

# american **SOKOL**

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SEPTEMBER 2000



*American Sokol Women's Director, SIS. BARBARA BARNES and President, BRO. LARRY LAZNOVSKY greet the crowds of onlookers lining the parade route through the streets of Prague, Czech Republic, during the recent All-Sokol Slet. The large American Sokol contingent was warmly and enthusiastically received. "Na Zdar!" was certainly the phrase of the day!*

## American Sokol

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A.S.O. Executive Board meets every 4th  
Tuesday (except July/August), 7:30 P.M.

A.S.O. Board of Instructors meets every 2nd  
Wednesday (except July/August), 7:30 P.M.

## From Your Editor...

Big changes are coming in the American Sokol national office. We're moving! Committees are being formed to handle the multitude of tasks involved in this project. I'll keep you informed of new phone numbers, address, office hours, etc. All members in the Chicago area, call the office NOW to volunteer to help with the move! You can certainly at least pack a box even if you can't manage to lift one.

### NA ZDAR!

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

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER

- 15 Sokol Grtr. Cleveland Fish Fry
- 17 American Sokol Little Ferry  
Coin Toss
- 16-17 Western District Annual  
Meeting & BOI Meeting at  
Sokol South Omaha
- 24 Northeastern District Annual  
Meeting at Sokol Detroit
- 24 Sokol Greater Cleveland  
Sauerbraten Dinner & Music

### OCTOBER

- 3 Sokol Milwaukee  
Membership Meeting
- 7 Czech Independence Day  
Celebration - Street Fair,  
Czech Mission, NYC

### OCTOBER

- 7 American Sokol Little Ferry &  
CSA Lodge #211 Oktoberfest
- 14 Central District Track & Field
- 15 Sokol Milwaukee Recognition  
Luncheon
- 21 Melodin Band at Sokol  
Berwyn-Slavsky
- 27 Sokol New York Children's  
Halloween Party
- 28 Sokol St. Louis Homecoming
- 29 Sokol Minnesota Pork Dinner

**XX AMERICAN SOKOL SLET  
JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2001  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN**

## THOUGHT STARTERS

from Sis. Joan Sedlacek, A.S.O. Educational Director

*"Truth never damages a cause that is just."*

~ MOHANDAS K. GHANDI

## 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.*

A Brief Overview of the

# XVII A.S.O. CONVENTION

WESTERN \* DISTRICT  
OMAHA \* NEBRASKA

The XVII American Sokol Organization Convention was held April 25-30, 2000 in Omaha, with the meetings being held at Sokol Omaha and the opening Social and Banquet at Sokol South Omaha. 103 delegates representing the American Sokol, its 6 districts and 41 Units from around the country spent many long hours during the 6 days reviewing the status of our organization, discussing ideas and then planning and setting our goals for the next 5 years.

Pre-Convention meetings started Tuesday at Sokol Omaha with the Board of Instructors and the By-Laws Committee beginning their work. Wednesday, those two committees continued their work along with the Educational Committee and the Board of Governors beginning theirs.

Wednesday evening, delegate registration was held in conjunction with an Ice-Breaker Social at Sokol South Omaha. Providing entertainment for the evening were the Omaha Czech Singers (Sis. Laddie Prazan, Director) and magician/hypnotist Bro. Chris Berka. The social was an enjoyable, relaxing evening of renewing Sokol friendships and

making new ones before our hard work started the next morning.

The official convention convened Thursday morning at Sokol Omaha with a special Memorial Ceremony written by Sis. Joan Sedlacek of Sokol Minnesota. Our six District presidents placed Sokol wreaths beneath two large pictures of our Sokol founders, Miroslav Tyrs and Jindrich Fuegner. Seven members/gymnasts (Sis. Rita Chizek, Andrew Dalton, Sis. Alison Kool, Veronica Kool, Emily Leahy, Elizabeth Rolfson, Sis. Gretchen Vencl), wearing various Sokol uniforms from 1889 to the present, honored the memory of our departed brothers and sisters who brought our Sokol organization to where we are today. Opening formalities continued with the election of Bro. Vladislav Slavik, Sokol New York as Convention Chairman, Bro. Larry Laznovsky, Sokol KHB, as Convention Co-Chairman, Bro. Bernie Babka, Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky, as Parliamentarian and Bro. Tom Pajer, Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky, Bro. Joe Vrzalik, Sokol Baltimore and Bro. J.J. Vencl, Sokol Greater Cleveland as Sergeants at Arms.

