

The mission of the American Sokol is to provide fitness and community for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural and social programs.

## 2008 Merit Award Winners



**Kelsey Rhodes**  
Sokol South Omaha  
Western District



**Paige Vachata**  
Sokol Stickney  
Central District



**Amelia Makowski**  
Sokol Baltimore  
Eastern District



**Anna Mangia**  
Sokol Tabot  
Central District

# AMERICAN SOKOL

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ASO Executive Board meets every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday\* at 7:30 PM  
ASO Board of Instructors meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday\* at 7:30 PM  
\*except in July and August

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## Calendar of Events



October	
4	Sokol/Sokolice Milwaukee 140 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
4-5	Central District / Houby Festival & Parade
11	Sokol San Francisco Dinner/Dance
11	Central District Track & Field Meet
15	Central District Exec. Board Mtg.
17-19	Nat'l BOI Mtg./Development Conference at Sokol South Omaha
19	Sokol LA Balboa Park CzechoSlovak Day
26	Sokol LA Heritage Dance
26	Sokol MN Pork & Dumpling Dinner
28	Den vzniku samostatneho ceskoslovenskeho statu - 1918 (Czech Independence Day)
30-1st	Sokol Spirit Rummage Sale
November	
1	Sokol Baltimore Annual Vinobrani Dinner & Dance
1	Sokol Stickney 80th Anniversary Fundraiser
1	Sokol MN Mystery Dinner Theatre Benefit for Sokol Cedar Rapids
1	Central District Annual BOI Mtg
2	Central District Annual Mtg
2	Sokol Milwaukee Recognition Dinner
11	Veteran's Day
15	Central District Jr/Womens Volleyball Tournament
21-23	Sokol Milwaukee Holiday Folk Fair
December	
6	Sokol San Francisco Annual Meeting & Children's St. Nicholas Party
6	Sokol Stickney Spaghetti Dinner
15	Sokol Chicagoland Annual Pot Luck Dinner & Exec. Board Mtg.
23	Sokol MN Craft & Bake Sale / Pancake Breakfast
24	Stedry den (Christmas Eve)
25	Svatek vanocni 1 (Christmas)
31	New Year's Eve

## June 23-29, 2009 International Sports & Culture Festival in Fort Worth, Texas

Is your important event missing from this list?  
Send your Events to  
[Editor@American-Sokol.org](mailto:Editor@American-Sokol.org)

## Message from Larry Laznovsky, ASO President ASO

Dear Brothers, Sister and Youth Members,

2008 promises to be a milestone year for the American Sokol. The addition of an Executive Director to our staff, plus the steps of implementation of our Strategic Plan by our Strategic Planning Team and Strategic Task Force Committees creates some exciting opportunities to move our organization into the future. Thank to all the volunteers that are working to take us in a positive direction.

The 2009 American Sokol Slet is rapidly approaching. Plans are moving forward to combine our event with other National and International groups to host The International Sport and Culture Festival. This event allows us to share some of our unique characteristics with other groups that have similar interests. Make your plans to be at the exciting event June 2009.

Also, congratulations are in order for the BOI Staff and other members that supported the events of a very successful Instructor School and a very successful National Camp.

*NAZDAR!*

*Larry Laznovsky*



*The Sokol Educator*

*Sis. EllenJeanne Schnabl, Educational Director*

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NAZDAR! Sisters and Brothers:

September is the 9th month of the calendar year. However, it is the 1st month of the New Sokol Season.

Preparations are being made in your Units for registration of classes. Monthly administrative and Board of Instructors' meetings are also starting to plan for the coming year's activities.

Are you reaching out to the new members and making them feel a real part of your Sokol Unit?

How about those people whose children will be in your classes? Are you trying to get them to become members? Have you told them about Sokol, its history and its meaning? A good place to start is within the walls of your own Unit with its own fascinating history.

Are you excited about the prospect of the next National -- or rather -- International Slet to be held in Texas next June? Do all our children and adult members realize exactly what a Slet is and what wonderful memories others have from previous Slety?

Are you doing your part to inform and educate everyone and anyone whom you meet about our great Sokol organization?

