



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

March/April 2014 | Volume 137 | Issue 3

# **XX American Sokol General Convention April 24-27, 2014 St. Louis, Missouri**

At the convention, the following positions will be elected: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Foundation Director, Membership Director, Public Relations Director, Editor, 3-Executive Board members, and 3-Alternate Executive Board members. Learn how to be considered on page 10.



## AMERICAN SOKOL

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Editor .....	2
President Note.....	3
The Sokol Educator.....	4
National Operations Advisor Report.....	5-6
Membership Report .....	6
American Sokol Gymnast.....	7-10
National Physical Director's Report .....	11-12
Updates from Around the Districts.....	13
Rising Star .....	14
Sokol Memories .....	14
Calendar of Events.....	15
Advertise with Us .....	16

### From the Editor...

Don't forget to submit items for publication. Please send a memory, article, newsletter or calendar of event to [editor@american-sokol.org](mailto:editor@american-sokol.org). This publication's content is driven by YOU and I need your submissions to make this a successful publication!

NAZDAR!



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## ***President Note – Sokol is all about Growing***

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

There is nothing quite like Sokol. The methodology is pure and simple and the results of being a member last a lifetime. Those who grow through a Sokol program are positively transformed. Those who volunteer for the Sokol program are positively transforming the organization and helping it to grow. This lifecycle is a key contributor to our sustainability over time. We strive to maintain this growth strategy in an effort to keep Sokol alive for generations to come.

### **GROWING AS A PERSON**

First and foremost, Sokol is here to cultivate each and every person it touches. Each person involved should be growing physically, socially and culturally through the Sokol educational system. Over the past several years, we have provided many new ways to allow our members to grow and reach their potential. A few of these include:

- New programming to further our mission and share more of our Sokol program with the community.
- Enhancing the merit award program to assist young adults.
- Strengthening our Instructor School and National Camp to provide educational and social opportunities unlike any other.
- Providing members with new ways to access (and share) important “growth” information.
- Offering mentoring and leadership programs to better prepare our youth as individuals and as leaders.

### **GROWING AS AN ORGANIZATION**

For the last several years, Sokol has been challenging itself to share its gift further than ever before. We have seized the value and benefits of what has been built over the course of 150 years and spread the word that we are here. We are trying new things, starting new programs, engaging new people, and basically coming into a new way of providing services to our members and communities. A few of these include:

- Promoting a culture of opening our doors to our communities.
- Enhancing communication techniques to better reach our members.
- Continuing strategic planning efforts with the expectation that we will continue to change and continue to provide what our communities need.
- Working internationally with partner organizations to stay aware of worldwide opportunities.
- Strengthening our leadership base through training and education in an effort to continue Sokol’s forward progress.

### **GROWING INTO THE FUTURE**

And we will not stop growing. As an individual or as an organization, we have plenty of growing to do. Society continues to change and we continue to change with it...sometimes even leading the change. Over the next several years, we will continue to strengthen our Sokol programs and make them more attractive to our members and communities. We will enhance our facilities to make them more viable for the activities that our members want and need. And with the full intent to share our Sokol gift with the world, we will open our doors wider than ever and encourage everyone to join us in building a sound mind in a sound body.

We are Sokols, and together we will all grow strong! (S)

Nazdar!

Tom Pajer  
American Sokol President





# The Sokol Educator

*Sis. EllenJeanne Schnabl, Educational Director*

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## MARCH BREZEN

Will it come in like a lion and go out like a lamb? Or will the reverse be true?

March is National Umbrella month; music in our schools; international listening awareness month.

1st week of March is sleep awareness — do you get enough?

Last Friday of March in the Czech Republic is Teachers' Day. Do honor them, for teachers are the ones who shape all other careers.

March 1, 1781: U. S. Articles of Confederation became effective.

March 2, 1824: Bedrich Smetana born.

March 4th: National Grammar Day – Know the difference between affect and effect; know when to use who and whom; know when and where an apostrophe is needed. How about the difference between eager and anxious?

March 7, 1850: Tomas Garrigue Masaryk born.

March 17, 1832: Miroslav Tyrs born.

March 19th: St. Joseph's Day: "Color me red" – observances originated in Italy in the 14th Century. Pope Pius IX declared him a saint in 1870.

March 23, 1775: Patrick Henry gave his famous speech: "Give me liberty or give me death".

March 28, 1592: Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius) born.

## APRIL DUBEN

April is the month of miracles.

Celebrate Earth Day on the 22nd. It was organized in 1970 to promote the ideas of ecology, encouraging respect for life on earth. It is observed in 140 nations.

April Fool's Day originated in France where it's celebrated with "poisson d'Avril" -- a paper fish is pinned to unsuspecting persons

April 1, 1853: Cincinnati, OH, became the first U.S. city to pay its firefighters a regular salary.

April 4, 1291: Prague was decimated by a great fire.

April 5, 1896: 1st modern Olympic games held in Athens, Greece.

April 7, 1917: 1st successful long-distance demonstration of T.V. saw Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover.