Thursday afternoon began a long, but very informative session by Professor James Ault of Creighton University. After much study and research of our Sokol organization and its history, he presented a third party observation of where we are and how we got here, where we are headed and some options we have concerning our future.

We convened again Friday morning for some District presentations and an informative session by an agent from the Internal Revenue Service on the IRS 501 (c)(3) classification. After lunch, all the delegates reported to their individual committees to begin their work of assessing what we accomplished in each area over the past five years and setting our goals and direction for the next five years.

The banquet on Friday evening provided an enjoyable break in our work. Delegates and guests began arriving at Sokol South Omaha at about 6:00 p.m. for a cash bar reception and were greeted by a live Peregrine falcon and its "cousin," an American kestrel, provided by the Raptor Recovery Center. The banquet

*Continued on Page 8.*

# M E M B E R

## **BRO. JERRY BARTOS**

In recognition of his volunteer service, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE) honored Jerry G. Bartos, P.E., with the ASHRAE-ALCO Medal for Distinguished Public Service at the Society's winter meeting in February. The award, which consists of an inscribed medal and plaque, is presented annually in recognition of voluntary participation by an engineer in public service.

Bartos, a life member, is chairman and president of Jerry Bartos, Inc. in Dallas. For more than 20 years, he has devoted his time and efforts to numerous local, state, national and international civic, charitable and political organizations.

As a first-generation American, Bartos is interested in Czech culture and Czech-Texas cultural organizations. In the 1990's, he served as chairman of a delegation representing the city of Dallas to create the Dallas/Brno (Moravia, Czechoslovakia) sister city relationship. He twice led the delegation to Brno to establish an international partnership.

In 1995, Bartos was designated Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic. He represents the Czech Ambassador in matters of cultural, procedural and business development.

His service includes terms on the Dallas Independent School District board and the Dallas City Council. As a member of the school board, he was cited in the Congressional Record for his role in fighting public corruption.

His commitment to business and civic affairs includes service as president of the North Dallas Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the Dallas delegation for the White House Conference on Small Business, regional chairman of Small Business for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and president of the Greater Dallas Planning Commission. Bartos also has volunteered with organizations such as the national board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, the American Bible Society, the Press Club, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Dallas Council on World Affairs.

In recognition of his leadership and service, he has received numerous awards, including the Small Business Administration Man of the Year, the Lutheran Church Evangelism Board Service Award, a Rotary International Paul Harris Award and a State of Texas PTA Life Member Award.

ASHRAE, founded in 1894, is an international organization of 55,000 persons. Its sole objective is to advance, through research, standards writing and continuing education, the arts and sciences

of heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration to serve the evolving needs of the public.

## **BRO. RICHARD PIVNICKA**

*Prague, Czech Republic ...*

Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Kavan announced the promotion of Richard Pivnicka, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic, to the post of Honorary Consul General, an appointment which signals the Czech government's continuing interest in California, and Silicon Valley, in particular.

Since his appointment in 1995, Mr. Pivnicka has been instrumental in the City of San Francisco's purchase of 247 electric trolley buses from the Czech/US joint venture company, ETI and in the development of the "CzechTech Network," a group of Czech nationals, Czech/American and American entrepreneurs who are prominent players in Silicon Valley.

Mr. Pivnicka has been an active proponent of the Czech Republic's entry into NATO and was a guest of Vice-President Al Gore during Czech President Vaclav Havel's 1998 state visit to Washington, D.C.

"There are only five Czech Honorary Consuls General in the world; it is a great honor to be counted among them," Mr. Pivnicka commented.

# H O N O R S

EDITOR'S ADDENDUM: Bro. Pivnicka is a member of Sokol San Francisco. He hand-wrote the following note to me: "This press release should have said I grew up on Parkway in Riverside (IL) and had a paper route which included Northgate. Warmest regards from California, Richard Pivnicka"

## **BRO. WILBUR HERMIS**

Bro. Wilbur L. Hermis, President of Sokol Corpus Christi was recently appointed by the Corpus Christi (Texas) City Council as one of nine citizen managers of the Crime Control and Prevention District. The Crime Control and Prevention District was established to enhance safety and increase crime prevention and safety by getting more officers out on the street to protect the community, to establish a program to combat juvenile delinquency and to implement a neighborhood approach to crime prevention and enforcement. The plan has worked well; juvenile crime is down, interaction between citizens and police is up and there is a growing spirit of community-wide cooperation aimed at improving the quality of life for the citizens of Corpus Christi. Congratulations, Bro. Wilbur, for this honor!

