

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

September 2013 | Volume 136 | Issue 7



1909 CHICAGO SLET: AUGUST 26-29

274 men competed. 302 men, 300 women and 800 children took part in calisthenics.

Read about the 2013 Sports Festival inside.



Photos submitted by Julie Barcal

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*except in July and August

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From the Editor... American Sokol is Going Green

Beginning this issue, the American Sokol publication will be delivered electronically to members with email addresses on file. This will help reduce our postage and printing costs and dedicate these resources to programs that benefit our adult and children members.

Electing to receive the digital publication will offer these benefits:

- It arrives in your e-mail instantly, in color – no waiting for the postal service. Just click the link to download the latest issue in PDF format.
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CORRECTION: The July/August edition incorrectly printed Dvorak's birthday. Dvorak's birthday is September 8th.

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President's Note – A Week in Milwaukee!

It's amazing how fast a week can go by. If you were lucky enough to participate in the 2013 Sports Festival in Milwaukee, you got a chance to experience a fantastic compilation of sporting events, exhibitions, history, culture, social excursions, and Sokol camaraderie at its best. If you stepped in and volunteered for the event, kudos to you for contributing your efforts towards a great tradition. My family and I were excited to be both volunteers and participants for the week.

Now I must admit, the week started off a little shaky. After our volunteers loaded about 2500 pounds of tables, chairs, beams, souvenirs, sound systems, etc... into the truck on Sunday, we headed to Milwaukee on Monday morning. My wife Kandi, in our family van, followed me in the truck closely as we made our way up 294. I received a phone call from her just before we reached the half way point. She mentioned the tire didn't look right. We stopped at a rest stop (mostly because the kids are always hungry) and took a look. Sure enough, one of the inside tires on the back of the truck had blown out. Our next 3 hours were spent waiting for the rental company service personnel to come out and fix the tire. Once he did, we were back on the road and headed to Sokol Milwaukee for the building of the participant packets. We had a great team putting the packets together at Sokol Milwaukee and it seemed like we finished in record time.

Tuesday tested my patience, endurance, and resolve to the max. We have not had an outdoor opening ceremonies in quite some time, and we had been building up for this exciting outdoor show. On Tuesday morning, the rain came....and hard. I waited and waited, but at about 11:00am, the rain was still pouring hard and we made the extreme decision to move the Opening Ceremonies inside to our rain location. I'm fairly certain that as soon as we started the ball in motion to notify everyone of the massive change, the sun came out. I think that it smiled at me once. Thanks to some great communicators within the organization, the word of the change to the indoor location spread like wildfire and the Sports Festival kicked off just right with a successful Opening Ceremonies.

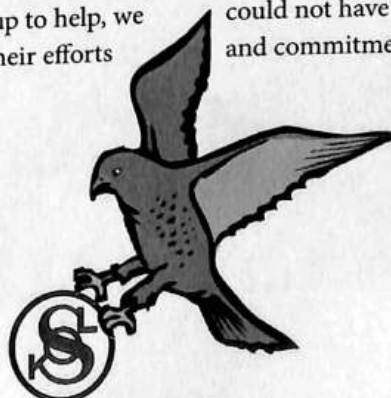
From that point on, it seemed like everything just clicked. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday competitions and social events were beautifully organized and run. Our guests from other organizations outside of our own were very impressed with the entire week. We got to see great gymnastic competitions, exciting volleyball and basketball games, displays of strength and agility with the fitness challenge and our new Wheels program, and then got to meet up with everyone at the Milwaukee Brewers game (against the Cubs), the banquet, the ice skating social, or a variety of other activities. The week was great fun for all.

On Saturday, participants all came together for the Closing Ceremonies program and performed. It was very exciting to see the field full at the end for the final number and to watch everyone have a great time. The party at the end of the evening was a celebration of not only what we accomplished that week, but also a celebration of what we are as an organization.

As we close the chapter on this historic event, it is important to recognize all of the volunteers that took the time to make it all happen. From the Steering Committee and National Board of Instructors, to Sokol Milwaukee and all of its members, to the "Visit Milwaukee" volunteers and all of our American Sokol members that stepped up to help, we could not have put it all together and given everyone such a beautiful event without you. I thank everyone for their efforts and commitment. This is what Sokol is all about! Ⓢ

Nazdar!

Tom Pajer - American Sokol President





The Sokol Educator

Sis. EllenJeanne Schnabl, Educational Director

SEPTEMBER ZARI

The month of September was named after "Septem" the Latin word for seven because it was originally our 7th month.

In 1894 Congress made Labor Day a Federal Holiday.

3rd Sunday of September is Grandparents' Day - this year it's on the 15th.

