.S.O. Treasurer; Barbara Lundeen, President, Pacific District; Mildred Mentzer, A.S.O. Secretary; Catherine Kocek, Vice-President, Central District
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“SLETY” *(Continued from Front Cover)*

wand upon a metal plate (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952; PAMATNIK OSMEHO SLETU, 1926). Only men participated in the activities. Present were 3,200 spectators (KUDRNOVSKY, 1979).

A Festival celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sokol movement was planned for the year 1887. Initiation of activities was to take place on June 25, with a festive performance at the National Theater, followed on June 26 by a morning rehearsal, afternoon parade and public exhibition at Kralovska louka where 20,000 onlookers were expected (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952).

Five-thousand entrants from Bohemia and Moravia were registered and guests were expected from America and Poland. All indications pointed toward a great event. Six weeks before the scheduled Slet, the authorities prohibited the parade and public welcoming of visitors (PROVAZNIK, 1975-1977).

The Executive Committee of Sokol Prazsky countered by canceling the Festival and directed all districts to conduct programs on a local level. However, since the Americans had already arrived, Sokol

Prazsky hosted competitions on June 26, 1887 at Cesky Brod (not far from Prague). Members and guests of sixty-nine Sokol units took part in the activities (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952). Gymnastics with indian clubs was introduced and performed by the American delegation (KUDRNOVSKY, 1979). There was also a demonstration in boxing. Four American teams exhibited on gymnastic apparatus. Competitions were conducted in long jump, high jump, pole vault, skok utokem (ramp jump), running, and weight

Continued on Page 6.

"SLETY" (Continued from Page 5.)

lifting. Due to an insufficient number of entries, the javelin event was scratched. Twenty Americans and seventy-four Sokols from the host nation participated (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952). Although activities were conducted on a limited basis they had a significant influence on gymnastics and the propagation of Sokol.

Officially, the second Slet became a reality in 1891 at the time of the Industrial Exposition in Prague. It was the first Slet sponsored by Ceska Obec Sokolska (*Czech Sokol Organization*). Members of the French Gymnastic Union made their initial appearance (PROVAZNIK, 1975-1977). A total of 2,473 gymnasts from 210 units took part in the gymnastic displays and 5,520 members in dress uniform were in the parade (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952; PAMATNIK OSMEHO SLETU, 1926). A question arose concerning the diversity of gymnastic apparel. Jindra Vanicek developed an exercise consisting of close order drill to verbal commands which was used for the first time at this program. A young Czech poet, Josef V. Sladek, composed "Pisen sokoli" (*Song of Sokols*) to music by Karel Richard Sebor, which began with the words, "Kupredu, kupredu, zpatky ni krok" (*Forward, forward, backward not a step*). It became one of the leading Sokol marches. The parade and exhibition were directed by Josef Klenka and the competitions were organized by

Karel Reeger (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952).

"Within four years, the third Sokol Festival took place at Prague on the occasion of the Ethnographical Exhibition of 1895" (*Ethnography: the scientific description and classification of the various cultural and racial groups of mankind.*) (GRACE AND ART, 1948, p. 12). This Slet was to take place within the framework of the exhibition and on the same grounds. Pre-registration in the spring of 1895 indicated that this area would not be sufficient to accommodate all the gymnasts. It was decided to erect a new stadium on the Letna Plain, which served at the location for the next four Festivals (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952). Along with visitors from France and the Slavic countries, members of Sokol units came from Austria and Germany (PROVAZNIK, 1975-1977). Groups of junior boys (ages 14-18) and boys (under 14) performed for the first time. Senior men of the Prague district presented a close order drill and under the guidance of Dr. Vanicek demonstrated with flags. All gymnasts were attired in identical garb; that is, blue trousers and white shirts (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952). After the second Festival, musical accompaniment for the mass drills was specially composed (KUDRNOVSKY, 1979). Likewise for this Slet their originated another march entitled "Hoj, vzhuru pestry Sokole" (*Fly High My Sokol*).

