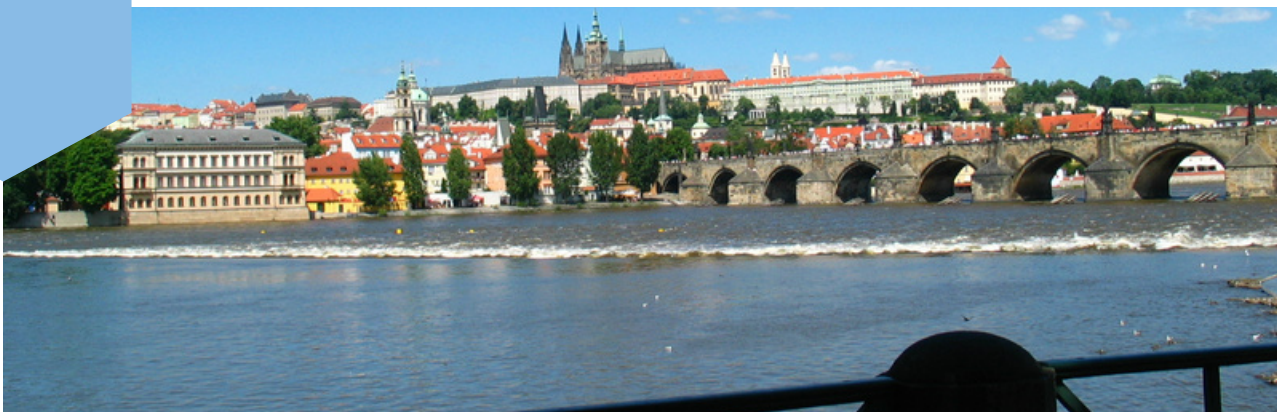




AMERICAN SOKOL NEWSLETTER

FALL 2023



Welcome to American Sokol's Newsletter!

Volume 146, Issue 4

ISSN: 0003-1259

November 2023

Cover Photo: Lida O'Donnell, c. June. 2006 - A view from the Vltava river bank on a beautiful morning at the beginning of the Sokol parade at the 2006 Slet.

In This Issue

- A Note from the President
- Sokol Memorial Day 2023
- The Midwest Czech Tour Continues
- American Sokol Town Hall Meetings
- Merit Award Winners - 2023
- Orienteering World Cup 2023
- Virtual ASO Administrative Conference
- 2024 COS Slet Tours
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
- Unit Growth Award - Sokol Wilber
- Two Wheels in Prague? Think Twice.
- But, Three Wheels is Nice!
- National Youth Stretch
- Cleveland Agreement of 1915
- There's more than Cheese in Milwaukee
- A Mortgage Burning Celebration
- DVD Lending Library
- American Sokol Donations
- Save the Date - XXV ASO Slet!
- Executive Board



A Note from the President

Family is work, but work worth doing

Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Friends of Sokol,

For many of us, Autumn marks the return to Sokol fitness, educational, cultural, and social activities. This usually leads to increased commitments and decreased free time. It can be a challenge. And that begs the question, why? Why do we continue with our commitment to Sokol?

Our commitment endures because Sokol is family and with a commitment that personal, we're dedicated to seeing it persevere. We're committed to keeping our family strong. Our work isn't a burden, it's a labor of love. We work to keep Sokol alive, not because of ourselves, but because we want to share it with others including our future generations (like with my new nephew Garrett Joseph Fron, pictured to the right).

At the American Sokol, our efforts are focused on making the work you do easier. Earlier this month we hosted a Virtual Administrative Conference and we're continuing to host bi-monthly Town Hall events. These events, and others upcoming efforts, are intended for our Sokol leaders to connect, share ideas, and have resources for future planning. How will this help?



- Connections are key to success because these provide opportunity to collaborate and foster new ideas.
- Idea sharing makes us better because it supports continuous improvement. We get better by building on the success and insights of our Sokol Brothers and Sisters.
- Resources provide continuity and building blocks for future success. By keeping our content available (as we're already doing on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)) this allows current and future leaders to engage with new and continued learning.

As I've mentioned, Sokol is a labor of love. This reminds me of the famous quote by Teddy Roosevelt, which was later supplemented by the TV character Leslie Knope (Played by Amy Poehler on Parks and Recreation):

"Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is a chance to work hard at work worth doing.' And I would add that what makes work worth doing is getting to do it with people that you love."



A Note from the President (continued)

This mindset is what makes Sokol special and a second home for so many of us. Family builds upon the success of their elders and strives to set up the next generation for greater success. **The American Sokol is committed to making your work easier and helping grow our Sokol family into the future.**

Our Executive Board values and welcomes your input. We need your support in the present and for our future. If you have any suggestions or questions, please email me at my new email address at adam.wilt@americansokol.org.

Brother Adam Wilt - President

Those Who Have Shaped My Sokol Journey...

This month, I'd like to say thank you to one of the members who first noticed my potential to be a leader in Sokol - thank you Brother Paul Lebloch! I'll never forget the 2009 Annual Meeting for Sokol Spirit when Brother Paul nominated me as a delegate for the American Sokol Convention. That nomination introduced me to Sokol governance nationally and inspired me to seek the opportunity to serve as President of my unit. That nomination initiated my path as an adult leader in Sokol, and led me to this opportunity to serve as your President. Thank you Paul Lebloch for recognizing my potential.