*~ Info supplied by Sis. Norma Baker,  
Sokol Corpus Christi*

## **SIS. AUDREY BENDA**

Sis. Audrey Benda has been bestowed Honorary Membership in American Sokol Little Ferry. She is a 48-year member of Sokol, having officially joined in 1952 and comes from a Sokol family. Segan gymming when she was five, began teaching gymnastics as a teenager and continued for over 50 years.

Audrey has been a dedicated, knowledgeable and innovative member. Her claim to fame is her ability to teach gymnastics and her proficiency in composing floor exercises, apparatus moves, rhythmic routines and calisthenics. Her fluency in the Czech language has been a great help to many. She became Physical Director of Sokol Little Ferry in 1959 and served in that capacity, off and on, until December 1999.

Audrey composed a calisthenic exercise for Sokol children that was performed at a national Sokol Slet in Chicago. She conducted training classes for instructors, ran competitions for Sokol Little Ferry and the Eastern District, served as a judge for many Sokol competitions and taught at Sokol instructor schools.

She can be credited with organizing and sponsoring many trips and special events for Sokol Little Ferry gymnasts, leading them in cars or vans to New York,

Astoria, Baltimore and to nearby campuses to attend various gymnastic events. She even took them on hikes to observe flowers and birds.

For many years, Audrey was Sokol Little Ferry's Educational Director and prepared material for teaching Sokol history. She wrote the American Sokol Little Ferry (ASLF) handbook and the ASLF Redbook. She served as Director of Women of the Eastern District and as liaison with all the units in the East. She was responsible for planning an Eastern District Slet held in the Little Ferry area at a local community college.

In addition to teaching children of all ages, Audrey has also taught the Adult Co-Ed Class, Beseda and classes in the Czech language. She has served as ASLF's chef, roasting the pork and making gravy for our famous pork dinners.

These are just a few reasons American Sokol Little Ferry has bestowed honorary membership on Sis. Audrey Benda. We recognize the many sacrifices she made to serve Sokol so well. We appreciate her efforts and thank her for her numerous contributions.

*~ Submitted by  
American Sokol Little Ferry*

# MASARYK STATUE UNVEILED IN PRAGUE

A statue honoring the first president of Czechoslovakia, Tomas G. Masaryk, was unveiled near Prague Castle on March 7, 2000 in Prague. Bro. Vratislav Zbuzek, Sokol New York (and Sokol I. Smichov, Prague) participated in the ceremonies (see bottom photo). Dignitaries attending the event included Czech President, Vaclav Havel and U.S. Ambassador Madeline Albright (shown at right).

*~ Submitted by Bro. Vratislav Zbuzek;  
Photos by Marie Brunerova, Prague*



## IT'S UP TO YOU

Have you made someone  
happy, or made someone sad,  
What have you done with  
the day that you had?

It was given to you to  
do just as you would,  
Did you do what was wicked,  
or do what was good?

Did you hand out a smile,  
or just give 'em a frown?  
Did you lift someone up,  
or push someone down?

Did you lighten some load,  
or some progress impede?  
Did you look for a rose,  
or just gather a weed?

What did you do with  
your beautiful day?  
It was given to you;  
did you throw it away?



## MUSEUM, LIBRARY & ARCHIVES FUND

From Barbara Lundeen .....\$10.00



AMERICAN SOKOL  
**GYMNAST**



EDITOR: Sash Dumanovic • 2419 Scoville • Berwyn, IL 60402

## Exercise Caution...

That's what the experts are warning parents recently. A policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics released on Monday, July 3, 2000 warns parents and their children that kids who specialize in one sport at an early age run a much higher risk for "overuse injuries", including stress fractures, tendinitis, burnout, and eating disorders.

Dr. Holly Benjamin, a University of Chicago pediatric sports medicine specialist, informs us that, "Children's bones grow faster than the muscles and tendons can keep up, and if they are doing a single sport, they are training certain types of muscles and only those muscles in a very repetitive manner, which leads to injuries." According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there were over 800,000 children between the ages of 5 and 14 that were treated in a hospital for a sports-related injury in 1998.

Examples of these types of injuries include the Little Leaguer who throw balls all year round and doesn't rest their shoulder. They may end up with shoulder pain or an injury. Also, the young soccer player who practices 12 months per year; and eats, breathes, and lives soccer. There may be knee or ankle pain for this athlete at some point.

