



Strength in the Eye of Sokol

2009 Slet Follow-Up Issue



Thank you from the American Sokol's 2009 International Sport & Cultural Festival/ American Sokol Slet committee on Page 6



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

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*except in July and August

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Calendar of Events



August

- 8 SGC Golf Outing
- 17-28 Central District Volleyball Clinic - Mon - Wed - Fri
- 28 Sokol Spirit Class Registration

September

- 12 Sokol San Francisco Picnic - Chabot Park
- 12 SGC Vcelka Dramatic Society play
- 13 SGC Vcelka play and Goulash Dinner
- 13 Sokol NY Hiking Trip
- 18 SGC Fish Fry
- 19 Sokol Spirit Czech Language Classes Begin
- 20 Sokol MN 20th Annual Czech & Slovak Festival
- 21 Sokol NY Classes Begin
- 26 Eastern District Mtg - Little Ferry
- 27 Sokol LA - 100 Year Anniversary Celebration
- 28 St. Wenceslas Day/Czech Statehood Day (Den české státnosti)

October

- 14 SGC Genealogy Society Luncheon and Tour #1
- 15 SGC Genealogy Society Luncheon and Tour #2
- 16 SGC Fish Fry
- 18 Sokol MN Family Night - Potluck, Games & Stories for the Children
- 23-24 Sokol Spirit Rummage & Bakery Sale
- 26 Sokol MN Annual Czech Pork Dinner
- 28 Independent Czechoslovak State Day (Den vzniku samostatného československého státu)

Send in your 2009 Fall and 2010 Event Calendars today!

Editor@American-Sokol.org



The Sokol Educator

Sis. EllenJeanne Schnabl, Educational Director

The First Sokol Flag:

Flags, banners & standards were highly prized since ancient times. A group of prominent Prague Women with national feelings and admiration for the new Sokol philosophy, at a ceremony on June 1, 1862, presented to the organization the flag created by Josef Manes, which with its combination of red and white colors, pictured the Sokol falcon and Tyrs' motto "Tuzme se - Let us exert ourselves" became the permanent symbol of the Sokol Organization -- Thanks to Sis. Dorothy Mily.

June 15, 1862: "NAZDAR!" was adopted on a motion by Joseph Barak.

June 16, 1887: First expedition of American Sokols to Praha, led by Bro. Joseph Cermak.

June 24, 1925: First Slet of the American Sokol Federation held in Chicago.

Do you know all 4 stanzas of "The Star-Spangled Banner"? Your District Educational Director has received a copy -- BETTER YET -- Look it up and contemplate the meaning.

"Fountains of Inspiration - The Sokol Slets" from an article by James L. Cihak, American Sokol, June, 1966 - sent by Sis. J. Sedlacek

As pure and invigorating as a mountain stream are the Sokol Slets. The rushing water leaping over, against and around granite boulders, rushes down from the heights to fulfill its natural role. Clean, fresh and active, its song is one of joy, bringing new hope to mankind and a lesson we are too prone to forget.

It is in constant activity, carried on with a well-planned purpose, that we too, as individuals, can develop the characteristics of the mountain stream. Cleanliness, joy in action, faith, hope and the knowledge of the indispensable value of Sokol training can create miracles in our lives as well as that of our nation.

The higher our ideals and goals, the greater the thrill of participation and accomplishment - from Socrates and his "Know Thyself", to the noble teachings of Tyrs, we know of millions whose lives were immeasurably enriched by striving to scale the heights to a finer concept of life.

We, as Sokols, have been unusually fortunate. It has been our good fortune to have been initiated at an early age into a philosophy and practical way of life whose benefits have outweighed the amount of effort we have expended to secure them. The more we have given of ourselves in our Sokol life the more we have unwittingly gained. The rewards have been soul-satisfying. Where else can you find such a gleam of youth and happiness in elderly eyes than at a Sokol Slet where they view the disciplined performances of the young? Their faith and efforts have been vindicated. The Sokol is carrying on in the second century as it had been in the past.

Yes, the Sokol Slets are Fountains of Inspiration, for every age, for every part of this great Nation. They are a declared inventory of past efforts and a pledge to the future. From the competitions of individuals and teams to the massed gymnasts in their combined calisthenics performances we witness the fulfillment of Tyrs' great dream, the physical, moral and spiritual training of everyone for a great democracy's future.

NAZDAR ! EllenJeanne Schnabl, American Sokol Educational Director

From Greg Harris – Executive Director:

I received this very interesting article from a former Sokol Tabor member - very forward thinking and in line with everything we are doing on to promote American Sokol for future generations!
Side notes from Bro. Paul Lebloch and Sis. EllenJeanne Schnabl: Bro. Paul: Bro Zenisek was a member of Sokol Havlicek-Tyrs. He drilled at Sokol Berwyn when their hall was sold.
Sis. EllenJeanne: His wife, Sis. Jarmila gymmed at Sokol Tabor when they had their Tuesday morning classes.

Features, comments, opinions

Sokol values in the United States

This year's XXII. slet of American Sokol scheduled to take place in Fort Worth, Texas, is an opportune time for a few thoughts about Sokol in the United States in its 145th year of its existence. The views expressed are based in part on an article by brother Václav Ženišek, originally published (in Czech) in the newsletter of Czechoslovak Sokol Abroad.

The establishment of Sokol in the United States in 1865 represented a valuable enrichment of the American way of life, by values unrelated and added to the usual economic and social integration process of immigrants. We have only recently started to understand that just as the existence of Sokol in the country of its origin was an expression of the patriotic feeling of the whole nation and thus became an integral and inerasable part of its history and national character, something similar to it was lacking in America. And only now do we begin to fully appreciate the value of immigrants' contributions to their ethnic group upon realization that after six, or even more generations, these groups are still to a great extent representative of the traditions and characteristics of their ancestors. They confirm that those immigrants did not arrive in America with empty hands, but carried with them more than just the meagre possessions in their luggage. They arrived with precious values in their hearts and minds.

Sokol Units in America were founded by these immigrants and it is thanks to them, their enthusiasm and perseverance, that Sokol Units still exist in this land of the free. Those generations arriving before the war, brought with them not only their ability of hard work but also their ideals; they came from a civilized country and required in their new homeland also the social and cultural activity to which they were accustomed.

Immigrants coming to the United States between the two world wars strengthened greatly the Sokol cause with the arrival of a number of capable and enthusiastic individuals. Compared with them, the immigrants, or more properly, the exiles, who arrived after the second world war, have not contributed to Sokol in the United States in any appreciable way. The cruel wartime Nazi occupation resulted in great losses of lives for the Sokol organization and the post-war communist regime in the old country used all means to belittle and erase the nation's own history. As a result, immigrants arriving in the United States during the communist regime in Czechoslovakia were more involved in politics than in national causes.

Now, after 144 years of Sokol's existence in America, the overwhelming majority of its current members are U. S. born. The days and times when American Sokol benefited from instructors and educators arriving from the old country are long behind us. Increasingly immigrants who arrived from communist Czechoslovakia hardly knew of Masaryk, Beneš and Štefánik and of Sokol's existence and history. And, sadly, the knowledge of those arriving from the Czech or Slovak Republics now is not much better.

