

# american SOKOL



Volume CXXV, Number III

MARCH 2003

Sisters and Brothers,

This will be a very difficult article to write, but with the encouragement of various members at various units, it must be done. Over the past several years we have lost many units, primarily due to a lack of interest and declining membership. After a period of time, these losses add up and contribute to a shrinking national organization. The American Sokol finds itself in the same position as many similar organizations. As time marches on, our membership gets older, without replenishing our membership rolls. We are in what the business world calls a "death spiral" and our future is questionable.

In recent months we have evaluated the vitality of our units. Yes, we have some very strong and successful units. However, the successful units are greatly outnumbered by units that are struggling to hang on. We have appointed a committee, now called "The Strategic Planning Committee," to research ways to improve the overall vitality of our organization. Based on the fact that our units are spread out across this great country, it does not make this task any easier. Each unit faces its own set of challenges of rules and regulations, etc. This committee's job will not be completed overnight as this trend has been taking place for many years. It will take precious time to get the job done right.

Well, what can we do to help in the short term? Every member needs to see what they can do to help. It may involve helping sign up new members into the units such as children, grandchildren, friends, neighbors, etc. Stronger units may need to reach out to assist weaker units. Also, our long time working leaders need to see if it is time to share responsibilities with younger members. It is my contention that the sign of a great leader is being able to recognize when it is time to step aside and let someone else pick up the ball and run with it. I know this is difficult to do, but it has to happen. When the long time leader steps aside they must be there to support the replacement when asked for help and must not criticize.

As I have mentioned in the past, we are fortunate to have had great leadership in the past and now we are blessed to have promising young adults taking charge of many aspects of our organization. We need each and every member to do their part and keep our Sokol flying into the future for generations to come.

I would appreciate your comments and suggestions regarding these issues. Thank you.

NAZDAR!  
Larry Laznovsky, President

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## From Your Editor...

Be sure to save this issue for continued reference - it contains the 2003 American Sokol Roster of Officers. I have been informed that the translation on the cover of the February issue was not entirely correct. As I do not speak Czech, I trust my submitters. Sorry for the mix-up.

NA ZDAR!

Sis. Patricia Satek

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## CALENDAR of EVENTS

### MARCH

- 1 Sokol Brookfield Exhibition
- 2 Sokol Minnesota Kaffe & Kolace
- 8 Sokol Milwaukee Bowling Tournament
- 8 Sokol Baltimore Costume Ball, Dinner & Dance 410.877.0534
- 8 Sokol Tabor Exhibition
- 8 Sokol Greater Cleveland Night at the Races
- 9 Sokol New York Exhibition
- 14 Sokol Naperville Exhibition
- 15 Sokol Stickney Exhibition
- 21 Sokol Greater Cleveland Fish Fry
- 21 Sokol Chicagoland Exhibition
- 22 Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky Exhibition
- 23 Sokol Los Angeles Spring Luncheon & Dance

### APRIL

- 5 Lodge 306 Sokol USA Exhibition
- 6 Sokol KHB Membership Dinner, Awards and Exhibition
- 6 Central District Special Number Competition
- 10-11 Sokol Minnesota Annual Garage Sale - Benefit Kitchen Fund

### APRIL

- 12 Sokol Greater Cleveland Skills Improvement Day
- 13 Sokol KHB Easter Bake Sale
- 18 Sokol Greater Cleveland Fish Fry
- 26 Sokol St. Louis Exhibition
- 27 Sokol Ceska Sin Swiss Meet
- MAY
- 3-4 Sokol Greater Cleveland Dramatic Society Vcelka Play & Dinner
- 10 Central District Girls Gymnastic Competition
- 16 Sokol Greater Cleveland Fish Fry
- 17 Central District Boys, Men, Women Gymnastic Competition
- 18 Central District Sokol Day Picnic at Cermak Woods
- 18 Sokol Little Ferry Pork Dinner
- 19 Sokol Milwaukee Exhibition
- 31-6/1 Northeastern District Slet Weekend - Cleveland, OH

XXIV SOKOL USA SOKOLFEST  
July 2-6, 2003 • Valparaiso, Indiana

## THOUGHT STARTERS

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

"It is so easy to be good-natured, I wonder anybody takes the trouble to be anything else."

~ DOUGLAS JARROLD

## 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.

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Listed alphabetically by District, then Unit.

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# AMERICAN SOKOL GYMNAST



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**Beth Kocek**, a member of Sokol Chicagoland and a member of the American Sokol National Board of Directors, recently took a trip to Barcelona, Spain, and learned about a pyramid group called "The Falcons" in Catalonia. Here is a summary of her trip and what she learned.

