



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


The Core Programs of the American Sokol



Physical Fitness 
Providing programs for people of all ages to improve health, fitness and overall well being.

Educational 
Offering programs that enrich and broaden the mind including CPR, Health and Nutrition and Leadership Training.

Cultural 
Providing a variety of classes that educate and cultivate its multi-cultural communities.

Social 
A truly social environment for the individual, community and family providing unity, culture and promoting positive ideals and values.

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Meets every 4th Tuesday* at 7:30 pm

ASO Board of Instructors

Meets every 2nd Wednesday* at 7:30 pm

*except in July and August

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From the Editor...

"Spring has put a spirit of youth in everything."
- William Shakespeare

Don't forget to submit relevant, interesting articles,
newsletters and more to be featured in *American Sokol*.
Send material by mail or email (editor@american-sokol.
org). I look forward to hearing from you!

NAZDAR!



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Meet the American Sokol Executive Board

Christina Curran- Wurst National Public Relations



Nazdar! My name is Sister Christina Curran-Wurst from Sokol Tabor in Berwyn, IL, where I have been a member for 35 years. If someone told me at the age of 10 that I would grow up to hold many positions with the American Sokol, I probably would have smiled, shook my head and said "No, I'm just here to be a gymnast." While I did become a gymnast, Sokol also created a leader out of me: Unit Instructor (20 years), Unit Women's Director (6 years), Central District Board of Instructors (16 years), Co-Director Central District Skills and Progressions Clinic (6 years), Central District Marketing and Communications Director (2 years), National Board of Instructors (11 years), a regular contributor to the American Sokol Publication and countless other *committees* throughout the years. In April 2010, I had the privilege to represent Sokolice Tabor as our Unit Delegate to the 2010 American Sokol Convention. There, I was nominated and elected the National Public Relations Director.

Some key Public Relation events and projects this past year include the coordination of a Sokol Oasis at the 2010 Chicago Marathon, launch of the new American Sokol website, and representation on the National Uniform Committee and 2013 American Sokol Slet Steering Committee. Two main goals for this year: establish a strategic marketing plan and formulate initial PR plans for the 2013 Slet.

If there is one thing I have learned as a member of the American Sokol, it is that our organization contains diverse membership. Each of us has our own thoughts, opinions and feelings on how our organization, districts and units should be operating. Recently, I attended

a FranklinCovey seminar titled *Generations and Diversity*. It provided good insight and most importantly taught me how to interact differently. Did you know this is the first time in history organizations are faced with four generations of people? Which generation are you? Please take the time to read each generation description.


Traditionalists: Born between 1901 and 1943. About 95% are retired from the workforce. Those who remain are at or near retirement or work reduced hours. They value traditional morals, safety and security as well as conformity, commitment and consistency. Common characteristics: hard working, loyal, submissive and tech-challenged.

Baby Boomers: Born between 1944 and 1964. They are associated with the rejection or redefinition of traditional values. By the sheer force of its numbers, the boomers were a demographic bulge which remodeled society as it passed through it. Labor statistics indicate that over the next decade nearly 80 million Baby Boomers will exit the work place. Common characteristics: work-centric, independent, goal-oriented and competitive.

Generation X: Born between 1965 and 1981. Commonly referred to as Gen X, this generation marks the period of birth decline after the baby boom and is significantly smaller than previous and succeeding generations. On the whole, they are more ethnically diverse and better educated. Over 60% of Gen X attended college. Common characteristics: individualistic, technologically adept, flexible and value work/life balance.

Millennials: Born between 1982 and 2003. Millennials have developed characteristics from doting parents, structured lives, and contact with diverse people. They are used to working in teams and want to make friends with people at work. Millennials have a *can-do* attitude, want a variety of tasks and expect that they will accomplish every one of them. Positive and confident, Millennials are ready to take on the world.

Take a moment to think about these 4 generations and their relationships within the American Sokol, on the unit, district and national levels. By understanding each generation and their work ethic, we can begin the steps necessary to foster the growth of Sokol.

One thing is for certain. We must lead and effectively work with diverse teams. We must understand the importance of our diverse membership. We must leverage diversity to improve results (i.e. increase membership, connect with the community). We must adjust to changing demographics. Most importantly, we must challenge unproductive beliefs and stereotypes, and recognize the value of each member's unique contribution. Only then, can we make Sokol a household name. 



The Sokol Educator

Sis. EllenJeanne Schnabl, Educational Director

APRIL

"Diamonds are a girl's best friend" as the song goes. This coveted gem is the birthstone for APRIL. Its colors can range from clear, bluish to sooty black.