Sokol Memorial Day 2023

Prague, CZ - October 8, 2023

I went to the Tyrs house (in Prague) for the Sokol Memorial Day ceremony. Sokol Guards were greeting everybody by the gate, and on our way in, we passed pictures of Sokol leaders that lost their lives during the war because they followed their principles. We entered the courtyard where more guards were standing by a memorial. The ceremony started with the song "Lvi silou." It was followed by speeches from government and Sokol officials. Then later we went to greet the cyclist that brought the Sokol light for the lighting ceremony, where wooden boats with names of Sokol leaders, killed by Nazi-regime, were lit and let out on the river as a symbol of respect. And meanwhile in Washington DC my Sokol tots class celebrated in the same way and let out their boats on Potomac River.

Dáša Měrková - Executive Board



Sokol Memorial Day 2023 Photos



The Midwest Czech Tour Continues

Well, in case you were wondering what the Czech Capital of Wisconsin is, look no further. Our Pesky Český, Jim Hantak, dropped by to let us know that Hillsboro, WI is just that. According to Jim, during the second weekend in June, the town holds the 3-day festival: Český Den (Czech Days). Activities include food booths with roast pork, dumplings, and sauerkraut, along with Czech pastries and beer, an arts and crafts fair, traditional Czech dancers, and a Polka mass at a local church. There has also been an antique tractor show at previous events.

Thanks for keeping your fans sated, Jim!

Have you been to Hillsboro? Or another quaint (or not so quaint) town with Czech roots? If so, we'd love to hear your stories!



American Sokol Town Hall Meetings

Have you joined us for a Town Hall yet? If not, what are you waiting for? Check out past recordings, which are on our [YouTube channel](#)! They're also available by navigating to the videos section of [American Sokol's Facebook page](#)! To date, we've covered:

- [Prague Slet 2024 Info](#)
- [Sokol Facilities](#)
- [Recruitment](#)
- [Membership & Social Engagement](#)
- [Non-Gymnastics Fitness Programs](#)
- [Fundraisers](#)

Next Town Hall: November 30, 8:30 PM EDT, 7:30 PM CDT, 5:30 PM PDT

Next Topic: Sokol Education

Who should attend: Any member who would like to talk or hear about Sokol Education with our Education Director, Anna!

Future topics will vary as we continue to feature the work of our Sokol units in a forum for idea-sharing and discussion. Please save these dates and note the featured topics. In addition to being available [via Zoom](#), you can join us on the [Facebook live stream](#).

Next Town Hall

Thursday, November 30 - Education

Future Town Hall Topics (Dates TBD)

Passing the Torch to New Leaders

Insurance/Risk Management (Closed to Sokol Leaders)

8PM EDT | 7PM CDT | 5PM PDT



Merit Award Winners - 2023

Tamara Bajek

Throughout my 15 years of being a Sokol member, I have participated in numerous competitions and events. As a result, I have formed friendships and learned significant life skills. Attending Instructors School for two years was my most impactful Sokol experience. Leadership and time management were essential life skills that I acquired through the School.

Besides learning how to coach gymnastics at Instructors School, I was granted the opportunity to lead my competition group during my Intermediate year. I discovered efficient ways to lead my peers such as demonstrating what to do, explaining the routine with cues, and considering suggestions from my team. Under my leadership, our group ended with a tie for first place when the School ended. Leading my peers throughout this experience taught me the patience and decision making required to be an effective leader.

The Instructors School had a busy schedule each day. Competent time management skills were a necessity in order to be successful at the School. I used my time wisely during classes and study to get my assignments done as well as completed work during free time in the morning or at night when needed. As an Intermediate student, I had to compose a Calisthenics routine with a partner, which was a long-term project. I would find opportunities throughout the day to meet with my partner to get our project done. Also, competition groups were given a set time limit to complete group choreography, so I would do my best to keep the group on task in order to maximize our productivity. Sokol has offered countless opportunities and experiences that helped develop me into the person I am today. I was able to form my leadership skills, improve my time management, and begin to apply them in my everyday life. My leadership allowed me to become captain of the high school gymnastics team my senior year. My time management helped me maintain a 4.0 GPA or higher throughout high school. I am forever grateful for the experiences that Sokol has provided and will continue my participation in this organization to continue my growth.



Merit Award Winners - 2023

Alexis Měrka

Sokol has been a large part of my life. It has kept me close to my Czech heritage and for that I will be forever grateful. I have learned many skills that have been, and will be, useful in all aspects of my life. On top of that, thanks to Sokol I met my best friends.

My most impactful memory is from the first Sokol event I ever went to. It was a summer camp at Modrá Skála on the South Branch of the Potomac River. We canoed to the campsite and stayed there for a week, building a makeshift kitchen and a large teepee. This camp is where I met those who are now my closest friends.

Throughout the camp, our náčelník gave us many tasks and challenges. He taught us how to canoe and kayak better, challenged us to carry fire from one side of the river to the other, and more. Our last challenge, though, was to canoe upstream through some intense rapids and hit a target with a spear. We were split into teams of 3 for this, and the first team to hit the target would win.

Canoeing up to the rapids, my team was in the lead. I remember standing in the strong rapids, trying to push the canoe upstream. I tried to take over and push the canoe through on my own since I knew I was the strongest of us three, but the rapids were too strong. This was the first time I remember having to rely on others and truly work as a team to get something done. So, fighting off the relentless current, we put our heads together to find the path of least resistance and pushed together to make it past the rapids. I don't even remember if we won or not, because that wasn't the point.

I have always been a big kid. I was always the tallest in my class, and I looked way older than I was. So, when it came to any physical challenges, I found it was easier to get it done by myself than to take the time to explain how to do it to others because I knew I could handle it. But this time it was different. This challenge forced me into teamwork. Those rapids were too strong for any one of us to get through alone, so we had to help each other and combine our strengths. Only then did we complete the challenge and learn that we are stronger together.