During the year 1900, the Technical Committee of the Czech Sokol Organization discontinued the use of blue and white belts on gymnastic trousers to designate instructors. Red and white belts became standard for members and teachers (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952).

Women made their first appearance in the fourth Slet of 1901. Their group totaled 867 and they performed a drill with indian clubs (KREJCI, 1948). The sixteen women who participated from the United States decorated their clubs with flags: in one hand the American flag, and a red and white flag in the other (MALA, 1967). Leaders of women's gymnastics in Sokol, at that time men, intended to create a distinction between the demonstrations of the women and men. Probably the indian clubs were selected because the circling movements were more suitable to the feminine gymnasts (KREJCI, 1948). Delegates from Poland and Russia attended; also the town council of Paris. Seventy persons were sent by the Union of French Gymnasts (HAVLICEK, 1948).

The fifth Slet of 1907 was Marie's first as a participant. For several reasons it was a landmark event. All the Sokols in the Czech lands and Lower Austria were united in the Czech Sokol Organization (PROVAZNIK, 1975-1977). An exhibition of 500 girls under fourteen years of age (their first) was staged.

Continued on Page 8.



Sokol Fitness Test

By Jiri Toncar SOKOL No. 5/98

Translated by Jiri Liska

The periodical Sokol, Nos. 8, 9, and 10 in 1995, and No. 3 in 1996, initiated the testing of physical fitness. In this supplement, these tests were described together with the way to evaluate them. The charts were computed for men and women ages between 6 to 60 years. The points from 1 to 20 correspond with the particular achievements. The overall evaluation was then worked into one test or a set of four fundamental tests, or of all seven tests.

The advantage of these charts is the fact that on the basis of points we can compare the fitness of the competitors without deference to sex and age. For a complete picture, we go back to the characteristics of particular test in which we tried to check physical condition. The tests evaluate this:

1. Mobility of the spine and general skill
2. Level of dynamic strength of stomach and hip muscles
3. running speed together with ability for fast changes of movement, skill
4. explosive strength of legs, partly also skill
5. endurance in speed, of arms and hands, increased demand on heart activity and breathing
6. dynamic strength of arm and shoulder muscles
7. strength, endurance in speed, skill in mutual cooperation

A brochure describing the testing was given to Sokols abroad and translated into English.

This idea of testing physical condition was promoted on roundups. During 1996 and 1997 the COS BOI gathered the results and evaluation of 1150 students: 924 boys and girls, 51 juniors and 164 adults. All seven tests were done by 185 students: 54 from Sokol Liberec, 68 from Sokol Praha-Sporilov, 53 from Sokol Canada and 10 from ASO-USA. Four tests were done by 965 students: 94 from Zupa Jungmannov, 103 from Sokol Michle. 737 participants of the instructors course of second class, and 31 from ASO-USA

After having evaluated 5093 tested values we take into consideration the fact that the objectivity, in spite of all efforts, could not be perfect. It is certain that there were certain inaccuracies in carrying out the test or in measurements. In spite of that, based on evaluation of particular measurements we came to an interesting comparison. The following is a chart of groups where all 7 tests were evaluated.

Results of Sokol Fitness Testing - All Seven Tests

Fitness Level	Sokol Liberce	Sokol Canada	Sokol Sporilov	American Sokol	Total
Outstanding	2	1	6	0	9
Good	29	16	31	2	78
Average	17	14	19	1	51
Weaker	6	21	12	7	46
Bad	0	1	0	0	1
Total	54	53	68	10	185

In general, the strongest results were achieved in tests No 1, 3, and 5; average results were attained in tests No. 6 and 7; and weakest results were in tests No. 2 and 4.