The modern version of April Fools' day started around 1562 when Pope Gregory introduced a new calendar with the year starting on January 1st.

Withholding tax was instituted in 1943 as a "temporary" measure. HA! This is not an April Fool's joke!

Gaylord Nelson, the Democratic governor of Wisconsin is credited with starting Earth Day. While serving as Senator from 1963 to 1981, his actions led to the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act.

The 3rd week of April is National Volunteer Week. It is when we forget ourselves that we do things for others that are most likely to be remembered.

April 7, 1348: King Charles IV founded the University of Prague, the first in Central Europe.

April 9, 1862: Foundation laid for the first gymnastic building of the Prague Sokol Organization.

April 15, 1891: First Sokol Unit in Prague established the first mounted division.

April 27, 1865: The American Civil War ended.

The end of April brings "Spores 'N More" Festival when the mushroom hunting season begins in Illinois.

The last Friday is Arbor Day named in honor of J. Sterling Morton in 1887.

April is National Poetry, Smile and School Library month.

Black Hills Gold was originated by Henri Lebeau, a Frenchman, in the Dakota Territory. He added zinc or silver to produce the green leaves; added copper to make rose leaves & yellow gold for other design elements.

Tea goes back to 2737 B.C. when a Chinese emperor, a scholar, herbalist and scientist, stopped to rest in his travels and servants began to boil his water which was a practice decreed for good health. A gentle breeze swept dried leaves from a nearby camellia bush into the water and the infused brew was thought to be the embodiment of Nature's refreshing flavor.

I saw an elephant walking down the road. He had a book and was going to school. He carried a satchel to hold his lunch. APRIL FOOLS!

MAY

KVETEN

V majovem slunicku
rosa se trpyti
uvijme venecky
z vonneho kviti

MAY

In May sunshine
dew itself glitters
we will make wreaths
from fragrant flowers.

The green emerald is fragile and is a symbol of rebirth and romance.

May is Military Appreciation month.

Memorial Day - officially on the 31st, but will be honored on Monday, May 30th.

"In Flanders Fields" was written by Col. John McCrae and now the "Buddy Poppies" have become the symbol of all those who have given their lives in our Nation's wars and are recognized throughout the world.

REMEMBER: In honor of our National Battle heroes, at dawn, raise our Flag all the way up to the top of the staff and then half way down where it will stay until Noon when it is to be raised all the way up again until sunset.

Sunday, May 8th: Mothers' Day - also for grandmothers, aunts and stepmoms. This is a chance for Sokol families to come together at the gym - each class could recite sentimental verses, perform skits or recall outstanding efforts of those women we all love.

May 2, 1866: Premiere in Prague of Bedrich Smetana's opera "The Bartered Bride"

May 9, 1918: Tomas G. Masaryk was in Washington, D.C.

May 1912: Czech Sokol Union recognized the Women members as having equal rights with the Men.

May 12, 1820: Josef Manes, distinguished Czech painter, born in Prague. He designed both the official banner and the uniform of the Sokols. He also painted the famous tower clock on the city hall in Prague.

May 28, 1815: Jan Malypetr, first teacher of calisthenics and disciple of group gymnastics in the Prague Sokol Society, was born.

May 1787: 55 Americans came to the State House in Philadelphia to draw up the plans for a federal government. This meeting was called the Constitutional Convention.

NAZDAR! EllenJeanne Schnabl, American Sokol Educational Director ☺



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

May 2, 2011

To: All American Sokol Members:

On Friday, April 29th, upon consideration and approval of the Board of Governors of the American Sokol, we terminated the employment of our Executive Director, Greg Harris. This decision was made on the basis of insufficient finances to fund the Executive Director position at this time.

I want to thank Greg Harris for his efforts and the work that he has accomplished in his tenure with the American Sokol. He took on a massive challenge in helping steer our 146 year old ship through new and uncharted waters. Together, we have made some very impressive strides forward and have learned many lessons along the way.

I would also like to thank the past administration for their vision and passion. Three years ago, the American Sokol made a confident decision when it was decided that we should hire an Executive Director. At that time, it was a calculated risk and despite our inability to fund the position currently, it was a good step to take. I would encourage all of us to continue to search for and seize opportunities like this as they arise.

