

american **SOKOL**

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FEBRUARY 2004



Be my Valentine!

American Sokol

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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.

Library, Archives & Museum Curator:
Annette Schabowski

From Your Editor...

If you live in the New York area, don't miss the lecture "The Roots of Sokol" on February 15 at Sokol New York. See page 7 for important details. Correction: Bro. Louis Teichman, who submitted the cover photos for the January issue, is a member of Sokol Detroit.

NA ZDAR!

Sis. Patricia Satek

46 Northgate Road ~ Riverside, IL 60546-1639

Editor@American-Sokol.org

CALENDAR of EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- 1 Sokol New York Exhibition
- 1 Sokol Greater Cleveland Superbowl Party
- 6 Sokol Detroit Winter Gymnasticale
- 7 Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky Mostaccioli Dinner
- 8 Sokol Milwaukee Jaternice/Pork Dinner and Bazaar
- 15 Sokol Stickney Pancake & French Toast Breakfast
- 15 "The Roots of Sokol" Lecture at Sokol New York (see pg. 7)
- 16 Sokol Milwaukee Gymnasts with WFLA Pizza Party
- 20 Sokol Greater Cleveland Fish Fry
- 21 Sokol Greater Cleveland Winter Exhibition

MARCH

- 6 Sokol Brookfield Exhibition
- 13 Sokol Tabor Exhibition
- 14 DA Sokol Biennial Convention

MARCH

- 19 Sokol Naperville Exhibition
- 19 Sokol Greater Cleveland Fish Fry
- 20 Sokol Stickney Exhibition
- 26 Sokol Chicagoland Exhibition
- 27 Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky Exhibition

APRIL

- 16 Sokol Greater Cleveland Fish Fry
- 16-18 Western District Competition and Exhibition
- 17 Central District Special Number Competition, 6 p.m.
- 23-24 Sokol Brookfield Rummage Sale

XI SOKOL CANADA SLET

June 23-27, 2004 • Toronto, Ontario

AMERICAN SOKOL CONVENTION

April 19-24, 2005 • Cleveland, OH

XXI AMERICAN SOKOL SLET

June 22-26, 2005 • Chicago, IL

THOUGHT STARTERS

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

"Often, it's easier to do a good job than to explain why you didn't."

~ ANONYMOUS

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.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS FIND ENERGY IN FT. WORTH, TX

The American Sokol Board of Governor's met November 21–23, 2003 in Ft. Worth, TX, along with the American Sokol Strategic Planning Committee.

The District Presidents gave updates on their District business. Central District President Sis. Barb Kucera, focused on the progress of the 2005 American Sokol Slet, "All Aboard, Chicago!" Confirmed dates of the Slet are June 22–26, 2005. The final venue or housing is not confirmed. Everyone is excited and pushing to promote the American Sokol through this fantastic event. Sis. Barbara Lundeen, former Pacific District President, has been working with the government on developing physical fitness programs for Seniors. The Western District was represented by their new President, Bro. Gary Masek. Northeastern District was represented by Sis. Mary Cushing, President. The Eastern District was represented by Bro. Bohus Bata, President, who advised that some of the smaller Eastern District Units may be merging or disbanding in the near future due to membership loss. Southern District was represented by their President, Bro. Bob Podhrasky. Everyone expressed the need for all Districts to encourage and support each unit in helping the American Sokol grow.

APPROVED: Trade-marking the American Sokol name and logos. In the future all places where the American Sòkol name and/or logo appear, everyone is to include a small "TM" near the name or logo.

NATIONAL OFFICE: We will be adding a new color laser printer to the office equipment. A "Memo from the Home Office" (or similarly titled article) will be included in future publications to keep members up-to-date on happenings at "home." A more

advanced conference phone system was approved to enable the many monthly meetings to be "heard" better over the states.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (SPC): The American Sokol Strategic Planning Committee met at the same conference in Ft. Worth, TX. They held workshops together with the Board of Governors as well as independently working to create a new business plan for the American Sokol. The SPC, Directed by Bro. Joe Vrzalik, brought in two inspiring speakers to present ideas for our future planning and assisted in many workshops to come up with our new plan. Mr. Barry Taylor, President & CEO of Greater Richmond YMCA, graciously donated his time and expertise to provide insight and data on the YMCA organization. Although our organizations are a bit different, there are some aspects that are the same. We examined the success of the YMCA, took Mr. Taylor's vision and tools and set the groundwork for our committee and BOG to begin a plan of action. Mr. Brad Durham, President and CEO of Independent Bank of Texas, and Sokol Ft. Worth member, gave a workshop on "Applying Business Applications to a Not-for-Profit Environment." Overall, there was one word that kept resurfacing: "ENERGY!"