Orienteering World Cup 2023 - Česká Lípa, Czechia

First of all, many of you may not know what orienteering is, but one Sokol family is trying to change that! According to [Wikipedia](#), "Orienteering is a group of sports that involve using a map and compass to navigate from point to point in diverse and usually unfamiliar terrain whilst moving at speed. Participants are given a topographical map, usually a specially prepared orienteering map, which they use to find control points. Originally a training exercise in land navigation for military officers, orienteering has developed many variations. Among these, the oldest and the most popular is foot orienteering." The Executive Board's very own, Daša Měrková, who happens to be Alex Měrka's mom, gave a presentation on orienteering at the 2022 American Sokol Development conference!



Orienteering World Cup (continued)

Many of you met Alex for the first time above. Well, she's back! (And we saved her picture for this section.) The below interview was completed in and written in Czech at the Orienteering World Cup, and can be found at the [Orienteering World Cup website](#). An English translation is provided below the picture.

Kdekoho asi překvapí, když závodnice reprezentující USA mluví plynně česky. Využili jsme tedy příležitosti a zeptali jsme se na pár otázek. Alexis Měrka, závodnice s českými kořeny, seznámte se.

Poněkud neobvyklá situace – reprezentantka USA mluví česky. Jak se to stalo? Jaký je tvůj příběh?

“Rodiče se přestěhovali do USA v roce 2001, týden před 11. zářím, takže první měsíc tam byl celkem zajímavý. Původně to bylo jen na půl roku, ale už jsou tam přes 20 let. Já jsem už vyrůstala v Americe, ale každé léto létám do Čech za babičkou a dědou. Teď se sem budu vracet zpátky, protože začínám studovat geologii v Praze.”



Jestli se nepletu, tak jsi tu běžela i před dvěma lety na Mistrovství světa. Jak si to užíváš? Více teď, nebo před dvěma lety? Dá se to vůbec porovnávat?

“Jojo, byla jsem tu i před dvěma lety, protože nikdo z USA sem nechtěl jet. Teď se mi to asi líbí o něco více. Na MS 2021 jsem běžela jen sprint, sprintové štafety a lesní štafety, které jsem ale nedokončila, protože to bylo moc náročné. Dnes to byl vlastně můj první pořádný dokončený lesní závod.” (pozn. redakce – Alexis jsme vyzpovídali hned po jejím doběhu krátké trati)

Běžíš tentokrát všechny disciplíny? Chystáš se i zítra na klasiku?

“Jojo, chystám se běžet. Snad to přežiju.” (pozn. redakce – Alexis úspěšně dokončila i nedělní závod na klasické trati.)

Budeme ti držet palce. Užij si zbytek světového poháru a děkujeme za rozhovor.

It will probably surprise someone when the competitor representing the USA speaks fluent Czech. So we took the opportunity to ask a few questions. Meet Alexis Měrka, a competitor with Czech roots.

A somewhat unusual situation – a representative of the USA speaking Czech. How did it happen? What is your story?



Orienteering World Cup (continued)

“Parents moved to the US in 2001, a week before 9/11, so the first month there was quite interesting. Originally it was only for six months, but they have been there for over 20 years. I grew up in America, but every summer I fly to the Czech Republic to visit my grandmother and grandfather. Now I will be coming back here because I am starting to study geology in Prague.”

If I'm not mistaken, you also ran here two years ago at the World Championships. How are you enjoying it? More now or two years ago? Can it even be compared?

"Jojo, I was here two years ago because no one from the USA wanted to come here. I guess I like it a little more now. At the WC 2021, I only ran sprints, sprint relays and forest relays, which I did not finish, because it was very demanding. Today was actually my first proper completed forest race."
(Editor's note - we interviewed Alexis right after she finished the short course)

Are you running all the disciplines this time? Are you going to the classic tomorrow?

"Jojo, I'm going to run. I hope I survive." (Editor's note – Alexis also successfully completed Sunday's race on the classic track.)

We'll keep our fingers crossed for you. Enjoy the rest of the world cup and thanks for the interview.

Way to go, Alex!

Virtual ASO Administrative Conference

On Saturday, October 7 from 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM CST, members and officers from all over the country took part in what we hope to be a frequent event - a virtual Administrative Conference! While getting together is great, a virtual conference allows for a lot more flexibility for attendees, presenters, and coordinators. Here's a list of the sessions. A recording of each can be found on our YouTube channel!

- Executive Board - A summary of goals and accomplishments during the first year of this term
- 501(c)3 Panel - Should you get one, keep one, or simply remain under the American Sokol umbrella?
- Risk Management & Insurance - This one speaks for itself. Maybe?
- Program Profitability - What can you do to keep your program competitive, but profitable?
- Prague 2024 Slet - An additional session, which may include some answers not found in the Town Hall.
- Unit Roundtable - An open forum for units to speak/ask about anything!

Stay tuned for the Save the Date for the next Admin Conference, which will be... in person!



2024 COS Slet Tours

June 24 – July 11

Why is American Sokol doing these tours?