September 2, 1894: Vojta Naprstek died in Prague - born April 17, 1826

September 10, 1919: Independence of Czechoslovak Republic established by the Treaty of Saint Germain

September 19, 1982: The "smiley" emoticon was invented by Carnegie Mellon University professor Scott E. Fahlman using a colon followed by a hyphen and a parenthesis as a horizon smiley face, as in :-)

September 21, 1874: Gustav Holst born in Cheltenham, England - composer of "The Planets"

September 23, 1642: Harvard College held its first commencement

Harvest celebrations start with the picking of hops in Europe.

Schools will be in session, although in some areas students have already been in classes for two weeks. Hopefully everyone has also enrolled in Sokol gym classes.


Now that our Slet (Sports Festival) has concluded, Sokol members welcome new classes and renewal of friendships.

Also on our agenda is the upcoming Convention held every 4 years. This time it will be held in April 2014, in St. Louis, Missouri, the site of the first Sokol Unit in the United States of America.

It is very important that all Sokol Members review our Constitution and By-Laws now, especially the "Historical Perspective" and "Declaration of Principles" on the first pages. As an American Sokol Member, in good standing it is your right and privilege to have your own copy. If you don't have a copy, ask your Unit Officers. You can also contact the main Sokol office in Brookfield, IL for a copy. These long-standing rules of the American Sokol Organization have been adapted/changed over the years and with the coming of this Convention there may be others. These rules state how a Sokol member can initiate a change or wish to make an article clearer - refer to Article 5, Section III, paragraphs 5,6,7,8.

One more consideration: Although currently not in our By-Laws, the S.O.P. or Standard Operating Procedures give additional information and are divided into 3 sections: Unit, District and National as are the Constitution and By-Laws.

One more question: Are we following these By-Laws to the letter as intended or merely by-passing them? Time for all to study them!

NAZDAR! Sis. EllenJeanne Schnabl, American Sokol Educational Director 

FLY YOU SOKOLS

Submitted by Maryann Fiordelis, National Physical Director



We all know the words to "Fly You Sokols, Fly On High" and during our 2013 Sports Festival we saw this in action throughout the week. The Falcon is our official bird and while we might not always have a live one, we sure can count on our Mascot, Talon, to not ruffle feathers.

Nothing says Sokol like gymnastics and fitness and we had plenty of that at the Sports Festival. Sokol is for all ages and our women proved that out in the Fitness Challenge as they flew through jump rope, pull ups, shuttle run and long jump. Below is our adult women fitness challenge winners in the various age groups (35-49, 50-59 and 60+). We also had a wide range of artistic gymnasts starting with 4-5 year olds all the way up to Masters ages 60+. Here is just a few of our female artistic winners starting with Girls levels, Jr. Girls Teams, and our Adult Tag Teams. You can bet they were all flyin' high that day and rightly so. As you can see I don't have any pictures of our male competitors for fitness challenge or artistic gymnastics so if you have any to share I'd love to get a copy, send to mfiordelis@yahoo.com.



Talon

Continued on page 6



Adult Women Fitness Challenge Winners



Female Artistic Winners: Girls, Junior Girls, Adult Tag Team





Slet Program: General Assembly

Then there's our closing (Slet) program where we can proudly display our heritage from the display of the various unit, district, organization flags flyin' during the general assembly to the folk dancers in Czech and regional costumes. Even our youngest member in Tots Class get into the feeling of soaring and heck they are just plain cute! Then we have our older gymnasts performing Sr. II Cal just flying through their performance to prove all ages can fly. And what would be a closing program without our official Tug of War and Relay Race between the District and guest organizations. Hope you enjoy these couple of shots as the teams were flyin around the track putting their heart and soul into the race and giving it their best. I don't know about you but I just love cheering them on and seeing who is going to win. To hear the roar of the crowd as you watch the faces saying I'm almost there.

If you are interested in seeing the results from all the events, go to the American Sokol website www.american-sokol.org; click on the Sports Festival icon and you will see a listing of the various results, then click to view.

Before I sign off, I wanted to once again say thank you to all those who helped make this event a success from the Slet Committee to all the volunteers who helped out in so many ways and especially to the Central District and Sokol Milwaukee for stepping up to the plate to host. Convention is coming up next April, wonder who will be willing to step up for the next one? Nazdar! 🇸

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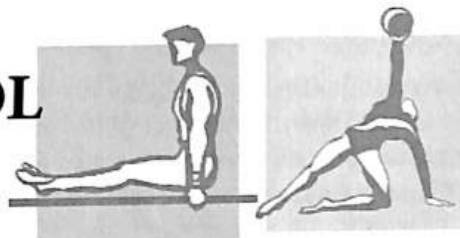


District Relay Race





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

September Rush! The School Year is Beginning!