April 7, 1948: World Health Organization founded.

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

April 9, 1893: Founding of 1st Slovak Sokols in New York.

April 9, 1899: Founding of Central Workingman's Union of Sokols in New York (D.A.)

April 12, 1861: Civil War started as Confederate forces fired on Ft. Sumter in South Carolina.

April 12, 1645: Franklin D. Roosevelt passed away and was succeeded by Harry S. Truman.

April 13th: National Scrabble Day – playing this game helps sharpen critical thinking skills & enhances vocabulary.

April 14, 1828: First edition of Noah Webster's "American Dictionary of the English Language" was published.

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

April 20, 1862: On the advice of Dr. Miroslav Tyrs, the Sokol Organization adopted the motto "Tuzme Se" - variously translated as: "Let us Inspire", or "With Aspiration". Also "Let us get tough and strong" (per Jarka Jelinek & Jaroslav Zmrhal).



## NATIONAL OPERATIONS ADVISOR ONE YEAR ON THE JOB

*by Mary Cushing*

I can hardly believe it has been a year since I moved to the Chicago-area to accept the job as Operations Advisor for the American Sokol. As I have mentioned before, after all my years volunteering for this organization in many different aspects, on many different levels, this is like the dream job. Getting to meet and help so many of the Units and their members is a real bonus!

I have already told you about my first 6 months in 2 previous articles. Now I'd like to tell you about the very busy past 6 months. Not only am I working to complete Phase II of my Site Visit Trips to each of the 32 American Sokol Units, but I have also been able to be a "true advisor" to several Units who have happened upon questions, road blocks and crisis issues. The culmination of all my data gathering, research and analysis will be presented at the National Convention in April. I still have a long way to go, but I am actually down to the "final four" Units to visit.

To catch you up, since I last told you of my travels . . . the summer was fairly slow, as most Units take a breather, with less meetings and less going on, but I managed to sneak in my first meeting with Sokol Spirit. Once the fall rolled around I managed 2 meetings at local units – Sokol Chicagoland and Sokol Town of Lake (2nd visit). We also were visited by member of Sokol San Francisco who happened to be in Chicago on a trip through the Midwest, so I was able to meet with them as well.

Then things really got busy. In October, I attended the Northeastern District Annual Meeting, followed by 4 days of meetings with Sokol Greater Cleveland, Ceska Sin (in the Cleveland area) and Detroit. During my Southern District trip in June, I only visited Units within the state of Texas, so now I was able to visit KH Yukon in Oklahoma. (How many of you knew we had a Sokol Unit in OK?)

I came home on a Sunday and turned right around on Monday to head to the Eastern District, where I spent 5 days visiting all 4 of their units. I was able to meet with Sokol Little Ferry members one evening and come back the next evening to observe classes and speak with their instructors. I spent the whole next day at

When you think of the Articles of Confederation, you also think of the U.S. Constitution with its 10 Bill of Rights and 27+ Amendments.

Now on the eve of our XX American Sokol Convention to be held in St. Louis, Missouri, at the end of April, we must focus on our own Constitution and By-Laws. Have ALL of you reviewed them?

Article 32: Purpose

Article 5: Administration of the organization

5 I : The Convention

5 II: Delegates to the Convention

5 V: Special Conventions

Article 21: Establishment and acceptance of new Units.

Article 26: Voting on amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws and special issues.

All of these, whether the U.S. Constitution or the American Sokol Constitution formulate laws which each citizen and member must follow. Laws keep things orderly and "transparent" and are laid down and enforced by a governing authority, elected by the majority. Rules or principles state that something which always works in the same way under the same conditions is preferable to chaotic behavior.

We have to stop at a red light or a red hexagonal sign. It is the law! We have to follow the law when paying our annual taxes. Laws or rules are guides for governing action.

Changes to the rules can be made by Acts of Congress with all 50 states being represented. Changes in the Sokol By-Laws can only be made at a Convention with proposals having been presented in writing at least 4 months prior to that Convention. Refer to Article 5, III Conduct of the Convention, Paragraph 6.

Each member in good standing MUST re-acquaint themselves with these By-Laws so that your Delegates will vote the wishes of the majority.

The XX American Sokol Convention starts for some on Wednesday, April 23rd and others on Thursday, April 24th. All delegates have been chosen based on their thorough knowledge of the American Sokol Constitution and By-Laws. We hope that all deliberations are fruitful and will be the wishes of the majority. Ⓢ

NAZDAR! Sis. EllenJeanne Schnabl, American Sokol  
Educational Director

*Continued on page 6*

*One Year on the Job...Continued from page 5*

Sokol New York, touring the facility, observing classes, and meeting with some members. My meeting with Sokol Baltimore was at a local library, as they were still finalizing the purchase of their new building. I was able to meet with them a second day which included a tour of the new facility, seeing plans for the renovations and working on a business plan with them. My trip out east concluded at Sokol Washington (DC). I met members informally and observed classes. They had 7 classrooms of children's Czech and Slovak classes, a performance group, adult yoga, and a gymnastics class for children.