American Sokol has survived all these years, we are like that pink bunny – we keep going and going ...the Strategic Planning Committee and your American Sokol Board of Governors have a goal to find the ENERGY and to keep the ENERGY positive as we move toward the future. Look for the Energy in 2004!

*Submitted by Sis. Jean Hruby,
American Sokol Office Manager*

Look for the Energy in 2004!

LOST IN BOHEMIA: Happy Days Cycling in the Czech Republic

Standing in the middle of a pine forest in Southern Bohemia, it was clear to anyone passing by that we didn't have a clue where we were. We were lost. And it was getting dark. Fiona was giving me that look. I stared more intently at the map, willing it to show me the way.

Ten weeks earlier, my partner Fiona is looking for a summer vacation that will feed our three kings of holiday criteria: sun, soft adventure and physical activity. Ignoring what's on offer in the Times travel section, we decide on a DIY adventure holiday. Our only requirements are that it has to be in Europe, is simple and has classic themes.

In need of inspiration, I pick up the barn-door sized atlas collecting dust under the coffee table, lay it out and like providence, it opens cleverly on the Central European plates. Et voilà! There in front of me, laying north to south, surrounded by neat topographic greens and browns and haphazardly criss-crossed by thin red and black lines, are the twin countries of Czech Republic and Austria. Looking closer, there are two real-world connect-the-dot cities ready to be joined – Prague

and Vienna. We'd never been to either city but travelling from one to the other did smack of an abridged European Grand Tour in the old style.

To add our own degree of difficulty, we decide to make the journey from Prague to Vienna by bicycle, towing our three year old in a child's bike trailer. I enjoy the fantasy: we're self supported, our weightless luggage strapped to the side of the bike in panniers,



joyously independent, gliding along under a brilliant July sky with the wind at our back on an endless, downhill, tree-lined road toward the ultimate Viennese five star hotel. What could be more fun? My chest fills with the thought of accomplishment.

We plan on 30-35 miles per day, or roughly 4-5 hours in the saddle with frequent breaks to let Louis play and run around. Central European summers are known for hot, dry days interspersed with

afternoon thunderstorms and since we'll be cycling at the height of summer we decide to ride in the morning, take long lunches during the hottest part of the day and continue when it gets cooler, arriving in time to relax before cocktail hour.

Flying into Prague's airport, we wisely sidestepped car-choked Prague and took a taxi to a starting point south of the city. We put the bikes together, loaded the

panniers, fit the bike trailer onto the bike and Louis into the trailer. We were ready to go, but slowly. The accumulated weight of Louis, trailer and panniers came to a knee-popping 100 pounds, without including my weight or the bike. Fiona had another 40

pounds in her panniers. We weren't going anywhere fast. To get to Vienna we only had to ride 275 miles over nine days. That was only 30 miles a day. But, if you were like us, it was further, as we immediately took off in the wrong direction.

Luckily, our maps were excellent and kept us on a mix of quiet farm roads and country lanes. By day three we were no longer map-challenged and were enjoying

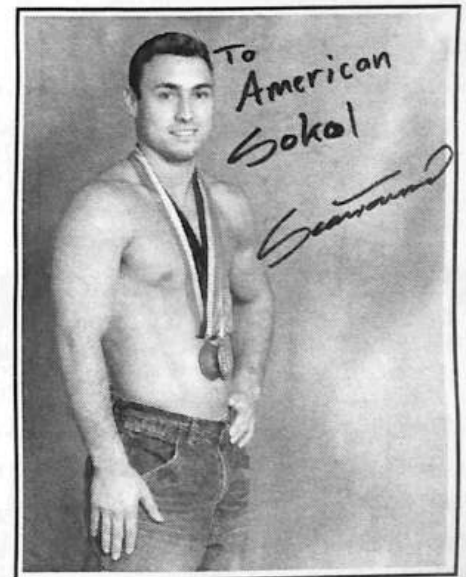
Continued on Page 9.