Greg -
Interesting article
He belonged to Sokol Tabor
Nita

Sokol in America is therefore left to its own resources in all respects. It will be up to those born in the United States to demonstrate whether they have the ability, vision and foresight, as well as the courage, fortitude and perseverance to develop Sokol into a movement attaining the importance and stature that Sokol had in the country of its origin.

We must be grateful to, and supportive of, the present generation of American Sokols in their promotion, furtherance and realization of Sokol ideals and principles. These principles proved decisive in achieving the liberation of Czechoslovakia and in safeguarding its subsequent democratic way of life. These ideas and principles are also of value to the United States and needed at this time - more so than ever before.

In the past the preservation of the Czech and Slovak languages and the retention of old country traditions were considered an important function of Sokol. Now, in the continuing relentless assimilation process, we begin to realize and accept that even upon the loss of the original language, great ideas can still survive and continue to exert their beneficial influence. We realize that even if in future none of Sokol members would speak Czech or Slovak, Sokol ideals could still continue to enrich the United States with much needed time honoured values.

Sokol ideals and efforts are not confined only to health, strength and physical fitness, but are equally, or even more so, devoted to the building of a good and moral character, good citizenship, and an unwavering loyalty and love for one's country - qualities that may be summarized by the word "patriotism". The goal of Sokol efforts in America should therefore now be to meld these ideals with the principles of the United States, its Bill of Rights and Constitution, to have them accepted as a way of life for all citizens.

American Sokol may look back with justifiable pride at its 144-year history. However, as Sokol's founder Tyrš has taught us, even the most glorious past does not guarantee the future. Only continuous forward-looking activity and steadfast adherence to ideals and principles on which Sokol was founded, can do so.

A continued future of Sokol in the United States therefore does not have to depend on the preservation of the Czech and Slovak ethnic heritage, but on the ability of Sokol leaders to promote and incorporate Sokol patriotic ideals into those of the United States. For without the patriotism of its citizens even a great and powerful America will not be able to safeguard permanently its own future.

Stránka pro naše příslušníky, kteří nejsou českého nebo slovenského původu a pro naši mládež druhé nebo třetí generace již v Kanadě narozené.

Another Sokol Success Story!

Sokol Success Story

Submitted by: Sis. Christina Curran-Wurst, Sokol Tabor

“How has Sokol made a difference in your life?”

At noon on August 17, 2007, the Curran household in Westchester, IL was alive and buzzing. My wedding day had approached. In just a couple hours, I would be standing at the altar exchanging vows with my soon to be husband, Tom Wurst.

As a very active member and someone who holds Sokol dear to her heart, I have to admit, it was nice to know I was officially off “Sokol duty” on my special day. A full day off with no Sokol! Is that possible? Even on my wedding day, the answer is “no.” The photographer was busy taking the usual home pictures: bride, bridal party and of course, family. As we were wrapping up shots with me and my four nieces, (all of whom I have taught in Junior Girls) someone called out “take a picture in Dress Right Dress!” My nieces rolled their eyes and I said to myself “Really, Dress Right Dress in my wedding gown?” Within minutes, we were lined up, the command was called and we “snapped” into position. The five of us laughed as we couldn’t believe we were actually doing this!

Now, onto the reception...a tradition at Curran family weddings is for all the cousins to take a large group picture. It is quite the task to gather everyone on the dance floor and have the photographer set up the shot. Once the cousins were dismissed, our “Sokol” family was called to the floor for a large group shot. Of course, we couldn’t take a normal group shot. Someone called out “pyramid” and before I knew it, I was climbing upon the back of some Sokol brothers. Once assembled and the photographer had the right distance (one floor up), the moment was captured on film!

I know Sokol has made a difference in my life with its simple presence on my wedding day. Of course, my involvement in Sokol would not have been possible if it weren’t for my mom, Joan Curran. Mom ~ thanks for enrolling me in Sokol when I was a tot and standing by me as a youth, teen and young adult when I wanted to “throw in the towel.” Sokol is a true gift instilling discipline, leadership, athleticism, teamwork, friendship, laughter and above all things...love.

"Texas Size Thank You"

The American Sokol's 2009 International Sport & Cultural Festival/ American Sokol Slet committee would like to extend a special "Texas Size Thank You" to all the Participants and Spectators who attended the event and made it a success. We congratulate you in your activities, your competitions and in your Spirit to Participate. We hope that all of you had a wonderful experience and will have memories to share for a lifetime.

Our local committee encourages you to reflect on the event in the coming months, consider the activities and the people who shared the memories with you. Whether you won in your competition or not, your participation alone proved greatness and value in your efforts. For years it has been told to you, "It's Gonna be Fun!" This was our Committee's ultimate goal. We hope this was the case. Please share with us, through the website or any other means, your reflections of the venture, the camaraderie, the entertainment, the feeling, the friendships and the experiences you had at the 2009 International Sport & Cultural Festival.



In review, as mentioned, the committee planned to entertain you, to amuse you, to create an environment for fun. The committee also suspected that it was time to share with as much of the country and World the Sokol Ideals and all the things that have made Sokol so dear to members. Sokol must be seen again to progress into the future. This event was a good step in that direction.

The Committee also wanted to share the Southern Hospitality and Cowboy Culture, where best to do that but in the City of Fort Worth. The committee set out with promotional material four years ago, created a dedicated event website, invited several like groups, promoted with post cards in Europe, created a "Saddle Up" campaign, produced a promotional video that circulated on the internet, produced tri-fold brochures, solicited for sponsorships, produced a thirty second TV commercial featuring the Fort Worth Mayor in support, scheduled live entertainment each night, commissioned videographers and professional photographers to record the activities, held interviews with four TV stations and included paid exhibitors at the event. It all culminated into a lot of Fun.

We are proud to say over 1600 participants joined in one or more of the over 22 activities. The Sokol spirit was viewed and shared by the many USA Gymnastics clubs, Foreign visitors, foreign clubs, unique basketball clubs, dignitaries and friends. In our view it appeared that all participants had an exceptional experience.

Congratulations again go out to all of you who participated. Please share with us your recollections of the American Sokol's 2009 International Sport & Cultural Festival.

Nazdar Y'all!

Slet Committee

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.

Kandi Pajer - 117 Oakland Grove - Elmhurst, IL 60126

Kandi@pajer.us

The Western District Competition Results

The Western District held their artistic gymnastic competitions on April 25, 2009.

Here are the results 1st through 4th place.