Come November things were out of control busy! Beginning with a presentation at the Central District Annual Meeting followed immediately with a 9-day trip to the Western District. I flew into MN and out of Omaha, driving my way to & from their 7 units. I was able to have a meeting with each of their units which included Sokol Minnesota, Cedar Rapids, Wilber, two units in Crete and two units in Omaha. The very next week the National BOI Conference was held in the Chicago area. I made a presentation to the attendees, as well as contributed to the BOI 4-year plan, through insight of Units' needs based on my visits and meetings with them.

December was slower with only one local meeting with Sokol Naperville-Tyrs; while January had some real urgencies. I had only one visit with a regular meeting at Sokol St. Louis. There I was able to meet with their membership, tour both their hall and camp facilities and meet and stay at the hotel that will host our Convention in April. There were also two somewhat "urgent" meetings that I was asked to attend, one with Sokol Houston and one with Sokol Milwaukee. So far in February, I had a local meeting with Sokol Stickney and an "urgent" meeting with Sokol Corpus Christi.

As far as what's coming up . . . I am down to my "final four" Units that I haven't visited yet. But I am happy to report these are all scheduled to happen in March. Two are local with Sokol Milwaukee and a combined meeting with Sokol/Sokolice Tabor and then a trip to the Pacific District. I plan to meet and participate in a Sokol activity at each of their units in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Other things I have done besides traveling and meeting include:

- ✦ Attending all Executive Board meetings
- ✦ Submitting a Grant Application
- ✦ Submitting American Sokol for a nomination of recognition with the PCFSN (President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition)
- ✦ Working on related projects with the
  - ✦ Pre-Committee of the 150th Anniversary
  - ✦ 2014 Convention Committee

The highlight of all these meetings was getting to meet and listen to all of the members from across the country; to get a true sense of their needs and how we can help. Those units that are doing well, we can certainly learn from; but for those who are not – it is critical to make some changes now, and for some it is "do or die". Visiting the units has really been eye opening. I have learned so much, even in areas and places I thought I was familiar with. I look forward to continuing to work with all units in the next phase. 

## The State of Membership


by Lori Laznovsky, Membership Director



Members are such an important part of our Organization. For almost 150 years, American Sokol has been a membership based organization. Our members are our supporters, participants, officers and leaders. Without members, we could have never accomplished everything we have in our rich history.

It is important for us to continue to provide our members with great benefits and meaningful programming. The organization can only improve with the help and guidance of the membership. If you have ideas about benefits and what your unit should offer, speak to the officers and find ways to improve. We know that

the benefits of each unit differ based on the part of the country, local amenities, etc. and it is up to each of us to keep finding ways to make improvements for our members. Find ways to partner with other organizations in our communities to create mutually beneficial relationships.

I would encourage all of you to not just be a member, but a part of the Sokol community and family. We need everyone's help to recruit new members and participants and to keep this great organization going for another 150 years. 



# 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



**National School Board**

## PLEASE ADOPT A STUDENT OR A CLASS!

The American Sokol National Instructors School is looking for YOUR help. Costs for everything are going up! This is the first time in several years that we have had to raise the tuition fee for School Students by \$50 across the board. The National School is subsidized by the Future Sokol Leaders Fund! But in recent years the donations to that fund have been declining. The Students at the Kurz are “OUR FUTURE SOKOL LEADERS”!! So in conjunction with the National Board of Instructors and the National School Board we'd like to be proactive in a “fun(d)” way of securing some additional donations to help with the School expenses and replenishing this National Fund.

Shortly, you will be seeing promotional information about this project. We are asking you to make a donation to adopt a student for \$50 or a class for \$75. You will be able to choose from a list which student or class you'd like to support. And you will be receiving special communications from that student(s) or class(es) because of your donations!! We welcome individuals, Units or Districts as supporters. Look in the next issue for more information.

Thank you in advance! Mary Cushing, National School Board Director ☺

## Why is Physical Activity Important? *From www.fitness.gov*

Physical activity provides long-term health benefits for everyone! By being active, you will burn calories that you store from eating throughout the day and—it can be as easy as walking the dog or as rigorous as running a marathon. Providing opportunities for children to be active early on puts them on a path to better physical and mental health. It's never too late to jumpstart a healthy lifestyle.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & OBESITY

Physical activity, along with proper nutrition, is beneficial to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. And it is important that everyone gets active: over the last 20 years, there's been a significant increase in obesity in the United States. About one-third of U.S. adults (33.8%) are obese and approximately 17% (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents (aged 2-19 years) are obese.

The health implications of obesity in America are startling: If things remain as they are today, one-third of all children born in the year 2000 or later may suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives, while many others are likely to face chronic health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, and asthma.