The good news is that "overuse injuries" are preventable. Having kids try different activities is healthy, and should be encouraged as long as they are supervised and instructed properly. The wonderful thing about Sokol is that along with our core activity of recreational gymnastics, we are able to provide a host of other activities that help shape and educate each young person that walks through that gym door for class. Activities such as track and field, calisthenics, special numbers, rhythmic gymnastics, volleyball, basketball, and many other games/activities not only stimulate different muscle groups, but also allow young people the opportunity to develop their interests.

### **The Academy's recommendations are as follows:**

- Pushing children beyond their limits is discouraged, as is specialization in a single sport before adolescence.
- Pediatricians should work with parents to ensure that the child athlete is being coached by people knowledgeable about proper training techniques, equipment, and the physical, physiologic, and emotional characteristics of young competitors.
- Physicians and coaches should strive for early recognition and prevention of overuse injuries, and should never encourage child athletes to "work through" such injuries. Treatment should include more than just rest or stopping the sport.
- Regular weight measurements should be taken to make sure child athletes are getting adequate nutrition and to identify early signs of eating disorders.
- Pediatricians should counsel athletes, families and coaches about the prevention and risks of heat injury.

AP



**First row:** (instructors & course secretary): Buddy Benak (South Omaha), Peter Lattanzio (DA Sokol), Jane Wise (Greater Cleveland), Mary Panackia (Detroit), Bud Benak (South Omaha), Bob Liptak (DA Sokol)

**Second row:** Phillip Mincone (DA Sokol), Derik Scott (St. Louis), Steven Kowalski (South Omaha), Carissa Skrivanek (Minnesota), Tina Valentine (Omaha), Veronica Kool (South Omaha), Melissa Mondello (DA Sokol), Jennifer Polk (Brookfield), Angeli DelCarlo (Naperville & Chicagoland), Anne Kocek (Chicagoland), Angelica Puchala (Berwyn-Slavsky), Kevin Fitzpatrick (Greater Cleveland), Joe Vorlicek (DA Sokol), Bo Benak (South Omaha)

**Third row:** Skye Wakefield (South Omaha), LeAnn Vance (Ohama), Heidi Vencl (Greater Cleveland), Evanna Cutshaw (Ceska Sin), Jessica Bardy (DA Sokol), Andrew Dalton (South Omaha), Jonathan Boyd (Karel Havlicek Borovsky), Sonja Nakonecznyj (Ceska Sin), Maria Pinizzotto (Greater Cleveland), Matthew Novaes (DA Sokol), Virginia Kocek (Chicagoland), Kathy Kavan (Greater Cleveland), Suzy Bures (Greater Cleveland), Heidi Sanders (Brookfield), Heather Beasley (St. Louis), Stacey Domzalski (Chicagoland)

**Fourth row:** Mark Beckerman (Greater Cleveland), Mike Dropka (Berwyn-Slavsky), Mike Maskowski (Berwyn-Slavsky), Mike Wise (Greater Cleveland), Steve Wise (Greater Cleveland), Kathy Berkley (St. Louis), Brooke Masek (Omaha), Joe Borowski (Greater Cleveland), Tory Kathrein (Tabor), Karla Pinizzotto (Greater Cleveland), John McBride (Karel Havlicek Borovsky), Jason Barber (South Omaha), Joe Kenney (St. Louis), Steve Berkley (St. Louis)

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A total of 44 students arrived at Sokol Greater Cleveland on July 18, 2000 for an intensive two-week national instructor's course directed by Bro. Bud Benak of Sokol South Omaha. I visited the course as an observer and walked in to find the students warming up after dinner for their Group Pyramid Competition. They were divided into groups that had to write a special number, rehearse it, and perform it in a very short period of time. I was very impressed by the way the numbers were written, performed, and how well the students took critique from the course instructors after the competition. During their two weeks, the students also studied Aritistic and Rhythmic Gymnastic skills, progressions, spotting, marching, calisthenics, pyramids, folk dancing, singing, appartus, judging, first aid, and Sokol history. There was also instruction in Sokol Systems, time for self-improvement, and practice teaching for the advanced students at the course. A picnic, some swimming, and a Talent Show were welcome by all and made the course even more enjoyable. Monday, July 31<sup>st</sup> was test day, followed by the graduation program in the evening. I was surprised at how much material was covered during the course. It is by no means easy to complete. For all of the students who went to course, Congratulations...I was impressed by all of your efforts, dedication, and hard work. You supported each other in difficult times, and gave everyone watching something to be tremendously proud of. To Bros. Bud, Bob, Buddy, Peter and to Sisters Jane and Mary, take a bow, you did an outstanding job at course. All the applause in the world isn't enough. We couldn't ask for much more. Thank you!