Sokol In the Third Millennium

By Lubek Jirsak

COS Publication SOKOL - January, 1999

Translated by Jiri Liska

Will the Tyrs legacy of harmonious development of personality become an important part of the new generation entering the third millennium? Will sokol education be pushed out on the edge of society? Will it adjust to populist elements so that the Sokol idea will fade under the growing pressure of commercial influences that are inundating most of the levels of human society today? We can say this to these questions: the more society stresses moral values, the more influential trends aimed at moral education through convincing, attractive ways, aimed at the broadest circle of participants will become. And because it is hardly possible to image life without moral values, there appears a great opportunity for the Sokol movement, if it does not waste the precepts created during its history. Let us get back to the Tyrs' legacy and let us try to show what part of that legacy is most important in the present time.

Thanks to Tyrs, the Greek Kalokagathia became the example of the basic Sokol idea, harmony of body and soul. According to the Greek concept it is an effective means for molding the personality which, in its manifestations aims at wisdom and wellness. Tyrs, in concert with this concept, tends, through harmonious education of body and soul, to fulfill principles assuring the necessary conditions of a healthy human society. These principles can be expressed briefly as truth, wellness and progress.

The harmony of body and soul is fading gradually. Sportsmen often violate this idea badly when they overburden their body, and risk, irresponsibly, hurting their health in order to reach top achievements. With top sportsmen, their body becomes the means of gaining money, and many times they disregard accepted rules of health education, principles of sport, and chemical science. The spectators of sports actions, especially soccer and football fans, neglect often times education of body and soul and use their presence at sports events as an opportunity to unleash their aggression. By doing this, they contribute to turning the sports matches into gladiator fights leading to wild entertainment and serving the commercial interest. Tyrs' approach to competitiveness was already cautious at the time when physical education was in its beginnings. In an article published in 1874, Tyrs wrote:

"Competitiveness and ambition are, of course, not the highest, noblest incentives of human behavior, but they are, however, important for the progress of the human race. It would be senseless, even impossible to root them out, it is necessary to keep them in the right perspective and on the right track."

The requirement for harmonious education of the whole person corresponds with the Tyrs position that the goal of sokol education should be all around agility, and not only as it pertains to physical exercise, but also properties which contribute to build a noble person trying to approach the ideal of harmony between body and soul.

One of the most important Tyrs ideas is the principle of general adherence to sokol education. According to Tyrs, the Sokol cause pertains to everyone. He does care about differences of sex, age, or social level. His goal was "that all people, no matter what their profession and wealth, find themselves in the Sokol circle." In addition, that "another's strength and another's agility" does not add fitness to anybody. Therefore, "it is necessary to exchange the grand stand for the turf and continue active for a meaningful time." The broadest participation in the all-around physical education in the interest of health, physical fitness and moral advancement must enjoy priority above other activities, even if they are more attractive at the given time. This principle does not contradict the requirement of progress. Tyrs emphasizes the incessant process of perfection and progress of the Sokol physical education system. "Whatever is going on outside our own branch we have to find out about it." It need not be accepted as is, but it should be adjusted to our conditions and endeavors, and what is contrary to our spirit and aim, should be rejected, even when it could bring some subordinated advantages...we do not want to copy things, but we want to make more perfect what we have found. We do not want the same thing, we want a better thing.

One of the pillars of the Sokol idea is togetherness, brotherhood. The principal of brotherhood was added by Fugner, who took it to the extreme when he devoted all his fortune to Sokol. This brotherhood reflects a deep feeling for equality, democracy, and mutual understanding. The feeling for equality and the principle of democracy have been indispensable parts of the Sokol environment since its very beginning. The togetherness and friendly atmosphere among

members and their readiness for mutual help is the oasis which gives us the strength to overcome everyday troubles, is the source of joy and lively strength, and offers the potential for every individual to understand the meaning of life.