While we cannot fund the Executive Director position at this time, our financial situation as an organization is secure. It has been one year since the current American Sokol Executive Board has taken office and despite not achieving all of our financial income targets, the board has worked very hard to cut expenses and to inspire new programming, new membership and new processes to attain many of our goals. Further information regarding the finances of the American Sokol will be made available soon as we are currently revising the budget for the next three years.

It is important to realize that in order to truly grow and prosper, we must bond together as an organization to support new endeavors and create new opportunities. An Executive Director can be a great asset to the organization. In order to gain maximum productivity out of this position, we must all be ready to work with that position and to take some leaps of faith that are outside our comfort zone. This position is a tool for us to use and should not be expected to do it all. We must be ready to challenge ourselves and to be willing to expand and make changes that will grow our membership and fulfill our mission. When we are financially comfortable to support this position, and with some additional planning for what our expectations should be for an Executive Director, I sincerely feel that we can move in this direction again and leverage the experience, knowledge and passion of a new Executive Director.

Regardless of this decision regarding our Executive Director, as a growing and strong organization, we will continue to aggressively move forward and to seize the opportunities that are right in front of us. Our plan to expand and to further our mission is now more important than ever. As mentioned, we have learned a lot and can thank Greg for much of it. If we choose to take these things that we have learned and create new opportunities, we can achieve great things.

Thank you to everyone who has helped and supported the Executive Director position and Greg Harris. As always, please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or concerns. I remain committed to working with you to grow the American Sokol.

Nazdar!

Tom Pajer – American Sokol President

Strategic Plan Update

Submitted by the Organizational Development Team

As part of our American Sokol Strategic Plan, the Organizational Development Team (ODT) would like to update the general membership with the progress we have made on the pending reorganization of the American Sokol. Last year, prior to the American Sokol Convention, our team sent out Phase I of this reorganization and it was presented and discussed on the Convention floor. Based on feedback we received at, and immediately following, the Convention, our team has diligently been working to revise several aspects of the concepts that had been initially presented. Upon completion of that task, we thought it would be advantageous to resubmit the revisions to the Units in order to get the memberships' reaction.

We have recently sent our re-working of the initial concepts for a straw poll vote to each Unit via email and hard copy. This is NOT intended to be an official approval of acceptance, but rather an opportunity to get an idea of how our Units will receive these changes. We felt this was best to do before tasking the National By-laws Committee with having to put these concepts into formal terminology for the official approval process.

The concepts have been resent to each Unit's Executive Board, with a ballot for the straw poll vote to follow. ONLY the Unit President, or their duly appointed representative, can send the ballot back to the email address which was set up for the National Secretary of the Executive Board and Board of Governors and the Chairperson of the National By-laws Committee to receive and tally those votes. Each Unit receives a specific number of votes based on their membership numbers, much like with delegate votes at the Convention.

Any votes in opposition to the concepts must be accompanied by specific reasons for opposing. This will help us to rework and change these points for better acceptance before it goes to the next step.

Be advised that your units have these documents in their hands. If you would like a personal copy sent to you, please contact your Unit President or feel free to contact us at orgdev@american-sokol.org. Any comments must be directed to your Unit President for inclusion on the ballot.

Thank you for your consideration of this most important matter for the future of our organization. 🇺🇸



AMERICAN SOKOL GYMNAST

*Pages 7-10 are specifically designed to benefit the Gymnastic programs of the 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

How to Get Your Athletes To Perform That Pullover!

From Gymskillbasics website

Kickover-(Pullover with one foot)

How It Is Done - Stand facing the bar, hands in an over-grip. Pull the chin to the bar while lifting one leg and pushing off the other to perform a backward roll motion over the bar. Finish in a front support, arms and legs straight, head in.

Drills/Progressions:

- Front support
- Forward roll off bar
- Candlestick position (good for those afraid to go upside down on the bar)
- Running kickover up a wall or mat

Spotting - Stand next to the bar & gymnast. Use 1 hand to guide the gymnast's shoulder close to the bar & the other hand to lift the hips up & over from behind. Once the legs make it over the bar, catch them with the hand that was at the shoulders & the other hand supports the nearest shoulder to guide to front support.

You will occasionally get a gymnast who throws their head back—Make sure they are looking for their toes, it helps to keep body in the correct position.

I like to tell my athletes—after pulling their chin to the bar, to pull their belly buttons to the bar. Some kids don't understand "hips" or where they are, so belly button on the bar really helps them visualize. KP:)

Pullover-(Two Foot Take Off)

How It Is Done - Stand facing the bar, hands in an over-grip. Perform a chin up while lifting the legs and hips up and over the bar, keeping legs straight and together throughout. Finish in a front support, arms and legs straight, head in.