By Kandi Pajer

It is the time of year again when school starts and everyone is trying to figure out where they belong and how they will begin the year. As a scholar (I mean from Elementary school up until College graduation when sitting in a classroom to learn) I really liked that you could begin every year fresh! In second grade, I was less than desirable to have as a student, so when third grade came around I remember deciding that I would get all of my work turned in on time as well as be a great listener in class. When the new classes start, you begin with a clean slate with that new teacher and set of students. If you had a certain reputation last year, that may not be the same status that you will have this year. In other words this time of year always made me happy to think of new beginnings and challenges.

As this year approaches I feel a few new things. (1) Disappointment because I feel like I have not spent enough time with my kids doing the things we would have enjoyed. (2) Rejuvenation because I get to work during the day because both of my children will be attending school.

full-time. And (3) A resounding emptiness that is constant but increasingly apparent this time of year. My beloved mother's birthday was in the beginning of September and I devastatingly lost her a little over a year ago.

How do you plan to attack this year? What are you going to do that will make this your best year yet? What am I going to do to increase the good feelings I have for the beginning of this year and turn the undesirable feelings to be a positive or encouraging sense?

With my disappointment about not spending enough time with my children I am going to set aside some time every day to personally connect with both of them. I plan on reading a bedtime story with them, ask them questions that will provoke creative thought where there personality will come through and elicit responses from both them and me. As well as plan monthly outings that will help us remember to have fun and just hang out together!

I plan on beginning to build a profession that I have a passion for. To maintain

the good feeling I have about it, I will set short term and long term goals. When I tackle those goals on my time line, it will help continue the enthusiastic feeling that I have.

As for my heartache, I will remember the conversations my mother and I had and share those with my husband and children (and in this part of this story you as well), not only to help them remember her, but also to teach them as my mother taught me - to carry on her legacy. She was always encouraging and had a piece of advice to share. When I applied for jobs right out of College and was stressed as to which one I would get she calmly said "If it was meant to be, it will be". That helped me relax and realize that my worrying wasn't doing anything but making me uncomfortable-so I relaxed and simply waited for them to come to me. Remember this statement for the new school year and try your best to see it through. If something is meant to be (like me getting a job this year for instance or you receiving that promotion) it 'will' be whether you worry

Continued on page 8

September Rush, continued from page 7

or are anxious about it. Be happy in the moment and enjoy the process of things, it is life and you are living it—good, bad or indifferent—rejoice and enjoy!

Another thing my mother always said was “this too will pass”. I know my extreme sadness will pass with time but the emptiness is a lot to bear. If you are going through a tough time, remember

that life has its ebbs and flows and your rollercoaster ride is an experience for only you. You should embrace life's challenges and brave through them with a smile and the knowledge that you can stick it out until it passes. I am going to remind myself this and use her as my example of compassion and strength.

I wish you all your most positive and

successful year yet! Just remember “The problem isn't actually the problem. Your attitude about the problem is the problem”. When life is going great take a moment to stop and take a deep breath and breathe in the goodness. When life hands you lemons, make lemonade! Do your best to stay positive friends and make healthy choices! Nazdar! KP :) 8

How To Beat Runner's Knee

By: *Matt Fitzgerald, www.running.competitor.com*

Patellofemoral pain syndrome—otherwise known as anterior knee pain and runner's knee—is the most common running injury, accounting for roughly 20 percent of all running injuries.

The main symptom is pain below the kneecap that is generally mild at first and experienced only during running but becomes progressively more intense during running and also increasingly felt at rest if training continues.

Many theories about the nature of the damage underlying the pain have come and gone. The reason behind this revolving door of proposed etiologies is that, unlike other injuries such as knee meniscus damage, there is no obvious structural abnormality associated with PFPS, whether the joint is examined by x-ray, MRI or surgical arthroscope. Recently this reality has lead orthopedists to a new view of PFPS in which pain itself—or, more specifically, chronic stimulation of pain nerves in the knee—is understood as the essence of the injury. Any of a number of varieties of relatively minor tissue degradation, such as inflammation of the synovium, a pouch that contains the knee's lubricating fluid, may underlie this pain nerve stimulation. But because these breakdowns are relatively minor and hard to identify, they need not be targeted. It's the pain itself that must be targeted.