Last but not least, Sokol has always had to maintain the administrative and economic security of its activities through donors. As a result of the admirable success of the past years in this respect, a material base (Sokol halls, playgrounds and other necessary equipment) was developed. Our predecessors achieved it through their own diligence, with no grants from public means. What made them exercise such a spontaneous zeal? It was the strong conviction that the Sokol movement is of indispensable importance for the healthy development of society and that it represents a well organized, dependable force able to fulfill important, unusual tasks. This was proven by events that happened during the biggest boom of the Sokol organization in the first half of the 20th century. The work performed in this way had the character of service, of honor, exercised in the public interest, and it became an integral part of their life. This attitude contributed substantially to the vigorous expansion of the Sokol movement. This is why the zeal of our Sokol predecessors deserves our sincere admiration, the more because it was mostly small, everyday and little visible work which requires accuracy, punctuality, and perseverance. In addition, officers even in small units had to solve unusually difficult cases which required a broad knowledge. Thanks to their abilities, courage and foresight, we inherited property of material, artistic, and historic value.

A great part of what was said here sounds very distant mentally to the society of today. Let us refer again to Tyrs who says that egotism and lies are characteristic of a sick society. How should we challenge this disease which penetrates into all levels of human activity, including physical education? It would seem that without a general change in the unhealthy state of society, any attempt at a remedy in subordinate branches and as a result in physical education—would be hopeless. We must say to this that it would be the worst mistake to wait until the state of society miraculously changes. The improvement struggle must begin immediately, and everyone must begin with himself and in the branch in which he is active. As a basis, there must be a clear program supported by good knowledge of history, by analysis of present mistakes and by a detailed plan for successful development in the future.

Sokols and Others

Excerpt from article by Jiri Konvalinka

SOKOL No. 2/99

Translated by Jiri Liska

It is necessary to substantially change the system of practice in our halls and playgrounds, as well as the way how to offer it to the society.

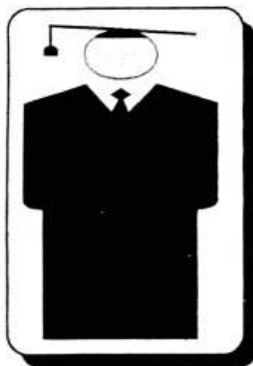
Our priority should remain physical education executed on the basis of contemporary scientific knowledge. This, of course, does not mean to neglect the interest in sports departments that the young and medium age generation has. Modern managerial and organizational methods must correspond with it. In its substance, this requires considering methodically executed physical education as public service the highest priority, necessary for health and development of physical ability and offering it to the public.

And in the long run, gradually and adequately, apply the moral education of the individual in the sense of democratic - Sokol ideals and traditions. This must be followed by extensive media promotion, executed in a modern way.

The system of physical education should be, first of all, differentiated in the direction of people interested in basic physical education in the attractive offering of relaxation, regeneration, conditioning and rehabilitation practice. Secondly, the system should take care of people interested in sports, with differentiation between recreational and competitive sport. In the latter case, the task of Sokol should culminate at the level of specialization in a certain sport. This with the necessary cooperation between sports organizations and our departments. All this should be done at a high level on a scientific basis, which requires professional and semi-professional instructors and coaches. Higher costs of such activity could be partly covered by current fees collected similarly to various fitness centers for services rendered even to the non-Sokol public. They would be also partly covered, in comparison with non-Sokol members, by "department" fees of our students, which would be lower. The used practice and training methods, of course, have to be able to compete with the other centers, lead by different organizations or private persons.

This is one of the ways through which we can penetrate into the subconsciouses of the broader public. It may be that commonly lead exercises and sport could bring to our ranks the generation we are now missing and by which we need to assure the more hopeful future of Sokol.

2000 MERIT AWARD



Upon recommendation of the Finance Committee and the Board of Instructors, the delegates of the XII American Sokol Convention, held in Detroit in June, 1975 approved Merit Awards to be paid from the Sokol Future Leaders Fund. **The Merit Award Committee is now accepting applications for the 2000 Merit Awards** from students who are planning a course or program in an accredited two-year or four-year college or who are already participating in such a course of study. The application process begins with the submission of the form below to obtain application forms and instructions.