## *Qualities of an Instructor....*

*By Sis. Mildred Prchal*

Instructors must be an example of what they preach. Their appearance and conduct must always show the results of their own belief in the wisdom of physical culture. They don't allow themselves loss of temper, nor the use of coarse or vulgar language. They are the embodiment of tolerance, patience, and understanding.

If an instructor wishes promptness from the pupils, the teacher must be prompt. Instructors should be firm however discipline must not be created through fear of the instructor. Be kind to the children for whose moral and physical development you are responsible, but also make them understand that when they enter the Sokol classes, they agree to abide by the rules. When reprimand is necessary, this is done best privately, not before the entire class. A sharp reprimand before the class is to create resentment towards yourself. The class hour must leave a feeling of contentment and satisfaction for the instructor as well as the pupil.

Sometimes the instructor must contend with a particular disobedient and belligerent child. It is not wise to continually overlook incidents caused by the child and punish another for the same act. Children are quick to sense this unfairness. They feel subconscious fear in the instructor and soon there is an end to their respect for the instructor and the discipline expected. The instructor must not show partiality. The conduct should be the same to all pupils.

Some instructors punish disobedience by sending the students home. This is not punishment. They will play outside and later will tell the others how much more fun they had outside than in the gymnasium. It is much better to stand aside – pick a particularly lively game for the period – the student will not enjoy being left out. Again, do not lose your temper – do not yell or use coarse language. Coarse and improper language is against all principles of the Sokol System.

Then we have the pupils who are unusually awkward. They may become the butt of jokes and laughter of the others. Such a child should be especially defended and protected by the instructor. The instructor who criticizes and makes sarcastic remarks about such a pupil instigates this condition in his or her class. The awkward and backward pupil should be given special attention by the instructor. Much can be done for such a child and the respect for an instructor who will go out of the way to help will be greatly increased in the class.

It is best for the instructor to acquaint pupils with the rules of the gymnasium and impress upon them that rules must be obeyed. To this they must agree before entering the class. Thus there will be no excuses later about not knowing this or that rule. Rules should be given orally and not in writing. It is easy to say that they did not read the rules, etc. Such rules usually refer to the time of classes, cleanliness in the washrooms or lockers, mounting apparatus without guard, leaving the gymnasium upon termination of class, etc..

Now as to the knowledge and teaching qualities of a good instructor: A good instructor does not need tremendous knowledge. There is no need for a Masters Degree in Physical Education to be a good teacher. Instructors must, however, keep on with studies to keep ahead of their pupils. Though the knowledge may not be broad, instructors must be able to teach what they know. It has been said that a teacher is born. This is not so. They are people who have a natural talent for teaching, to be sure, but instructors who are sincerely eager to impart knowledge to their pupils will find a way to do so.

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Sister Mildred Prchal was one of Sokol's greatest. She was inducted into the Gymnastics Hall of Fame, pioneered and developed Rhythmic Gymnastics in the United States, studied ballet, music and acrobatics in Paris, taught ballet to world class dancers, and authored many technical works.

There is a lot of truth in this article. There is also a little something that every instructor can use to make their teaching even better. I hope that each instructor reading this article uses some of her advice in their classes if they do not presently. A little more effort may go a long way.

Continued from page 1

There are Elite level athletes that disagree with the Academy. Shannon Miller says that focusing on one sport early on helped her excel and that she would have missed her "glory days" had she not focused on gymnastics early in her life. She added, "I doubt that I would be an Olympian or going to my third Olympics" and "When I was 12 and 13, I was already competing and representing my country, and I don't see how that can be a bad thing."

You could certainly argue both sides. Champions are produced by sacrifice, strong desires, tremendous intensity, and overwhelming dedication. They are committed to being the best, and are willing to take the pain in many cases to succeed. Athletes can be recreational or competitive, and many times can be both. They have similar desires and determination as age and competitive level increase. Sokol has helped produce both kinds of people and will continue to do so in the coming years.

It's important to remember that your child should enjoy what he or she is doing. Do not pressure or force children to excel in one sport, especially if they do not enjoy themselves. It is an invitation for catastrophe later. There are kids who really love one sport, that is a little different. They should be encouraged and allowed the opportunity to excel as long as they feel they would like to participate. The problems tend to arise when there are parents who push their kids to be the next basketball star, and become convinced that is all they can do.