How do you target the pain? First, you avoid doing anything, including running, that causes the knee to hurt, but you also do as much running as you can do pain-free. This approach will enable the damaged tissues to restore homeostasis (or their natural equilibrium state of breakdown and regeneration) yet will also keep the knee well-adapted to the stress of running. Many runners with PFPS can do some pain-free running. You might find that you can run for a certain duration (say, 20 minutes) and no longer without pain. In this case, run only that far until your limit increases. Or you might find that you can run every

other day, but not every day, without pain. Then run every other day for a while. After a few weeks, try a test run 24 hours after a previous run to see whether the limit remains. Continue to increase your running gradually back toward pre-injury levels as comfort allows, reversing this process briefly whenever soreness emerges anew.

Where there is pain there is almost always inflammation. Taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen according to label directions and placing an ice pack on your knee for 10 minutes at a time, three times a day, may accelerate the resolution of this inflammation.

Consider whether poor shoe selection, biomechanical factors, and/or muscle weakness might have contributed to your injury. Weakness in the hip abductors and hip external rotators is often seen in PFPS sufferers. In runners whose hip stabilizers are weak, the thigh tends to rotate internally as the foot comes in contact with the ground. This is a compensatory movement that is performed unconsciously to enable other muscles to take up the slack of stabilizing the pelvis. But the slack is not entirely picked up by these other muscles, and consequently the pelvis tilts laterally toward the ground on the side of the unsupported leg. The thigh tilts with it, like a falling tower, while the lower leg remains upright, pinching the knee between them. It is likely that this pinching effect, as well as the twisted (or “knock-kneed”) position of the thigh relative to the knee when it absorbs impact forces, causes damage to occur within the joint. If you are a knock-kneed runner, train yourself to actively contract the muscles on the outside of your hips when you run to keep



your pelvis level and keep those thighs in their natural, neutral alignment. In addition, begin doing exercises to strengthen these muscles.

It is possible that pronounced heel striking, or overstriding, also increases the risk for PFPS. While this link has not been shown directly, studies have demonstrated that runners who experience excessive impact shock are more likely to develop PFPS, and that heel strikers experience greater impact shock than midfoot strikers. So if you are a pronounced heel striker and you have PFPS, train yourself to shorten your stride and land your foot flat underneath your hips instead of heel-first out in front of your body.

If reducing impact shock is an effective means of reducing the risk for PFPS, then switching to running shoes that reduce impact shock may also protect the knees. The problem is that research on the relationship between shoe cushioning and impact shock has produced muddled results. Some studies have found that impact forces are actually greater in running shoes with softer cushioning due to unconscious stride changes that are made in different shoes. However, it has been suggested that such counterintuitive results may have been caused by inadequate measurement techniques. At least one recent study provides evidence that added shoe cushioning reduces specific impact variables that are now seen as the best indicators of injury risk—namely, peaking loading rate (the abruptness of impact) and tibial acceleration rate (or the rate at which the lower leg approaches the ground). However, it still seems to be the case that interaction between the specific shoe and the individual runner has a major effect on impact characteristics, such that the right level of cushioning is different for each runner and it's impossible to predict the level that is right for any single runner.

Since you can't undergo comprehensive impact testing when shopping for running shoes, how do you select the shoe with the right amount of cushioning to minimize your risk of developing PFPS and other injuries? Some research indicates that comfort is a fairly reliable guide. Subjective assessments of comfort coupled with on-the-road experience are even better. To begin, buy and wear the most comfortable shoe you can find. If it keeps you injury-free, buy another pair (or buy the most similar pair you can find when that particular model is inevitably phased out or replaced with a newer version). If you do get injured in that shoe, try a different shoe with a little more or less cushioning that is also very comfortable. Keep experimenting with different shoes until you find your optimal shoe type (but keep in mind that even the optimal shoe will not prevent all injuries).

The good news about patellofemoral pain syndrome is that it's a relatively minor condition. Indeed, it's really just a chronic failure of tissues within the knee to fully recover from running-induced damage between runs. The bad news is that it can be just as debilitating and last just as long as more serious breakdowns. Use the tips I've just given you to minimize the impact (so to speak) of knee pain on your running, if and when it strikes. 📌

I really enjoyed this article because everyone that I talk to that runs or has ran has mentioned in some part of their training or another that their knees bother them. The above article discusses the type of pain, what might be wrong with your stride or equipment and how to fix it! Of course, if your pain persists—you NEED to see a doctor, but sometimes just reading an article and trying some minor changes can really help a lot! Enjoy - KP :)



Happy National Yoga Month!!

From: The American Osteopathic Association Website.

Developed in India thousands of years ago, yoga has become an increasingly popular form of exercise in the United States. Whether yoga's recent rise in popularity stems from an increase in stress levels or the following of a Hollywood trend, yoga delivers many benefits to those who incorporate it into their everyday lives.

"Yoga is a healing system of theory and practice. The purpose of yoga is to create strength, awareness, and harmony in both the mind and body," explains Dr.