Level/Place	Competitor Name	Unit	Level/Place	Competitor Name	Unit
Girls Level 1			Boys Level 2		
1 st	Alyssa Black	South Omaha	1 st	Wyatt Smith	Crete
2 nd	Samantha Weber	Crete	2 nd	Dawson Hoover	Crete
3 rd	Ashley Rosburg	Crete	3 rd	Austin Lorenz	Crete
4 th	Madison Benne	South Omaha			
Girls Level 2			Boys Level 4		
1 st	Tristin Smith	Crete	1 st	Christopher Whitely	Omaha
2 nd	Isabelle Wilcox	Cedar Rapids	2 nd	Cody Kraus	Crete
3 rd	Amy Jo Kapperman	Crete	3 rd	Zachery Muff	Crete
4 th	Brandi Schmitt	Crete	4 th	Nathan Derr	Crete
Girls Level 3			Jr. Boys Level 2		
1 st	Meghan Prohaska	Cedar Rapids	1 st	Victor Mark	Cedar-Rapids
2 nd	Shayla Winston	South Omaha			
3 rd	Anna Sommer	South Omaha	Jr. Boys Level 4		
4 th	Emerson Andelt	Crete	1 st	Joey Mark	Rapids
Girls Level 4			2 nd	Eric Sindelar	Cedar-Rapids
1 st	Madison Pohlman	South Omaha	Jr. Boys Championship		
2 nd	Agali Gomez	South Omaha	1 st	Tyler Hamilton	South Omaha
3 rd	Wendi Haufle	Crete	Jr. Girls Level 2 11-14		
4 th	Brooke Foster	Crete	1 st	Elizabeth Cueto	Omaha
Girls Level 5			Jr. Girls Level 3 11-14		
1 st	Emily Mayberger	South Omaha	1 st	Madeline Moser	Minnesota
2 nd	Carly Mark	Cedar Rapids	Jr. Girls Level 4 11-14		
3 rd	Kelsey Betterton	Cedar Rapids	1 st	Nicole Muff	Crete
4 th	Rachel Clark	Minnesota	2 nd Tie	Nicole Corcoran	C. Rapids
Girls Level 6			2 nd Tie	Andi Lawrence	C. Rapids
1 st	Makenzie Horak	Cedar Rapids	3 rd	Alexandra Hewitt	Crete
2 nd	Kaitlyn Barnes	South Omaha	4 th	Kirsten Mitchell	Minnesota
Jr. Girls Level 5 11-14			Jr. Girls Level 4 15-17		
1 st	Mackenzie Pohlman	South Omaha	1 st	Brittney Collett	Omaha
2 nd	Katie Betterton	Cedar Rapids	2 nd	Kelsey Jackson	Omaha
3 rd	Amanda Crane	Cedar Rapids	Jr. Girls Level 5 15-17		
4 th	Ellen Sutton	Cedar Rapids	1 st	Skye Weihe	South Omaha
Jr. Girls Level 6 15-17			Jr. Girls Level 6 11-14		
1 st	Brittany Winkelman	Omaha	1 st	Sarah Sullivan	Omaha
Jr. Girls Championship 11-14			2 nd	Alyssa Kuncil	Omaha
1 st	Lilia Hutchinson	South Omaha	3 rd	Rachel Reyes	Omaha

Congratulations to all competitors.

VANISHING ACT

Stop your child from going missing this summer. By Taniesha Robinson
From Chicago Parent Magazine Chicagoparent.com

Free outdoor festivals are part of what makes summers in Chicago (or any city-KP;) special. They're a great idea for family outings, but the huge crowds can make it a challenge to keep track of even the best behaved child.

Ninety percent of families will experience losing a child in a public place, according to a parent survey by Wander Wear Inc., a company that creates products to prevent children from being lost. Fun, outdoor family time can suddenly turn into a parent's worst nightmare when a child is lost.

"Every parent experiences this and it's not a matter of laziness or ignorance," says Alyssa Dver, family safety expert and founder of Wander Ware Inc. and the Center to Prevent Lost Children. "Kids are curious." Although Wander Wear Inc. sells many products for lost-child prevention like locator tags and brightly colored T-shirts, Dver founded the center to inform parents about what they can do before buying anything. "Nothing in the world is going to replace (a caregiver's) vigilance, keeping their eyes and ears on that child," Dver says.

Nancy McBride, safety director for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, agrees. "I don't think it's a good idea for parents to think that just because they have a product, they're safe," she says, adding that cell phone use is probably the best technology to help ensure family safety.

Here are some ways to make sure your child returns home safely from Chicago's (or any city's-KP;) outdoor summer events:

-Put safe, easily accessible and visible contact information on your child. Whether you buy an identification bracelet or write your number on your kid's arm with a Sharpie marker, make sure to brand your child with your contact information so others can help if he or she is lost. "Even a 2-year-old who doesn't speak very well can flip up their sleeve and point to a number to have somebody call you," Dver says. Always put your cell number instead of your home number and never include home address information.

-Dress children in "away from home" clothing. Brightly colored clothing makes it easy for others to help you find your child. Dver says yellow or green works best because other bright colors like orange or hot pink are too common. The Center for Missing and Exploited Children advises that children should not wear clothing or carry items labeled with their names.

-Check park or venue information beforehand. It's a good idea to consult venue Web sites to familiarize yourself with lost-child codes or print maps to note information booths and plan ahead for family meeting spots.

-Carry a recent photo and description of each child. On the back of the photo, put your cell number and a physical description of your child. "When a parent loses their child, they get Jell-O for brains," Dver says. "They don't remember their own name, let alone their kid's name and all the details of their children." The photograph helps a hysterical parent communicate and gives others a visual of the child.

-Teach your child to ask an authority figure or another mom for help. "We really want people to be talking to people who work at the park," McBride says. She adds that a mom should be a default person of the child cannot identify a police officer or someone who works at the venue. Children can easily pick out another mom in a crowd and this is one authority figure you do want them to talk to if they become lost.

-Shut up, don't delay and don't stray. Calling out your child's name repeatedly alters other event attendants, including potential abductors, that you don't know where your child is. Immediately report your concern to a person in authority, but try not to stray too far from the spot where your child was lost. Chances are he or she is still nearby.

-Celebrate when reunited with your child. Resist your instinct to chastise your child when they return. Children may opt to stay away if lost again out of fear of punishment.

Dver urges parents to teach their children a plan of action, saying it's the best way to ensure the safe return of a child if lost. "Every kid does get lost," she says. "So talk to your kid about it."

When arriving at an event-point out to your child or children (do this even when on a field trip or outing with your classes) who the safe people are. A lot of times, workers at an event have the same colored t-shirt or wear hats-let the child know that those are the safe people also police officers and/or firemen are safe as well. You can also designate a restroom or a special statue (ahead of time) that can be a safe place for the lost child to go and wait for you. It is also helpful when being with a group that you make "buddies", no one should ever go anywhere or be alone. It is a lot easier to find two children together, than it is to find one alone. Have a great summer and be safe! KP ;)

A Clean Gym is a Safe Gym

From USAG

Received from Sis. Mary Ellen Newsom -

A clean and tidy gym is a sign of pride for clubs. It shows that the club's philosophy puts the health and safety of their clients, from athletes to parents and spectators, as a top priority. Part of demonstrating this priority is establishing a cleaning schedule for mats and other equipment. The National Athletics Trainers' Association suggests that all mats be sanitized daily.

Clubs should follow the cleaning and sanitizing guidelines that come with the mats and equipment to be sure to use cleaners and cleaning techniques that not only sanitize the product but also do not compromise its over-all safety, longevity and warranty.