- Opportunity as a fundraiser for our Future Sokol Leaders Fund
 - Bring up to Endowment Level for future generations
 - Provides funding for:
 - National Instructors School
 - National Merit Awards
 - National Camps
 - Translations, publications, and preservation of Sokol literature and history
 - Opportunity for Sokols across the United States and Canada to travel together
 - Provide One-Stop Shopping
 - Provide Economy of scale through larger group size

Pre-Slet Tour, June 24 – June 29 High Level Review

- Berlin, Germany – June 24-26
- Dresden, Germany June 27
- Spend afternoon of 28 and morning of June 29 in Karlovy Vary
- Arrive in Prague late afternoon of June 29

Slet Week Program June 30-July 5

Sunday, June 30

- Sokol parade in Prague (9 a.m.)
- Service in St. Vit church at Prague Castle
- Official Opening Ceremony at the National Theatre
- Night trip to Petrin Hill and lighting of the Petrin Tower

Monday, July 1

- Performance of art Sokol groups on stages at the center of Prague

Tuesday, July 2

- Sokol Gala (Sokol Greater Cleveland Silks group performing)

Wednesday, July 3

- Performances on stages in Prague

Thursday, July 4

- Evening performance of calisthenics

Friday, July 5

- Afternoon calisthenics performance and official end of Slet 2024

Note: We do not have calisthenics practice schedules or when we will be performing in Slet programs

Hotels in Prague, Czech Republic - Slet Week

Name of Hotel*****Location*****Cost per night (not final)

- Pytloun Old Armoury Hotel - Near Tyrsuv Dum - 130 EUR 2 people w/breakfast
- Pytloun Kampa Garden - Near Tyrsuv Dum - 140 EUR 2 people w/breakfast, twin rooms with breakfast 205 EUR



2024 COS Slet Tours (continued)

- Pytloun Boutique Hotel - Near Old Town Hall - 180 EUR 2 people
- Hotel Roma - Near Tyrsuv Dum - 99 Eur per night for single, double or twin inc. breakfast +2 EUR/person
- Hotel Jalta - Near Old Town Hall - 180 EUR per room w/breakfast 3rd person in room plus 60 EUR
- Hotel William - Near Tyrsuv Dum - all prices inc breakfast per night: single 70 EUR, double for 2 90 EUR, twin room 2 single beds 90 EUR, triple for 3 with 3 single beds 105 EUR, 2 dble bed for 4 120 EUR
- TBD - Near Eden Stadium

We recently found out the COS has a hold on the entire Holiday Inn (4 Stars) and one other hotel in this area. Would like them to give us a block so we can take care of our members.

Tour for Monday, July 1, Full Day Tour Pilsen, Czech Republic (West Bohemia)

- Pilsner Prazdroj Brewery with lunch in brewery's restaurant
- Patton Memorial
- Central Square with the Cathedral of St. Bartolomej
- Shopping

Bus 50 seats (at least 35 pax needed) price 78 EUR/person

Bus 20 seats (at least 15 pax needed) price 98 EUR/person

- This price includes: modern bus transport, whole day guiding services, Prazdroj brewery tour with beer tasting, 3 course lunch at local brewery, entrance fee to: General Patton Museum, Old Synagogue, Cathedral of St. Bartholomew
- The price doesn't include: drinks you buy during lunch, entrance to the Big Synagogue – 13 EUR/person

OR Tour for Monday, July 1, Full Day Tour Liberec, Czech Republic (Northern Bohemia)

- Beautiful Architecture; Main Square
- Mount Jested, Communication Tower, cable car up
- On way to Liberec will stop in Stara Boleslav

Bus 50 seats (at least 35 pax needed) price 81 EUR/person

Bus 20 seats (at least 15 pax needed) 103 EUR/person

- This price includes - modern private bus, whole day guiding services, round cable car Jested up and down, 3 course menu at the local very special restaurant at the Jested Tower, entrance fee to Basilika of the Assumption of Our Lady with very special PALLADIUM in Stara Boleslav entrance fee to the old church of St. Kliment to see the spot where St. Vaclav was murdered and buried
- The price doesn't include: drinks you buy during lunch

Tours for Tuesday, July 2, ½ Day Tour Lidice 3.5/4 hours

- Lidice village which was wiped off of the map by Nazi
 - Memorial and Museum
 - Lidice Gallery



2024 COS Slet Tours (continued)

- Bus 50 seats (at least 35 pax needed) price 28 EUR/person
 - Bus 20 seats (at least 15 pax needed) price 42 EUR/person
 - This price includes - modern private bus, guiding services for the whole trip, entrance fee to the Lidice Monument (Museum, Lidice Gallery, Family house No. 116, former village ruins, Lidice Children Monument, Rose garden)
 - OR, ½ Day Tour Lany, Czech Republic, 4-5 hours
 - Chateau chosen by the first President Mr. Masaryk, weekend home then residence upon retirement
 - Masaryk Museum and Cemetery
 - The Castle is closed Mondays and Thursdays
 - Bus 50 seats (at least 35 pax needed) price 28 EUR/person
 - Bus 20 seats (at least 15 pax needed) price 37 EUR/person
 - This price includes: modern private bus, Guiding services during the whole trip, Entrance fee to the Lany Chateau
-
- Tour for Wednesday, July 3, Full Day Tour Cesky Krumlov, Prague
 - Castle, garden is very unique and has the only Czech Republic revolving theatre
 - Vltava raft cruise
 - Bus 50 seats (at least 35 pax needed) price 81 EUR/person
 - Bus 20 seats (at least 15 pax needed) 103 EUR/person
 - This price includes - modern private bus, Whole day guiding services, Entrance fee for guided tour in the Cesky Krumlov Castle, Ticket for the raft cruise on Vltava river
 - 3 course lunch in DEPO restaurant
 - The price doesn't include: Drinks you buy for lunch, Cesky Krumlov Castle Tower, 2 EUR (for those we do not want to walk up and down steps)

Thursday, 4th of July Tour, Lunch Boat Tour, toasting Independence Day

- Hoping all that traveled to Prague will join us on this tour

Tours for Friday, July 5, ½ Day Tour Nizbor Glass Factory, Nizbor, Czech Republic, 5-6 hours

- Guided Tour to see authentic production of blown and manually cut glass and crystal