Natalie Nevins, DO, medical director of Amrit Davaa Wellness Center in Hollywood, California and a certified Kundalini Yoga Instructor. "As an osteopathic physician, I focus a lot of my efforts on preventive medicine and

practices, and in the body's ability to heal itself. Yoga is a great tool for staying healthy because it is based on similar principles."

While there are more than one hundred different types, or schools, of yoga, most sessions are typically comprised of breathing exercises, meditation, and assuming postures (sometimes called asana or poses) that stretch and flex various muscle groups. Regular daily practice of all three parts of this structure of yoga produce a clear, bright mind and a strong, capable body.

"A person who practices yoga on a regular basis will experience physical, mental, and spiritual benefits," says Dr. Nevins. "The relaxation techniques incorporated in yoga can lessen chronic pain, such as lower back pain, arthritis, headaches, and carpal tunnel syndrome," explains Dr. Nevins. "Yoga can also lower blood pressure and reduce insomnia."

According to Dr. Nevins, other physical benefits include:

- Increased flexibility
- Increased muscle strength and tone
- Improved respiration, energy and vitality
- The maintenance of a balanced metabolism
- Weight reduction
- Cardio and circulatory health
- Improved athletic performance
- Protection from injury

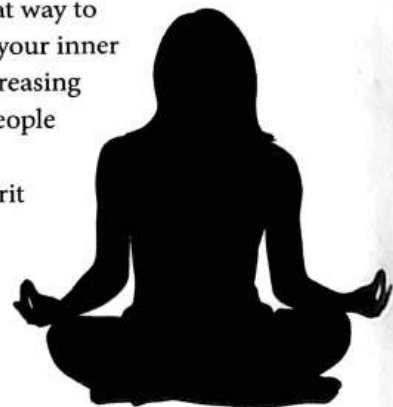
Aside from the array of physical benefits, one of the best benefits of yoga is how it helps a person manage stress, which has been known to have devastating effects on the body and mind. "Stress can reveal itself in many ways, including back or neck pain, sleeping problems, headaches, drug abuse, and an inability to concentrate," says Dr. Nevins. "Yoga can be very effective in developing coping skills and reaching a more positive outlook on life."

Unlike more traditional forms of exercise, yoga's incorporation of meditation and breathing help a person improve his/her mental and spiritual well-being. "Regular yoga practice creates mental clarity and calmness; increases body awareness; relieves chronic stress patterns; relaxes the mind; centers attention; and sharpens concentration," says Dr. Nevins. Body and self awareness, in particular, are very beneficial, adds Dr. Nevins, "because it can help with early detection of physical problems or ailments and allow for early preventive action."

Because there are so many different kinds of yoga practices, it is possible for anyone to start. "Whether you're a couch potato or a professional athlete, size and fitness levels do not matter because there are modifications for every yoga pose and beginner classes in every style," says Dr. Nevins. "The idea is to explore your limits, not strive for some pretzel-like perfection."

Most community fitness programs or local gyms offer a variety of yoga classes, with a range of skill levels. You can also find yoga studio listings in the yellow pages. If classes don't appeal to you, there are many yoga DVDs, TV programs or books to help guide you through a routine. For more information about different methods of yoga and how to select the one for you, visit the American Yoga Association Website.

Yoga can be practiced to enhance overall health, to improve balance, to heal and prevent injuries, to strengthen muscles and to open the body for meditation. "It is a great way to get in tune with your body and your inner self," says Dr. Nevins. Yoga's increasing popularity is proof that many people value an exercise system that engages the mind, body and spirit in equal measure. If you've never done yoga before, give it a try and see what it can do for you. ☺





RISING STAR ALIX WILT

Submitted by Kathy Barcal

Alix Wilt has been a member of Sokol since she was three years old. She started her participation with Berwyn-Slavsky in Berwyn, Illinois and is now a young adult member of Sokol Spirit in Brookfield, Illinois. Sokol is a very important part of her life as well as her family's life.

Alix has attended four American Sokol Instructor schools over the years. In 2011, she attended Instructor School as an instructor-in-training. At one of these she received the Bro. Bob Liptak award. Alix has attended one National camp and numerous Slets over the years. Throughout her years at Sokol, Alix has been awarded the American Sokol Merit Award and the Central District Merit Award. Alix is a very driven young woman, who has attained goals both at Sokol and in her participation in other organizations. She has developed leadership skills and many friends through her participation in Sokol.

Alix's leadership skills have proven very valuable to her participation at Sokol Spirit in our classes. She served as the Treasurer for four years and the director for one year during her time in our junior class. As a participant in our junior

class, Alix co-authored a junior class special number and later co-authored a marching number with our women's class for participation in a National Slet. During her time in junior class, Alix assisted teaching second class girls at Sokol Spirit for three years. Alix continues to come back to Sokol as a participant in our women's class!

