



# american sokol publication

July/August 2018 | Volume 141 | Issue 5



PRAGUE SLET 2018  
*photos by Lynda Filipello*

## AMERICAN SOKOL

ISSN 003-1259

Published six times each year: January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, November/December. All content is due on the 1st of the first month. For example, the March/April issue's content is due no later than March 1st.

American Sokol, 9126 Ogden Ave, Brookfield, IL, 60513

Subscription: \$12.00 per year

Periodical postage paid at Brookfield, IL and additional mailing offices.

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From the Editor...

Many of our fellow Sokols are in Prague as I write this on the celebration of our own country's Independence Day. A big NAZDAR to all who represented the United States in this historic Slet. From the looks of social media, much fun was had by all! Look inside for two articles and photos from the Prague Slet.

Units, please send in your calendar of events for the upcoming season as soon as you are able to editor@american-sokol.org

We hope everyone has a restful summer and spends time with friends and family! #OneSokol!

NAZDAR!



**HELP Save Our Organization. CLICK HERE:**  
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## The Presidential Address

### *The Sokol Eye – Sokolským Okem*

*What time does the bus leave? What tram gets me to Eden Arena? Will my luggage make the weight requirement? Better yet, will my Lemon Bechorovka make it home? Or that Sliv someone gave me from their private stash? So, how do I get money? They don't take credit cards? How many flights of stairs are there to my apartment? Man that beer tastes good! Oh no... are we really stuck in this elevator? Where are they selling souvenirs? How come they only have one tap at this Sokol after party? Where are our seats? Selfies here, selfies there... Extra practices, really? Wow, did that Czech Sokol actually say they would give us a private practice so we can learn it? Where is the Air Conditioning? Is the A/C on? He keeps shutting it off! Does this bus go any faster... No, there is a governor on the engine... putt, putt, putt down the road we go. How far do we have to walk? That is a BIG hill... so, I am staying right here. Sunshine, heat, do you want to swap T-shirts? That pin is really cool! Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava, Cejkovice, Templar Knights, Velke Bilovice, Prague, Pilsen, Nizbor, Karlovy vary, Lidice, Cesky Krumlov, Ljublijana, Gradac...Parade, flags...so many flags! That was so much fun! American Sokol Strong in the Parade. Emotions... people crying just to see us in the parade, handing out flags, stickers, souvenirs. Opening Gala, stage performances, Slet, Sokol Straz (Honor Guard), a 200 person Boat Cruise, and a baby announcement... the same couple that got engaged on the boat in 2012! Colors, choreography, children, seniors, beauty, history, 100 years of Czechoslovakia, "Nazdar" heard all over town. Oh yes... don't forget Harley-Davidson!*

These are only some of the words and thoughts that come to mind when describing our recent journey to the 2018 Všesokolský Slet in Prague. So many memories were made as we all ventured to this amazing event coming from all over the U.S. taking a hundred different paths to get there. Months of planning and practicing brought over 250 American Sokols to Prague. We are so proud to have had members participating in the Slet performances and the stage performances. These individuals gave so much of their time to represent us using vacation time to attend additional practices. We can't thank them enough for their efforts, but to express our deep pride in what they chose to do for American Sokol.

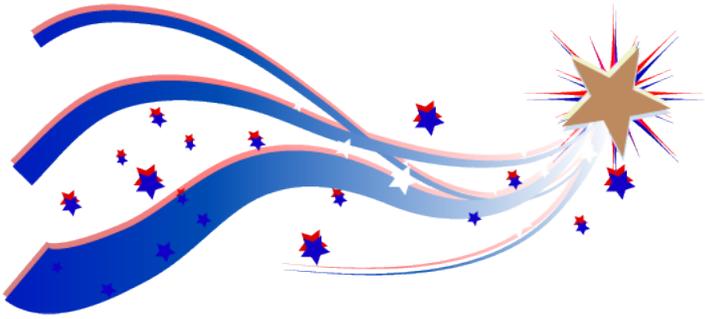
As always, at the end of a major Sokol Slet, we spend the next few weeks reflecting on the awesome events that took place and how incredibly unique the Sokol organization is. Many went for the first time and were blown away. Andrea Vachata and Kim Elliott, Sokol Stickney, both expressed to me, "Jean you were right! I got so emotional marching in the parade. It is nothing one can describe." Lynda Filipello, Sokol Naperville Tyrns, said, "Wow, I am so glad I went to the Slet. I now have a new understanding of the Sokol organization. We belong to something so great." My daughter Jenna Vondrasek sent me an emotional text from the Charles Bridge, "Mom, I get it now! I understand why you do what you do and why you kept us in Sokol." For those that returned for their 2nd or 3rd time stated that each time they come back the experience gets better and better.