The following are some examples of suggested cleaners for specific manufacturers:

Gibson: Gibson Mat Cleaner

GMR: Mat Miser to clean chalk off mats

Mancino Manufacturing Company: Any regular household detergent; 1 : 10 dilution of household bleach; diluted

Virex from S.C. Manufacturers claims to kill HIV-1

Norberts Athletic Products, Inc.: Lysol with water; Automotive hand cleaners for shoe marks

Resilite: Diluted Kenclean Plus kills viruses, bacteria and fungi on mats

The following additional supplies should be kept on hand in the event of injuries or occasions involving blood or other bodily fluids:

- latex disposable gloves
- rubbing alcohol
- bleach diluted in a spray bottle with water (1 : 10 Ratio)
- clean rags and paper towels
- wet wipes
- diapers
- extra clothes for children

Remember that some children may have issues with allergies. It is a good practice to use the most non-toxic cleaning products and practices available that will still provide the level of cleanliness and sanitizing required. Projecting a "green" cleaning routine will also help show your clients that your club not only cares about the health and safety of the children, but also of the community and environment.

FITNESSFLASH-From Self Magazine

Change of heart-Working out can reshape your figure-and your ticker, a study in the Journal of Applied Physiology reveals. All exercise strengthens the heart, but cardio and weight training transform it in different ways. More research is needed to pinpoint the specific benefits of each activity, but researchers say making both part of your gym beat is best to ensure heart health.

Ask your Unit Director for the strength training program-that Maria Breidenbach and I (Kandi Pajer)-put together for the American Sokol for both adults and children. Some gyms are implementing it right now-see if your gym is one of them KP:).

Walk this way-Plan an outdoor escape with Topo! Explorer, a new database from National Geographic Maps that connects to your GPS. At Topos.com, there are more than 1,081,371 miles of U.S. trails with aerial photos and path descriptions for hikes, runs and more. You can even share pictures and videos of your trip with pals.

Pacemaker-If your favorite song lags behind your workout tempo, you can give it a tune-up at TechnoSweat.com for about \$1. Upload your music, choose beats per minute (130 to 145 bpm for a brisk walk and 155 to 170 bpm for a sprint) and pump up each jam so it's on track with your routine.

SOKOL DETROIT GOES TO TEXAS

Even though Michigan is one of the hardest economically hit states we had 25 participating in various activities at the International Sports and Cultural Festival in Ft. Worth.

If you ask those that went to sum up their time there you would hear words such as HOT, FUN, FRIENDS, GREAT MEMORIES, NICE DISPLAYS; did I say HOT. Many of us were even reminiscing about the last time we were in Ft. Worth for the National Slet in 1981. This was helped along by pictures brought to share and see if we could remember everyone in the various pictures; my how time flies and people get older BUT it was good to know that many of them are still involved in Sokol.



Our group participated in almost every Sokol event such as Opening Ceremonies (numbers were great and so were the skits; I'm still looking for John Wayne for his autograph), Fitness Challenge, Amazing Race (that was so much fun but don't know how many times we had to go up and down on the escalator to guess the right number of hats), Artistic Gymnastics, the Parade, Volleyball, Golf, all the socials, being Meet Directors for Team Marching and Team Cal as well as Artistic competitions, Judging cal, being part of the closing ceremonies as Field Director and performing in Group II, Jr/Sr Aerobics and the Finale. We, of course, are thrilled that we brought back medals for Fitness Challenge, Artistic Competitions and part of the team for 1st place Tug-of-War trophy. A couple of us even came in early to help with last minute stuff to make sure the events would be ready on time.



It was nice to see the groups from USAG, PAGU and SNAP perform and enjoying themselves.

I was honored to be there to welcome in the four bicyclists as they finished their unbelievable feat of biking from Chicago to Texas. What stories and memories they must have. I was mad at myself though that I didn't have cold beer to offer them (especially the Texas draft that was served at the socials). I really enjoyed reading Matt's daily emails about the day's adventure (and glad I was flying in).



Sokol is all about family and traditions. Although we did not have any three generation families participating this time we had lots of two generations ones with Jim and Jerry Kalivoda and daughter Lynn Conrad, Jackie and George Eisenstein and son Marty, Maryann Fiordelis and daughter Teresa Simonds, Dianne Lande and daughter Jenna, Annette Aldrich and daughters Joana and Valentina, and Anita Graham and twin daughters Alana and Ariana Heade. Our junior girls are three sets of sisters: CeCe and Bridget O'Reilly, Valentina and Joana

Aldrich and Ariana and Alana Heade. One tradition that we seem to carry on at these Slets is having my Sokol family help me celebrate my birthday (now if only I could have my husband with me!) and my teacher and mentor, Jerry Kalivoda for always remembering the cake.



As our President, Renata Greene, stated at our unit meeting, a big thank you goes out to Teresa Simonds for volunteering to chaperone CeCe and Bridget O'Reilly so they could be with us in Texas. That's what family is all about.



I can't close before saying a big thank you to our National Directors, Barb Vondra and Chuck Kalat, for their hard work and dedication for putting much of this together as well as the Southern District Slet Committee for stepping out of the box in hosting these events.



Nazdar,
Maryann Fiordelis, Women's Physical Co-Director

Ride2Camp – Progress Reports

This was so much fun to follow and I wanted to share with you – however, to include all their photos would be impossible in this issue. Therefore - I opted to reduce the font size and paragraphing in an attempt to share their story. I hope you enjoy. Nancy

Day 1 - Friday, June 12, 2009: We just set up camp for the night in Fisher, IL. We traveled 123 miles starting at 5:36am and ending at 4:48pm. The townsfolk are great and welcomed us with open arms.

Day 2 - Saturday, June 13, 2009: We had a very eventful day today. Here is a time line of June 13. 12:57 am- local hooligans throw rocks at our tents, play loud music and kicked our tents. We chased them away and spent the next 4 hours in a half sleep. 6:02 am - left Fisher Illinois 32 minutes late. 9:00- rescued buster the dog and returned him safely to his owners. 12:15 PM- climbed our biggest hill yet only to meet a local bike enthusiast and an AM beer connoisseur. He invited himself to ride the next 30 miles with us, 12:48- he didn't make it. 4:30- Dawn and John Ourada and kids of Sokol Stickney meet up with us on their way to St Louis. Wonderful surprise! 5:15 we rescue a massive injured turtle from the road. 7:38 we arrive at Ramsey state park. Now- we need sleep, after completing our two longest days.

Day 3: Sunday, June 14, 2009: Fortunately for us, and unfortunately for you, Day 3 was much less eventful than Day 2. We had no run-ins with animals, the law or any interesting strangers. But, here is what we did do since we last emailed you: We arrived at Ramsey Lake State Park after feeling unsafe and unwelcome in Ramsey, IL. This was the same size town as our previous overnight stay, but we got nothing but bad vibes, so off to the State Park we went. We arrived near sundown as we had way too many extra stops, so we rushed to set up camp, apply bug spray, fill our water bottles, etc. After finding the spots in our respective tents that has the fewest sticks and stones underneath, we quickly fell asleep. No loud music, no unruly teens, no worries about our bikes. However, Matt Carozzi was still rudely awakened. The culprit? Mark and his unruly appetite. He woke up so hungry that he rifled through his bags to find his leftover Subway, thus alarming Carozzi. He was not a "happy camper!" We arose at 4:45am, packed our tents, ate fruits and granola and departed for our next 113 miles to Carbondale. We started on route 51, ate lunch on route 51, and ended on route 51. The wind was on our backs about 90% of the day, and we made great time. Even with the wind aiding us, we were all surprised at our performance and energy level, considering we just completed our 2 longest days, and day 3 was the hottest yet. Our planned stop in Carbondale, IL was at a Sokol friend's house. Allison has been at SU for 2 years completing her master's degree and welcomed the opportunity to house and feed us on our journey. Now, we're packing our bags (in air conditioning), memorizing the route for tomorrow (in air conditioning), getting our CLEAN clothes out of the dryer (in air conditioning) and preparing to sleep well for the first time in days! Oh, and we got our uniforms tonight! They arrived late in Chicago, so we had them overnighted to Allison's. They're a bit snug, but they sure look cool on us. PS - We're 31.67% finished!