Are you prepared to join one or more of our many classes and dispel the facts that too many people are overweight mostly because of inactivity? Bending and stretching every day will help to keep your bones, joints, ligaments supple. You don't have to walk on the high balance beam or swing on the horizontal bar -- you just have to get motivated and keep moving!

By the way: You probably know the words to "The Beer Barrel Polka" BUT: do you know the words IN CZECH? It is called "Skoda Lasky". Thanks to Sis. Ellie Babka of Sokol Spirit who clued me in. She found a lot of information on this sad song in Google -- [www.nthposition.com/skodalasky.php](http://www.nthposition.com/skodalasky.php). Look it up and pass on this information to our members even just for the fun of it. (I know that many of you still do not own a computer. Therefore: ask your children or grandchildren to help you seek this information. You can also go again to your local library and they will be willing to help you too.)

NAZDAR! EllenJeanne Schnabl, American Sokol Educational Director

## Message from Greg Harris, ASO Executive Director

Hi Everyone,

I have been here almost 4 months now and have had the opportunity to do a bit of traveling to several Units/meetings and to observe a few of the amazing programs that we offer. Kudos should go out to the tireless efforts of those who are working so hard to keep Sokol moving forward. The organization is a hidden gem and we need to do everything we can to stop being the "best kept secret." Everyone, outside of Sokol, should know about us and what we do to make the world a better place....and we do indeed do that! Then, they need to become members of our organization!

In addition to the devotion that I have seen of our current members, I have seen a number of things that I feel are holding us back in our attempt to take Sokol to the next level. We must all realize that this is 2008, almost 2009, and we must make every attempt to move forward and assure the survival of our organization. That is what the Strategic Plan is all about. Here are my observations to date:

- Every Unit follows the basic guidelines of the by-laws....but most still do things on their own that vary greatly from Unit to Unit. Our goal is to have cohesion and consistency in order to create an environment that will allow new membership opportunities, new programming and opportunities for bringing in new people, etc. Here in the national American Sokol office, Jean and I are constantly looking for new ways to help each and every Unit excel...be it through programming, activities, international public awareness, and funding sources. With all of the Units operating in a consistent manner, it will allow us to be able to apply for larger funding based on universal practices. The goal would be to create a centralized pool of money that can be used equally by all of the Units.
- Every Unit does something very well, but each Unit needs help in one way or another. Why don't we want to help each other? It seems like each Unit is very wrapped up in its own, protective, world. We must all start looking beyond our walls and seeing what we can do to help each other as one, national, organization. Only then can we truly move American Sokol into the future. Closing doors and losing members helps no one. What can we do to keep our young people from leaving? What Units need new, fresh faces to keep them going? Where do we need help with programming? Are all Units being run as efficient business models that have Sokol as the number one priority? Could some of our younger members take the reins, move up as officers, and help revitalize some of the Units? Are there members out there who are looking for new opportunities to start new Units? I certainly hope the answers are "YES!" We cannot afford to lose our young people and we should be doing everything we can to find new and exciting Sokol opportunities for them. It's what they want and they deserve to have a chance.
- That being said, older members MUST start mentoring and begin teaching the younger members how to run the Units as businesses, and give them more control. It is up to you to show the next generation how to keep your Units alive and well. If you wait until you are debilitated and too old to continue, no one will know how to take over, and we will be closing doors (many Units are on the brink of this happening now). I have heard from many older members that, "there is no one who is willing to take over" and when I talk to those people would like to "take over," they tell me, "I try to help but the older members won't let me take over, or have any responsibility for that matter, so I have bowed out and stay in the background, not saying anything." We need to change this....immediately.