The World Sokol Federation meeting was held the day after the Slet in Prague, and I am proud to announce that I will serve as the World Sokol Federation President for the next three years. You will see more information in the next issues about our World Sokol brothers and sisters and the role American Sokol will take in creating stronger bonds with them.

We all have a renewed energy for Sokol here in America and can't



*continued on page 16*



# RISING STAR

## SYDNEY BOWDEN

submitted by Mary Cushing  
American Sokol Instructors School Director



*Sydney Bowden (standing) with her sister Meghan*

This second segment of the articles on the 3 girls from Sokol Greater Cleveland will focus on Sydney Bowden, the youngest of the three girls. The picture shows Sydney and sister, Meghan, celebrating after graduation of their final Instructors School.

Sydney started Sokol at age 3 years old, after beginning her gymnastics at a private gym club. They didn't like it there and through a friend from school, who had been doing gymnastics at Sokol, invited her to join. Sydney is now in Junior Girls class. She competes at the Xcel Gold level. A part of Sokol Greater Cleveland's competitive team, Sydney competes in the AAU Meets, as well as Sokol competitions. Sydney has attended 4 or 5

National Slets – in Cedar Rapids, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh and Cleveland; the last two Sokol USA Slets.

She began coaching while still in Girls Class. Sydney assisted with Tots class and still continues to coach the Tots, now for 6 years. She said she enjoys the Tots because of their refreshing and fun-filled nature. After being around peers her age and older, she said the younger kids keep her sane!

Sydney is 16 years-old and technically will be a junior in high school this coming year. She is active in the marching band, playing tenor saxophone. But she doesn't attend classes at her high school, but at Cleveland State University. She has been in a program that allows her to take college classes while completing her high school requirements. She has been in this program long enough to now actually is able to declare a major. Biology is her focus, wanting to eventually go on to medical school. Her goal is to pursue a career as a medical examiner.

Sydney has attended four National Instructors Schools. Allowed to enter her Beginner School at age 12½, since it was in her home unit that year, she is one of our youngest students to complete the 4 year cycle. She attended her subsequent schools in Chicago at Sokol Spirit, Ennis, TX at Sokol KHB and Sokol Cedar Rapids last year. When asked what kept her coming back each year, she replied, "the people". She said she was told going to the school you were able to meet a lot of people. Although at first she stayed with her own group of kids, as she continued, she made more and more friends. Although the school is only 2 weeks out of a year, when you are together day and night for 14 days you grow close. She also likes the fact that now going to Slets and other national events, you can continue to meet up with these friends!

A member of the S.A.L.T. (Sokol Aspiring Leaders of Tomorrow) group, Sydney was one of the members who put together the Teen Social held at the Nation Slet in Cedar Rapids. She felt encouraged knowing that the supervisors of the group and the BOI would accept ideas of younger members and the others who attended, were enjoying an event she helped to organize. Sydney looks forward to other tasks to work on.

Sydney feels the best thing about Sokol is the feeling of family. No matter what you are going through, there's always someone there to listen. People of all ages and backgrounds can come together with the common ground of their love for Sokol and its ideals.

The American Sokol provides fitness and community for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural and social programs.

# Sokol Stickney Turns 90

by Linda M. Malek-Tibensky



Stickney children 1928

Stickney children 1928  
depression, when there was no money to hire anyone to build the facility, would be a very difficult task. In an article written in 1935 for a Sokol publication, (translation provided by Joseph Jagr, and Diane Spacek-Sarkarati), it states that the brick used to build the Stickney facility was obtained from demolished structures in Chicago. Sokol members had to manually pick up the bricks, remove the old mortar, and deliver them, by themselves, to the Stickney site. Mr. Vydra, of Sokol Tabor Berwyn, donated transportation of the brick, and architect J. Bednár donated the structural designs. Despite bad weather that hampered construction, Sokol volunteers from neighboring



4131 Home Ave.

Gymnastics Federation Rhythmic Committee. Her husband, Charles Prchal, the architect who designed the Western Electric tower, served as president of American Sokol for thirty two years. Both Mildred and Charles were involved with Sokol Stickney.