## **Els Falcons de Vilafranca – by Sister Beth Kocek**

On a recent trip to Barcelona, Spain, and learning about the group of falcons in Catalonia, I decided to put myself in contact with my fellow sokols and wrote them a letter in Catalan. They were very excited to receive me in their village of Vilafranca, about 50 kilometers inland from Barcelona. Not knowing what was ahead of me, the president and vice-president of their group met me at the train station. We headed to the village of Sant Sadurni d'Anoia, the region of the Catalan sparkling wine, Cava. We went to the cellar of the cava Recaredo, to where the wine is fermented. It was a complete guided tour ending with wonderful people and a tasting.

Next, I was taken to a class for children learning how to build castellers, or human towers, which is what the Sokol groups do there. We had many conversations about the history of both our organizations and what they consist of now. The Falcons de Vilafranca had originally been organized in the 1940's, by a catalan man who, after traveling to Prague, was very attracted to the ideals of Miroslav Tyrs and wanted to instill them into his people. During that period, the catalan culture was very suppressed by the dictator Francisco Franco and, naturally, an organization as strong as the Sokol movement would be very much welcomed. They have evolved differently than our organization, however, still focusing on the body, but building bodies together is a larger aspect of their organization. They build many pyramids ranging from 30 participants together forming a triangle, to five stacked on top of one another's shoulders.

From the display, I was brought to the building of the Festa Major. Meaning, "the main festival", that's what it is, for the entire last week in August, the city is performing, dancing, and not working. In it, I viewed a video, saw pictures and stood among the retired "gegants" (giants), "capgrossos" (big heads) and other parade characters. From there it's a short walk to la Placa de Ajuntament and the center of the town, where the festivities take place. I was shown the path the parade takes and how it's carried out. They brought me then to the statue dedicated to them in the town, the base of it forms a falcon and on the body emerges 37 metal stick bodies forming their known triangle.

Then to dinner, we were met by 4 others at the restaurant "La Casa del Conill", house of the rabbit, from the year 1812. Of course, being a catalan dinner, it was quite enjoyable. First course consisted of calcots, the long green onions, which had been cooked over a grill, and when eaten are dipped in a sauce consisting of tomato, garlic and olive oil. It can become very messy. There was a selection of dry sausages and naturally, pa amb tomaquet, a staple in Catalonia consisting of bread with some oil dribbled on it, tomato spread on it and some salt if wanted. The meat and potatoes was served secondly. For dessert, lemon gelato and gourmet coffee. We watched various videos and exchanged gifts at the end.

Being connected to another culture through a hobby or family oriented affiliation such as Sokol is something to be treasured. It was wonderful to share my culture and experiences with theirs and even more wonderful to feel welcomed and be welcoming because of the same great bond, Sokol.

Thank you Beth, our members can see the social value of our organization through your article! KO.

The fact that I am a physical education teacher and have been a participant of a fitness based organization (Sokol) my entire life, this article from *Q Health* hit home. I have decided to put it in "The Gymnast" because I believe everyone in Sokol enjoys fitness and believes in a healthy lifestyle. If this article strikes you just as it did me, please do not hesitate to write to the author. Thanks, KO.

## **WHAT GOOD IS A STRAIGHT-A BRAIN IN A FAILING BODY?**

By Bob Condor

This issue continues to baffle me, even when rational people make rational cases for the status quo:

*How is it that American 3rd graders engage in less than 25 minutes of vigorous or moderate physical activity, on average, per week during physical education classes? That's the research out just last Monday from the federal government's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.*

The standard health recommendation for all of us, especially children, is 30 to 60 minutes of at least moderate physical activity each day. So parents are left to make up the remaining minimum of 185 minutes a week (figuring a half-hour daily) in their children's lives.

That might seem like a lot of playground visits, family walks, impromptu outings, regular lessons or team sporting activities. Consider it three of the more important hours of your child's week, whether he's in kindergarten or she's a sophomore in high school. Encouraging physical activity in kids is right there with making sure they get enough sleep (they need probably more than you think; ask the pediatrician) and feeding them breakfast each day (studies clearly show it improves brain power between the first school bell and lunch).

If you are thinking, "Where can we find the time?" take an honest look at TV viewing and computer use for starters. Then, as your kids get older, create ways for the physical activity to be a family affair (such as skating, bike riding, yoga, even power walking).

The institute tracked 814 3rd graders at 648 U.S. schools. It found that 45 percent of the kids were in two PE classes each week, which is certainly better than the 30 percent taking PE only once each week. The once-weekly schedule is all too common in the local city and suburban schools despite Illinois' being the only state to require daily PE through the 12th grade (a school district, however, can request a waiver, providing a loophole).