- Respect. Or the lack thereof. We need to start respecting each other and the strengths that each of us brings to the organization. I am amazed at the amount of disrespect I have witnessed. Every single member of this organization is different, and brings a different set of skills to the table, which is a great benefit to American Sokol. Those skills may not be the same as yours, but that is ok. We need new, fresh, ideas. Just because something is, "not the way we've always done it" does not make it bad. If an idea is presented and I hear, "that's a great idea, BUT let me tell you why it won't work" then that tells me that it isn't a good idea in your eyes. Why don't we say, "That's a great idea, how do we make it work?" If we don't respect each other, and what each of us brings to the organization, then we don't respect the organization or our mission or the people who have worked so hard to get us to where we are today. Everything we do should be for the betterment of the organization. "The way we've always done it" is not working any longer.
- In-fighting and feuding must stop. I cannot believe how much of this is going on. There are so many more important things that we should be worried about than, "who said what" or "who did that to so-and-so" or "well that Unit did this and now we don't like them" etc., etc., etc. Most of the feuding started a very long time ago and it should be time to let by-gones be by-gones and move on. How can we move forward when we continually focus on the past...and the focus is usually on the bad things that have happened in the past? If we have learned nothing from the unfortunate incidents of the past, then shame on all of us. We need to rise up, shake ourselves off and start marching forward. EVERYONE needs to work together as one, solitary, cohesive, national organization.
- I should NEVER hear about issues, fighting, feuding, etc. from any young members. I have the great fortune of spending a lot of quality time with our some of our young members and I have had some very interesting conversations with them. From the amount of time they are attempting to give to Sokol, it appears as though they are very excited about being a part of the organization, and its future, and should be looking to that future through the eyes of someone who wants to eventually take over and help the organization survive and prosper. They should NOT be mired down in the muck that I hear a lot of older members talking about. They should be excited about the good parts of our history and not be subjected to the bad. When a young person comes to me and says, "can you come to our Unit and help us...we have a lot of problems and no one seems to be able to help" that is not acceptable. These kids should be having fun with us and wanting their friends to join them and be a part of the greatness that is Sokol. Our young members should aspire to be our new leaders and not see the current leaders as stumbling blocks to our success and future.
- The segregation of men and women must stop immediately. This is the year 2008 and all of the UNITS are a part of the National Organization, and quite frankly, segregation is against the law. Men and Women MUST work together in order to achieve success. The money that is brought in must be the collective UNIT'S money in order to survive. I am hearing that certain leaders in some of the Units are domineering and making others uncomfortable, creating animosity, and simply pushing people away, which in turn make them no longer want to be members. This is unacceptable and must stop. If a member is exhibiting this behavior it will be documented and action will be taken. A member that is creating animosity and driving other members away is not effective for Sokol and therefore not needed within our organization. Sokol should be a happy and safe place for everyone. Younger people are leaving, and starting their own gyms, because they do not see a future with Sokol because of the politics that they see going on....this WILL change.

- There is a lot of focusing on petty things. This must also stop immediately. Everyone should be focusing on the real, serious, issues that face Sokol and we should be working together to come up with solutions to keep our doors from closing. We should be working together as a collective, doing everything we can to help those Units in need (and EVERY Unit has a need) and stop focusing on things that simply are not important and that create animosity among others. If people, or processes, are in places that create negativity within the organization, committees, or Units, then they must be removed and replaced immediately. Nothing can move forward if there are people or processes in place that hinder progress or create animosity.
- We must be able to sell memberships to everyone, at any time, in order to grow the ranks and make sure we ensure our success. Membership is truly where the money is and we must find ways of growing our numbers. We need new members to support this organization. Contrary to popular belief, there is no magic bucket of money that tips over and pours out just because we think we are worthy. We must prove to the outside world that we have the desire to reach out to the community and embrace others...especially those that may be less fortunate than ourselves. This will prove us worthy of receiving large grants that will be of benefit to ALL Units. No one, in my experience, is willing to pay for a building, mortgage, utilities, or even help repair them, if the intention is to only serve our current membership base as a private club. Organizations or individuals that fund programming, etc., allow for a small percentage of the funding to be delegated to operating costs, but it is a very small percentage of the funds. We must look for simple, effective ways to bring the communities, in which we serve, through our doors and entice them to become members of our wonderful organization. Non-Sokols are ready and willing to join us...we just need to let them.

If you have a suggestion or idea, we want to hear it. However, those suggestions and ideas should be presented in a positive, constructive way. Simply complaining about something or correcting someone, will fall on deaf ears. It is not needed in our organization, it is a waste of time, is ineffectual and non-essential. When making a comment, ask yourself, "How does my comment effectively help Sokol?" The goal is to positively move forward as a national organization.