Drills/Progressions:

- Front support
- Kickover
- Chin up and L-hang hold simultaneously

Use the same positive tips for this skill as the kick over above.®

The 6 Exercise Machines You Must Avoid.

by The Editors of *WOMEN'S HEALTH*

Walking into the gym and expecting a great workout is like walking into the supermarket and expecting a gourmet meal. The basic ingredients are there, but like they say in the infomercials, results may vary. With working out, as with cooking, a little bit of smarts, dedication, creativity and knowledge will make all the difference between perfect pasta and a gelatinous ball of mush.

For this list of no-no exercises, we consulted Stuart McGill, PhD, professor of spine biomechanics at the University of Waterloo, in Ontario; Nicholas DiNubile, MD, author of *FrameWork: Your 7-Step Program for Healthy Muscles, Bones, and Joints*; and trainer Vern Gambetta, author of *Athletic Development: The Art & Science of Functional Sports Conditioning*.

1. **Seated Leg Extension** – What it's supposed to do: Train the quadriceps. What it actually does: It strengthens a motion your legs aren't actually designed to do, and can put undue strain on the ligaments and tendons surrounding the kneecaps.

A better exercise: One-Legged Body-Weight Squats – Lift one leg up and bend the opposite knee, dipping as far as you can, with control, while flexing at the hip, knee, and ankle. Use a rail for support until you develop requisite leg strength and balance. Aim for five to 10 reps on each leg. (If you are susceptible to knee pain, do the Bulgarian split squat instead, resting the top of one foot on a bench positioned two to three feet behind you. Descend until your thigh is parallel to the ground and then stand back up. Do five to 10 reps per leg.)

2. **Seated Lat Pull Down (Behind the Neck)** – What it's supposed to do: Train lats, upper back, and biceps. What it actually does: Unless you have very flexible shoulders, it's difficult to do correctly, so it can cause pinching in the shoulder joint and damage the rotator cuff.

A better exercise: Incline Pull-Ups – Place a bar in the squat rack at waist height, grab the bar with both hands, and hang from the bar with your feet stretched out in front of you. Keep your torso stiff, and pull your chest to the bar 10 to 15 times. To make it harder, lower the bar; to make it easier, raise the bar.

3. **Seated Hip Abductor Machine** – What it's supposed to do: Train outer thighs. What it actually does: Because you are seated, it trains a movement that has no functional use. If done with excessive weight and jerky technique, it can put undue pressure on the spine.

A better exercise: Place a heavy, short, looped **resistance band** around your legs (at your ankles); **sidestep** out 20 paces and back with control. This is much harder than it sounds.

4. **Seated Leg Press** – What it's supposed to do: Train quadriceps, glutes, and hamstrings. What it actually does: It often forces the spine to flex without engaging any of the necessary stabilization muscles of the hips, glutes, shoulders, and lower back.

A better exercise: Body-Weight Squats – Focus on descending with control as far as you can without rounding your lower back. Aim for 15 to 20 for a set and increase sets as you develop strength.

5. **Squats Using Smith Machine** – What it's supposed to do: Train chest, biceps, and legs. What it actually does: The alignment of the machine—the bar is attached to a vertical sliding track—makes for linear, not natural, arched movements. This puts stress on the knees, shoulders, and lower back.
- A better exercise: Body-Weight or Weighted Squats** – See “Seated Leg Press” above.
6. **Roman Chair Back Extension** – What it's supposed to do: Train spinal erectors. What it actually does: Repeatedly flexing the back while it's supporting weight places pressure on the spine and increases the risk of damaging your disks.
- A better exercise: The Bird-Dog** – Crouch on all fours, extend your right arm forward, and extend left leg backward. Do 10 seven-second reps, and then switch to the opposite side.

If you have a personal trainer and they are having you do these exercises—they will make sure you are doing them in the correct position with the correct posture. In that case, these exercises would be ok to perform. Ⓢ

Please make sure to use caution with any exercises you are executing. Do not lift a weight that is too heavy for you and making you change your form or strain too much. Remember before you begin any workout regimen you must consult your physician. KP:)

Quick Fit Tips

From: Shape magazine, March issue

Three surefire ways to maintain your motivation as you strive toward your new goal:

WRITE IT DOWN. Keep a journal in which you describe each walk—the time, distance, if you had a walking buddy and where you went. As you fill the pages, you'll be inspired to keep charging ahead toward your target.