Day 4: Monday June 15, 2009 - Greetings from the Show Me State! After we all slept like babies in beds, on couches or on the floor (Carozzi insisted), we ate delicious banana nut pancakes Allison prepared for us and departed toward the Mississippi River. At the start, we had to conquer our hilliest segment of land yet. The hills were both steep and long, but we had not yet warmed up our legs, backs, etc. Though right around when the hills began to shrink, Mother Nature decided to make up for an uneventful day 3. As the rain started, we pulled over to waterproof our things and ourselves. For about 2.5 hours, we were pelted with rain, but our spirits were high and the cool drops acted as natural air conditioning. With the wind still our friend today, we pedaled on, making great time! Our lunch destination was historic Cairo (pronounced kay-row). We imagined this town, right on the Mississippi, would be full of action. Not the case. We have been riding through some pretty bleak, run-down towns, but we all left Cairo mildly depressed. On a Monday at midday, the town was virtually abandoned. Grandiose marquees falling apart. Formerly gorgeous 1920s houses all boarded up. 9 out of 10 businesses were vacant. This town seemingly had been robbed of its spirit, much different from the other small Illinois towns that seemed to be apathetic about their lives. All we can imagine is that when I-57 came through and a new, better bridge was built, Cairo went by the wayside. After a depressing lunch, we carried on in the rain to the bridge to cross the Mississippi River into Missouri. The bridge was so narrow that two

trucks could barely fit side by side. When the coast was clear, we went for it. As the bridge was long and steep, we caused a pretty large traffic jam! Alas, though, Missouri! The rain stopped finally and we entered a small town called East Prairie at a gas station to carb up. An older woman approached us as we were eating snacks and asked us about our trip and invited us to a charity ride they have every year. We could not make it as it was a week away, but she kept talking to us. She had heard about tornado watches in the area and wanted to get us safely to our final stop. She made a few calls and escorted us about 5 miles to our final stretch. She said that 'they'd be waiting for us' in New Madrid. Now, here we sit in the New Madrid, MO community center (which we were simply escorted to by the police and given the keys to the door). We are extremely full because the town advisor made a call to a restaurant called Rosie's and said we could eat for free. We have heat/ac, water, fridge, toilets, a roof and a new favorite town! We are more grateful than you can imagine for the people here and for Silvie, our friend who made it all possible from East Prairie. Well, it's getting late and we need to check our tires, pack our panniers and get some rest! Arkansas tomorrow!

Day 5: Tuesday June 16, 2009 - This morning, we woke up warm and dry with refrigerated fruits and water. We mopped up our mess at the New Madrid Community Center and departed for Arkansas! We figured we'd get out of Missouri as soon as possible because we wouldn't find anything better there. At around 6:37am, though, tragedy struck. An ear-deafening pop followed by Carozzi skidding to a stop meant we'd be fixing a tire. We pulled into the grass and assessed the situation. A tube can be patched within minutes. A small hole in a tire can be plugged long enough to get to a bike shop. A 6 inch rip along the seam of the tire equals a new tire. We had patches and tubes, but this was beyond repair. With our handy dandy Internet phones, we looked up the nearest bike shops. There was nothing within 30 miles. And, it was not even 7am. We were talking about Carozzi hitching a ride to a shop while everyone else continued. We talked about somehow rigging his bike to Kocek's and having a make-shift tandem bicycle. After scratching all plans, we went to our new friend: Silvie. Carozzi called Silvie to ask if she knew of any local shops that did not come up on our phones. She only knew of the ones we'd found. There was a Wal-Mart 20 miles north of her that had our new tire and we said we'd call the county to see if a police officer could give us a ride. They said they had no one available. Mark then tried using his AAA membership to tow us all to Wal-Mart. He gave the directions and then the questions came about the vehicle. Uh oh. The operator had never heard of a 2008 Novara Safari. When Mark explained that it was a bicycle, the conversation quickly ended. Meanwhile, as Silvie had not heard back from us, she had already gotten out of bed, filled up her gas tank and let her husband know she was going to see some guys she met last night. She insisted on driving to Wal-Mart and all the back down to where we were. We fixed the tire and were off. After 3.5 hours, we had traveled 7 miles. Not a good start. Shortly thereafter, it started to rain again. Well, it didn't really rain. It was more like thousands of pellets being shot out of guns onto our skin, into our eyes and mouths. We could not see. We could barely ride straight. The winds were as strong as they had been all trip. The sky was black. Yet, we were all calm. We rode on. Until the sirens started to sound. Even being from large metropolises, we knew sirens were bad. Now, rather than squinting to avoid the needle-like rain, our eyes were wide open darting across the horizon looking for a tornado to touchdown. We contemplated stopping at every house we passed, but made into the next town. And just as abruptly as it started, it ended. We all felt scared, yet with adrenaline pumping, and will never forget the sirens. The good news was that we were ahead of schedule from the day before, so we had only 90 miles to go (yes, ONLY 90). So, we were about 30 miles in, pumped up, wet and 3 hours behind. The rest of the day we hoped would be better. As we hit our final 60 mile stretch, our dear friend Mother Nature was up to no good again. We were heading southwest and for 60 straight miles, the wind was traveling northeast. And be traveling, we mean racing. Averaging 30 miles per hour, the wind was relentless. We took turns leading, acting as a shield to the others as we filed tightly together, but we were getting completely worn out. After about 40 miles, we decided that we'd switch every mile, with the "shield" falling to the back for 3 miles of rest before being beaten down again. This plan worked surprisingly well and we all were able to overcome the wind. At around 7:05, we arrived at our destination:

Paragould, AR. Now we sit at Brad's house, a "couch surfer" member who hosts other members of the couch surfing community. (There is actually a website where people make profiles advertising their need for places to sleep while traveling or their ability to house travelers.) Aside from being a great host and being fully prepared, Brad is also a part-time bike repairman. Not only are we comfortable, well-fed and safe, but we all got tune-ups too! So, aside from the mini-explosion in Carlozzi's tire, the casting call for Twister 2 and the 30+ mph winds, we had a great day. In all honesty, if we had not been staying at Brad's, but rather in our tents, the day would be classified as awful. We look forward to waking up sore tomorrow and doing it all again.