90TH ANNIVERSARY OF SOKOL FORT WORTH 1913-2003

Celebrated November 8, 2003

The festivities for the evening included:

- Banquet Dinner
- Unveiling of replica stained glass "SOKOL" from 1935 building at 3221 NW 28th Street. Original made by Frank Stransky, Sr. Replica by Jimmy Prevratil.
- Panoramic group photo of all attending
- Awarding of certificates and pins for years of membership 5-55 years
- Silent Auction: Proceeds for purchase of "Just for Kids" equipment
- Program:
 1. Number by parents with tots
 2. Guest: USA 2000 Olympian and 2001 World Champion Gymnast Sean Townsend, performing pommel horse, parallel bars, high bar. Narrated by Coach Kevin Mazieka.



Museum was open and there was also a display of Sokol memorabilia, posters, etc.

Submitted by Bro. Jerry Milan

Czech Culture ~ FASANK

Fasank (Shrove Tuesday) is celebrated on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten fast. It is a time of general merry-making. As midnight draws near, the young fellows make preparations to bury "Fasank." A bass fiddle is dressed in a "kroj" (traditional costume) and draped with ribbons as a symbol of music and gaiety. It is then laid on a chair and the group, in a circle, proclaim the sorrow of parting with good times and music for the next forty days. Eulogies are said and the bass fiddle is then carried in a gala parade around the hall till the stroke of midnight. At that time, all merriment stops and everyone begins the observance of lent.

Reprinted from Sokol Minnesota "Slovo"

Sokol Tabor Junior Class Election Banquet

On Monday, September 29, the Sokol Tabor Junior Class held their first annual Junior Board election banquet at Al's Italian Restaurant in Berwyn, IL. Pizza, refreshments and ice cream sundaes were served. Sis. Joan Curran, President of Sokolice Tabor, was the guest speaker. She praised the Juniors for their dedication to the organization and encouraged them to be leaders for the Sokol generations to come. 15 juniors were nominated to run for an office. Each went through a question and answer session lead by Junior Girls' Instructor Christina Curran. After the votes were tallied, Women's Director Candace Short announced the new elected Junior Board for the 2003–2004 Sokol year. Pictured L to R:

Jeremy Pros – Junior Boy Director
Julia Hickey – Junior Girl Director
Kristin Kulkanek – Secretary
Kaitlan Short – Treasurer
Matthew Petkus & Anna Mangia
– Junior Representatives



The Junior Board is the “voice” of the Junior Class. They hold monthly meetings to create fundraisers, gym activities and outside social events to keep the Junior Class interesting.

GUEST SPEAKER

Bro. Jerry Hosek, Sokol Zizka, Dallas, TX

My father, Louis (Ludvik) Hosek was a founding member of the first Sokol unit in the Southern District, Sokol Karel-Havlicek Borovsky in Ennis, Texas. It remains a strong unit to this day. Prior to that, my father was a member of Sokol in Vienna, Austria, where he was born and grew up. He attended the celebrated Jan Amos Komensky Czech school in Vienna. My grandfather Jan Hosek was one of the charter members of that school.

Coming to America in 1907, my father spent a lifetime committed to Czech causes. He served as an organizer of the Southern District, which at that time extended through Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska. There were over 20 units. He did lots of travelling at the time, when roads were bad and accommodations were usually in someone's home.

Sokol during my youth was more than a gymnastics club. There were dances, theater plays, a lending library, Czech orchestra, choral groups, and more; with some kind of activity nearly every night. There was even a Czech school that I attended during the summer when regular school was out. I attended with much protesting and some tears.

We have seen many changes over the last several decades, yet Sokol hangs on, due to the dedication of a few mostly older persons who were raised in a different time. At times like these, the old Sokol march comes back to mind: (Spejme dal) Forge ahead, (statne dal) determinedly always ahead (za Sokolskym praporem) behind the Sokol banner! I am cheered by the memories.