In addition to being a fraternal organization, Sokol is a business and needs to be treated and run as such. I am very excited about the people I have been meeting who are excited, energized, and ready to take Sokol into the year 2009 and beyond. I am looking forward to leading this organization toward that future, but it takes all of us. For those of you who do not want Sokol to change, or do not want to groom our younger members to take over the Units so that they can bring their new, exciting and fresh ideas to the table, and be seriously listened to, then we thank you for your time and the rest of us will be moving ahead without you. It is time for the "new Sokol." The future is bright and we all need to be a big part of it. Sokol can, and will be, an internationally renowned organization again. Are you ready to be a part of it?

Nazdar!  
Greg



# AMERICAN SOKOL GYMNAST

*Pages 7-10 are specifically designed to be a benefit to the Gymnastics programs of American Sokol.  
Please pull, copy and distribute to your participants as you see fit.*

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## How Sokol Has Prepared Me for the Future American Sokol Merit Award Essays

Anna Mangia  
Sokol Tabor  
Central District

It starts with the Mazurka. Next comes the tango, slow, sensual steps and quick furious ones - a passionate fight expressed through movement. Calisthenics follow; lunging legs exaggerated straight, stoic arms cutting through the air. The men come together now, building a three-tier pyramid. The women leap around the forming pyramid, heels clicking softly as shoes reunite with floor. The couples join, the anger and passion rising. A loud boom in the music - the women pull away from the men, faces hidden. The men slowly drag the women back, a slow crescendo in the music. Another boom - a tight embrace. The last boom - a final, low dip, the men supporting the fallen women. The audience applauds as the lights dim. This routine, entitled To Sokol Tabor, with Love, was performed for the first time in November 2006, in honor of Sokol Tabor's 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The dance, which bridged past, present, and future, symbolized all that Sokol Tabor has stood for since its establishment in the United States in 1966. I have been a member of Sokol Tabor since the age of three. Sokol has taught me self-discipline, responsibility, and leadership skills, and I will continue striving for excellence in the Sokol community.

To Sokol Tabor, with Love, gave the other dancers and me a chance to give back to the organization that has given us so much. The Mazurka at the beginning of the routine represents Sokol's connection to Czech culture and tradition. We were able to express our passion for Sokol through the Tango. The Calisthenics section embodied Sokol tradition. The pyramid the men made symbolized Sokol's bond with dance. The end represents something different, but equally important. Everyone in Sokol tries to pull away at one point, whether it is because of other activities, a move, or even college. The end of this routine has become a metaphor for my move to college. I hope to move away in order to continue my personal and academic growth while I work on my dream to become a lawyer. I will soon have to juggle college life and my dedication to Sokol. A teacher I admire once used a well-known quote to inspire his students: "If you love something, set it free. If it comes back, it was yours; if it doesn't, it never was." This quote has comforted me throughout my senior year. I know I have to let Sokol go in order to further my goals, but I also know it will come back to me, because I love it and it has all ways been mine to experience.

Amelia Makowski  
Sokol Baltimore  
Eastern District

Every community that I have ever encountered in my lifetime has defined my identity and prepared me for the future in some way or another, and so I am posed with the following question: Which community has had the largest impact on my life? The first community that comes to mind is Sokol Baltimore Gymnastics, probably because I just got home from the gym not fore than ten minutes ago. Sokol is not only a place where I can maintain physical fitness and practice gymnastics, but it is also a home away from home.

My involvement in Sokol began before I could even walk, let alone make my own decisions. At that point in time, my parents made most of my decisions for me, including the decision for me to take gymnastics at Sokol on Monday nights. When little me entered the big gym for the first time, I was overwhelmed. I was like a kid in a candy shop, unable to focus my attention on just one thing. I wanted to walk on the big balance beams, swing on the bars, climb on the rope, jump on the trampoline, run wild on the floor and explore all of the different apparatus, *all at once!* I felt like I had stemmed into a whole new world. Monday nights suddenly became something to look forward to. Sokol was all about having fun, making friends, and doing gymnastics. Unlike most gyms, which are characterized by competition and pressure to be the best, Sokol was overflowing with friendly motivation and encouragement. My coaches Carrie and Annette took on mother like roles as they nurtured me not only in the world of gymnastics but also by encouraging fairness and good morals. My fellow gymnasts were like siblings, teaching me the importance of cooperation with your peers. Another benefit of Sokol is that it provided me with many positive opportunities, such as performing with the Baltimore Opera Company and attending Camp Woodward.