Bus 50 seats (at least 35 pax needed) price 29 EUR/person

Bus 20 seats (at least 15 pax needed) price 38 EUR/person

This price includes -modern private bus, Guiding services, Glass factory tour

OR, ½ Day Tour Krivoklat Castle, Southwest of Prague, 5.5 hours

- During 16th Century during Habsbourgh Empire reign it was a prison

Bus 50 seats (at least 35 pax needed) price 32 EUR/person

Bus 20 seats (at least 15 pax needed) price 42 EUR/person

This price includes - modern private bus, Guiding services during the whole trip, Entrance fee for Krivoklat Castle guided tour



2024 COS Slet Tours (continued)

Friday, July 5

- Officially the 2024 COS Slet ends after the afternoon performance
- Most will be staying until July 6 before they leave for home
- Need to know when we are booking hotels if you need rooms earlier or later
- Post Slet Tour, July 6 to July 10
- Brno, eastern foothills of Bohemian-Moravian Highlands, July 6
- Cesky Krumlov (UNESCO)
- Salzburg, Austria July 9
- Vienna, Austria July 10
- Fly home, July 11
- Miscellaneous
- Flights from home to your first destination and flights to home from your last destination are to be made by individuals and are not included in any of our tours. Travel insurance is on your own.
- COS is expecting American Sokol to be conduit of information to and from them. Such as purchases of uniforms, metro pass, pre-order of souvenirs, etc.
- American Sokol will also have gear to purchase: white polo (can be used for Parade Uniform, pins, and flags.
- Once we have an idea of how many we can expect to join us on our various adventures, we will be able to set prices. We are working on getting range of prices for the tours based on size of bus needed.
- Please note that some sites on the tours could change.
- This is a fundraiser so additional charge will be included in pricing
- After all very end of our fundraising tours, any one who participated with us will receive a letter for tax purposes showing your donation amount.

For more info, please contact: slet@americansokol.org

Sis. Maryann Fiordelis - Prague Slet Coordinator

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Did you know that Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), a US government-funded media organization for Eastern Europe (and other areas) has its headquarters in Prague? Well, that's been the case since 1995 for the organization that was founded in 1949 during the Cold War. And unfortunately, those same Cold War countries are relying upon RFE/RL to again supply them with the news they need. CBS News' 60 Minutes has been covering the re-emergence of Radio Free Europe, and provided an update to their 2022 story earlier this year. For more from CBS on this unfortunately relevant coverage, please [check out this link](#).

(Special thanks to Meribeth Tooke for directing us to this story!)



Unit Growth Award - Sokol Wilber

Sokol Wilber had never held a summer kids camp, but Sokol Minnesota loaned them their idea and they put a Nebraska "twist" on a successful camp which netted them several new members (and the purpose of the award).

Each day started with the Czech National Anthem and the Star Spangled Banner! Marching each day, the campers learned to count in the Czech language. During the week, the campers had "tours" as part of the curriculum: Wilber Czech Museum, where they saw a rug weaving and repeated this for themselves during the week; Karpisek Market, where they learned of Czech meats and other delicacies which were put out for tasting at the program conclusion on Friday. The third tour was to Barnas Drug, where they learned Czech crystal, garnets, etc. and came back and created their own Czech heart pins. Dvorack Library was the 4th tour where they learned about Kroj from each Czech region/town and then made their own Czech paper vests. There was ribbon dancing, games, cornhusk doll making, music, and games. The cooking classes made bramborové knedlíky (potato dumplings), Rozety (rosettes), koláčky (fruit-filled cookie), and Chlebíčky (open-faced sandwich). Special guests from Sokol Crete told the story of Sokol. They also had an accordion class!

At the finale Friday, tastings of the all the food plus a play created and the singing of two Czech songs and the Wilber Mayor came to tell everyone how important the town's heritage was because of the settlement of Czechs.

The Unit Growth grant was started over 10 years ago through an anonymous trust and has continued because of the investment earnings and grants written by the Foundation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Sis. Meribeth Tooke - Foundation Director



Dear American Sokol,
Thank you for your generous support in making the First Annual TJ Sokol-Wilber Czech Cultural Day/Camp possible.
Your grant made a significant impact, allowing us to create a memorable and enriching experience for all 40 campers, their families and the community. We look forward to continuing this tradition at next year's camp!
With heartfelt appreciation, TJ Sokol-Wilber Czech Camp Committee



Two Wheels in Prague? Think Twice.

Over the summer, Radio Prague dropped an interview ([and article](#)) with Daniel Bečvář, who works for Auto-Mat, a non-governmental organization. During this chat, it highlights that, while Prague ranks as the 2nd best public transit city in the world, it ranks 73rd (of 90) for cycling. Auto-Mat is hoping to change that. [Read](#) and/or listen here (<https://english.radio.cz/cycle-or-not-cycle-question-prague-8787674>) to find out more. And, please, wear a helmet if you decide to go out on two wheels in Prague!

(Thanks to John Cinatl of Sokol Los Angeles for the lead on this article!)

But, Three Wheels is Nice!

Many of you have probably never seen or heard of a Velorex, but for those of you who have... well, it sure is a sight! Any small, lightweight, fabric-bodied, three-wheeled vehicle is sure to turn some heads. I first saw one of these in Cicero, IL, when a patron of Klas restaurant rolled up in one. And, for some reason, the strange car and name stuck in my head! Fast forward a few years, and I happened to see not one, not two, but three Velorexes during the American Sokol pre-Slet tour while we were passing through Hudlice, CZ! Thankfully, I was able to drum up these pictures from 2012. I hope you enjoy them, but seeing one of these trikes in person should be on your Czechet List! (Yes, I just made up this term, combining Czech and bucket.) For more info on Velorexes, head to this [Radio Prague article](#) from 2021!