Studies indicate that overweight youth may never achieve a healthy weight, and up to 70% of obese teens may become obese adults. Even more worrisome, the cumulative effect could be that children born in the year 2000 or later may not outlive their parents. The impact of obesity doesn't end there. Obesity has personal financial and national economic implications as well. Those who are obese have medical costs that are \$1,429 more than those of normal weight on average (roughly 42% higher). And annual direct costs of childhood obesity are \$14.3 billion. By incorporating physical activity into your daily life—30 minutes for adults and 60 minutes for children—as well as healthy eating, you will experience positive health benefits and be on the path for a better future. ☺

## ***Did you know that March is National Nutrition Month?*** **Fortify Your Health With a Nutritious Diet**

*From everydaysources.org*

Who would have thought you could fight cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke ... with a fork?

Many people don't know it, but one of the most important things you can do to protect yourself from these diseases is to eat a healthy diet. Whether or not you have a family history of cancer, diabetes, heart disease or stroke, what you eat - and how much you eat - can help reduce your risk. As a matter of fact, if you are one of the many Americans who do not smoke, eating well - along with being active and maintaining a healthy weight - is your best defense against disease.

Following a few simple recommendations from the American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association and the American Heart Association can help you eat your way to a healthier weight - and a healthier YOU!

### **Make Healthy Choices**

+ Eat at least five servings of vegetables and fruits each day.

Does "five" sound like a lot? Serving sizes are actually smaller than you might think!

One medium piece of fruit	6 oz of 100% fruit or frozen vegetables
¼ cup of dried fruit	½ cup chopped, canned or frozen fruit
½ cup chopped, canned or frozen fruit	1 cup leafy greens

+ Focus on fruits and veggies that have the most color. They're generally the most nutritious.

+ Choose whole grains over processed (refined) grains and sugars.

+ Choose whole-grain rice, bread, pasta and cereals.

+ Not sure if it's whole grain? Look for "whole wheat" or another whole grain as the first ingredient on the label.

+ Limit consumption of refined carbohydrates, including pastries, sweetened cereals, soft drinks and other foods high in sugar.

+ Substitute healthier fats for not-so-healthy fats

+ Choose monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats such as olive oil, canola oil and peanut oil.

+ Avoid trans fats, found in many margarines and baked goods.

+ Limit your intake of saturated fats and cholesterol found in meats and dairy products.

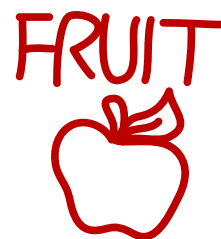
+ Select lean cuts of meat (look for "round" or "loin").

+ Trim excess fat from meats.

+ Choose low-fat and fat-free dairy products.

+ Choose poultry, fish and beans as alternatives to beef, lamb and pork.

+ Add avocados and nuts to your diet. (These are high in healthy fats, but also high in calories, so don't go overboard!)



## Dining Portion Sizes

Eating out? Restaurant portions are frequently two to three times larger than normal portions. Remember these tips next time you dine out:

- Split an entrée with a friend or save half of it for lunch the next day.
- Have an appetizer and salad or soup as your main course.
- At home, serve appropriate portion sizes, and store the rest for leftovers. Avoid eating directly out of a bag or carton. Think about buying foods packaged in individual serving sizes to help you control portions. Serve dinner on your smaller salad plates instead of your dinner plates!
- Watch Your Portion Sizes! No doubt about it – our portion sizes are getting bigger and bigger, and unfortunately, so are our waistlines. Beware of portion distortion, and help trim down the number of calories you eat each day.
- Use these visuals to help you judge what a normal portion size is:
  - ½ cup of vegetables or fruit is about the size of your fist.
  - A medium apple is the size of a baseball.
  - A three-ounce portion of meat, fish or poultry is about the size of deck of cards.
  - A single-serving bagel is about the size of a hockey puck.
  - 1 ½ ounces of cheese is the size of a pair of dice.

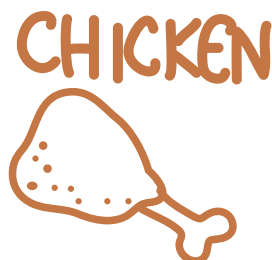
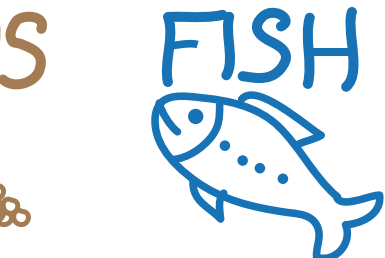
## Cooking Tips

Use low-fat cooking methods like roasting, baking, broiling, steaming or poaching. Limit deep-fat frying and sautéing in a lot of oil, butter or margarine. Use a cooking spray, broth or water to sauté meats.

Substitute vegetables, fruits and other lower-calorie foods – lowfat dairy products, lean meats and cheeses, whole grains, and reduced sugar foods - for calorie-dense foods such as French fries, cheeseburgers, pizza, ice cream, doughnuts and other sweets.