Alix has been incredibly active along with her family in the CSA Fraternal Life Organization for many years. She won the Miss National CSA title for 2012 - 2013. Alix will continue to be a part of this organization even after she hands over her crown to the next Miss CSA! Alix has also danced her way into the United Moravian Society and the Moravian Cultural Society since she was a young girl! These groups have performed as various events within the community. Alix's Czech heritage is very important to her and she continues to be a part of the organizations that have been a very influential part of her life and her family's life.

Alix is currently attending Marquette University where she is studying elementary education and mathematics. She will be entering her Senior year in the



fall of 2013. Alix is the President of her sorority, Alpha Chi Omega.

Once Alix graduates, she would like to come back to Sokol to teach and be a participant in our women's class!

We look forward to seeing Alix back at Sokol Spirit! We are thankful that she will continue with Sokol as an adult member.

Do you know of a young senior or junior member that exemplifies the Sokol spirit? Every month we highlight a young adult member in the Sokol organization that is an aspiring leader in your Sokol, Unit or District. To make this column a success we need your help! Send the name of a Rising Star, a photo and the reason you are nominating them to editor@american-sokol.org. ☺

Central District College Bound Merit Award *Submitted by Lynda Filipello*

The Central District is proud to announce the newly established College Bound Merit Award Program which was approved at the 2012 annual meeting. The inaugural winners of this Merit Award are Alexandra Mangia and Veronica Walinski. Congratulations and good luck in college! ☺



Alexandra Mangia



Veronica Walinski

Sokol Memories

Submitted by Tom
Cunningham

It's taken a while to go back to my childhood memories. Having nearly died in 1947 of spinal meningitis made my younger years difficult. Though I survived, it was not without setbacks. I had both learning and physical disabilities, was ridiculed in class and bullied at recess. I became a loner, hated other kids and they were mean to me.

My father taught me how to box and tumble to build confidence. I don't think I became confident, just became a good boxer and a fair tumbler. By my junior year in high school, I was Texas state golden gloves champ and high school diving champ.

During the summer of 1957, my family moved from Houston to Dallas. That summer I worked offshore in the Gulf of Mexico to roughneck on an oilrig. That fall I started over in a new high school, while not knowing anyone was lonely, I was pleasantly surprised to find many school mates accepted me right away. I soon met Sandra my future wife. Times began looking good.

I was sort of "The Fonz" Mr. Cool, but not easy to reach. Dad took me to the Dallas Athletic Club to have famous coach Lester R. Griffin and top gymnast Jamile Ashmore continue my lessons in tumbling. The D.A.C. had mats, trampolines, and rings and I soon found rings to be my thing. At that time Sokol Zizka had just completed the new faculty on Greenville Ave. in north Dallas. I went by to check it out and when I went through the door I had no idea my life was to change for the better.

I quickly learned what it was like to be a team player and be a part of a very positive organization. I learned to give and take, to share with others, and to work on bettering everything I could. I found friends who not only cared for Sokol, but also me. I learned a couple new words "bro and sis" and what they mean. I learned how to get involved at all levels with people and how to work my way into the system. Now aren't these great values for the rest of someone's life?

I would like to share about my relationship with a few people I met in Sokol that I will never forget.

Walter Hosek: Walter and I bonded quickly. He became a second father to me. Being my coach, Walter was very persistent but also patient, as any good coach should be. He was very smart and skilled at his job "Little Cunningham I know you're stronger than Hercules, but without good form none of that matters, keep your legs together and toes pointed!"

The new Sokol Zizka hall on Greenville Avenue was beautiful. Out back was a beautiful drill field down a terraced hill from the back door. Bermuda grass had taken hold of the field so Walter & I planted St. Augustine on the hill and it looked great!

During the week a series of thunderstorms rolled through. By the weekend all the grass was at the bottom of the terrace. We brought out a wheel barrel and re sodded