After overcoming many obstacles Sokol Stickney opened the door to their new home at 4131 Home Avenue in 1935.

In 1970 Sokol Stickney remodeled, upgrading the facility and changing the facade.

Information provided by American Sokol, the Hawthorne Museum at Morton College and Jerry Wright, author of *Gymnastics Who's Who in American Women*.

Sokol began in Prague in 1862 as a Czech/Slovak organization dedicated to physical health, good citizenship, and moral integrity. The Sokol community believes in developing physical fitness through gymnastics and athletics. Sokol Stickney organized in 1928. They did not have a building of their own so they used neighboring facilities until they could build a facility in Stickney.

Construction of a building during the depression, when there was no money to hire anyone to build the facility, would be a very difficult task. In an article written in 1935 for a Sokol publication, (translation provided by Joseph Jagr, and Diane Spacek-Sarkarati), it states that the brick used to build the Stickney facility was obtained from demolished structures in Chicago. Sokol members had to manually pick up the bricks, remove the old mortar, and deliver them, by themselves, to the Stickney site. Mr. Vydra, of Sokol Tabor Berwyn, donated transportation of the brick, and architect J. Bednár donated the structural designs. Despite bad weather that hampered construction, Sokol volunteers from neighboring

communities persevered, donating their time and skills to assemble the building.



The Sokol class photo from 1964 (above) includes gymnasts from Stickney and fellow gymnasts from other Sokol venues. In the middle of the first row is Mildred Prchal, renowned developer and teacher of rhythmic gymnastics and Chairperson of the U.S.



ASO Course Certification

# National Physical Director's Report

## THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

It has been my great pleasure to serve as your National Physical Director for these last eight years. I grew up in the gym. While never being that good of a gymnast I felt comfortable in Sokol which makes room for all. Some of the things I gained thanks to my Sokol Instructors was grace, confidence, courage to try and not to give up as you learn and grow from your mistakes.

More importantly was the Sokol family I gained along the way. As well as their love and support, the hard work and the fun times. Thanks for the memories.

Looking back on my eight years I'm proud of the two National Slets where in 2013 we opened up our competitions to non-Sokols and in 2017 we went back to a more traditional Slet having our gymnastic competitions at a Sokol gym while introducing xcel into our female Routines.

We had awesome development conferences where we introduced new ideas, program and strengthened our coaching skills and increasing our knowledge.

I certainly didn't do this on my own. I had great assistants and board members blending experience with fresh ideas and new people. What would I have done without Barb Vondra, Mary Cushing or Jan and Chuck Kalat – my go to people – and to all of my board members who took on many challenging tasks and projects and always came through when it really counted especially our National Slets, Instructors Schools and our 150th Anniversary celebrations. Thanks for the memories.

I've enjoyed bringing on new people listening to their ideas as well as initiating S.A.L.T. (Sokol Aspiring Leadership of Tomorrow), collaborating with the Polish Falcons to share ideas, working on these ideas together and sending some of our teens/young adults to their leadership conferences and their summer camp as well as several instructors to help lead the camp.

Yep, I have a lot of Sokol memories throughout my years. Although I'm no longer your National Physical Director, I hope to stay on our National Board of Instructors for several more years.

They say as one door closes another one opens. I'm excited to see what new challenges and assignments I'll get to undertake as your 2nd Vice President. Looking forward to making and sharing more memories with all of you.

Nazdar,  
Maryann Fiordelis





# The Sokol Educator

*from The National Education Committee*

All classical music lovers enjoy symphonies and chamber music of the renowned Czech composer, Antonin Dvorak, but how many of us know of another great Czech-American classical artist in an allied art?

This is the portrait story of Czech-American sculptor Albin Polasek, a monumental wizard, who literally carved his own destiny. *Carving His Own Destiny* is the book written about him by Ruth Sherwood, and the Albin Polasek Foundation Inc., in Winter Park, FL contains much of his art, and includes a studio, two galleries, a chapel with 14 stations of the cross, and three-acre outside gardens, all open to visitors and tourists without charge.

Albin's widow, Emily Polasek, President of the Foundation, is utterly dedicated to the sculptor's art, so that it has timeless life in the art world. She is one of a minority in America who is not class or money conscious. The story of Albin Polasek's life is truly the story of America as a land of opportunity, and represents the gratitude so many talented men and women expressed for this land, which became their new home when they came as immigrants.