## Dairy Substitutions

- Use evaporated (skim or whole) milk instead of higher-fat cream in baked goods, sauces and soups.
- Use reduced-fat or fat-free yogurt to replace all or part of the sour cream or mayonnaise in a recipe. Replace part of ricotta cheese with reduced-fat cottage cheese. Use a puree of cooked potatoes, onion, and celery as a creamy base for soups instead of cream or half-and-half.
- Sharp cheese gives extra flavor so that less can be used. This helps trim the fat.
- Select yogurt or milk products without added sugar or flavorings. Mix in fresh fruit for a flavor boost.®



## Teaching Ideas for Key Stage One in Gymnastics

Article from *Livestrong.com* By *Angela Brady*

Stage one gymnastics is an introductory stage, but it could possibly be one of the most important stages in a gymnast's career. During Stage One classes, gymnasts are introduced to the basic movements that lay the foundation for the mastery of more advanced stunts, and they learn about the strength and postures necessary to advance. Most Stage One students are very young, but aspiring gymnasts of any age must learn these lessons before moving on.

**Body Positioning** – Correct positioning is so important to gymnastics that it is the first area new gymnasts concentrate on. Students must master positioning so it comes naturally to them and future efforts can concentrate on propulsion and technique. Teach students to straddle-sit, V-sit, and transition back and forth between the two. Have contests to see who can form the most shapes with their bodies by arching and scooping, extending and contracting. Challenge the students to move around the room with as much of their bodies touching the floor as possible, then with as much of their bodies in the air as possible. Do as many positioning moves as possible in front of the mirror so students can connect the "feel" of each position with the look.

**Floor Exercises** – Students must master the forward and backward roll -- an effective drill is to line them up horizontally along a mat and have them forward roll to one side, then backward roll to the other side, repeating until they are comfortable with being upside down. To reinforce control of the forward roll, use a circular mat as a track for them to roll around in a line. If students are having trouble getting over with either roll, use a wedge mat to provide an extra boost. Have height and distance jumping contests on a spring mat to teach the students about the propulsion necessary for future moves; younger

students will be delighted at the height they can achieve on the spring mat. Cartwheels should be spotted at first until each student is able to scissor the legs over instead of whipping them around the side. If a student consistently has a difficult time with cartwheels, have her start on the opposite foot -- it may come more naturally.

**Apparatus** – Apparatus work is very basic at Stage One and is focused on teaching the purpose and "feeling" of each piece of equipment. Gymnasts at this stage should only hang from the uneven bars so they get used to bearing their body weight with their arms and shoulders. Allow them to hang from both bars to experience the difference in height. Use the low foam beam for a balance beam introduction -- the students should be able to walk forward and backward and turn on two feet at the ends. Races on the foam beam can safely bring out each student's competitive nature and force them to concentrate on balance. Encourage parents to place a 4-inch-wide piece of duct tape on the floor at home to allow the student to practice walking in a straight line.

Additional Balance Training-Without separate balance training, students may never fully master the beam. Line the students up for balancing contests in different positions. Have them balance on one foot with the other leg pointed in front or in back, have them balance in an inverted pike position with one hand or one leg lifted, then have them lift both a hand and a leg. If they progress quickly, move on to side planks and one-legged squats. Balance contests tend to be popular with younger gymnasts. Keep it fun but work to keep them focused on the intent of the exercise. Ⓢ

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### From the Convention Nominating Committee:

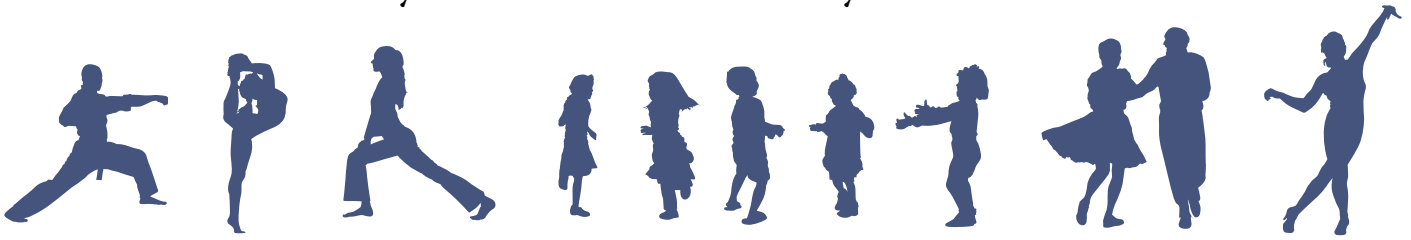
The nominating committee for the 2014 Convention is reaching out to the members. We are searching for qualified and committed people to hold the following national offices: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Foundation Director, Membership Director, Public Relations Director, Editor, 3-Executive Board members, 3-Alternate Executive Board members

Please email resumes to the National Office at [ASO@american-sokol.org](mailto:ASO@american-sokol.org) so they may be forwarded to the Nominating Committee. A resume is required for all of those intending to run for the American Sokol National Executive Board; including current officers. Resume should include, but not limited to:

- 1) What position do you seek, and why do you feel you are the best candidate?
- 2) Sokol Biography/Accomplishments
- 3) If elected, what will be some of your goals, in order of importance, that pertain to your position on the AS Executive Board?
- 4) How do you plan to accomplish these goals?
- 5) If you hold other offices in your unit and/or district how will this affect your actions and opinions when considering issues being considered by the AS Executive Board? Ⓢ

Thank you, 2014 Convention Nominating Committee: Norma Zabka, Roger Martanovic, Rhonda Liska, Allison Gerber, Mary Steinman

**National Physical Director's Report**  
**June 2010-January 2014**  
**Maryann Fiordelis – National Physical Director**



It's hard to believe that almost four years have gone by since the last convention. Maybe it is true that time flies when you are having fun. The National Board of Instructors' primary focus is developing, enhancing and initiating programs while providing education and training to cultivate proficient instructors (current and future) to provide safe, effective coaching and leadership. To aid us in achieving that direction, following is a synopsis of accomplishments.

- Brought on new blood to the board every year by continually seeking out younger interested people to either become official members of our National Board of Instructors or to take on programs and events adding their own flair to them.
- Had successful development conferences in 2010, 2011, and 2012 hosted by four units in three districts with a total attendance of 325 participants from 5 districts, Sokol USA and Sokol Canada.
- Held National Instructors Schools in 2010, 2011 and 2012 with a total of 99 students. Since there were no bids submitted for 2013, we decided to financially support units/districts to hold Weekend School with national instructors. Sokol USA in conjunction with American Sokol hosted a weekend school with 18 students from both organizations.
- In 2011, Wheels became a National Program getting outside expertise assistance from Wolfgang Bientzle; Sokol Spirit and Sokol Detroit took advantage of this offering. Kandi Pajer competed as part of the USA team at the World Wheels competition in 2013. John Bazatta and Ken Nagel have become certified judges and Teresa Simonds is a certified coach. This event was added to our 2013 Sports Festival with Sokol and non-Sokol competitors.
- Fitness Challenges were held every year. In 2010 we participated in the WSF Fitness Challenge with 349 participants from 9 Units. The following three years we used the American Sokol challenges. In 2011, there were 412 participants. In 2012, we had 449 participants; we also offered fitness challenges for those over 60 with 59 participants. In 2013, there were 610 participants represented as well as 45 individuals in the 60+ challenge.

Other areas where we encourage participation to build upon a sound mind in a healthy body included:

- 2012 District Director Conference – This conference was held before the Development Conference with all District Directors but one as well as 1st and 2nd female and male assistants, Educational Director, Probortunity Lead, Sokol USA Women's and Men's Directors, Sokol Canada Men and Women Director, President of Sokol Canada as well as several guests from the three organizations. Some of our in-depth discussions included our National Programs, which ones we should be supporting, what resources we have, how to get more to participate and utilize these programs. Sis Anna Janos discussed her plans on behalf of the World Sokol Federation to build a better collaborative effort.
- Instituted the Walking Challenge in 2010 and raised close to \$900; made this an annual event. In 2011, we raised close to \$600. For the 2013 Walking Challenge, we decided that even though there had been less participation and fundraising, we needed to continue the challenge to promote good health. The summer theme in support of our Sports Festival was "Wheelin' to Milwaukee – A Sound Mind in a Healthy Body" where the challenge was web-walking 90 miles from Chicago to Milwaukee in 6 weeks.

*Continued on page 12*

*National Physical Director's Report...Continued from page 11*

- We had over 200 American Sokol participants at the 2012 COS Slet to join in the celebration of their 150th Anniversary. We participated in the parade, stage performances, Gala and three of the calisthenics in both performances. The Wheels group under the direction of Wolfgang Bientzle did a fantastic job at the Gala as well as performing at numerous stage performances.
- In 2011, National Gymnastics Day was aimed at breaking the World Handstand Record; six American Sokol Units (Cedar Rapids, KHB, Detroit, Chicagoland, Tabor, and Spirit) as well as Sokol USA Lodge 306 participated and helped break the record. The previous record was set back in 2005 in Australia with 2402; the new World record that day was set at 20,478. In 2012, the theme was "Turn the World Upside Down." Units who participated are Sokols New York, Spirit, Tabor, Sokolice Crete, Omaha, South Omaha and Cedar Rapids.
- 2012 was the first time we participated in Sr. Fitness Day. We encouraged all the units to open up their gyms to invite seniors (Sokols, neighbors and the community) to come and participate in this event. Each unit that participated set up their own type of events. This allowed for a great variety of exercises at KHB, Detroit, Spirit, Tabor and Stickney. Some examples included ice breakers, warm ups, chair exercises, Sr. Fitness Challenge, arm chair dancing, beam workout, walking, mind games, light weights, stretch and balance. Several units brought in outside groups that could provide information on hearing, heart health, assisted living, volunteerism, balance, blood pressure checks and more. Of course with seniors you need to entice them with food—healthy food. In 2013, Sokol Karel Havlicek Borovsky- Ennis split their participants into 3 groups with beam, chair and therabands and balls as exercise props. After lunch fire safety tips were presented. Sokol Tabor also hosted an event for Sokol members with four exercise stations.