The amount to be awarded is \$500 to two students per year per district which has under 1500 members, and an additional two students per year per district which has over 1500 members. The award is good for one year. An individual may receive only one award, and no renewal is available. Applicants may be entering any year (not just 1st year) of appropriate studies.

Failure to submit a transcript of grades for the year of the award to the American Sokol Merit Award Committee and/or failure to complete the year's course of study will result in request for repayment of the award.

The selections are made by the Merit Award Committee and approved by the American Sokol Organization Board of Instructors and the American Sokol Organization Executive Board. The following points will be considered by the Merit Award Committee in selecting the candidates:

1. Regular attendance in Sokol classes for at least three years prior to this application. Juniors may be included but must become adult Sokol members at age 17.
2. Successful completion of Sokol Instructor School(s) -- Unit, District, and/or National.
3. Teaching or assisting experience in Sokol gym classes.
4. Service to Sokol -- Unit, District, and/or National Organization.
5. Recommendation of Physical Director of Sokol Unit.
6. Recommendation of District Physical Director.

Although physical education study will not be a criteria, more consideration will be given to those training in the physical education field.

Merit Award Committee

Janet Kalat, Dave Harlan, Marie Ptacek, Dick Ptacek, Tom Pajer, Eva Balas (Chairman)

American Sokol Organization, c/o Merit Award Committee, 6424 W. Cermak Rd., Berwyn, IL 60402

I desire to make application for the American Sokol Organization Merit Award. Please mail application form and other application instructions to:

Name (signature): _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode _____ Phone: _____

My age is: _____ years. I am a member of Sokol _____ of the _____ District.

APPLICATION REQUEST SHOULD BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN MAY 1, 2000
APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 1, 2000.

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PURPOSE: *To train and education young people to assure able administrators, the best of idealistic instructors and educational directors for Sokol Units and Districts.*

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In Memory of long-time members of Sokol Zizka: Jerry Bouska, Marie Fitz, Marie Janousek, Geroge Prevratil, Helen Prevratil, Sid Pokladnik and Frances Smith from Sokol Zizka	\$175.00

GENERAL FUND

In Memory of Jerry A. Rabas from rose Rabas and Joan Zizek	\$30.00
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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!**

*In Memory of
Linda P. Modes,
Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky
From Juanita Loggindice,
Sokolice Tabor*

*Louis (Ludwig) Hosek
~ In Memoriam ~
Member of Sokol at Ennis, Dallas
and Guy, Texas and Vienna Austria
From Jerry Hosek*

*Czeslava K. Stanley
Ted & Jean V. Stanley
Steve, Bill & Roy Stanley
George & Agnes Vanek*



SOKOL TREE

If you happened to be able to stroll through Illinois' Brookfield Zoo this holiday season, you may have caught sight of this great "Sokol Tree" decorated by the gymnasts of Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky, Berwyn, Illinois. Each year, the gymnasts make decorations to decorate one of the many community trees displayed at the zoo. Sis. Diana Rhoades does a terrific job of coordinating this project for Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky!

See Page 11 for information on how you, too, can become an
AMERICAN SOKOL FLAG WAYER!

"SLETY" (Continued from Page 6.)

Introduction of the Festival pageants with living figures occurred on the Sunday prior to the main affair (PRIRUČKA, 1978). A total of 2,500 senior women drilled with indian clubs to graceful musical accompaniment provided by the composer Janda, which yielded the fluency of dance (KREJCI, 1948; PAMATNIK OSMEHO SLETU, 1926).

A boost to women's gymnastics was provided by a demonstration of American Sokol women led by Josef Cermak. They presented precisely defined movements, concluding with long and short holds, executed so as to cause a picturesque formation, utilizing fancy steps and poses. calculated to create a visual impression on the spectators (KREJCI, 1948).