CREATE A SUPPORT SYSTEM. Ask a friend with similar exercise habits to join you as you follow your plan. The encouragement you give each other will boost your chances of success. Plus, skipping a workout will be much less tempting if you know someone's counting on you.

HAVE A BACKUP PLAN. Don't let a busy schedule or poor weather put a damper on your exercising. For example, if it's raining, walk at the mall. Can't find someone to watch your kids? They can tag along on their bikes. Ⓢ



American Sokol
INSTRUCTOR
SCHOOL
JULY 10 - JULY 24, 2011

Hosted by Central District:

Being held at **Sokol Spirit**

Levels: Beginner, Intermediate,
Advanced, Advanced II

Minimum age ⇨ 13

School Fee: \$275 for American Sokol Youth Members - Early Bird Discount - Postmarked by May 15
\$325 for Adults or other Sokol Organizations – Early Bird Discount - Postmarked by May 15
\$375.00 Postmarked May 16 – June 15
\$425.00 Late fee - Postmarked after June 15

The application can be found on
www.american-sokol.org

Click the News Flash in the right side bar
to access the necessary documents.





In Memoriam...

Brother Larry Laznovsky (1945 – 2011)

Larry was born September 10, 1945 in Ennis, Texas to Frank A. and Mary A. (Trojacek) Laznovsky. He grew up in Ennis and graduated from Ennis High School in 1963; after graduation he attended Technical School and received an associate degree. He worked for AT&T

for thirty-four years as a communication technician, served his country proudly in the Air National Guard, and worked tirelessly on behalf of Sokol and his Czech heritage. His life's work ended on March 26, 2011 at the age of 65.

Larry was a loyal and loving husband, father and grandfather. He is survived by wife Lillian, daughters Lisa and Lori, son in law Nathan Vyers, granddaughter Olivia, and step grandchildren Kristen and Kyle. He leaves behind many, many friends and family that loved him, respected him, and depended on him. Without question, Larry lived life to the fullest.

He manifested his passion for his Czech heritage as Vice President of the Czech Cultural Society, a Board Member of the Texas Cultural Partnership, a founding Board Member and District Representative for the Texans of Czech Ancestry, President of the National Polka Festival, and as one of the founding Board Members of the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center. Larry was especially proud of the accomplishments of this group and if you get a chance to travel to La Grange, Texas, you should enjoy the Texas Czech History Museum and Amphitheater complex surrounded by restored houses and barns donated by Czech families.

Sokol was always an integral part of Larry's life. His grandparents were charter members of Sokol Karel Havlicek Borovsky (KHB), his father was Unit President for many years with his mother always directing the kitchen activities. Sokol got into Larry's heart and blood at a young age and he was given special permission to attend his first instructor's school when he was 12. He became KHB's Director of Men's programs at age 17. Larry's involvement in Sokol gave him the opportunity to travel many places and meet many people. It was at a Sokol Slet in Chicago that he met Lillian Vesely and fell in love. Lil and Larry were married on November 29, 1969 and enjoyed a faithful and enduring

marriage with each supporting the other in their endeavors and working together to achieve life's goals.

Larry was never without a title (which in Sokol means job) serving as Unit Men's Director, Unit President, District Men's Director, District President, President of the American Sokol Organization and Vice President of the World Sokol Federation without taking a break. He served as President of Sokol KHB for the past twenty-eight years.

Throughout his life Larry seized the opportunity to have many wonderful experiences. As a Union representative he worked with several of Texas and national Congressmen and Senators. He rode in a limousine with Prime Minister Klaus of the Czech Republic on a trip from Dallas to Ennis. In 1989 he made a point to travel to Prague to witness the rebirth of the Czech Sokol Organization which had been suppressed by the communist Regime for forty years. He had the honor of accepting the Gratis Agit award on behalf of the American Sokol Organization which is awarded by the Czech Government to a select few persons and organizations each year for service to the Czech Community. He had the pleasure to meet and shake the hand of President Havel of the Czech Republic and was honored as President of American Sokol to lay a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery. Larry and Lil also had many opportunities to travel and were always on the go. There were Sokol Slets around the United States and two in Prague. They also attended Gymnastrada events in Berlin, Sweden, and Portugal. Larry's most recent honor, which was high on his list, was the opportunity to travel to New Brunswick Canada with daughter Lori to carry a torch bearing the Olympic Flame along Hopewell Cape on its journey from ancient Greece to the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver Canada.