Day 6 Wednesday, June 17, 2009 -Hello from Clarendon,

Arkansas!! Raise your hand if you thought yesterday was a rough day. 4 hands would be up here, had we the strength. Now, for the 3rd time, we have had our hardest day yet. It was relatively uneventful, but here is how it went. We packed our things at Brad's and departed toward Clarendon, 118 miles away. It was in the 80s at 6am. Not a good start. The hills were a plenty by 6:15. The wind was howling in our faces by 7:00. Our good night of rest was made irrelevant before rush hour. We trekked on, as usual, and stopped for a much-needed break from the wind and sun at a diner in Hickory Ridge called the Fowl Play Cafe. This town had a population of 158 and had a sign upon entering that read "if it flies, it dies." Thrilling. We sat at the cafeteria table in the only open seats near some guys who were working on the road in town. We got to talking as we do and were informed of the nothingness that was to follow on our route. After eating, we left and planned our stops according to our new friends. With the wind and heat, we needed to plan precariously. By this point we were stopping every 10 to 15 miles which was killing our time and hopes to make it to Clarendon. We pulled up to a small cinder block building in Hunter, a town of 118. We were greeted by the owner who offered us free water and chips. As we were about to leave (after a lengthy chat with the owner's wife Marcia and her friend), we were asked where we were staying. We said we'd have to figure that out if we actually made it to Clarendon. We were contemplating stopping in a motel in a town before there. Then Marcia said to hold on. She called her ex-mother-in-law and asked if we could sleep in her yard in Clarendon. You all can guess what happened next. Three of us are now asleep in the guest bedroom of a 500 square foot home of an 80 year old widow. The other is soon to follow. We got showered and changed and prepared for our 7th consecutive day of our journey. Unfortunately we did not take many pictures today as we were too exhausted to be touristy, our phones did not work often, and it was near impossible for us to finish our day. If not for knowing we had a backyard to stay in, we undoubtedly would be behind schedule starting tomorrow. We are beaten down. There is not one single body position that is remotely comfortable. What keeps us going are the people we continue to meet and the supportive emails and texts we receive from all of you. Without you all and the amazing people we have encountered, we would be just another group of people looking to do something crazy. We do have a mission, and because of the supporting cast of loyal readers and local good Samaritans, we will not fail. Goodnight from Clarendon!

Day 7: Thursday, June 18, 2009 - Salutations from Bearden, AR.

We woke up at 4:30 and packed up, carbed up, and pumped up in our little spare bedroom. Our new grandmother, Maedean, was up with us in her hair net and nightgown and made us pose for pictures. She gave us huge hugs and told us to come back anytime. We were off to the bridge. Leaving Clarendon included crossing a massively long and steep bridge that when two semi trucks are crossing simultaneously, "they smack mirrors." Two different people in two different towns told us that. To add to the already inherent danger, we crossed in the dark. Well, nothing exciting happened. Sorry. We were cruising until we wound up on an interstate. Without notice, route 79 merged with an interstate and we got into a bit of an argument. One of us wanted to stop and look at the map. One wanted to throw the bikes over a fence and take the frontage road. One wanted to go backwards on the interstate. And Mark just wanted to eat. We went back up and went to the center of Pine Bluff. It was lunch time and humid as can be. We sat and talked to a bunch of people as they left the gas station as we rested for well over an hour. As we were pulling out, a woman pulled up, asked Steph our story and after 20 seconds, parked her car, got out, and handed Steph \$20. We jotted down her email address and thanked her graciously for her blind generosity. We love Arkansas! We continued on our slightly windy (but only about 10mph, which is still awful, but better than the previous 3 days), extremely hot and humid

ride. We stopped a few places for Gatorade and snacks, and in Rison, Marcia (from the day before) called me saying she has a cousin in a town 15 miles past our stop in Fordyce that we could stay with. We had a decision to make. In Fordyce, we ate and bought fruits for the next 2 days and thought about staying in a motel; our first non-free night. We were tired, grumpy and content having made it to our scheduled stop, but the idea of getting ahead intrigued us. Free intrigued us more. A new set of people helping us was the kicker.

Tired, grumpy and full, we hopped back on the saddle and headed to Bearden. We entered the town and were alarmed at the rundown buildings. We got to the house and... Well, just look at the picture!

Jeff and Mindy are PHENOMENAL! Jeff is Marcia's distant cousin with whom he hasn't spoken in 10 years. Within seconds we were family. We had towels, food, water and laughs galore and once again, new friends. We've got couches and blow-up mattresses waiting and another long (but 14 miles shorter now!) day tomorrow!

Day 8 Saturday, June 20, 2009 - Howdy all y'all Ride2Camp

followers! Wow. Is it really the 8th night? It feels like a month since we were in Fisher, yet, at the same time, does not feel like we've been in the middle of nowhere for 8 days. At the start of day 8, we awoke at 4:30am, and Mindy was awake and ready to make us breakfast. As we prepared, she cut up some fruit, scrambled some eggs, cooked some sausage, baked some biscuits and made 4 very sore individuals into 4 very sore and full individuals. We exchanged hugs and handshakes with Mindy and Jeff and left in the dark again. The earlier we leave, the less time we'll have to be in the Arkansas sun. A smooth shoulder on route 79 coupled with full bellies made for an easy first leg of the day. Jeff even caught up with us on his way to work and snapped some action shots of us. We took our usual break after a few hours and decided the best plan was to take another break before lunch. The sun really gets hot, and rather than eat lunch at 11:00am as usual, we were going to eat after 12:00pm and sit at a restaurant during the hottest part of the day. By the time we were done eating and drinking bottomless glasses of ice water and sweet tea, we started to get excited; we were going to be in Texas in 27 miles! While we did miss the sun for almost 2 hours, it was still waiting to roast us when we got back to the road. Not only were we almost to our final state, but the locals told us that the rest of the way was flat. After applying sunscreen (again!), we departed for the hilliest segment of our journey yet... Apparently the either today was "opposite day" or "lie about the Arkansas terrain day" because we were miserable as the hills kept rolling up and down for about 18 miles. But, we could smell Texas. Neither the 99 degree temperature with high humidity nor the foothills of the Ozarks was going to keep us out. Kocek had his iPod on and his speakers bungeed to his bike and we rocked and rolled. At about 5:15pm, we crossed into the Texas half of Texarkana! The flashing bank signs still read 97-99 degrees, but in a few moments, we'd be at Michael's house in the air conditioning. Michael and Alecia are also on couchsurfer; the same place that connected us with Brad. We quickly showered, relaxed, played with the dogs Marley and Kaya, and ate chicken, vegetables and potatoes from Michael's garden (all but the chicken). Now we're horizontal for the night. And looking to wake up again around 4:30am to avoid at least some of the sun. We're sorry nothing really exciting happened today, but we were due for a break. We're not actually sorry, as the hills and heat were more than enough to cripple us without the aid of exploding tires, tornados, turtles in the road, thunderstorms or backtracking off of the interstate. Please continue to send emails and texts. We read them all, but hope you understand we'd never sleep if we responded to everyone. But, in 2 1/2 days, we'll have all the time in the world! 247 miles to go!