AMERICAN SOKOL GYMNAST

Kandi Pajer-117 Oakland Gr. Elmhurst, IL. 60126
kandipajer@american-sokol.org

2004 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 2004 Merit Awards** from students who are planning a course 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. Each district is allowed 2 merit awards per year regardless of membership. If a district doesn't have 2 qualified applicants, the remaining merit award(s) for that district may be given to another applicant(s) who did not receive an award because 2 awards per district initial limit in their district. These extra awards are given on an at large basis to the next most qualified applicant(s) regardless of district affiliation. There are NO merit award renewals.

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

The selections are made by the Merit Award Committee and approved by the American Sokol Board of Instructors and the American Sokol 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 the Physical Director of Sokol Unit.**
- 6. Recommendation of the 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, c/o American Sokol, 122 W. 22nd Street, Oak Brook, IL 60523

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

APPLICATION REQUEST SHOULD BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN MAY 1, 2004
APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 1, 2004

2003 American Sokol BOI Development Conference October 18-19, 2003 — Sokol Brookfield, Chicago Area

The 3rd Annual National BOI Development Conference was again held in conjunction with the District Directors Conference and National School board meeting. This scheduling provides a larger pool of session presenters and a high experience level which is beneficial to less experienced attendees during discussion periods where they have the opportunity to mix with and listen to some of our most experienced Sokol leaders.

To encourage participation, a group fee (\$125) was payable by a unit which allowed participation by an unlimited number of its members. The conference, open to ALL unit/district directors and instructors, was announced and publicized through the Directors Newsletter. Three meals and snacks are included in the registration fee.

The basic format of the all-day Saturday & Sunday morning conference consists of a series of 22 1-hour presentation/discussion sessions, 2 presented simultaneously at any given time. Knowledgeable Sokol people or local professionals present each session. ALL SESSIONS INCLUDE A DISCUSSION PERIOD. All sessions are video taped.

The subjects of this years sessions were: Team Building, Job as an Instructor / Director, Women s Spotting & Progressions (Middle / Advanced Skills) (2), Vault Table Training and Use, Preschool Class Activities (2), How to Keep Men s & Women s Class Interesting, Senior Coed Group II Activities, Men s Spotting & Progressions (Middle / Advanced Skills) (2), Selling Sokol to the Public, Making Money — Fundraising, Involving Kids in More Competitions / Running Fun Meets, National Instructor School and National Sokol Camp, Project 16-24 Year Olds, Teacher / Parent Relations, Taking Advantage of the Internet, Diversified Activities, and the 2005 ASO National Slet.

88 people attended this year s Development Conference. Though many people wear many different hats, the attendees can be broken down as follows: 11 — District Directors, 14 — Unit Directors, 13 — ASO BOI Members, 50 — Other Interested Parties.

This annual conference is a large undertaking and we wish to commend the entire National BOI staff, all session presenters and coordinators, and all attendees for their efforts on behalf of this conference.

We especially would like to commend those units and districts that showed the vision to invest in their present and future by supporting the attendance of their directors and instructors.

Barbara Barnes — Women s National Physical Director
Chuck Kalat — Men s National Physical Director



Annual Directors Conference

The American Sokol National Board of Instructors held its annual meeting with the District Directors on October 17, 2003 in the Chicago area. All Districts were represented by their directors or the District Director's representative. The meeting was conducted by the National Physical Directors; several members of the National BOI and representatives of Sokol USA and DA Sokol also participated.

Annual national director, district, activity, and committee reports were reviewed and discussed with emphasis placed on discussing the various different activities conducted by units from around the country with an eye toward adding greater variety into our unit programs. Other areas of discussion included the 2003 Sokol USA National Technical Meeting, the National School Board Meeting, New ASO Uniforms, Youth Membership, 16-24 Year Olds Project/Program, National Gymnastic Skills Month, Unit/District Directors Development Program (Handbooks), Strategic Planning Committee, 2004 Sokol Canada Slet — Toronto — June 23-26, 2003 ASO National Instructors School (Cleveland) / 2004 ASO National Instructors School (Omaha), 2003 National Sokol Youth Camp (Barryville) / 2004 National Sokol Youth Camp (????), the 2005 American Sokol Slet — Plans and Preparations, and the 2003-2004 ASO BOI Budget. The daylong meeting preceded the 3rd annual BOI Development Conference.