He was born on St. Valentine's Day in 1879 in Frenstat, Moravia, the seventh son of Josef and Petronila Polasek. At age 15, he began his long art career as a woodcarver apprentice in Vienna. When Albin was 22 in 1901, and already an expert wood carver, he immigrated to America in the steerage class on a German ship. A few months later, Albin started work in an altar factory in Dubuque, IA, carving life-sized religious figures.

During his first two years in the United States, Albin saved enough money and was accepted as a student of sculpture in Pennsylvania. Albin earned money by working in the LaCrosse Hackner Altar Factory. He carved a marble archangel and a life-sized statue of Jan Hus, and was awarded the Cresson Foreign Traveling scholarship to study in Europe for the next three summers.

In 1909 Albin obtained his final citizenship papers, and his statue *The Eternal Moment*, now in the Paul Schultze Collection in Chicago, was highly praised and publicized. The statue is a standing pair of a man and woman, at the exquisite moment of first love, when it is still spiritual and tender. In 1910 Albin won the country's highest art award, a fellowship to the American Academy in Rome, for his sculpture *Faith, Hope and Charity*.

One of the most famous of all Polasek's works is *The Sower* made in Rome. In 1916 the Chicago Art Institute ordered the bronze *Sower* to be placed on the front steps of the building facing Michigan Avenue. Many years later in 1963, the MacNeal Memorial Hospital Association of Illinois used the *Sower* as a model of human anatomy in their annual report with this explanation, "Our search for art led us through Michelangelo, DaVinci, and we were delighted with our choice by the great artist Polasek."

Albin Olasek died May 19, 1965 and left a legacy of culture. He was a classical realist who delighted in bringing life's fire to his creations, and was four years behind in his commissions through most of his 50 working years. There are more than 400 of his artworks in the world for many generations to enjoy. A non-profit organization named Albin Polasek Foundation was established in Winter Park, FL to showcase some 200 of his sculptures and paintings.

*Submitted by Joan Sedlacek, Western District Educational Director*

American Sokol July/August 2018

# My First Praha Slet

by Lynda Filipello

Sokol Naperville Tyrs President, Central District VP, and ASO Secretary

Have you ever been on an unexpected adventure that was gifted from an unexpected source? I have had a few adventures in my lifetime, but this was the *pièce de résistance*!

After spending many, many years hearing stories of personal experiences of members who participated in COS Slets in Praha, I was given a gift by Sokol Los Angeles members to attend the 2018 COS Slet. What an honor.

The fourteen plus hours of air travel, plus the endless walking in the terminals was a real test of endurance for this 79-year-old. I know I could have requested a wheelchair, but not yet I said to myself. I was greeted by Zdenka Svitek at the Praha airport and a very polite driver. Arriving at the Jalta hotel I settled my baggage and went to dinner at Bredovský dvůr with Lillian Roter (president, Sokol LA), Zdenka Svitek (VP Sokol LA) Yvonne Masopust (membership director Sokol LA), and Darine Klega (recording and financial secretary, Sokol LA).

*Round two...* I have walked in many parades but this one is a PARADE! I had no intention of walking but Mike Dropka put me in the front with Kathy Barcal and off we went. There were thousands of Sokols with their units and many more thousands cheering us. It was overwhelming. They all ended in the Town Center packed full with thousands of Sokols! Elaine Zitko and I took our dear sweet time hobbling back to the Jalta. She is quite the trooper.