Miscellaneous areas that were worked on during these four years included:

- SMART goals in 2010 for District Directors, Assistants, School Board Chair and National Physical Director and in 2011 expanded to all BOI members
- Mentoring Program in 2010 developed by the BOI Leadership team and in 2012 expanded it to include Mentoring for Volunteer Managers
- Fundraiser of 150 memories asking units/district/individuals to send in their memories, pictures etc. from attendance at COS slets to use a memento to present to them on their 150th Anniversary
- American Sokol has participated in the WSF shows every year it has been held and have won in various categories almost every year. In 2012, they did not have this competition as there were only 2 groups that participated with American Sokol being one. Sokol Tabor's Synch or Swim received an award for their number based on "Creativity & Originality of Theme and Its Execution" and their certificate was presented at our 2013 Sports Festival Opening Ceremony.
- 2013 Sports Festival held in Milwaukee. While attendance numbers were down in most events those who attended expressed satisfaction in the venues and most activities ran relatively smoothly. There is a complete book that has been compiled covering all BOI aspects of this Sports Festival including suggestions for improvements and how the next one should be changed.

Our National Board of Instructors is continually looking for new ideas we can initiate, willing to take on challenges and provide assistance to our Sokol Units where needed while encouraging them to stretch their wings to see how high they can soar. Do we always get it right? Heavens no but I truly believe in the old adage that those who never fail are ones who are too afraid to try anything new. Where would we be today if Thomas Edison gave up on the light bulb? "Do not go where a path may lead go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Ralph Waldo Emerson

As this Board of Instructors met to develop their four year business plan areas we felt were the right direction included adding more development conferences to our agenda, adding a new track for inexperienced instructors and parent helpers, encourage and support the attendance of our district directors and instructors to various training and educational sessions, strengthen our communication streams throughout all levels, as well as challenging ourselves towards building operational excellence for all levels of instructors. Nazdar. ©

## Sokol Baltimore Gets a New Home

*by Mary Cushing – National Operations Advisor*

It isn't every day a Sokol Unit gets a new home. Sokol Baltimore has been looking to purchase a hall to call their own for quite some time now. Previously they were running classes out of St. Patrick's Church hall, but after the east coast earthquake of 2011, the hall was structurally unfit and their programs and functions came to a halt. But this did not deter the members of Sokol Baltimore. They were proactive in diligently looking for a place they could call their own and continue to provide the only gymnastics program in the city limits of Baltimore.

When I made my visit to their unit last October, I was able to meet with key members twice. Once we met in the evening at the local library for my typical presentation and data gathering. And the next afternoon I was fortunate enough to meet with key members as well as the realtor to see the property they were considering for purchase. I received a tour of the building and neighborhood, as well as reviewed the draft of renovations being considered, in order to make this building functional for their purposes. I was very impressed with how much thought and work was put into the development of this project.

They developed an business plan, worked with a realtor and architect, and did the research on permits, demographics, and did not forget the financials. They have thought out, not just the logistics for their gymnastics program, but staging areas for parents to wait, meeting areas, an office, kitchen area and ADA bathrooms. They even have an additional 80 ft. of warehouse to utilize in the future once they see how programs are going. The demolition part should be finished this month, making way for the renovations to begin.

The leadership of Sokol Baltimore also has the insight to realize changes will need to be made even in how they run their unit and new building now in 2014. The fact is, things that worked in the past, simply won't work now; such as an all-volunteer base that worked so well for so many years. The fact that they are reaching out to the membership to come to meetings to share ideas is encouraging to see. Recognizing the need for change and actually taking a proactive stance to get there is commendable.

Shortly after my visit, they finalized the purchase and jumped right in with their plans. Often times, we as Sokols move slowly. And while it is wise to give your due diligence to a plan, for many it often remains just that "a plan". But the members of Sokol Baltimore took those plans and dreams and are bringing them to fruition. I know they still have a lot of work ahead of them; but they have certainly come a long way! Kudos to a progressive Sokol membership!! Way to go Sokol Baltimore.

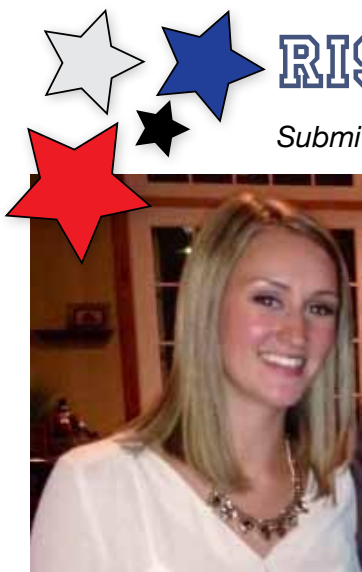
Numerous permit drawings required by the city have been generated by the architects. The permit set includes 10 -24x36 inch drawings and is in review with the city to obtain a permit for the work. The final departmental approvals were given on February 5th and the demolition phase was completed. (S)