We've all heard the explanations for the demise of PE. School budgets have to be cut somewhere. Parents want kids to perform well on standardized tests, so more time is devoted to "academic development." Classroom teachers can incorporate physical movement into daily lessons.

While some school districts in recent years bucked the national trend by improving PE offerings-and have better academic test performances to prove the value of the changes-the current political climate isn't likely to help matters. The new federal budget offered by President Bush, a daily runner and widely identified as a friend of the fitness industry, proposes deep cuts in a relatively new government physical education grant program that was championed by a fellow Republican, Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska.

Less than 10 percent of the 3rd graders (who were observed during actual classes) had PE instruction four or five times per week, and 16 percent attended three times weekly. Yet mull this finding: In each PE class, there was only about 12 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity. The typical class includes seven minutes for the teacher preparing the class or forming lines, five minutes on fitness exercises, five minutes on skill practice, five minutes on knowledge and 10 minutes of game play.

Even the kids taking daily PE would get only one hour total of appropriate intensity, though experts will point out the daily PE programs tend to be more efficiently focused on creating the most physical movement for students. What's most baffling-and disturbing-is the argument that kid's grades will suffer by adding PE back into the school day. Some researchers are starting to build evidence that regular physical activity enhances cognitive skills at all ages, including, say 3rd grade.

Let's add overall happiness and the enthusiasm level of children to the mix. Just ask any parent whether he or she is eating dinner with a child who has played tag in the back yard for an hour or with one who has played a video game before mealtime.

Even the institute, which will take a more conservative view by the nature of its official government status, states in no uncertain terms that the "fears that increasing physical activity might have a negative impact on academic performance are unfounded."

In grade school, certainly recess can add back some physical activity time, right?

Wrong.

An overwhelming number of schools have eliminated recess altogether, boasting that the compressed school day still has the same number of classroom instruction hours.

This isn't just baffling, it's wrong.

Tell me differently by e-mail, if you like, but do me one turn before composing your thoughts. Take a walk out in the fresh air, and bundle up if the windchill is on the wrong side of 32 Fahrenheit.

Then tell me no recess is a worthy idea.

*—Watch Bob Condor's health and fitness reports Monday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday on CLTV's "Innergize" show.*

*—E-mail Bob Condor at [bcondor@tribune.com](mailto:bcondor@tribune.com). Send health and fitness news to [rwerland@tribune.com](mailto:rwerland@tribune.com).*

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Teachers and parents who send your children (or who go to sokol themselves) should feel good that they are doing something that will help keep them or you healthy. The many activities that sokol provides such as, marching, calisthenics, gymnastics, track and field, rhythmic, volleyball, and game playing are all types of required physical activity. The national average for obesity in America is on a rise. We need to instill the desire for physical activity in our children to help combat that norm.

I heard on the news that you do not need to cut back or eat less to lose weight (most of the reason people can't stick to a diet). To help you lose or maintain a healthy weight you just need to add more exercise to your day. It can help you and your family become more healthy, and bring you closer together if you decided to work together on this project.

Last month (for National Heart month) I gave some suggestions on how to get more exercise in your day, to help keep your heart healthy. You can look back to that issue of "The Gymnast" to add daily activity. There are also many more creative and fun ways to get some added steps in.

You might ask, why is exercise good for my heart?

Well, when you exercise, a number of good things happen to your body:

Short term:

1. Your heart rate increases, increasing blood flow to your muscles.
2. Your breathing rate increases, increasing oxygen flow to your muscles.
3. Works your muscles, your heart and lungs to help them become more efficient.

Long term: (Because of the short term effects)

1. Helps decrease blood pressure (adds more HDL's in the blood stream).
2. Helps your muscles, heart and lungs get stronger and your body fend off disease.
3. Increases your metabolism, decreases your body fat, and helps you look more physically fit.

KO.

## ATTENTION

Instructors that are entering volleyball teams for the national competition in Valparaiso. Read this article sent by Joe Vrzalik from the Chesapeake Digs newsletter.

## IN THE HUDDLE

*by Ron Sommer, Coach, Middle River Volleyball Club*

In my opinion, one area of volleyball receives scant attention in the overall scheme of things and that area is the skill of SERVING. We spend hours doing digging drills, passing drills, etc.,-except serving drills. I am the first to admit that serving drills are not very exciting, but that is where many people make a mistake. Serving is more than drills. It is a state of mind as well as physical ability.

The secret of teaching the skill of serving is simple. You first get into the mind of the server. Before a player serves the first ball, you must ensure he or she fully understands what serving is all about. Did you ever think about the fact that serving is the only time during a volleyball game that a player has complete control of both the body and the ball? At every other time either the ball or the player or both are in motion. Theoretically then, a player should never make a bad serve. The reason players make bad serves then, is because a mental mistake is made before a physical mistake occurs.