Also, children have dynamic interests. They change quicker than you can imagine. Help nurture that somehow because it is shaping who they will become. Be supportive and remember that it is especially important now, more than ever, to have a variety of sports or physical activities available to the children you teach, as well as your own. I'm confident Sokol will continue to offer such programs in the future, and be able to cultivate young athletes as they mature.

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## National Gymnastics Day

August 12, 2000

National Gymnastics Day was organized and created for the sole purpose of promoting the sport of gymnastics to the public at the grass roots level across the country. There are many ways for the gym management and/or the BOI to do this. 1) Having a display or small exhibition at a local plaza or mall 2) Arranging a time to bring some gymnasts over to a daycare center for a demonstration, with a game or activity to follow 3) Take some gymnasts to an outdoor park for a short tumbling exhibition during a crowded afternoon 4) Schedule a time with a local children's museum to do a short performance 5) Half time demonstrations at a local event..be the star attraction 6) Call the zoo and ask what it would take for your gymnasts to do a little exhibition in front of all those parents and kids 7) Contact your local amusement park and ask if you can have some space to do an exhibition prior to National Gymnastics Day...then pass out stuff inviting people to your gym for an open house or something on National Gymnastics Day 8) Tie in with a local community event, parade, or festival...contact your local chamber of commerce or city hall for a calendar of events 9) Pay attention to any kid/parent orientated conventions through the year in your area and try to tie something in 10) Organize some performances or an exhibition throughout the year a some local schools. It's also important to remember that these activities can be combined or altered to fit your personal situations. Other things to keep in mind are: passing out flyers/brochures, organizing volunteers, offering one free class for first time students, and remembering to promote Sokol along with gymnastics.

# The Sokol Festivals "SLETY"

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

## INSTALLMENT #5

See January 2000 for part one, February 2000 for part two,  
April/May 2000 for part three, June 2000 for part four.

Mass calisthenics at the large scale exhibitions were expected to demonstrate progress achieved since the previous Festival. However, after a five-year interruption in Sokol work, it was feared there would be a regression. Friends at home and abroad expected the same high level performances as in the past and did not realize that such an extensive suspension of gymnastic activity would cause retrogression. Foreigners regarded the Slets as one of the wonders of the world and looked forward to them with much expectation. It was also essential to attempt to regain some of the ground lost during World War II when considerable advances in physical education were made by other countries. Therefore, the display that was prepared for 1948 reinforced the direction they intended to pursue in women's gymnastics in the near future. Its purpose was to upgrade the skill of the women and at the same time bring them pleasure in participation. To a greater extent than ever before, the Women's Board of Instructors endeavored to differentiate the routines to meet the physiological and psychological needs and interests of each age group. The children's number was carefree and playful; the junior girls' drill a light and happy dance; and the women's exercise was spirited. Intent of the program was to reflect joy and happiness while relying on the intelligence and voluntary discipline of the gymnasts.

To insure the success of the eleventh Festival, they drew upon all available resources developed by contemporary technical science; such as, descriptive drawings, photographs and films of the Slet calisthenics; records of the musical accompaniment, and radio broadcasts as teaching aids. Everything possible was done to accomplish this great venture which had been anticipated for a long time.

Their budget permitted frequent visits to districts to

assist with teaching of the Slet drills. Members of the COS Technical Committee, as well as the Boards of Instructors on the district and unit levels, were extremely devoted and could be counted on for their full cooperation whenever and wherever necessary. This degree of dedication and cheerful participations could result in nothing less than success. The eleventh Festival was not a step, but a mighty leap forward in the development of Sokol physical education for women (Krejci, 1948).

President Dr. Eduard Benes abdicated his office on June 7, 1948 and was replaced by Klement Gottwald, who for years had been subservient to Moscow. Benes was recognized and regarded as a co-worker of T.G. Masaryk and co-founder of the first democratic republic. For Gottwald, there was but hate and scorn. An unplanned tribute was given to Dr. Benes when a change in the formation of the junior girls' nastup (entrance) to the field resulted in forming a large "B" that was distinguishable from many of the grandstands.

First to actually dare express the general opinion of the people were the little girls (class II, ages 11-14). As they were being aligned to enter the stadium, someone told them the ex-President was in attendance and they should hail him. When their display was ended they called, "At zije president Benes" (Long live President Benes). At first, due to the applause, their shouts were not audible. When their cries became clear, they were joined by outbursts from all the stands. Director of men Penniger dashed to the microphone and ordered the girls to stop, but in vain, as he could not be heard. Provaznik commanded him to leave the directors' platform, since she was in charge of the program. As he withdrew, he grumbled, "this is your work, the result of your educational endeavors" (Provaznik, 1975-1977, p. 18).