In 1907 the fourth international competition of the European Gymnastic Federation (EGF) took place within the structure of the Slet. Here the Sokols bested a very capable French team for first place (HAVLICEK, 1948). After the Slet, an official Sokol badge "Na Straz" (On Guard) was proposed and developed by the sculptor Stanislav Sucharda. Possibly it became the most widely know Czech club badge.

Worthy of note is that during this same period, Josef Cermak, an American physical educator, authored a book *Telocvik (Gymnastics)*. It was available in Bohemia and had a direct effect on Czech gymnastics (JANDASEK & PELIKAN, 1952).

The sixth Festival in 1912 marked the 50th year of the founding of Sokol. It was also the first Slet of the Svaz Slovanske Sokolstvo (Slav Sokol Federation). All the Slav countries were represented (PROVAZNIK, 1975-1977). A record number of participants demonstrated the strength of the organization and its high level of gymnastic achievement (HAVLICEK, 1948). Sister Provaznik did not take part in this last pre-war Festival, as she was caring for her baby daughter, Alena (PROVAZNIK, 1975-1977). Cermak's influence emerged in the women's calisthenic number, which was accompanied by the melodies of a new Sokol composer, Karel Pospisil. This drill was the result of a cooperative endeavor of the women's committee and the Men's Board of Instructors. Although the women's committee was not involved in producing the Slet, it contributed substantially to its preparation (KREJCI, 1948).

Although I have been twice around the world, I have never seen anything so beautiful, lovely, so imposing, and patriotic as the Slet in Prague. It is, indeed, the eighth wonder of the world. Sir C. Wakefield, Lord Mayor of London

Slet number seven, 1920, was attended by Thomas G. Masaryk, President of the new Republic.. As a result of the war, the country was left impoverished. Food was rationed and other materials, as leather for shoes, were scarce. In

an attempt to gain control and thwart the efforts of the Sokols, the communists demonstrated, began rumors, and sowed discontent among the citizenry. They agitated stating that all the participants and visitors in Prague for the Festival would result in famine and would threaten a revolution.

Although the government favored the idea of conducting the event they called a meeting of top officials of Sokol and asked them to reconsider the date (PROVAZNIK, 1975-1977). The Minister of Transportation stated that because of a shortage of equipment and personnel, it would be impossible to provide conveyance for the expected number of participants and spectators, while the Minister of Subsistence added it would be utterly impractical to supply the capitol with sufficient provisions for so great a number.

Sokol representatives then introduced their plan. A detailed account was presented by the one concerned with transportation pointing out depots in which there was rolling stock that could be restored. Repairs would be made by Sokol railroad men in their spare time, without charge. Further, a timetable for the operation of trains during the Slet days that would be run by volunteer trainmen, working overtime without extra pay, had been prepared.

Continued on Page 9.

"SLETY" *(Continued from Page 8.)*

Subsequently, the chairman of supplies submitted a list of donors of foodstuffs, a project entrusted to the Sokol districts in the agricultural regions. These contributions far exceeded the estimates of the ministry (PROVAZNIK, 1962). Also, the Czech Sokol Organization obtained a loan from the American Sokols, permitting them to purchase food from the American Relief

Administration directed by Herbert Hoover.

Impressed by their enthusiasm and sincerity, the government withdrew its objections (PROVAZNIK, 1975-1977). Agricultural districts supplied adequate provisions for the gymnasts and donated food to the public kitchens of Prague. As a matter of record, the plans outlined by the Sokols were favorably executed (PROVAZNIK, 1962).

However, they still had to contend with the communists who threatened to prevent the Slet. It was feared some fanatic might ignite the stadium stands or cut their supports causing them to collapse. From the start of construction, men of the Prague units guarded the Festival grounds during the night (FIKAR, 1959).



ILLINOIS ETHNIC MUSEUM DAY

Illinois Governor George H. Ryan sponsored a tribute to Illinois ethnic museums in Illinois at the James R. Thompson Center. Over 30 ethnic museums had cultural exhibits at the event. The **American Sokol Organization Archives & Museum** received an award for their participation in Governor Ryan's Ethnic Museum Day.