The American Sokol owes a debt of gratitude to Brother Laznovsky. His extraordinary volunteer efforts will always remind us of the importance of being selfless and supportive. Neither for profit nor glory — Larry was always true to that.

As he became President of the American Sokol in 2000, the challenges of our 135 year old Sokol organization awaited him. Brother Larry committed himself to not only managing the organization, but orchestrated a movement to grow and change the American Sokol towards the future.

continued on page 14



A Weekend in Retrospect

Submitted by Tom Pajer, American Sokol President

As is quite common, I had the pleasure to experience a very interesting weekend in March. I could not help but share with you, our membership, my assessment of this particular weekend. Four very exciting events caused me to both ponder and enjoy the path that we are on as a Sokol organization. I share these with you so that you can enjoy our successes and consider our progress.

A 1st Class Treat

While I don't get to attend my son Max's 1st Class Boys class all that often, I had the opportunity to take him to class on Friday, March 11th. With minutes left before the beginning of class, I noted that an ex-Junior of mine, Eddie Zempich, was the only instructor at the gym.

Eddie normally assists the multi-talented head instructor, John Bazata. While I've observed Eddie as a Junior Boy, a Men's class member, and a National camp participant, I have not had a chance to view his abilities as an instructor. What I saw on that Friday night gave me continued hope for the future. While 1st class boys can be a challenge to anyone's patience and abilities, Eddie had a command over the class that rivaled or topped any competing entity's instructors. There is no doubt that Eddie has been witness to one of Sokol's best boy's instructors, John Bazata but it takes extreme self confidence, discipline and courage to stand in front of a large class of 6-9 year olds and wrangle them into order and precision.

It's times like this that remind me of the importance and the power of a good instructor. It also reinforces the need for solid mentoring of our young instructors. While there is certainly no substitute to role models like John, it's good to know that we have new material from our Strategic Plan to support this type of solid instruction. Kudos to both Eddie and John for reminding us of the power of good instruction and good mentoring.

Friday Night Affair

At 7:00pm on Friday, after Max's Sokol class, we ventured out to one of the local gym clubs for their Friday Night Pizza Fun Nights. From 7:00pm to 10:00pm, for \$15 per kid (\$20 at the door), the kids are delighted with an opportunity to go absolutely bonkers in a fully equipped gym and enjoy pizza for dinner during a "break". Needless to say, I was motivated to view the proceedings and view how this was being done...safely. Armed with my camera phone, I walked through the front door to an enlightening

experience. We were quickly greeted as we walked in and were told where we should check in. No less than 3 staff members were ready to receive kids and parents as they walked through the door. I found that curious until I walked further into the facility to find that they had well over 120 kids from the community also taking advantage of the evening's festivities.

As we checked in our kids, the staff herded the kids onto the 40' by 40' where they began their "rules" speech. It was at this time that I was most impressed. They had no less than 10 staff members...just for the gym activities! The staff members were all dressed the same, in the gym club staff member polo with black slacks. All staff members were attentive and focused as one of them recited the rules to the kids in a very energetic and interesting way. As this was happening, I took a look around as another group of staff members began preparing the pizza plates for the first group. Upon asking, I was told that the kids would be called by age into the room for their pizza snack and that this would happen in a controlled fashion throughout the evening. After picking up the kids later that night, (parents need not stay, and I took advantage of this by having dinner with family) I found that they did more than run around and play. They also got to experience new programs that were being offered at the gym club. Max and my daughter Scarlet both came home with wooden boards that they had broken in half, having experienced the Tae Kwon Do demonstration.

So...there is no doubt that the community is rich with opportunities to provide this kind of community service as well as earn a significant amount of revenue in the mean time. I know that we have programs similar to this throughout the American Sokol. Please feel free to share the success of these types of programs that happen in your Unit with me at any time.

Wheels

Thanks to the increased vision of Sokol Spirit as they begin to leverage new programming opportunities, my wife Kandi got the opportunity to spend the weekend learning how to instruct and train gymnasts in the new American Sokol program, Gym Wheels. Thanks to the efforts of Greg Harris, Jean Hruby and Maryann Fiordelis, our outsourced gym wheel instructor, National Champion Wolfgang Bientzle, has been working hard to train our Sokol kids on the Gym Wheel and to train interested Sokol instructors on

WHEELS! WHEELS! WHEELS!

Submitted by Chuck Kalat

how to teach this sport.