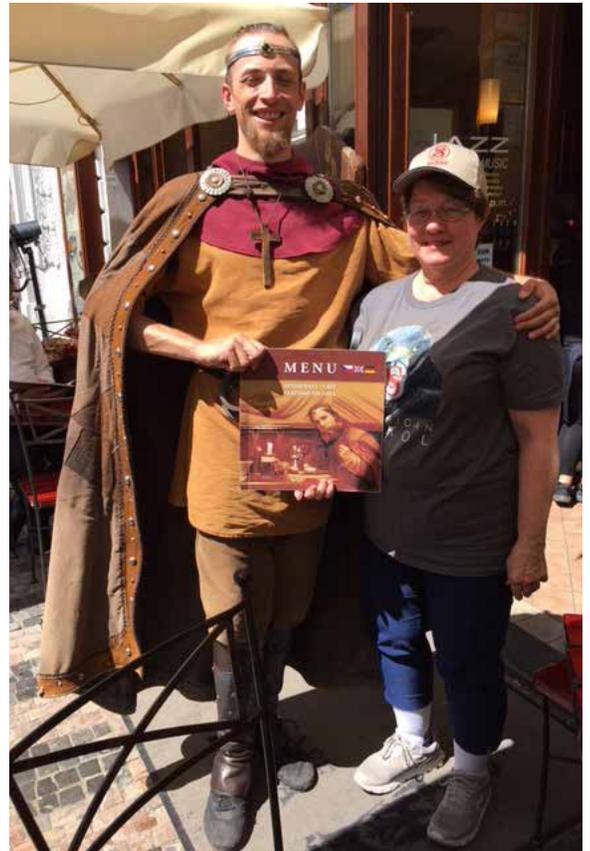
The Opening Gala performances at the indoor stadium were on a professional level to my amateur eyes. The employees of the stadium went out of their way to find me handicap seating since there are no hand rails to hold onto for either up or down seating.

*Round three...* The real hard work starts now. Kudos to all our members who were flag bearers. Three separate rehearsals, which one has to ride the Tram to and back again. Rehearsals for the Calisthenics was just as grueling. Now I say this as an American, not as a Czech citizen. I do not think our members will ever complain about our rehearsals anymore considering the endurance test in Praha.

*Round four...* The boat cruise was another endurance test for the Slet participants. A beautiful three-hour cruise and a rush back to the Tram for dress rehearsals. You better know what number Tram gets you to your destination!

*Round five...* By this day I could barely walk. Cobblestones are not the best track for arthritic feet and knees, but I was not the only person stressed out. However Sokols Have Spirit, *right!* The big evening performance. OMG, I could not speak. From the start the horses and riders, the Flag bearers, the many groups coming out into the stadium and the music. I have watched many Olympic opening ceremonies, but these are our Sokol members who have kept this organization alive for over 154 years. This has meaning and purpose. The performances were each spectacular. *Long Live Sokol!!*

*Round six...* The next day is the afternoon performance and closing ceremonies. The small children and parents were perfect in their performance, as were all the Calisthenic performances. All I could think of were the authors of these Calisthenics and their vision. What design engineers!



*continued on page 9*

Please check out these performances here: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/12359453265-xvi-vsesokolsky-slet-2018/218471291472002/>

It is awe inspiring to see Praha and the history that has transpired for over 1,000 years. This is a city well-planned for walking, wonderful healthy food without a lot of salt or sugar, friendly residents including the many dogs, and great drinking water!

Thank you to Sokol Los Angeles for making this happen for me. Thank you to our president Jean Hruby for her many months of preparation. Thank you to all our members who purchased the souvenirs. And a special thank you to Rhonda Liska for helping me up and down stairs and encouraging me to press on in Praha. Thank you to Michael Barcal for carrying the Sokol Naperville Tyrs flag in the parade. Thank you to Victoria of Sokol Zizka for carrying the Sokol Naperville Tyrs flag in the Slet. Thank you to Mike Dropka for bringing all the Central District and ASO Flags to Praha. Thank you to all our members who graciously rehearsed and rehearsed and then performed so flawlessly.

A very special thank you to all our Sokol Members who have kept Sokol alive here in the USA and reminded us of the COS Slets for us to continue to participate in.



American Sokol members supporting President Jean Hruby as she received the Liberty Award from the Bohemian Lawyers' Association on May 24, 2018.

*Left to right, 2nd row: Joe Placek, Jenna Vondrasek, Michael Gonzalez, Debbie Blazina.*

*1st row: Vera Wilt, Kim Elliot, Lynda Filipello, Jean Hruby, Andrea Vachata, Rich Vachata.*



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**Place your order today while we still have stock! Limited quantities available.**

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|  |      |
|--|------|
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| American Sokol Hand Held Flag (new flag design)      | \$6  |
| American Sokol Rally Towel – with Slet Logo          | \$4  |
| *Czech Sokol Souvenir 2018 Calendar (limited supply) | \$10 |



### T- shirt with Striped Sleeves

|   |      |      |                         |
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### DONATIONS FOR 2017/18 SEALS CAMPAIGN *(continued)*

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*This is a revised version of the list that was originally published in the March/April Publication.*

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Helenka & David Livingston in honor of Edmund Draha and Georgina Reymisky  
Alice Kohl & Alice Kohl in memory of Elsie Kohl

Donations will be published in the June and December Publications. We thank everyone for their continued support to our organization. If we have forgotten anyone, please let us know. NAZDAR! and THANK YOU SO MUCH!