Even though my parents chose Sokol for my, I chose to stay with Sokol and make it a priority in my life. I started out in the "Tot" class, for children five and under, progressed through the "Beginner" class, became a member of the Exhibition team, and finally found myself in the "Advanced/Intermediate" class, the highest class offered by Sokol. By the time high school came around, I realized that I had already accomplished most of my gymnastics goals. At first, this seemed like the end of the road, but really it was just another one of life's transitions. I began coaching the "Tot" class four days a week. My job as a coach gave me an entirely new perspective as I transitioned from being taught to being the teacher. Taking on the position of a coach also allowed me to become a role model for young children.

When I look at the children in my class, I see myself, thirteen years ago. They are curious and excited from the moment they step into the gym, eager to learn and interact. I always wonder which children are going to make the same decision I did, and stay with Sokol, and which ones are going to go off in a different direction. Although my brother and sister stopped gymnastics after a few years to pursue other activities, I knew that I belonged at Sokol. I could not even begin to imagine what my life would be like without Sokol, but I'm sure that I could not be as content with any other lifestyle as I am now.

**Kelsey Rhodes**  
*Sokol South Omaha*  
*Western District*

I have been a Sokol gymnast for thirteen years. I have developed a strong work ethic that has carried over in all areas of my life. Sokol has taught me to strive for excellence not only in the gym, but in the classroom as well. I have learned to manage my time. Dedication and determination to do my best has helped me become a successful young adult. The Sokol motto "a strong mind and healthy body" has had an impact on my life.

**Paige Vachata**  
*Sokol Stickney*  
*Central District*

Dr. Miroslav Tyrš founded Sokol on the notion that physically fit, mentally alert, and culturally well-developed citizens make a nation strong and give life to patriotism, and these ideas have also given me strength to endure what my future holds. Through physical perseverance in classes and competitions, I have learned that success is the lone product of hard work and dedication, which will help me overcome any obstacle life places ahead of me. Also, by attending meetings, working on committees, and organizing events, Sokol has taught me that having strong leadership skills is vital, but knowing how to listen and work as one member of a team is an essential trait to possess. But if I had to choose the most important thing Sokol has taught me in preparation for my future, it would be that no matter what life throws at you, true family and friends will always be there to lean on in times of need.

## DO THE MAGPIE

Slet, a traditional Czech communal exercise, has been reinvented as a flash-mob-style workout by two British artists. Carlene Thomas-Bailey Tuesday July 08 2008 The Guardian / This is article on British "SLET" recommended by Milan Reban.

It's a Sunday afternoon and instead of reading a newspaper in bed as usual, I'm heading to an art gallery in Norwich, dressed in my running gear. I am attending a free event where, I am told, art and exercise collide. I arrive, as instructed by a website, on the grass outside the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, a colossal Norman Foster building made of reflective glass and the destination for a flash-mob-style workout called a "slet". The exercises hail from a traditional Czech youth gymnastic movement called Sokol and, says the website, will be energizing and fun.

I walk over to a couple who are milling about, looking just as lost as me. "I looked up Sokol on Wikipedia," says 19-year-old Joseph Murray who has come from Suffolk with his girlfriend, "and this picture came up of people in vests and shorts doing communal exercise and it looked really funny."

About 40 people have shown up to take part on this sunny day: young and old, men and women. Before there's any more time to ponder what lies ahead, organizer Felicity Croydon booms through a megaphone: "Hi, I'm so glad you could come. Can you all stand on the colored markers? We're about to start."

Part exercise routine, part social event, these slets are jointly organized by south London artists Caroline Jupp and Croydon (who is also a trained dancer). "Last spring," says Jupp, "we went to the Barbican Centre and, without asking permission, performed a pilot slet on the grounds outside it. Only a few people turned up and it was a really cold day, so passers-by just looked at us like we were mad. Then we did another slet outside Brockwell Lido in south London, earlier this year."