She comprehended they were in trouble, but did not know how much. Completing her duties, Sister Provaznik went to the box of the government

*Continued on Page 9.*

# ASO Convention Overview *(Continued from Page 3.)*

portion of the evening began with a short program consisting of the American And Czechoslovak anthems being led by Kathleen Dalton and Veronica Kool, children of members of Sokol South Omaha. Ms. Hana Mattlova, Political Counselor at the Czech Embassy in Washington, DC, representing Czech Ambassador Alexander Vondra, addressed the group. A toast with "Sokol Blosser" wine started the delicious prime rib meal, which was served by the Junior gymnasts from Sokol Omaha and Sokol South Omaha. They received a standing ovation for their fine service. During the meal, the Nebraska Children's Chorus - Ragazzi Children's Choir performed, including two Czech songs. We were

entertained throughout dinner by a string quartet from Millard South High School. After dinner, everyone was free to enjoy the wonderful dancing music of the "Czech Express" from St. Louis, visit the Sokol South Omaha Museum and Library, watch vintage Slet videos, walk through a pictorial historical display of past and present Sokol Districts and Units, and browse through the "Sokol Sharing Exhibits," displays set up by Sokol Districts and Units from around the country to share brochures, pictures, ideas that are successful for them.

Back to work Saturday morning! Committees met again for approximately three hours to wind up their work before lunch. After lunch, the General Convention

convened again to hear the reports of the various committees, discuss, amend and approve their recommendations. We adjourned at 9:00 p.m. with work still left to be done.

The Sunday session began at 9:00 a.m. We finished hearing and approving committee reports and then completed official business by making some presentations, electing and installing our new National Officers. The XVII American Sokol Convention adjourned shortly after 1:00p.m. and delegates headed back home, tired, but hopefully filled with ideas, enthusiasm and hope for the future.

*- Edited from information submitted by  
Sis. Jolene Dalton, Sokol South Omaha*



**New American Sokol Officers** being installed by Bro. Walter Slavik, Convention Chairman:  
L to R: Sis. Barbara Barnes, Sis. Janet kalat, Sis. Patricia Satek, Bro. Chuck Kalat, Sis. Mary Steinman,  
Bro. Roger Martanovic, Bro. Larry Laznovsky, Bro. Gary Masek, Sis. Rhonda Liska, Sis. Valentine  
Husak, Bro. Bohus Bata, Sis. Joyce Petrik, Sis. Joan Sedlacek, Bro. Sash Dumanovic.

## "SLETY" (Continued from Page 7.)

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officials and was instantly encircled. Excitedly, members of the cabinet asked for an explanation. Marie replied, "It was all a misunderstanding. The children were informed that Eduard Benes was present in the loge and saluted him. He still retains the title of President conferred on him by this government of yours. Had he been here, we all would have acknowledged him, you as well as I, and the greeting would have been in order, isn't that right?" Hesitantly, they agreed, but retorted, "Tomorrow Klement Gottwald will be here and a similar incident should not recur." to that she responded, "Don't worry, tomorrow I will explain to the girls that Dr. Benes will not be in attendance, and that will take care of the matter" (Provaznik, 1975-1977, p. 18). This explanation seemed to appease the ministers, but as Sister Provaznik turned from them she was confronted by men in civilian clothing led by Evzen Penniger. They introduced themselves as secret service agents, and requested her to follow them to police headquarters located in the stadium to answer some questions. Marie agreed, and asked them to wait a moment while she met with the Sokol Executive Committee. Sister Provaznik confessed she took pleasure in keeping the secret service men at bay. Joining the committee in their quarters, she requested a cancellation of the children's parade scheduled for the next day, due to inclement weather. Her reasoning was they needed to have their uniforms dried for their exhibit the following afternoon, as wet clothing would be hazardous to their health. However, the real motive for wanting the procession deleted was that Marie knew the children would hail the former President all over again and she wanted to spare them a clash with the police, who would be sure to step in on the street. Counter to the wishes of the communists, the motion was approved and Sister Provaznik departed to join the waiting secret service agents.

Marie Provaznik was interrogated until 1:00 a.m. In vain she told them that being on the directors' platform she was not in a position to be aware of what was taking place where the girls were gathered. Again and again they repeated the same

queries, only to get the same replay. Meanwhile, the entire Women's technical Committee and all fifty district directors were waiting at headquarters for the next day's instructions. When at long last Marie appeared, she sent them to the dormitories to notify the instructors of the parade's omission and to care for the children, keeping them warm and dry. Because of the altered plans, it soon became known throughout the city that Sister Provaznik had been detained and questioned by the police, which did not help to quiet an already annoyed population.