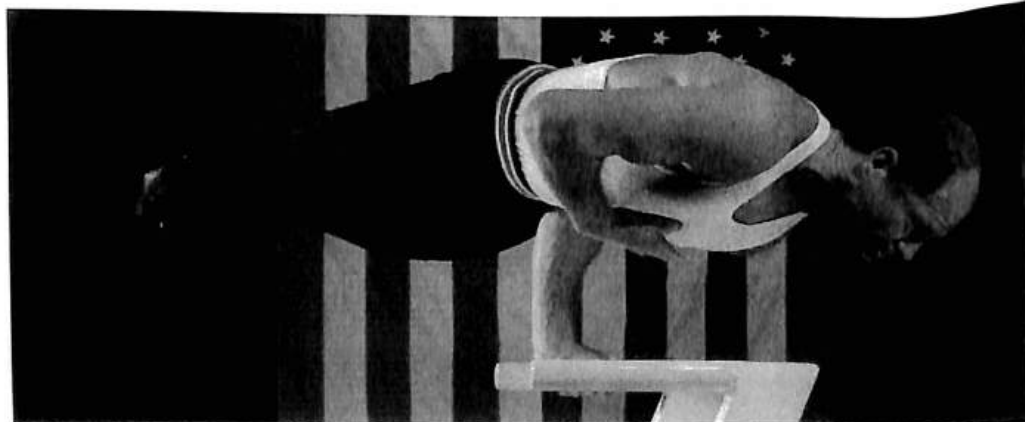
the hill. As the weeks rolled by more and more thunderstorms rolled through and by the end of it all we finally had grass on the hill.

The point of all this was that Walter and I had fun keeping up the place and making memories working together, which were really important in my younger years.

Then my son Bobby became the next Cunningham to come along. Bobby became very proficient on the horizontal bar and the pommel horse. He was runner up at the Texas state high school competition his senior year. Walter gave his all in every part of his life. Only God knows for sure how many young lives he changed for the better. Walter we love and miss you always.

Joe Ehrenberger: Joe was about 8 years older than me. I got to know him because every year we would take a trip to Monterrey Mexico and we would perform at the elite Circulo Mercantile Murtualista. This was basically a massive country club. It had a gym capable of seating over 3000 people. We put on an extensive exhibition with the top gymnasts of Mexico. Joe and I have great memories. Joe was our best all around gymnast. Joe was in his 50's still doing giant swings on the horizontal bar. Joe, like Walter, has also made major contributions to Sokol Zizka.

The Podhrasky family: I could never say enough about this fine family. I'll start with Julius, Julius has been a positive force in



1987: Tom Cunningham performing a one-arm planche (48 years old)



1962: Pikes Peak, high altitude handstand.

Sokol for many and I mean many years! He is one of the hardest workers I've ever met. Next is Bertha, Bertha works extremely hard on the administrative and every year she sends out our statements of annual dues. Bobby or now Bob, is currently over the southern district. I remember the look on Bobby's face when I pressed a one handed handstand on a rail outside the Sokol hall. Bobby grew up to be a hard working Sokol member.

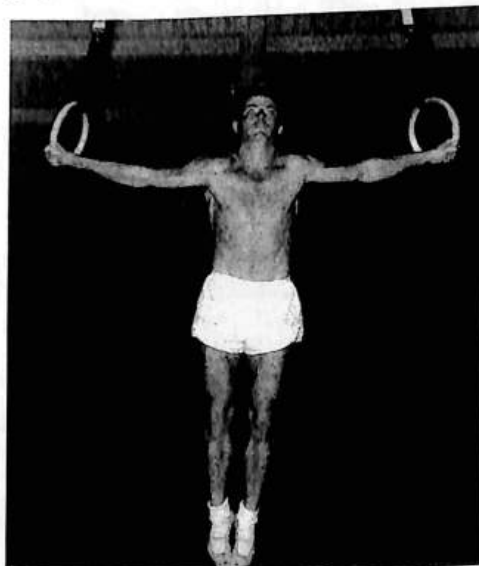
David is several years younger than me and we bonded like brothers. David and I performed in several skits put on by Sokol Zizka. David was very interested in railroad and model railroad trains, as was I. We rode on vintage steam engines designed for the old engineers and railroad buffs. Back in the 80's when I owned anvil media (12 top notch recording studios in Dallas and L.A.) we rode a train called the big boy; it was a dual 6-wheel driver steam engine. This was one of the biggest engines ever built. We recorded the sounds of train whistles and horns, which gives David some credit for the song "The Lonesome Train of Memories" I wrote and sung on my "The Sky's the Limit" platinum album. David and I were really into stage sound systems, for ten years of A.A.U. body building competitions me and David built

the stage sound systems, this included the 1986 MR, Miss America contest. I can't say enough good things about David.

Philip is David's son. He was a fine young man who was a fair gymnast but mostly just a fine young man with a charming personality. Patricia or "Trish" is David's daughter. Trish has given up lots of her time coaching and teaching the youth at Sokol Zizka. To sum them up; the Podhrasky family was a major influence on Sokol Zizka. I can't think of another family that has contributed more from being the president to cleaning up the kitchen after making meals for the youth and other functions.