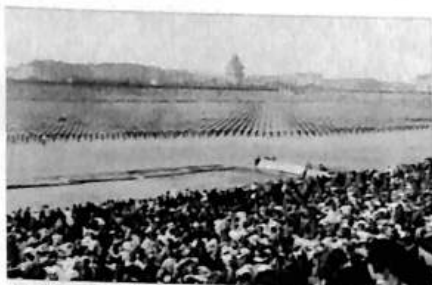
The idea for setting up slet events in the UK emerged two years ago, when Jupp, who specializes in social and community-based art projects, attended the Modernism exhibition at the Victoria and Albert museum. The show featured images of people from the Czech Republic exercising together in a slet, in the early 1900s. The word "slet" means "a flocking of birds" and was used to describe the mass exercise displays, which were a part of the Sokol movement. Gymnasiums would come together and perform synchronized routines in the open air, highlighting the benefits of outdoor exercise.



Members of the Sokol club in costume, 1880s

"After the exhibition I wanted to know more so I went to the British Library, looked at books and found an amazing Czech archive," explains Jupp. "There were fantastic photos of these characters wearing hats with falcon feathers, because 'sokol' means falcon, a symbol of courage."

Jupp saw slet as an antidote to today's culture of fitness where people scurry to the gym, hit the running machine and don't talk. "I really hate that," she says and so, keen to revive an old tradition, she decided to instigate a slet revival. She and Croydon pored over archive footage and stills to work out the synchronized routines. Then they mixed in some traditional keep-fit moves such as "half [jumping] jacks" to make it more accessible. "The traditional slets were all about exercising en masse and the beautiful shapes everyone made together," says Croydon. "So I had to think carefully when arranging the routines, because there are lots of things which you just can't do en masse because they don't create the nice shapes I saw in the footage."



Slet in Prague, 1920

The duo wanted the venues for each slet to reinforce a sense of wellbeing - they had to be light, spacious and, most importantly, outdoors. "I chose sites with new or modernist architecture, because they reinterpret modernist ideals of that time, which connected architectural light, space and openness with health," says Jupp.

"We're going to start with a basic stretch," says Croydon, balancing on the mini podium. "Then we're going to make a magpie," she adds. The magpie involves a star-shaped stretch before bending down to touch our shins, then another star stretch before bending down again, this time making a diamond shape with our hands between our legs. Once the group masters that, we split up to create an inner and outer circle, jogging fast in opposite directions and

changing when our leader claps her hands. I feel like a child in the playground and am soon giggling with the rest of the flock, who have quickly transformed from total strangers into my friendly exercise buddies. We're falling all over the place and there are frequent near misses as people don't change direction quickly enough.

"Keep your knees high and stop chatting," shouts Croydon. We laugh some more.

Next, it's the dove (all the exercises have bird names), which involves - gasp - partner work. We jog, then stop and face each other at arms length and swing alternate arms back and forth seven times, ending with a high five. My partner is Lithuanian and speaks very little English, but she gets the routine spot-on while I'm so bad at it that I burst out laughing again. Success in this routine is down to hand-eye co-ordination, which is not my strong point. Plus the wind (a welcome alternative to the air conditioning inside a gym), while refreshing, is so blustery that it's almost pushing me over. Still, wind resistance means harder exercise.

We move on to some military marching in rows. "It feels a bit like barn dancing," says 20-year-old Eleanor Mortimer. A few more bird-shaped stretches follow, and we are all (more or less) synchronized, arms extended while we turn 360 degrees as a group.

"Stretch up to the sky," says Croydon. I follow obediently and marvel at the blue sky and the sun shining between my fingers.

"One of the best things about teaching outside," says Croydon, "is that you've got the sky to look at, the grass to touch and the trees in the distance, whereas in a studio you have to create visual pictures for people to imagine. Also, people seem much happier - each time we do a slet, I have these faces grinning back at me."

We finish after an hour and nibble on fresh orange segments, discussing the slet. I'm out of breath and my

arms ache, but Susan Avenal, another participant who is a self-professed fitness fanatic says: "That was more like a gentle warm-up." She might not be so impressed, but I'm glad to have got out of the house and had a dose of vitamin D. The British Heart Foundation says that 30 minutes of the jogging and vigorous marching we did today are exactly the type of pulse-raising exercises they recommend to strengthen your heart and help with weight control.