I've received word that a member of Sokol St. Louis (who lives in Wisconsin) recently won an award at a local car show for his Velorex. Maybe we'll get a future submission from him! Stay tuned...

Do any of you own a Velorex or know someone who does? If so, feel free to add to this story!

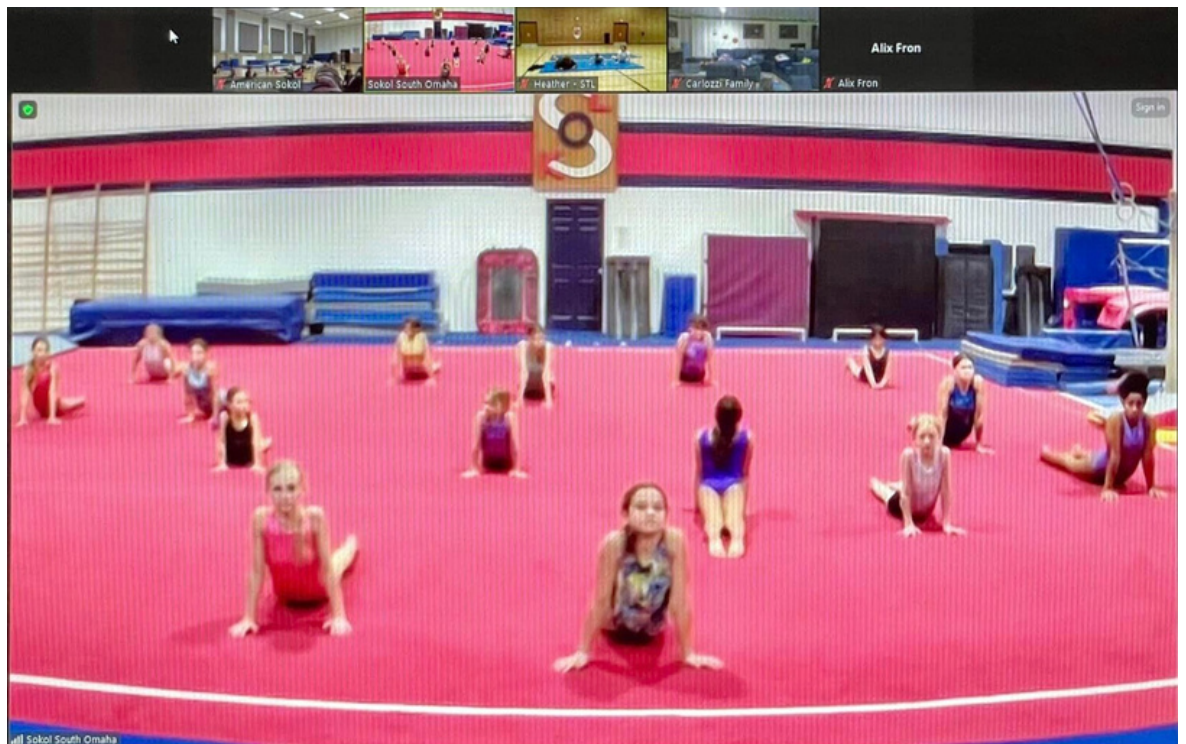
Matt Carlozzi - PR Director



National Youth Stretch

On Thursday, October 26th, Buddy Benak, of Sokol South Omaha, led Sokol kids across the country in a 15 minute stretch! Thanks to everyone who participated!

Sis. Christina Curran - National Youth Director



Cleveland Agreement of 1915

Seed that blossomed into a flower that was Czechoslovakia

A little known event took place in Cleveland, Ohio on October 22-23, 1915 that was the fundamental stepping stone to the formation of the future nation of Czechoslovakia. At the Bohemian National Hall, 4939 Broadway Ave., a document known as The Cleveland Agreement was conceived and approved by the Bohemian National Alliance, headquartered in Chicago, and the Slovak League of America, founded in Cleveland and headquartered in New York. In this Agreement, the delegates agreed to work in unison to pursue the independence for their respective peoples by collaborating in the effort to form a new, free union of Czech and Slovak states. Cleveland was selected to hold the meeting because, not only did the city have a significant population of both nationalities with ethnic organizations and newspapers, but was a central location nationally. Cleveland also offered a sizable and prestigious facility for such a meeting in the Bohemian National Hall.

The result of this conference was a proclamation that included these five fundamentals:

1. Independence of Czech and Slovak Lands
2. Federal union of Czech and Slovak nations with full autonomy of Slovakia with its own government, use of Slovak language and cultural independence
3. Free elections
4. Form of the government to be democratic, similar to that of Great Britain
5. These items form a basis of mutual agreement and can be altered only by agreement of both parties

This document, the Cleveland Agreement of 1915, was the first formal agreement between the two nationalities. It served as a basis for extensive fundraising to support the Government in Exile: Czecho-Slovak National Committee in Paris, for negotiations with allies and lobbying in U.S. congress. Please note: there is not a document to be framed and displayed - this conference was just starting the path to independence of Czechs and Slovaks. The meeting minutes embodied the agreement.

Sokol Greater Cleveland acquired the building, renovated it, and built a new gym addition. In the Bohemian National Hall, now known as Czech Cultural Center of Sokol Greater Cleveland, the lobby has been dedicated to the Cleveland Agreement of 1915. It features the statue of T.G. Masaryk, founder and the first President of Czechoslovakia.