American Sokol
YOUTH PROGRAM

Activities and Information

Check out THESE youth activities and share them with the young Sokols that you know!
The February Newsletter is in the hands of ALL Youth Members!

The February newsletter has shipped out to all youth members.

Here s what they have in their hands:

National Camp Scholarship Contest

National Instructor s Course Scholarship Contest

Sokol MadLibs Fun

Create a Future Sokol Contest

Please work with all the youth members that you know and help them participate in all of the FUN!!!

So how can I get a youth newsletter?

All active youth members receive the youth newsletter but who else can get it? The youth newsletter is also sent to all Directors, Educational Directors, and a copy is sent directly to the gym. However, your instructors can get the youth newsletter and other important BOI material by having your directors enter them into the American Sokol Instructors Database. Please encourage your director to enter all instructors at:

<http://www.american-sokol.org/instructor>

Christmas Coloring Contest Winners!

We had many entries into the Christmas Coloring Contest this year. All of the entries were really GREAT! Here are the winning entries in their age groups:

Under 5 — Drew Manning — Sokol Fort Worth

5-6 — Tie — Franky Hedderman — Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky AND
Kaitlyn Barcal — Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky

7-8 — Tie — Jaclyn Huebner — Sokol Stickney AND
Sarah Foley — Sokol Greater Cleveland

9-10 — Regis Cmolik — Sokol Greater Cleveland

11-12 — Katie Fron — Sokol Tabor

13-14 — Julia Pinizzotto — Sokol Greater Cleveland

15 & Up — Jesse Karlik — Sokol West



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.

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

The American Sokol Youth Committee

The Roots of Sokol

The origins of Sokol in the mid 19th Century are an amazing chapter of history for anyone with an interest in the Sokols and their role in the founding of Czechoslovakia. Claire E. Nolte, author and Chair of the History Department of Manhattan College will present a lecture on the historical origin of Sokol in 1862.

Save the date!

Sunday, February 15, 2004
1:00 p.m. – Sokol Hall
420 East 71st Street – New York City

An "Open House" tour of Sokol Hall will be available at 12:00 noon, just prior to the lecture. Visitors can see the restored 1896 meeting room, the library and the collection of prints from the Czechoslovakia of 1923.

Seating for the lecture is limited, so please call the Sokol Hall office at 212-861-8206 if you wish to reserve a seat. We look forward to seeing you.

Na Zdar! The Library Committee of Sokol New York

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 46 Northgate Rd
 Riverside IL 60546-1639**
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**Executive Board of American Sokol
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 Oak Brook IL 60523-1557**

10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)
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12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

PS Form 3526, October 1999 (See instructions on reverse)

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b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		
(1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions (Based on Form 3541, include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)	3860	3719
(2) Paid In-County Subscriptions (Based on Form 3541, include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)	0	145
(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	0	0
(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	0	0
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b(1), (2), (3), and (4))	3860	3864
d. Free Distribution (Sum of 15c, 15d, and 15e)	0	0
(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541	0	0
(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541	0	0
(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	0	0
(4) Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	0	0
e. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d, and 15e)	0	0
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f)	3860	3864
g. Copies not Distributed	140	136
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i. Payment Prior and/or Requested Circulation (15c, limited by 15g, times 150)		
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publication required; <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.		
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Patricia Satek, Business Manager	Date: 12/15/03	

18. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

Instructions to Publishers

- Complete and file one copy of this form with your postmaster annually on or before October 1. Keep a copy of the completed form for your records.
- In cases where the stockholder or security holder is a trustee, include in items 10 and 11 the name of the person or corporation for whom the trustee is acting. Also include the names and addresses of individuals who are stockholders who own or hold 1 percent or more of the total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities of the publishing corporation. In item 11, if none, check the box. Use blank sheets if more space is required.
- Be sure to furnish all circulation information called for in item 15. Free circulation must be shown in items 15d, e, and f.
- Items 15c, Copies not Distributed, must include (1) newspaper copies originally stated on Form 3541, and returned to the publisher, (2) estimated returns from news agents, and (3) copies for office use, leftovers, spolia, and all other copies not distributed.
- If the publication had periodic authorization as a general or regular publication, this Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation must be published; it must be printed in any issue in October or, if the publication is not published during October, the first issue printed after October.
- In item 16, indicate the date of the issue in which this Statement of Ownership will be published.
- Item 17 must be signed. Failure to file or publish a statement of ownership may lead to suspension of Periodicals authorization.