Day 9 Saturday, June 20, 2009 - We woke up at Michael's house

at 4:30am with smiles on our faces. We got to sleep relatively early, we were clean, we had strawberries and bananas awaiting us and we knew that we had woken up in Texas! Our journey was more than 75% finished and we had no more state lines to cross. The countdown had begun. We started out in the Texarkana dawn with our annoying flashing red tail lights switched on. The morning was warm and muggy, but the road was relatively smooth. We rode on a road with a 70mph speed limit, though. This was a little unnerving, but being a Saturday, traffic was light. However, we still managed to pass a vehicle moving in the same direction as us. We swear to you that we passed a covered wagon with a family inside being drawn by horses on a 70mph road. We asked what on earth they were doing. They were simply going 8 miles into town for breakfast. (This inspired us to

start planning the logistics of Ride2Camp 2010!) Before we left, Michael said the roads would be fairly level the rest of the way. He was right... for the first 20 miles. Yesterday the hills were massive and frequent. Today, they simply never stopped. By 8:30, we were soaking in sweat from the laborious pedaling up and down. We made a point to mention the hills yesterday, but today was actually worse. None of us recall a time in the final 75 miles when we rode 2 miles without climbing a significant grade. We should have been alarmed when we looked at the map at towns like Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, etc. Instead, we grumbled again about someone imagining the smooth interstates nearby and assuming the back roads were equally flat. Good news is that the high was only 95 today. Near our lunch stop, a woman rode by us flailing her arms at us in excitement. We stopped and greeted her, only to learn that it was Rhonda Liska of Sokol Ennis. She had been emailing us for a few days and just decided to spend her Saturday with us 70 miles from home. She had a cooler full of Gatorade, water, energy drinks (which we passed on) and juice. She then offered her services for the day, basically to be our escort. She drove up ahead of us and made sure we were hydrated, then went into Winnsboro and scoped out the scene. We were ahead of schedule, so Winnsboro was our final destination. There, Rhonda picked up menus from the local eateries and haggled with the local motel to get us the corporate rate. That and pretty much decided our fate for the night, and after being spoiled indoors for 6 consecutive nights, it was really hard to argue. I don't think she would've taken no for an answer anyways. She had logged 150 miles in her car being our servant, so it was the least we could do. Rhonda has left us now (after a grocery store stop, which was after eating at La Parrilla) with drinks and snacks from home. She is a true Sokol, just as dedicated to our cause as we are. She would have sold her car had we asked her to, and we look forward to seeing her Monday when we're finished riding. Yes, that is 2 more days of pedaling! It is way past our bedtime now, thus this very hilly chapter of our story must come to an end. We look forward to sharing tomorrow's hopefully smooth, dry, cool, and wind-free day. There are only 157 more pesky little miles to go. It's not over yet, but we can sure feel it!

Day 10 Sunday, June 21, 2009 -Good evening from Poetry, TX! Our connection was so bad last night that we had fallen asleep 2 hours before the phone actually mustered enough signal to send the email. We apologize to anyone who was waiting for it last night. Today started as usual at 4:30am in air conditioning. We admit it; we've been spoiled. We packed our bags and out we went, only to find Carlozzi's front tire to be flat. Of course the one rider with huge mountain tires is the only one to have tire issues. The hole was so small that it took 4 people 30 minutes to find and repair it. Thus, we were off to a late start. Little did we know that it had only begun. After a late start, we were all looking forward to finally finding the flat part of Texas. To date, we are yet to find it. The hills were out to get us today. They were not the tallest, but oh were they consistent!? We don't typically mind a hill or two, as we get a rest when rolling down. The last three days, though, have been absolutely awful, today being the worst. But, we were only a day and a half from the end. After a few hills, the winds picked up. Now we haven't had a wind at our backs since day 3, so we were used to it. But the wind hadn't been that bad with the hills.

Today, they were working in unison against us. We went two directions: south and west. This means the wind was either up our noses or in our left ears. Neither of these felt good. As expected, by 9:00am, we were soaked with sweat. The heat was coming quickly. Within our first 3 hours, we were all grumpy due to all of the elements teaming up on us. We were actually wishing for rain. To add to the mix, we were also riding on the worst pavement we'd ever been on. Later we found out it is "murphey pave" which we speculate was done during the lazy recession instead of repaving the roads. These are gravel roads that are simply soaked in black oil, leaving them as rough as the regular gravel, but in one 30 mile piece of gravel instead. This led us to ask of Texas, "What else do you have?" Oops...As we were approaching our lunch stop, we were climbing another hill in a tight cluster. Carlozzi had to swerve to avoid bumping Stephanie's bag and as a result, Mark bumped him. In an instant, Mark had to avoid swerving into 70mph traffic while maintaining control of his bike on the crummy road. He was successful in remaining on the shoulder. Control on the Murphy Pave, though, was near impossible. He laid down his bike behind us, causing us all to stop. Alertly, Mark dragged

his bike to the grass before searching for his first aid kit. Carlozzi got to him first, and his sock was already bloody from the gash on his knee. After a few minutes of panic, first aid, and repacking our bags, Mark was able to mount again and make it to the Subway for lunch. There we ran into some local paramedics who have is some more first aid advice and supplies. After a 2 hour lunch and re-bandaging, we were off to Terrell. At this point, we were not going to ask Texas any more seemingly rhetorical questions. We knew she had power over us. We just had to keep on riding. And we did, all the way to Paula's house in Poetry, TX. We arrived, exchanged life stories, current and past jobs, and stories about the ride. Before long, we were at a farm enjoying interacting with dogs and horses with Paula and her daughter. It was a very relaxing evening; something we needed after Texas have is everything she had. As we sit here on a farm, ready for bed, we are all thinking to ourselves, "Is that really all you've got, Texas?" But shhh... We dare not say it aloud. Today we were challenged. One thing after another we conquered. Everything is bigger in Texas. But, the bigger Texas gets, the better we get. Our reward for such a rough day? We're 78 miles from the finish line; our shortest day yet! See y'all in Ft. Worth tomorrow!

Day 11 Tuesday, June 23, 2009 - Nazdar Y'all from Fort Worth, Texas!! WE MADE IT! But, here is how it went... Yesterday was our hottest day yet, and of course it could not have been as easy as simply riding 78 miles to the Ft. Worth Convention Center. By 9:30am, we had taken 3 wrong turns and had to figure out a new route on the fly. We ran into roads with no name and a bridge that had been closed down without the knowledge of our mapping program. Yet, we regrouped, rerouted and trudged on through the hottest day yet. It was over 100 degrees yesterday, and by the end, our 78 miles turned into 103. To add to our frustrations, Kocek blew his rear tube about 35 miles from the finish line. We patched it, only to have it blow again 5 miles later. There was an issue with the actual tire, as there was a small hole in it, and it was looking like it had the possibility of becoming the same issue Carlozzi had on day 5. Kocek removed his front and rear tires, put an emergency boot on the hole and switched it to the front, as the rear has significantly more weight. At this point, we were pedaling with our fingers crossed. Our finish time had gone from from 3:00pm to 6:30pm, and our faithful, awaiting our arrival, were getting anxious and worried. At 6:30pm, we made the turn into the convention center, not knowing what to expect. We thought there would be a few Sokol dignitaries waiting to congratulate us, and possibly a few other Sokol who were milling around the area. But, we rode into a screaming crowd of about 75 people, all clapping, waving flags, and snapping pictures. Congratulatory shouts were filling the air. Everyone was overjoyed; some even with tears in their eyes. We had just finished something no one we knew had ever done. Everyone was so filled with emotion because they all know that we did not really finish anything; we have only begun our mission. We would like to thank everyone who supported our cause. We are now in the process of compiling materials to send to corporations about how successful we were and about the lives we touched. We would like to thank all the loyal readers and their support during the ride. The emails we got were heart-warming and supportive. We never imagined a crazy little ride through the heart of the country would have gotten attention outside of Sokol. There are so many people behind the scenes that we would like to thank, but the list would go on and on. Now, we have a week to celebrate. In between celebrating, we have a basketball tournament, 2 volleyball tournaments, marching competitions, 5k runs and people to tell our tale to. Please excuse us for being late, and please excuse us in advance for not replying to everyone's emails this week. When we return home, please look for an update on the ride and a more detailed overview of our trip. For anyone who would like to donate to the American Sokol National Leadership Camp Fund, please find the attached form. We are nowhere near where we need to be, but with your support (and our legs) we will get there. Please stay tuned for more information about Ride2Camp 2010!