Paul Burik - Sokol Greater Cleveland

References: Gregory Ference – “Sixteen Months of Indecision”, Denni Hlasatel Nov. 1915 “ The Official Report of the Bohemian – Slovak Conference in Cleveland”



There's more than Cheese in Milwaukee

The months of October and November are very busy this year for Sokol Milwaukee. In addition to the International Holiday Folk Fair, our regularly scheduled event, we had the amazing opportunity to partner with Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) in sponsoring their 2023 conference in Milwaukee.

The conference ran from October 17-21. The CGSI Conference is the premiere event to learn about techniques for genealogical research in the areas now known as Czech Republic and Slovakia. Presentations throughout the conference explored the history and culture of the people who lived in the present-day countries of Czech Republic and Slovakia. Sokol Milwaukee is a Platinum Donor for the event. Several Sokol Milwaukee members were involved in the planning committee, tours, workshops, presentations, Parade of Kroje show, and audio-visual help. In addition, we supplied conference attendees with 650 koláče on their Friday break.

From November 17-19, we participate in the International Holiday Folk Fair, America's premier multicultural festival that celebrates the cultural heritage of the people living in southeastern Wisconsin. You can explore the ways music, food, dance, and art weave together a message of welcome. The Czechs sponsor a Food Booth, Sales Booth, and Cultural Booth, and our youth perform a gymnastics number in the children's program. As usual, the Holiday Folk Fair involves Sokol Milwaukee members on three baking days in October and three baking days in November. Helpers bake 1,500 koláče, 1,900 coffins, 32 strudel, 50 vanočky and numerous other pieces of bakery. One of our specialties are rakvičky, Czech coffin cookies.

Ann Cramer - Sokol Milwaukee



A Mortgage Burning Celebration

Copied (with permission) from Sokol Greater Cleveland's Newsletter

On September 9, we officially celebrated paying off the \$750,000 mortgage that added the gymnasium and connecting space to Bohemian National Hall. Thanks to our many donors and members, we were able to accomplish this in 23 years, which was 7 years early.

The over 260 members and guests were not fazed by the cloudy and drizzly day, but instead arrived in high spirits and thoroughly enjoyed socializing with so many people they had not seen for quite a few years. Everyone was treated to appetizers and a buffet dinner along with two free beverages. The gymnasium was a constant mix of activity, including an inflatable obstacle course and a bouncy castle complete with slide and ladder. A face painter did her magic on many little faces, and rock painting was a break from all the excitement. A huge Plinko board greeted everyone as they entered, guaranteeing all a prize for playing.

Outside, people were enjoying the DJ's music while mingling or relaxing in the 3 tents with their favorite beverage. The more energetic attendees tried their best to win at corn hole, Connect 4, can smash, ladder golf, or the giant Jenga game.

In the ballroom, the buffet dinner was served to music provided by another DJ. Smiles and constant chatter definitely indicated that everyone was having a good time.

The actual burning of the mortgage took place outside in the early evening. As the fire was being prepared, those present were asked to write a message or sign their name on a small wooden stick that would be used as kindling for the fire. After a few heartfelt remarks, the 21 pages of the mortgage papers were tossed into the fire.

Jane and Howie Wise - Sokol Greater Cleveland



DVD Lending Library

American Sokol Czech Movies for you and your unit's enjoyment are now on loan!

During 2021 & 2022, American Sokol won awards to develop a Czech Movie Lending Library from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic with the Foundation writing the awards and Education creating and fulfilling the request. Part of the award was the offer to each Sokol unit to purchase screens and DVD projectors.....with 10 units applying for this. Today after screening, searching copyrights, analyzing content to present for educational purposes we are releasing a partial listing of the DVD's and VIDEO's available to you and your unit. The process is run through the American Sokol Office and the part-time administrative assistant Gina reachable at office@american-sokol.org. The forms to request, etc. are part of a Standard Operating Procedure listed on the american-sokol.org website backdoor "Administrative" section, where you can print them. In the near future Education will have their own website page and the Lending Library listing and forms will be available there. The current listing is:

1. Accidental Army, DVD: 2009; 47 minutes; Black/White; English; PG rating because of death scenes portrayed Documentary about the Czechoslovak Legion (Československé legie) were volunteer armed forces composed predominantly of Czechs and Slovaks fighting together with the Entente powers during World War I. predominantly of Czechs and Slovaks fighting together with the Entente powers during World War I....most of which were Sokol men! (NOTE: American Sokol contributed to the production of this film as shown in the credits.)
2. (The) Accidental Hero, DVD: 2013; 85 Minutes; Black/White; English; PG rating. It was a multi-media one-man show about Lieutenant Colonel Matt Konop, a WWII American officer who miraculously liberates the Czech villages of his grandparents. It's a true story written and performed by his grandson, Patrick Dewane. Patrick's grandfather refused to talk about his service in the war. He was noted for his fighting in the Battle of the Bulge and celebrated in the Czech Republic for his role in the liberation of the cities of Domažlice and Pilsen in Czechoslovakia near the end of the war.
3. All My Loved Ones/ VSICHNI MOJI BLIZCI, DVD: 2000; 82 Minutes; Color; Czech w English subtitles; G rating. Beautiful cinematography of the Czech countryside, Charles Bridge and Prague and the train station. Matej Minac's heartbreaking and poignant story of one family's experience at the onset of World War II is inspired by the heroics of English stockbroker Nicholas Winton who saved hundreds of Czech Jewish children from the Nazis and is loosely based on his own mother's personal memories of the time. The Silberstein's are a large and close-knit extended family living a good life in the Czechoslovakian countryside. Believing in the decency of mankind, they don't really pay heed to the Nazi threat.
4. (The) Bartered Bride/Prodaná Nevěsta, DVD: 1981 TV Film; 137 Minutes; Czech w English subtitles; Color; G rating. A Comic opera in three acts written by Bedrich Smetana. It is a love story about Marenka whose marriage is arranged to Vasek, but she protests that she loves Jenik. The parents have a dilemma since they have made an agreement with Kecal, the marriage broker. After some deception and a surprise revelation Marenka's parents bless the marriage between her and Jenik.