Pictured left to right are Penny Kendall, Director of International Relations & Chief Protocol for Governor Ryan; Bro. Fred G. Kala, A.S.O. President; Bro. Paul Lebloch, A.S.O. Vice-President; and Pat Michalski, Assistant to the Governor for Ethnic Affairs.

AMERICAN SOKOL ORGANIZATION XVII GENERAL CONVENTION APRIL 25-30, 2000 Tentative Convention Schedule

Date	Event	Venue
Tues., April 25	BOI & By-Law Committee	Sokol Omaha
Wed., April 26	BOI & By-Law Committee	Sokol Omaha
	Board of Governors	Harvey's Hotel
	Ice Breaker Social	Sokol Omaha
	BOI & By-Law Committee	Sokol Omaha
Thurs., April 27	Educational Directors	Sokol Omaha
	Rules & Order	Sokol Omaha
	Credentials	Sokol Omaha & Hotel
	Convention General Session	Sokol Omaha
	Convention General Session	Sokol Omaha
Fri., April 28	Banquet & Dance	Sokol South Omaha
	Convention General Session	Sokol Omaha
Sat., April 29	Convention General Session	Sokol Omaha
Sun., April 30	Convention General Session	Sokol Omaha

American Sokol Organization Tour ~ Prague 2000 Slet

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Includes: Air from Newark, Round Trip Airport/Hotel Transfers in Prague, 9 Nights Lodging at the Movenpick Hotel w/Breakfast, See Optional Day Trips Listed Below

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- 7/3 Motor coach to Karlovy Vary, with stops at Lidice, Moser Glass Works, Diana Lift. Dinner and overnight at the Central Hotel in Karlovy Vary.
- 7/4 Depart for Ceske Budejovice, stopping at Pilsen, Pisek and Lomek. Dinner and overnight at the Zvon Hotel in Ceske Budejovice.
- 7/5 Visit Budvar Brewery, Hluboka Castle and Cesky Krumlov. Dinner and overnight at the Zvon Hotel in Ceske Budejovice.
- 7/6 Depart for southern Moravia, visiting Jindrichuv Hradec and Slavonice. Dinner and overnight at Zerotin Hotel in Velke Bilovice.
- 7/7 Full day touring in south Moravia, visiting Lednice Chateau and Slavkov (Austerlitz) and other important places. Dinner at a famous wine cellar and overnight at Zerotin Hotel in Velke Bilovice.
- 7/8 Depart for Slovakia via Uhersky Brod, Trencin, Zilina and Ruzonberok. Dinner and overnight at Grand Praha Hotel in Tatarska Lominca.
- 7/9 Spend the day in the Tatra mountains, hiking, river rafting and enjoying nature.
- 7/10 Depart for the Czech Republic. Overnight in Roznov pod Radhostem and visit the Skansen. Dinner and overnight at Eroplan in Roznov pod Radhostem.
- 7/11 Depart for Prague. Farewell dinner and overnight at the Movenpick Hotel.
- 7/12 Transfer to airport for your flight home.

OPTIONAL DAY TOURS

City Tour \$12.00; Karlovy Vary Tour \$56.00; Ceske Budejovice Tour \$56.00



REGISTRATION FORM

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 Home Phone _____ Sokol Unit _____
 Slet Participant Observer Special Medical Needs _____
 Departure (Home) City _____
 Special Requests _____

Payment Policy: A \$250.00 per person deposit is required. The balance is due April 25.

Cancellation Policy: 60 Days Prior to Departure – \$25.00 Penalty; 59-30 Days Prior to Departure – \$100.00 Penalty; 29-7 Days Prior to Departure – \$1,000.00 Penalty; 6 Days or Less Prior to Departure – No Refund (Ask about our optional cancellation insurance.)

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