Stretching exercises (such as the magpie), are beneficial too. "Stretching helps to align the muscle fibers and keep the tissue healthy," says personal trainer Annabel Arkwright. "It improves flexibility, mobility and can be used to correct postural problems." Walking away, I pin on my new slet badge with pride and go home to check out the time and location of the next one. (Copyright Guardian News and Media Limited)

American-Czech Educational Center  
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# CZECH HOMECOMING

**Saturday October 18<sup>th</sup> 2008**

Serving 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Roast Duck - Roast Pork or Goulash  
Includes: Sauerkraut or Vegetable - Dumplings - Kolacky & Coffee  
Children's Plate Available

**Music - Button Box Band & Czech Express!!**

Czech Beer, Pastries, T-Shirts & Buttons  
Games & Lots of Friends

**FREE Admission - Ample Parking**  
**For more information call 314-752-8168**



# 2009 INTERNATIONAL SPORT & CULTURAL FESTIVAL

BULLETIN I  
MAY 15, 2008

The Southern District of the American Sokol will be hosting the 2009 American Sokol Slet as part of the 2009 International Sport and Cultural Festival in Fort Worth, Texas. The event will take place June 23-28, 2009 and will include participation from USA Gymnastics, the Pan American Gymnastics Union as well as other sport and cultural groups. Participants from all over the world are expected to take part in the multi-sport and cultural activity.

## Planned Activities

### 2009 American Sokol Slet

Multi-sport activities – Artistic gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Volleyball, Basketball, Fitness Challenge, Golf Tournament, Bowling, fun Run/Walk, Team-Marching and Cal Competition

Opening Ceremonies and Slet Program

### USA Gymnastics

Competitions – TeamGym Nationals, USA Gymnastics for All Challenge, International Rhythmic Gymnastics Invitational, Festival Rhythmic, Aesthetic Gymnastics Invitational.

Displays – National GymFest, USA Gymnastics/Sokol Gala Showcase Evening, City Performances, Large Group performance opportunity for the Closing Ceremony

Education – Coaches Congress & Forum, TeamGym instructor and judge's course, and more!

Fun – Fitness Challenge, social activities, etc.

### Pan American Gymnastics Union Gymnaestrada

Includes Educational Forum and workshops, Choreography sessions; PAGU Gala Evening; Preparation, planning and workshops for 2011 World Gymnaestrada.

### Combined Activities

Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Downtown Parade

Educational Forums

International Exhibition Hall and Museum

Special Social Events – We are looking at a holding a Day at the Park for interested groups at a location such as Six Flags over Texas.

## Accommodations/Hotel Information

We currently have rooms blocked for this event at:

**The Fort Worth Omni**  
**1300 Houston Street**  
**Fort Worth, TX 76102**



- Nightly Rate for up to four persons in one room- \$159 + tax per room
- Located Directly across the street from the Convention Center
- Brand new facility with an indoor pool, meeting rooms and restaurant.

You can book rooms online by visiting the 2009 Event information posted at [www.slet2009.com](http://www.slet2009.com) or by calling 1.888.444. 6664 and use special code 190691777 to receive our exclusive rate.

## Side Trips and Excursions

A variety of half-day and full-day tours and excursions will be available during the event.

- Customized tours for your group prior to, during, or following the event are also available.
- More information regarding specific tours and prices will be available in the next bulletin.
- Possible excursions include the JFK Memorial, Southfork Ranch, shopping, Fort Worth Stockyards, Museums, and more!
- Excursions will be arranged by National Travel Systems.



# SOKOL GOES TO BEIJING

Sokol's Rome Milan, Pauline David, Talon & Lesli Milan and daughter Talia (12 years old) spent time at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China. Ever the promoter of Sokol – the Sokol emblem, held by Rome Milan, was seen on The Today Show worldwide! Just one week before, Talia Milan was seen in a "lift" on international television. **Way to promote Sokol y'all!** (They're from Texas if you didn't know!).

Rome Milan is very busy with the planning and promotion of the 2009 International Sport & Cultural Festival being held in Fort Worth, Texas next June. Just as they promoted Sokol in Beijing, they ask that you remember to mention the 2009 event in every Unit and District announcements you send out.

Have you made your arrangements yet?