Demolition & Renovation of The New Hall



December Unit Meeting Held in Portion of Gym Area



## RISING STAR: PAIGE VACHATA-SEIDEL

*Submitted by Kimberly Elliott, Sokol Stickney*

Sokol is a way of life for the Vachata family, so to say Paige An Vachata-Seidel was born into Sokol would be accurate. Paige has been involved in Sokol Stickney mere days after she was born. Her parents would bring her to the gym, in her carrier for meetings and classes, fundraisers, competitions etc. She attended her first National Slet in Omaha, Nebraska in

1989 at the age of 7 months old and her most recent participation being with the Sports festival in 2013 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Paige became an "official" registered class participant at 3 years of age in Sokol Stickney's Tots class, and has been an active class member ever since. Paige attended Sokol Kurz in Corpus Christi, and has been an active member on Sokol Stickney's BOI and a coach. Under Paige's leadership Sokol Stickney re-launched its Junior Board, and Paige has been the adviser to the Junior Board of Sokol Stickney for the last 6 years. Paige was also instrumental in bringing the female volleyball program back to Sokol Stickney. With her coaching skills and knowledge of the sport, many Sokol Stickney junior girls have grown into talented young adult

players. Paige also was the author and co-author of many Special Numbers throughout the years, and is currently in the process of co-authoring a children's calisthenics.

Paige has been the Publicity/Marketing chair for Sokol Stickney's executive board since the position was implemented. Paige has been instrumental in bringing Sokol Stickney current with Social Media and similar means of publicity. The endless hours Paige has been volunteering and coaching at Sokol Stickney is only a part of her busy life. Paige's Sokol skills of organization, leadership and time management along with her own amazing traits supported her during her college years. Paige recently graduated from University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) in 2011 with a Bachelors degree in Communication. Paige was offered a job with Wirtz Beverage and is currently a sales consultant for the company. She also recently became Mrs. Seidel. I am proud to call Paige a "Rising Star" within the Sokol Organization. I am certain she will continue to live her life in the "Sokol" way supporting the organization, and Sokol Stickney in the future.

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](mailto:editor@american-sokol.org). 📧

## Sokol Memories

*Submitted by Julie Ann Barcal*

If anyone knows the date of this photo, email the Sokol Office at [aso@american-sokol.org](mailto:aso@american-sokol.org) or call Colleen at 708.255.5397. 📧

If you have a Sokol Memory or photo send it to [editor@american-sokol.org](mailto:editor@american-sokol.org). We look forward to hearing and sharing your special memory.



Children of Sokol New York in folk costume, date unknown.



## Mark your Calendar

### Events around the American Sokol

Get your event featured! Email [editor@american-sokol.org](mailto:editor@american-sokol.org)

## March

- March 8**      **Sokol Tabor Exhibition** – Sokol Tabor Hall, 6pm.
- March 9**      **Sokol Chicagoland Exhibition** – Elite Sports Complex, Downers Grove IL, 2pm
- March 15**     **Sokol Spirit Exhibition** – George Washington Middle School, Lyons, IL, 5:30 pm
- March 16**     **Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Flavors of Slovakia** – 12:30 pm; Cabbage rolls, pierogi, dumplings, and more. \$16 adult; \$8 child 9 and under, cash bar.
- March 21**     **Sokol Naperville-Tyrs Exhibition** – Naperville Central HS, Naperville IL, 7pm
- March 22**     **Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Šibřinky** – 4-10 pm; Supper and Dance: Cathy Erickson Band, children, teen, and adult folk dancers. \$10/advance (by 3/15) \$12/door.
- March 23**     **Sokol LA Spring Social** – Knollwood CC, Granada Hills, CA
- March 29**     **Sokol Stickney Exhibition** – George Washington Middle School, Lyons, IL, 6:30 pm
- March 29**     **Sokol San Francisco Lunch and Dance** – Crowne Plaza Hotel

## April

- April 4**      **Sokol Ennis Friday Night Party w/ the Studebaker's** – Clubroom 7:00pm
- April 5**      **Sokol USA Lodge 306 EXHIBITION**
- April 12**     **Central District Special Number Competition** – LT HS North Campus, La Grange IL
- April 12**     **Sokol Detroit Trivia Night** - 7:00pm, Sokol Cultural Center
- April 13**     **Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Pancake Breakfast with Craft and Bake Sale** – 9 am - 1 pm
- April 13**     **Sokol Little Ferry 118th Annual Gym Exhibition**
- April 16**     **Sokol San Francisco Walk for Health** – Mt. Tamalpais State Park
- April 27**     **Sokol Sokolice Milwaukee Film Festival** – 1:30pm Norway House, 7507 W. Oklahoma Ave, Dark Blue World, 2001



### American Sokol Deadline

Send your submissions, articles, events and photos to [editor@american-sokol.org](mailto:editor@american-sokol.org) 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.



## PERIODICAL

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