# In Memory Of... *by Anne Nightingale*

My dad, Bro. Vladislav (Walter) Slavik (World Sokol Federation President, Sokol Eastern District President, Sokol NY President), most of our family decided to attend the Všesokolský slet in Prague this summer. Anna Slavik, Julie Slavik-Weiss, George Jr. and George Sr. Weiss and Beluse Bednar (all Sokol members) as well as my son Charlie Krowl, and Mahopac friend Shane McDonald ventured out to Prague.



My sister Julie and I marched in the parade representing Sokol NY on July 1st along with Irene Wynnyczuk and George Sr. carried the Sokol NY flag while Gregor Wynnyczuk carried the Eastern District flag. This was a very memorable experience for me. The crowds cheering us on were just fabulous. Anyone in the crowd over the age of 70 WEPT as we passed by. This caused me to feel very emotional also. It's an experience I will never forget. NY Sokols Wendy McClure (and her husband), Pavel Paces (along with his wife) and Anne Marie Suchanek were in the crowd taking photos and cheering encouragement.

We had many adventures way too numerous to list. But I will mention a few highlights. Tyršův Dům is a beautiful Baroque palace which is now the home of the Sokol movement. During our first visit to Tyršův Dům, we were being followed by a man who approached us and confirmed that we were from the United States. He introduced himself as Richard Remes. He explained that although he was not a Sokol, his grandfather was. He showed us a medal and a pin from a Sokol slet in 1938 which his grandfather attended. He gave these items to us, with hopes that they would be displayed in our Sokol Hall in New York. We were shocked and honored by this man's kindness. It was at this visit to Tyršův Dům that we saw some of the practice sessions for the special presentations we would later see at the Gala.

The Sokol Gala was quite a magnificent event that inspired much awe and respect. Units from South America to Canada, Croatia to Scandinavia were represented. Each presentation was unique and creative. It was a heartwarming experience.

Our second visit to Tyršův Dům was to find a memorial to our mentor, Czech school teacher, and Sokol instructor, Sis. Marie Provaznikova. We were having a difficult time locating this memorial and our Czech was very rusty. However, Milan Nethr, offered to show us the memorial we were seeking. His English was perfect and it was such a pleasure conversing with this "local" (from Ujezd) in English! So grateful! He then proceeded to educate us in Sokol history, as well as other organizations (most of them annihilated by the Nazis and Communists) that were very similar to Sokol.

Opening night of the Slet was spectacular (and yes, Irene Wynnyczuk was right - we should have been seated higher in the stands as we would have had better perspective.) Again, seeing all these Sokols from nations across the world working together in perfectly choreographed and synchronized calisthenics was a majestic sight to observe.

Of course, we visited with many many relatives we still have in the Czech Republic. Even Bro Juro Bezak (anyone remember him from Barryville camp?) came all the way from Slovakia to spend some time with Beluse Bednar.

I am sure I am forgetting to mention many names and places. The week went by way too fast and reminded us all to remember to make our next visit a lot longer. A stellar time was had by all. To visit our ancestral home, with a Všesokolský slet included, was a once in a lifetime experience. Nazdar!



# It Has Been A Real Honor

*Bro. Chuck Kalat, Co-founder & former Editor of the Director's Newsletter*

After 28 Years and over 280 issues as the Editor of the Director's Newsletter (DN) since its inception, Chuck Kalat has decided to retire. He feels it a real honor to have had the opportunity to serve in that position.

The DN was initially the brainchild of Chuck and his wife, Janet when she became National Women's Director in 1990. For the first 21 years the DN was a Board of Instructor's Publication for disseminating Sokol thinking and coaching, leadership, and training information to the District and Unit Physical Directors throughout the American Sokol.

In 2011, under the direction of President Tom Pajer, the DN content and scope was expanded to a more general content with distribution to ALL National, District, and Unit officers. The intention was to provide a vehicle that would allow the National Executive Board officers communication with their District and Unit counterparts on a monthly basis for disseminating information and encouragement to help them do their jobs more effectively. Email subscriptions to the Director's Newsletter are available to Sokol members at a nominal cost.