PS Form 3526, October 1999 (Reverse)

2005 American Sokol Slet – “ALL ABOARD CHICAGO!”

Compose a SLET JINGLE

We're looking for talented individuals or groups to compose a Slet Jingle for the 2005 Slet in Chicago. The jingle should be a short song that is catchy and will add spirit and excitement to the Slet week. *There are no rules! Just be creative!* Please send all entries by June 1, 2004 in any format to:

American Sokol Slet Jingle
122 West 22nd Street
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Questions? Contact Tom Pajer 630-833-6916 or
tompajer@american-sokol.org



FUTURE SOKOL LEADERS FUND

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

From Joseph A. Kocab	\$20.00	
In Memory of Anton Smunt from Joseph Ruzicka Family	\$25.00	
In Memory of Agnes Vachata, George Rench, and Edward Pietryzak from Sokol Stickney	\$150.00	
In Memory of Otto Hracek from Sokol Chicagoland	\$25.00	
		In Memory of Stanley Barcal
From Sokol Berwyn-Slavsky Men's Club	\$100.00	From Sokol Chicagoland
From Elsie and Alice Kohl	\$25.00	From Western District ASO
		\$25.00

2005 American Sokol Slet Logo Design Contributors

The American Sokol 2005 Slet committee has been meeting monthly in preparation for the big event to take place in the summer of 2005. Response to their request for Slet logo design ideas to go with the chosen theme of “All Aboard, Chicago!” was exciting. They would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals for submitting design ideas:

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Watch for the unveiling of the new logo, coming soon!

LOST IN BOHEMIA *(continued)*

long, sun-drenched days cycling through the Vltava River valley towards Southern Bohemia. Any blue-light railroad crossing we came to we halted, hoping to see the single coach trains that trundled by. Many stopped at the forlorn looking whistle-stops doubling as stations to disgorge their contents of old ladies and children. It was the high point of Louis' day.

By following the lines of green in the distance we could see our direction of travel as the roads were lined with trees. Apple trees were the hands-down favorite. We passed thousands of them, some with people hanging onto low limbs, picking away. Now and then a beat up, rusty red Skoda would belch past, jammed to overflowing with bodies and leaving a trail of diesel smoke in its wake. Other than tractors and old cars our only road companions were other cyclists; kids returning from school, farm laborers, the odd granny whizzing by with a basketful of carrots. Louis' child trailer was a natural ice breaker wherever we went.

The towns passed slowly, Benesov, near Konopiste, King Ferdinand's castle and home before he was assassinated. These days it's a museum which sadly keeps two half-crazed caged bears within its walled moats. Tabor, a medieval fortress town high on a hill with a commanding view over Luznice River surprised us with a

restaurant that served giant helpings of Tex-Mex style ribs; and Ceske Budejovice, home of the real Budweiser and one of the loveliest old towns we'd seen. We arrived in the perfectly preserved stare mesto, supposedly the second largest square in Europe after Krakow and an untouched example of the benefits of medieval commerce. The square hosts three generations of German burgher power in the fanciful buildings facing the central fountain. Capping it all off is the stunning blue Rococo radnice.

With time we fell into an easy rhythm. Fiona would lead on the flat stretches with me catching her wheel and drafting to reduce the drag from the trailer. Downhills saw me whiz by her, driven by the sheer weight of the bike-trailer ensemble. At the slightest rise she would glide past me as I slowed dramatically, my knees straining to pull the weight of the bike and trailer up and over the crest. Louis took to the trailer well, and either slept or played with his assortment of toys. A screen let me talk to him while keeping bugs out and we passed the time discussing the various attributes of different Hotwheel cars and which dinosaur we liked better, the T-Rex or triceratops.

For the first few days the weight added hours to our arrival estimates and played havoc with our bodies, finding us collapsed in heaps on the bed, exhausted.