Before the start of each volley, the server is the only offensive player on the court. The six opposing players are in a defensive posture (receiving), and the server's teammates are in a defensive posture (defending against the coming attack). The server must be trained and taught to think offensively until after the ball is contacted for service. The server must attack the opponent with the serve. The mental mistake occurs when the server is distracted by teammates' comments of thinking about defensive coverage. Thus, before each serve, the server must go into a "mental shell" and focus total attention on the serve. While in this "focus" mode, the server decides where to put the serve in the opponent's defensive zone (serving tactics).

While "focusing," the server must sub-consciously remember the "Seven Rules of Serving":

1. Never, never, never blow game point serve!
2. Serve the ball tactically in play. Make the opponent play the ball (give them 3 chances to "screw it up")!
3. Never make a service error if the teammate before you made a serve error.
4. Never make a service error after an opponent's time out or substitution (a lot of mental mistakes are made here).
5. Never make a service error after you have served two or more consecutive points.
6. Never make a service error after an opponent has just made a service error.
7. And last but not least, concentrate-take your time-concentrate!!

As you can see, the server must be aware of the flow of the game to the extent he or she does not violate any of the "Seven Rules of Serving." Again, while "focusing," the server must look at the opponent's serve receive pattern and decide which serving tactic to employ:

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Tactic #1 | Server to a weak receiver.   |
| Tactic #2 | Serve to a weakness in the receiving pattern.  |
| Tactic #3 | Serve to the defensive zone where the back row setter is coming from. Make the setter turn around or back set. |
| Tactic #4 | Serve in the path of the setter.   |
| Tactic #5 | Serve to a receiver who has just misplayed your serve.   |

You must train your server to "focus." In order for this to work, the server must work within the team's serving strategy for the game or match. The server doesn't necessarily want to "Ace" the opponent, just make the other team have to work to get to the ball.

Thank you for the article Brother Joe. Good luck to all volleyball teams! KO.

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NOTE: Refer roster corrections to the American Sokol National Office 630-368-0771 or ASO@AMERICAN-SOKOL.ORG

Refer to the web-based roster for most current information.

# NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

The American Sokol Library will be open for National Library Week, April 6-12, by appointment. Call today, 630-368-0771, and make plans to check it out.

# American Sokol YOUTH PROGRAM Activities and Information



Check out THESE youth activities and share them with the young Sokols that you know!

## 2003 NATIONAL SOKOL CAMP AND INSTRUCTOR'S SCHOOL

Applications and Registration forms are now available for the National Sokol Camp and the National Instructor's School. To find camp information and forms, please go to [WWW.AMERICAN-SOKOL.ORG/2003CAMP](http://WWW.AMERICAN-SOKOL.ORG/2003CAMP). To find course information and forms, please go to [WWW.AMERICAN-SOKOL.ORG/IS](http://WWW.AMERICAN-SOKOL.ORG/IS). We are very lucky to have these great programs for our youth. In fact, did you know that there is an essay contest to win free tuition to these two events? All youth members received the contest in their newsletter. We are looking forward to seeing the essays pour in.

## KIDS TO COLLEGE PROGRAM

Another thing that went out in the newsletter was a survey to find out which of our youth members were going to college next year and which ones were going to be seniors in high school and planning for college next year. The youth committee has put forth a program to provide valuable information, tools and items to both of these groups to help them with their future plans. Encourage the veteran youth members at your Sokol to take advantage of this helpful program.

## SOKOL KIDS YEARBOOK PAGES ARE COMING SOON!

Once again the youth committee will be putting together a yearbook of our SOKOOL kids in action. Each Unit will receive one blank yearbook page in the mail. The Unit is responsible for decorating that page however they wish to represent the youth of their Unit. They can put pictures on it, have the kids sign it, paint it, etc... Whatever a Unit wants to do will work for us! After the page is created, it is sent back to the youth committee where we will compile all of the pages into the 2003 Sokol Yearbook. We are hoping that every Unit participates this year and we will have the yearbook ready for everyone to see in Valparaiso, the National Camp and the Instructor's course.

If you want more information about Youth Activities or have ideas for programs we can do this year or in the future, you can contact your district youth ambassador or call or e-mail Tom Pajer at 630-833-6916 or [TOMPAJER@AMERICAN-SOKOL.ORG](mailto:TOMPAJER@AMERICAN-SOKOL.ORG)

Please encourage the SOKOOL kids that you know to read their newsletters and participate in the contests and other programs. We give out some really cool prizes.

**NA ZDAR!**

**The American Sokol Youth Committee**

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