*Jan & Chuck Kalat*

# Changing of the Guard

*Sis. Pat Satek, New Editor of the Director's Newsletter*



Sis. Pat Satek is assuming the position of Editor of the Director's Newsletter going forward. She is a lifelong member of Sokol (Slavsky, Berwyn-Slavsky, Spirit). She has taught classes at most every age level, most notably 20+ years teaching Junior Girls and mentoring the Junior Board at her gym. She has co-written numerous calisthenics routines and special numbers. She has served as Director and Secretary at the Unit and District levels and as 1st Assistant National Director under Sis. Jan Kalat. From April 1992 to June 2005, she was Editor of the *American Sokol* Publication. Along with Sis. Kathy Barcal, she will also serve the next four years as ASO National Physical Director. She may be contacted at: [patsatek@outlook.com](mailto:patsatek@outlook.com)

*Pat Satek*

*continued from page 3*

wait to work on our programs and preparations for our own Slet in 2021. Thank you all for supporting the Slet in Prague and I hope that we can share more stories from the Slet in future issues for those of you who were unable to attend.

I look forward to the upcoming Sokol Season and the 100th Anniversary Celebrations with all of you!

Ať žije Sokol! ~ Long Live Sokol!  
Nazdar! Jean Hruby, President

The American Sokol provides fitness and community for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural and social programs.

# Merit Award Winner: Payton Elliott

*Sokol Stickney, Lyons, IL*

At the age of 17 I have already spent countless hours, days, and yes, even years at Sokol Stickney. During which I have experienced so many wonderful, and positive moments. There are a few instances that stand out. The weekend of November 13th through 15th, 2015 is one of those times. I was fortunate enough to participate in the 150th year celebration of the American Sokol. Prior to this event I had participated in numerous Sokol Slets and competitions, but this weekend was definitely different.

The festivities began on a Friday evening where I was fortunate enough to be a participant in the opening ceremonies, in the actual opening number. I was overwhelmed with pride when I stuck the finishing pose, and the spectators erupted in applause. It was evident to me at that moment this was the beginning of a special weekend.

The following day on Saturday I had the honor of being a volunteer at the 150th year American Sokol Gala, the evening was magical. The women dressed in beautiful gowns and the men in their tuxedos. I vividly recall a display that showcased the history of Sokol and the sport of gymnastics. I was amazed to see how instrumental Dr. Trys was in the development of gymnastics, I listened as Brother Rome explained his display and where all the memorabilia came from. I was especially proud when he pointed out the items donated from my unit. I was reminded that evening, how our Sokol ancestor's strong convictions and Sokol ideals, had persevered over the last 150 years.

As I listened to the speeches and watched to videos, all with while with historic Sokol music in the background, I felt my stance getting stronger and my heart filling with pride. I knew at that moment that I, along with the hundreds of guests and volunteers that evening were taking part in Sokol history.

After the Gala we all finished the celebration off at the Anniversary Party at the Lisle Hilton. In true Sokol fashion we danced the night away. All of us, coming together on the dance floor performing impromptu "all Sokol" special numbers.

These are the moments I cherish; the units gathered together in friendship and laughter, dancing the night away, sharing our past and anticipating the future of Sokol. I look forward to the day Sokol gathers for its 200th year anniversary. On that day I will share my memories of this special weekend with the next Sokol generation and may they be as blessed by being a part of this magnificent Sokol community as I have been.



# The Svestkas in Prague

by Bro. Larry Svestka



Travelling to Prague for the 2018 Slet was an enjoyable experience. I went with my son Charles who carried the flag for Sokol Tabor. He was in a special number and we were both in the Men's Cal, Borci. Being on the field in Eden Arena with 940 men was an incredible experience as I am sure others who participated in the Slet will agree. There was a brotherhood amongst the Sokols even when a lack of fluency made communication a challenge. Spending time with Sokol brothers and sisters in Prague was tremendous fun.