I was excited to see as I arrived that many of the Wheel instructors were wearing "Sokol wear" and Sokol was clearly noted as the primary host of this event. We continue to realize new opportunities and we should continue to reach out and utilize these new programs to grow our Units. Kudos again to Sokol Spirit and other gyms that have the courage to reach out and try something new. Kudos also to our National Executive Board and Office staff for supporting, financing and promoting this program.

Saturday Night Lights

I am happy to close my "weekend assessment" with tradition and excellence. My trip to Sokol Tabor's exhibition was a fantastic reminder of the power that we have within this organization. I have been to many events and exhibitions with Max and Scarlet. Whether they be cub scout, park district, gym club, or other, I have had the opportunity to compare our program with that of many other comparable organizations.

Truth is, nothing I have seen through any of these non-Sokol programs has come close to matching the excellence of a good Sokol exhibition, and Sokol Tabor's exhibition this particular weekend clearly reinforced that. From their traditional flag ceremony opening, through their well rehearsed calisthenics routines and apparatus, all the way through some phenomenal special number creativity and innovation, Sokol Tabor produced a show that alone could entice someone to retain their membership and sign up for next year.

While Sokol Tabor excels at this event, they are not alone throughout our ranks. I am continually proud of the enthusiasm and passion that goes into and clearly comes out of our Sokol Exhibitions. What is equally amazing is the level of quality coming from a primarily volunteer workforce.

For me, these four events, as different as they may be, are a crystal ball vision into our future. From leadership, through our opportunities, right down to our traditions, we have exciting possibilities ahead of us. As members of this great organization, it will take your efforts, pride, support and passion to bring any of this to life. We are an accomplished organization that is positioned with potential to enrich our communities and the world. 🤝

Sokol KHB in Ennis, Texas conducted a Wheels Gymnastics Workshop during the Christmas break. Thirteen participants ranging in age from 5 years old to an adult super mom got to experience an afternoon of Wheels Gymnastics.

Wheels Gymnastics is a great activity for young and old. Using 6 to 8 foot diameter parallel, metal wheels, the sport allows the participant to work on their balance, strength, flexibility, and athleticism while enjoying a unique and spectacular sport – but it is not for the faint of heart.

The workshop allowed all to experience the wheel while rocking, sitting, standing, and balancing at various levels on the wheel and even spinning head over heels in pairs and individually.

The clinician, Wolfgang Bientzle, is a multi-time European and World Wheels Gymnastics Champion and serves as a national coach for Wheels Gymnastics in the United States.

The evening of the workshop Wolfgang even performed at the halftime of the Dallas Mavericks basketball game. Everyone had a great, exciting time, showed fearless eagerness to try whatever skill Wolfgang gave them on the wheel, and can't wait until he comes back again. 🤝



*In Memoriam... Brother Larry Laznovsky**Continued from page 11*

His understanding of Sokol history and tradition coupled with his vision for what Sokol could become changed the American Sokol forever. His leadership created passion and motivation in those around him and the American Sokol began to change course. Brother Larry was a master at calmly steering our large old ship through changing waters, and he stayed the course to prepare the organization for the next generation of growth.

Following in Larry's footsteps is no easy task. You see...Larry took big steps...and his stride had great direction and purpose. He walked with gentle care and was mindful and attentive to those who were on the journey. His ability to lead with quiet strength ensured those who walked with him that they were headed in the right direction.

Larry was a dedicated person, a born leader who always brought a Can Do attitude to any challenge before him. In any situation he was recognized as the voice of reason. He seldom became emotionally involved and worked with others to persuade them to do the right thing. Brother Larry's guidance and leadership will never be forgotten, and the American Sokol is strong because of him. WE are inspired because of him. And WE are dedicated because of him.

Always a challenge to balance family with the demands of the community, Larry did his best to do as much for others as he possibly could. Larry passed away a relatively young man, but had accomplished so much. His contributions to society and the organizations are beyond compare. The list of people he touched is countless. What was in his heart was visible by his actions. As we attempt to fill the great void that he is leaving, we all need to remember that if Larry were here he would remind us that:

“It will all work out.”

Unfortunately, one goal that Larry didn't quite have time to complete was retiring the mortgage on the Sokol KHB facility built in 1991- a goal he worked on for 20 years. Those whose lives were touched by Larry can honor him and his memory and help reach that one last goal by donating to the Sokol KHB Building Fund in Larry's name. Donations can be mailed to: **Sokol KHB Building Fund, 4811 FM 1183, Ennis, TX 75119.** ☺

SOKOL ST. LOUIS PARTICIPATES IN ETHNIC FESTIVAL*Submitted by Mary Ann Sulz, Sokol St. Louis*

On February 27, 2011, the city of Maryland Heights, Missouri celebrated the 10th anniversary of the *Ethnic Festival*, with participants from various groups celebrating their cultures and sharing them with more than 1,000 attendees. Sokol St. Louis jumped at the chance to again be a part of this colorful and entertaining festival. (Two years ago, the Czech Republic was the featured country and we went all out to share our culture with others).