In the early morning, the Communist Party sent a messenger to inform Marie Provaznik that she would be held accountable for any demonstrations. Responding, she agreed to be answerable for the acts of the girls and women, but not the men and boys. At the same time, the courier read to her the statements presented to the government by the secret service. Marie regretted she was not given a transcript, as it made for amusing reading. Unfortunately, the account was not true. Supposedly, the police uncovered a plot designed to kidnap Klement Gottwald and his cabinet from the stadium. Later it was also learned that an assortment of weapons were stored under the grandstands by the communist authorities to be used in the event of a revolution. For these reasons, the police of the entire Republic were concentrated in Prague.

Another surprise that morning was when Sister Provaznik discovered a plain clothes man keeping vigil at her door. He and others like him were to be her steady companions for the remainder of the Slet. Day and night, one was at the entrance of Marie's room; another was on watch on the directors' platform; and one more traced her every step. Those who knew Sister Provaznik from her visits to Lany (a castle which was the summer home of Czechoslovak Presidents, where Thomas G. Masaryk lived and spent his last days) and the royal palace at Hradcany, sympathized with her and offered their apologies.

As the situation unfolded, Marie Provaznik wished

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## "SLETY" *(Continued from Page 9.)*

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for an opportunity to talk to all the feminine instructors and the junior girls, in whom she saw the future of the organization. She wanted to remind them of the ideals of Sokol, and to ask that they preserve them for generations to come. But there was no time or place for such a meeting. Each day, as the little girls, juniors, and women assembled to enter the field, Marie reminded them of their agreement, that their love and esteem for Dr. Benes should be expressed in deeds and not words, especially not in the stadium. Even the children understood. While Sister Provaznik stood in the directors' booth, she watched the girls passing under her, looking up, their index finger on their lips in a silent vow.

Learning of the girls' outburst, the boys became incited and shouted, "Now it will be our turn." When the men listened as Marie spoke to the women and children, they reasoned, "She is right, stadiums are not for manifestations, for them we have the streets" ((Provaznik, 1975-1977, p. 21). And there they demonstrated. The parades of the juniors and seniors presented an opportunity for the people to vent their emotions.

A scheme of the communists used to halt public displays was to print a duplicate number of admission tickets for the Sunday, July 4 Slet program. They distributed them to factory workers with instructions to arrive at the stadium and take occupancy of the seats far in advance of the scheduled starting time. When the rightful ticket holders arrived, they found their places taken. Some requested a refund and got it. Others, who had traveled long distances, wanted to see the Festival and stood in the stands. Strahov was filled to an overflowing capacity. It was a wonder there was no incident.

All the officers of Sokol were mandated to write articles for the press. Likewise, Minister Cepicka contacted Marie Provaznik and asked if she would also compose an item. As a gesture of good will, she was given the option to choose the newspaper to which she would like to communicate. Marie responded: "Do you have a conscience? Are you

unable to see how much work I have and what my responsibilities are? How dare you ask me to do more!" Cepicka apologized and commended her, but added that if she refused it could be interpreted as a lack of cooperation. To that Sister Provaznik retorted: "Whoever perceives that as failure to cooperate is a person of ill will and against such people I am defenseless." At long last Marie agreed to write, however, only if she found the time, which of course she did not. Her list of sins continued to grow ((Provaznik, 1975-1977, p. 22).

All the incidents that occurred, plus many arrests, did not escape publicity and compounded the tension that increased to an unbearable level. A great turnout was expected for the seniors' march on Tuesday, July 6, 1948, and representatives of the foreign press were to be on the scene. therefore, it was imperative that all public outbursts be prevented, as they would be an indicator of the real attitude of the population. Numerous loudspeakers were erected along the course of the procession and incessantly pumped out communist slogans and propaganda. But the voice of the citizens was more powerful. Spectators filled the sidewalks and hung or sat on anything that was available — balconies, windows, light poles, trees, and monuments. Bordering the parade route were communists who wore arm bands marked "usher." However, they could not keep the public behind them or the Sokols in the passing columns from calling out anti-communist expressions. Now and then, these fake officers tried to identify and arrest some individual. As if planned, a section of the marchers deviated from their course, encircled the communist usher and pushed the would be offender out of reach. In many of the formations, Sokols displayed American flags. When the police tried to confiscate them, the banners vanished, only to reappear from under sleeves after a few steps.

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