Nazdar Y'all!

Matt, Matt, Mark, Steph

§ Legal Advice in Czech & Slovak

by Attorney at Law in Czech Republic

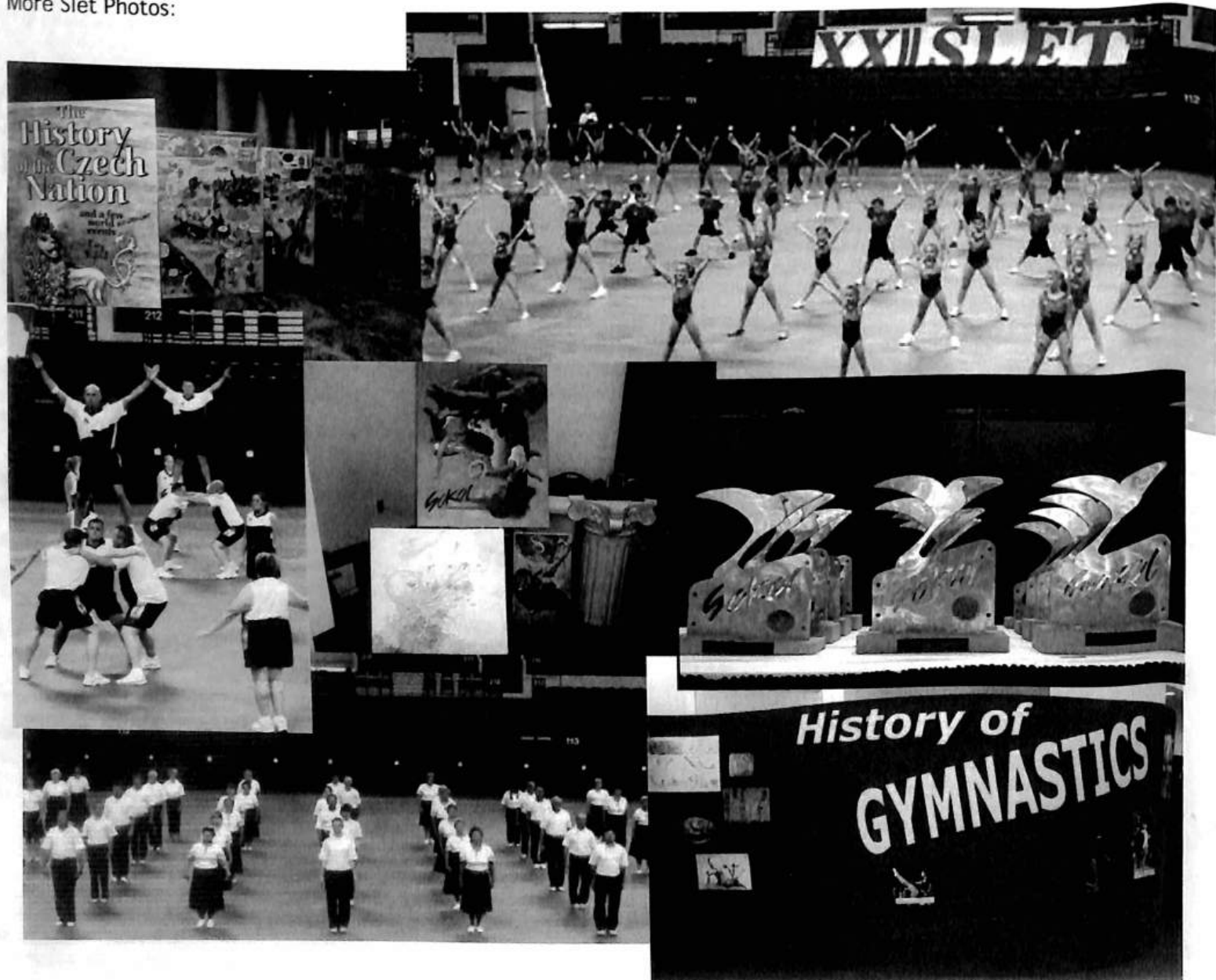
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STRATEGIC TASK FORCE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM SENT OUT TWO SURVEYS

They say a decent return on surveys is 20%. Wonder how American Sokol Units fare against that. Let's take a look.

The first survey that the team sent out was regarding the communication process from team to units, units to members and community and if they have implemented any of the programs yet. The survey went out in March with an April 15 deadline.

Central District has nine units; heard from four or 44% (nothing from Ceska Sin, Chicagoland, Milwaukee, Spirit and St. Louis). Eastern District has five units; heard from four or 80% (nothing from Washington). Northeastern District has two units; heard from both or 100%. Pacific District has three units heard from none or 0%. Southern District has seven units and heard from four or 57%. Western District has seven units and heard from six (or so I've been told but haven't seen any surveys); been told only one that hasn't turned in anything is Cedar Rapids. So that's a total of 33 units and heard from 20 or 61%. So percentage wise, that's pretty darn good.

Now let's take a look at some of the responses. Eight out of the fourteen that I actually have, stated they felt communication from Implementation Team was effective and ten felt that materials they received were sufficient to start the implementation of the core programs. When asked if they felt the communication from unit to members regarding the implementation of the core programs was effective, only four indicated yes. Only three units indicated they were communicating with the general public about our core programs. When asked if they have actually implemented any of the programs several were in talking stage, couple looking for volunteers to head up the programs, four ready for Fitness program, one all but fitness, one has been doing all the programs right along as well as many others, a couple stated they were not considering the Educational program as it is offered in community (and some are for free).

We then asked what types of plans they had in place for implementing any of the other core programs. The answers ranged from nothing at this time, to surveying members, to forming committees, to looking for volunteers to wanting to hire a Program Director. We know since the time of the survey that Sokol Tabor has started summer programs and opened it up to the community with decent results and several other units are actively looking into hiring a General Manager or Program Director to assist with these programs and getting more activities into their halls on a daily basis.

The next survey we sent out was to Unit Physical Directors regarding the Instructor Guidelines and knew we had to get this back before the end of the gym year so there was a June 1 deadline. We also realized that the end of the year is a busy time with competitions and getting ready for National Slet so we weren't sure what kind of a response we would receive. And in fact we only heard back from Central District (7 out of 9 with only Stickney and Naperville not responding), Eastern District only Little Ferry responding, and both units from the Northeastern District or a 30% return rate. We are hoping to still get more in and want to share our findings with the National Board of Instructors first so stay tuned.

Nazdar, Maryann Fiordelis, Implementation Team Lead

More Slet Photos:





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