Larry Laznovsky: Larry was 12 when I met him. He would come to Sokol from Ennis, which is about 40 miles south of Dallas. Larry gave his best at gymnastics, though it was tougher for him than most because Larry was very tall and big boned, yet he let nothing hold him back from giving it his all. Larry was very influential at the Ennis Sokol organization. With his years of dedication and go-getter attitude he became the president of American Sokol for several years. We will miss you Larry. You were great!

Jerry Milan: Jerry, only a few years older than me, would always cheer me on in a playful way; this was okay though because



1961: Iron Cross on still rings.

his big grin and joking personality would cheer anyone up. But in all seriousness Jerry was a top-notch gymnast coach at L.D. Bell High School in Hurst, Texas just east of Fort Worth. Jerry along with his lovely wife Henrietta (a truly gifted artist) worked diligently to make Sokol Fort Worth the amazing organization it is today. Jerry and Henrietta had two boys Rome and Athens (named after the location of two Olympics) although I do not know much about Athens, I have watched Rome grow up from a cute boy who was very good at gymnastics to a hardworking young coach. A quick note: Emil Milan, Jerry's brother was a coach at Trinity High School near L.D. Bell High School where Jerry coached.

Now to name a few more Sokols that crossed my life in my younger years (I am now 73 years old ouch!)

- Miro Jurcik and daughter Frances
- Comer Caldwell-won southwest A.A.U. on parallel bars and coached me on them.
- Joe and Floy Pokaladnik- good friends
- Helen Krutilik-friend
- Irene Hosek (Walters's lovely wife)
- Jerry and Frank Stransky- good friends

I'm sure I have forgotten some but unfortunately most of the fine Sokols have passed. I have watched these members work hard for this organization year after year and although many of these Sokol members do not want recognition, I would like the wonderful American Sokol readers know that this old and I mean old Sokol brother, wants the young Sokols who use this great organization today to know who were instrumental in making American Sokol the great facility it is today! Nazdar! ☺

If you have a Sokol Memory you would like to share with American Sokol readers, send it to editor@american-sokol.org. We look forward to hearing and sharing your special memory.

We apologize for not including this ad in our Sports Festival program book. Thank you to all units, districts, members, and supporters who contributed to the success of this program book. Your participation is what makes events memorable. Nazdar Lynda Filipello

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Events around the American Sokol

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

September

- September 14 Sokol Greater Cleveland Oktoberfest Polka Party** — Featuring DJ KISHKA 7:00-11:00 pm No Admission Charge (Donations Accepted at the Door) Cash Bar, Brats and Other Food Available Questions? Call Julie Meyer 216-288-5692 or email jmeyer1993@yahoo.com
- September 20 Sokol Ennis Friday Night Movie Watch Party** — Clubroom 7:00PM - 11:00PM
- September 22 Sokol Greater Cleveland Sunday Dinner** — Sliced Roast Pork, Sauerkraut & Dumplings 1-2:30pm
- September 29 Sokol Tabor / Central District Golf Outing** — Western Acres Golf Course, Butterfield Road, Tee times start at 11:00am; \$28.00 per person, includes 9 hole greens fee, burgers and brats afterward on the clubhouse patio. Beer and soft drinks are extra. All Sokol members, friends, and guests are welcomed. Contact George Kulhanek (630 842-2460) for information or to make a reservation.

October

- October 5 Sokol Detroit Haunted Walk & Hayride** — Sokol Camp, Gates open at 6pm, Fun Activities: 7-8pm; Trick or Treating on the Haunted Walk: 8-9pm; Hayrides through the forest start at 8:30pm; \$6.00 per person(includes hayrides); Food/Drink for sale; See our FB Event or email sokoldetroit@charter.net
- October 4-5 Sokol Spirit Fall Rummage Sale** — 3909 Prairie Ave, Brookfield, IL; info@sokolspirit.org
- October 11-12 Sokol Tabor Fall Rummage Sale** — Fri-Sat Oct 11th & 12th 9am-2pm Lower hall \$4 Bag Sale after 11am on Saturday Contact: Juanita Lo Giudice 708-738-3137
- October 25 Sokol Ennis Czech Heritage Celebration** — Clubroom 7:00PM - 11:00PM
- October 26 Sokol Ennis Fall Festival Hall**
- October 27 Sokol Greater Cleveland Sunday Dinner** — Sliced Cottage Ham, Sweet-Sour Cabbage & Potato Dumplings, 1-2:30pm
- October 27 Sokol Greater Cleveland Concert** — Selections from *The Bartered Bride*



American Sokol Deadline

Send your submissions, articles, events and photos to editor@american-sokol.org for the American Sokol by the 1st of the month prior to the publication issue! For example, send items you want included in the October issue no later than September 1st.



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