*Photos provided by Henrietta Milan.*



Beijing Olympics - 2008

Today Show - Sokol on Display



2008 Olympics Beijing

Talia Milan in "lift"



Larry Laznovsky, President of Sokol KHB Ennis, accepts the "Pride of Texas Award" presented to Sokol KHB Ennis, by the Gymnastic Association of Texas at its annual conference. The award is in recognition of KHB's 100th year of the oldest, continuous gymnastics program in Texas. Literally thousands of children, teens and adults have passed through the Ennis Sokol programs.

*The following was recommended for publication by Bro. Peter Latanzio*

Dear American Sokol,

My name is Bob Bajek and I was in Sokol Naperville Tyrs for 16 years. I went to Kurz twice and taught for four years. Right now, I am a sports reporter for the Daily Eastern News at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Ill. I want to be a sports writer as my profession. In the summer, for the June 17th issue of the newspaper, I wrote a column on the Opinions page exploring my love for playing sports and how it helped develop me into the person I am today. I mentioned how Sokol also shaped my life. I hope you enjoy it.

### ***The importance of sports***

By Bob Bajek/Columnist

Growing up, it wasn't school, a musical instrument or even Nintendo's Mario that defines who I am today. That designation belongs to sports.

Sports have always enthralled me as far as I can remember. I was never the one to sit down and do nothing. I liked to run and jump and play. I used to play basketball in the backyard with my brother Lou when I was five or six. We would have dunking contests on our six foot hoop, emulating Michael Jordan or any other 90's Bull. Sometimes I still have trouble keeping my tongue in.

Lou and I would also play baseball every day in the summer. We used a plastic ball and bat. A makeshift pitcher's mound developed from our excessive play.

The unfortunate aspect of our games is that we would argue every call and various physical shuffles would develop. After a while, we grew tired of our fists and finally acquired some sportsmanship around when I was nine.

I wasn't involved in any organized sports because I was very small. However, my family and I were involved in Sokol, a gymnastics program founded in the Czech Republic in 1862. The gym we went to was Sokol Naperville, only a five minutes drive from my house. There are many Sokol gyms located around Chicagoland, the nation and even the world.

I learned how to do cartwheels, forward rolls and events like the rings. Under the guidance of my coaches Bob and Joe Kucera, I was able to go to Level 5, a respectable skill level. My best moves were the

flyaway dismount and handstand on the parallel bars. I also won some medals in the district competitions.

As I got older, I wanted to teach gymnastics. I went to National Instructors School in 2003 and learned how to teach kids. For the next four years, I enthusiastically taught young children Sokol gymnastics. Being a gymnastics teacher was a phenomenal learning experience. I had to overcome my shyness, gain confidence in my abilities and relax.

These lessons I continue to take with me to college and beyond. Sadly, athletic activity is down throughout the country. Many kids are getting overweight and lazy. Athletic inactivity doesn't only help a child physically. It could teach him or her to be hard working, fair, confident and respectful.

Kids should be active in youth sports or even recreational play. One solid youth organization is the National Youth Sports Corporation. According to their Web site, more than two million kids have been involved in the program.

One study, posted on the University of Purdue's news service Web site, states that children enrolled in this program between the ages 10-16 showed positive changes in their views about education, self-perceptions and sportsmanship.

I hope every kid gets involved in a sport either competitively or just for fun. The benefits aren't only physical but extend to important life lessons that a child will not forget

Bob Bajek, Volleyball Reporter  
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*"What happens here...  
stays here!"*



*Please join Sokol Stickney on  
Saturday, November 1, 2008  
for a fundraiser celebrating our 80th year  
at The Oaks Hotel, Burr Ridge, Illinois.  
Cocktails will begin at 6:00 p.m. with open bar  
Dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m.  
"Las Vegas style" entertainment will  
begin at 9:00 p.m.  
Bid on your silent auction choices  
throughout the evening  
Older children and teens are welcome to attend a  
celebration with buffet, beverages, and dancing  
in a separate banquet room  
Donations: Adults \$60 and Children \$25  
For those who would like to stay at the hotel a special  
room rate of \$109.00 plus taxes will be available  
Contact Marie for more information at 708-788-9828*



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To place your ad, contact Jean Hruby at the National Office, 708-255-5397 or email [JeanHruby@American-Sokol.org](mailto:JeanHruby@American-Sokol.org)



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