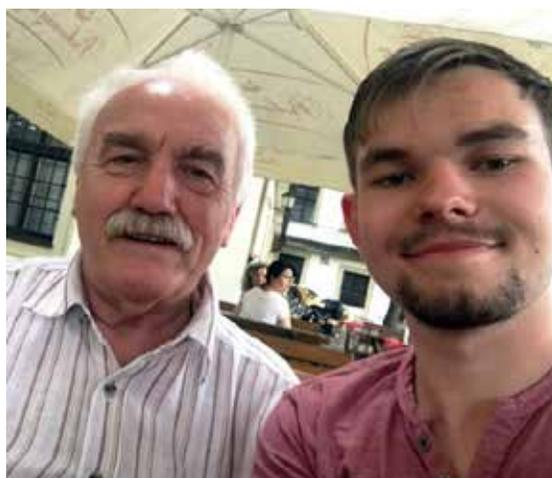
I also met family on my stay in Prague that I had never met before. During the American Sokol 150th Anniversary

Gala in Chicago, Czech Consulate General, Borek Lizec asked if I would be willing to answer some questions for *Czech Radio*. I agreed. I did not know that it ever aired and never gave it much thought afterwards. But as it turns out, my cousin Vladislav Svestka was driving in his car in the Czech Republic and heard the interview on the radio. He called another cousin, Pavel, who lives in Key West, FL to find out if I was related. I was contacted by Pavel but never pursued meeting until this trip, because he was flying into Prague for his summer visit.

Seven members of the family, including my father's first cousin, Bohumir Svestka, came to Hotel Kampa and we visited for about 2 ½ hours. Bohumir's father was my grandfather's brother. My grandfather came to the U.S. in 1914. He went back to visit in 1928 when he married my grandmother. My cousin Lenka had some photos and letters from the seventies and eighties when my grandmother was in contact with them and stayed with them in the town of Borotin.

Charles FaceTimed my dad back home and he met his cousin for the first time via technology. Charles and I had to leave to be in the Thursday night Slet performance at Eden Arena. We ran to our room, got our uniforms on and ran to catch the tram. When we got there, Bohumir and his son Jan were waiting on the platform. We visited some more on the way to the program. When we arrived at our stop, Bohumir's wife and sister-in-law were there waiting-so that made a total of nine family members we met. They went to watch the Thursday evening opening performance. We exchanged contact info and invitations to visit have been extended. I had met Jan in 1998 when I visited Jistebnice, the village my grandparents came from, but he did not speak English at the time. He is now an architect and fortunately, he and a few others speak English so we were able to communicate.

The interview with *Czech Radio* had to do with the importance of maintaining the cultural aspect of Sokol. As it turns out, it was the starting point for reconnecting with my father's side of the family. My father's parents left their families behind. My Grandfather's younger brother, Bohumir Sr., had five children, they all had children, and now some have grandchildren. Jan emailed his family tree and there are thirty cousins descended from Grandpa's younger brother alone. We will keep in touch and exchange photos and information electronically, and maybe next time there will be more time to visit. Had I not attended the Gala and spoken with *Czech Radio*, we'd probably have never met.





## Mark your Calendar

### Events around the American Sokol

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

## July

- July 4** Fourth of July Picnic - Sokol Ceska Sin, Cleveland, OH
- July 4** Fourth of July Picnic - Sokol Detroit, Sokol Camp, South Lyon, MI
- July 21** Annual Golf Outing- Sokol Detroit, Sokol Cultural Center, Dearborn Heights, MI
- July 21-22** Czech & Slovak Festival - Sokol Detroit, Sokol Cultural Center, Dearborn Heights, MI
- July 22** Sokol Sunday Dinner - Sokol Greater Cleveland

## August

- August 4** Golf Outing - Sokol Detroit, Fox Hills Country Club, Plymouth, MI
- August 5** Annual Unit Picnic - Sokol Ceska Sin, Cleveland, OH
- August 24-26** Fishing Derby - Sokol Detroit, Sokol Camp, South Lyon, MI

## September

- September 15** Oktoberfest - Sokol Greater Cleveland, Cleveland, OH
- September 16** 28th Annual Czech & Slovak Festival - Sokol Minnesota, St. Paul, MN, MO
- September 23** Bike & Train Ride - Sokol Ceska Sin, Cuyahoga Valley, OH

## October

- October 14** Annual Picnic - Sokol Town of Lake, Sokol Camp
- October 28** Centennial Celebration of Czechoslovakia Founding - Sokol Greater Cleveland, Cleveland, OH

## November

- November 17** Annual Holiday Fair - Sokol Greater Cleveland, Cleveland, OH

Watch the Slet from July 5th. Courtesy of Czech TV. Click below.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/12359453265-xvi-vsesokolsky-slet-2018/218471291472002/>



### 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.



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July/August 2018 | Issue 5

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