This year we participated by professionally decorating one wall of the lobby of the Maryland Heights Community Center with colorful and authentic Czech kroje (costumes). Being a part of the “parade of nations” gave us the opportunity to proudly march behind the Czech flag as several members donned their beautiful kroje and entered the large auditorium. It was a feather in our hat when the community choir sang a Czech song.

After the opening ceremony, we were well prepared to sell our kolacky and rohlicky to the general public. A dusting of powdered sugar added the crowning touch, and these little pastries were a welcome treat after other ethnic foods were tasted.

Last but not least, one room was set aside for our tumbling mats as several of our gym instructors demonstrated and taught some basic skills to the children attending the festival. We gave out numerous flyers advertising our gym classes and the upcoming Czech Festival at the American-Czech Center. Posters and signs on the walls provided additional advertising. Several people expressed an interest in our programs-some had visited the Czech Republic; others were proud to speak of their Czech background and heritage.

Being a part of this celebration was very gratifying and we were well satisfied with our eagerness to spread the Czech culture to others. Now it was time to get back in the kitchen and make dumplings, and bake more kolacky and rohlicky for our Czech Festival at the American-Czech Center in St. Louis. The date of our own celebration took place on April 9, 2011. ☺





Mark your Calendar

Events around the American Sokol

Get your event featured! Email editor@american-sokol.org

May

- May 13** **Sokol Milwaukee 142nd Annual Exhibition** – Norway House, 7507 W. Oklahoma Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 7pm
- May 15** **Sokol St. Louis Meat Shoot** – Sokol Camp, Imperial Missouri; Noon to 5:00 pm Meat and cash rounds, pot shots, food and raffles. For more information info@sokolstl.org.
- May 20** **Sokol Greater Cleveland Monthly Fish Fry** – 5pm to 7:30pm
- May 21** **Central District Female Artistic, Calisthenics & Marching Competition** – Lyons Township North
- May 21** **Central District Male Artistic, Calisthenics & Marching Competition** – Sokol Spirit
- May 21** **Northeastern District Sokol Competition** – Sokol Detroit
- May 22** **Central District SOKOL DAY** – National Grove 1&2 Riverside, IL
- May 22** **Sokol Greater Cleveland Chicken Paprikash Dinner** – Served from 1pm -2:30pm, Cost \$12.
- May 29** **Sokol Detroit Camp Pancake Breakfast** – Sokol Camp Dining Room, Served from 8am-10am; Adult \$3.50 Children (under 12) \$2.50
- May TBD** **Sokol San Francisco Walk to T.G.M. Bust** – in coordination with the Czech Fraternal Life, Golden Gate Park

June

- June 5** **Sokol Greater Cleveland Summer Exhibition** – Odd Fellows Camp
- June 5** **Sokol Milwaukee Spring Fling & Recognition Dinner** – Meyer's Restaurant, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 5:00pm Cocktails, 6:00pm Dinner. For more information visit www.sokol-milwaukee.org
- June 17** **Sokol Chicagoland & Elite Sports Complex Fitness Fun Fair** – Elite Sports Complex, Sokol Chicagoland, 6360 S. Belmont Rd, Downers Grove, IL; 9:00 to 11:00am. Fun stations include: trampoline, basketball, tunnels, scooters and more! \$10 per team of 2, Ages 4-99! No pre-registration required
- June 17** **Sokol Greater Cleveland Monthly Fish Fry** – 5pm to 7:30pm
- June 17-19** **Southern District Slet at Sokol Fort Worth** – Volleyball, Gymnastics competition, Tots Skills Evaluation, Calisthenics Performance, Awards, Field Events.
- June 18** **Sokol Detroit Summer Gymnastical** – Sokol Camp
- June 18** **Sokol San Francisco Picnic** – Lake Chabot Park, San Leandro
- June 26** **Sokol Greater Cleveland Duck Dinner**
- June 29-July 2** **Sokol USA Slet** – Independence, OH
- June 30** **Sokol USA Slet Social** – Sokol Greater Cleveland



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