By the time we hit Ceske Budejovice, my knees were feeling the strain and needed time to repair. The weather turned cold and wet so we decided to take the local train 25 miles to Cesky Krumlov, a diversion from our planned route but one that would give Louis a much promised train ride and my knees a much needed rest.

We're glad we went. In a word, Cesky Krumlov is simply exquisite. Cycling from the train station down the steep-sided valley and through the narrow cobble-stoned maze of Latran was hazardous and slippery in the rain but we could see why the town is named the jewel of Bohemia. It is truly beautiful, even soaking wet. It's a living memorial to medieval village life with the whole historic center designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.

We spent two relaxing days wandering among the warren of narrow streets before the bike beckoned and saw us climbing out of the river valley onto a landscape of golden barley and wheat fields, on our way north.

The break from the bikes was a tonic for our sore muscles and we found renewed energy as we cycled through the dikes and pond landscape of the Trebonsko region, known for fish farming and brisk sales of Christmas carp. In the center of the region nestles the picture postcard, medieval

Continued on Page 10.

LOST IN BOHEMIA *(continued)*

spa town of Trebon, bordered on three sides by its castle and the 16th century Regent brewery. Up till now we had seen the odd cycle tourer, but now they were everywhere – German, Austrian, and Dutch. Many were on longer tours and were camping, unlike us. One Danish family of four had ridden across Europe, the two children golden brown and glowing. The boy was no more than 10, the girl 13 and each had their own panniers. They smiled shyly as they rode off.

The shady, pancake-flat roads were a welcome relief after days of undulating hills as we flew down the roads towards Slavonice, a stone's throw from the Austrian border and a throwback in time. We rode 40 miles in three hours, stopping only once for a break, giddy with our forward progress.

The next day we rode 48 miles into and out of the gorges of Podyji National Park, and the biggest hills of the trip. I found I was standing on the pedals as I climbed out of the gorge and realized my previous reluctance to test my knees on hills had melted away. I felt stronger than I had in days and we took to racing each other over the crests. We were getting used to the weight and the long days on the bikes. Our pace quickened. With each day since Cesky Krumlov we felt lighter and stronger, able to bounce back quicker from the day before. The fact was we were

getting lighter too. Even with end-of-day beers and huge dinners, we were working hard, burning calories at a high rate and dropping weight. With a positive change in our bodies we also realized we had broken the back of the trip and could sense it coming to an end as we closed on the Austrian border.

Just south of Znojmo we crossed the border at the lonely Retz control point and found ourselves in Austria. As we moved south the land changed quickly from thick forests and gorges to the flatter plains of northern Austria. Mile upon mile of vineyards lay before us on gently rolling hills. It wasn't just the land that was different. Immediately after crossing the border everything seemed tidier, more ordered. As if by magic, village lawns were neat and trim, houses maintained, cars new and shiny. It was as if an army of cleaners had just swept through that morning. Forty years of Communist neglect and mismanagement left the Czech side looking unkempt, in need of a good coat of paint and a spring cleaning.

Our entry into Vienna along the Danube bike path was effortless and anticlimactic. We were elated yet sad that our journey was almost over and decided next time to go for longer. After celebrating with a bottle of champagne and a long bath, we hit the streets as regular tourists, this time on foot.

Over the following days we found ourselves replaying the trip and talked about the highs, lows and what we would do differently next time. We both agreed cycling with children was not the headache it was perceived to be. Louis, only three, enjoyed the sights, sounds and experience of bike travel. His retention of events and memories three years on continues to amaze us and triggers memories of our own. We also decided next time we would happily pay a service to transfer our luggage for us, especially since I was already pulling the combined weight of Louis and the trailer. When added together, the challenge, independence, great food, fitness factor, beautiful scenery and sense of accomplishment rewarded us far more than we expected.

About the Author:

Briand Beausoleil is the owner of First Light Bicycle Tours, which offers bike tours in the Czech Republic in association with www.myczechrepublic.com, a website covering Czech culture, language, and travel information for visitors to the Czech Republic. Further information on bicycle tours in the Czech Republic can be found at www.myczechrepublic.com/bike_tours



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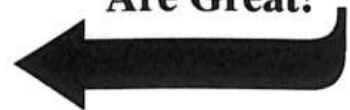
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