DVD Lending Library (continued)

5. Call of Dudy Bohemian bagpipes across borders/Ještě hrajou dudy, DVD: Music Video: 2015; 52 Minutes; Czech songs; Some English; G rating Bagpipers featured: J.Režný, M.Cwach, Chodská vlna, Domažlická dudácká muzika, I.Macdonald, H.Grunwald, N.Smith. Czech-American Michael Cwach is a bagpiper and musician who works at the National Music Museum at the University of South Dakota. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to pursue his study of Bohemian bagpipe traditions of the Czech Lands.

6. Czech Dream/Český sen, DVD: 2004; 88 Minutes; Color; Czech w English subtitles; Comedy; PG for some offensive language. A funny and provocative look at the effects of rampant consumerism on post-communist Czechoslovakia. Two Czech film students decided to explore the manipulative powers of consumerism on post-communist Czechoslovakia by creating a marketing campaign for a super store that didn't exist.

7. Comenius-Life and Legacy of John Amos Comenius/ Komenský-Život a odkaz Jana Amose Komenského, DVD: 2020; 96 Minutes; English; PG rating. The movie is the story of his life as he tells it to Rembrandt as he paints his picture. John becomes an orphan and goes to live with his aunt and uncle at a young age. He eventually studies at Heidelberg and becomes a scholar, linguist, and reformer of education. John and his families spent most of their lives in exile because he was persecuted for his Protestant faith and scientific beliefs.

8. Divided We Fall/ Musíme si pomáhat, DVD: 2000; 122 Minutes; Color; Czech w English subtitles; PG-13 Rating for some moderate profanity, a little violence, some mild sexual dialogue. In a war-torn village (1941-43), one couple makes the ultimate sacrifice to save another. The film offers a story about human frailty, the possibility of a healing aftermath—and, yes, forgiveness. It was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

9. Fabulous World of Jules Vern/Vynález zkázy - "An Invention for Destruction", DVD: 1958; 83 Minutes; Black/White; In English; G When genius scientist Professor Roche and his aide, Simon Hart, are abducted by pirates, the professor doesn't understand the gravity of the situation. But Simon soon realizes that the pirates want to use Roche's newest invention -- a strong explosive -- for world domination. With Roche isolated, Simon tries to thwart the plans of pirate captain Artigas by sending a balloon with a message to the outside. Little does he know; Roche has a clever plan of his own.

10. Fireman's Ball/Hasič míč (a loterii), DVD: First released in 1967; 73 minutes; Black/White; and 14-minute interview with Forman on the Political problems with the content when it was about to open just prior to the "Prague Spring" 1968; G Rating. During a small-Czech town beauty contest at the annual Firemen's Ball, so many things start going wrong, that the whole affair turns into chaos for their Fire Brigade. Czech music is played from a small-town band during scenes at the Ball and for background.



DVD Lending Library (continued)

11. Goat Story (The old Prague Legends)/Kozí příběh - pověsti staré Prahy, DVD: 2008/2010; 80 minutes; Color; In English; PG13. The story takes place in Prague during the reign of Charles IV, when Charles Bridge was built in Prague and the unique Prague Astronomical Clock was built. He comes to the capital from the countryside plain and Cuba and his Goat carry a load of eggs as a raw material for the construction of Charles Bridge. A poor student Matěj comes to Prague to study with Master Hanuš. The first Czech-produced feature-length computer-animated film, it features animation by Art and Animation studio.

12. (The) Good Soldier Schweik/ Osudy dobrého vojáka Svejkam, DVD: 1956; 104 Minutes; 1957; Color; Czech w/ English subtitles; PG rating for language. The exploits of Schweik, a good-natured buffoon in the Czech Army during WWI (1914-1918), whose mishaps bring disaster to rigid military situations. Though determined to do his duty, the messes he creates expose the weaknesses of the military as an institution and bring into sharp relief, the absurdity of war. Similar to Catch 22 and Slaughterhouse 5. Became a comic strip.

13. I Enjoy the World With You/S tebou mě baví svět, VHS: 1982; 82 Minutes: Color; Comedy; Czech w English subtitles; PG-13 Child nude bath scenes. Three middle-aged men go for a vacation into the mountains with their children. How will they cope with their youngsters' everyday needs without their wives? It seems like many times this story has been told, but the way Director Polednakova approaches to the subject is simply charming. It truly is one of the most original sit-coms.

14. I Served the King of England/Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále, DVD: 2007; 113 Minutes: Color; Comedy/Drama; Czech w English subtitles; R for male & female frontal nudity in several scenes. Dreaming of becoming a millionaire, a short, but ambitious a Czech works his way into a posh pre-war luxury spa, where his marriage to a Hitler-loving fraulein provides him with a golden opportunity to make his fondest wish come true. The movie provides a look at the glamorous life at an old-world Prague hotel. 2008 Oscar Nominee.

15. Kolya/KOLJA, DVD: 1996; 105 Minutes; Color; Czech w English subtitles; PG-13. Kolya is also the Russian nickname for Nikolay. The film begins in 1988 while the Soviet bloc is beginning to disintegrate. František Louka, a 55-year old Czech man dedicated to bachelorhood and the pursuit of women, is a concert cellist struggling to make out a living by playing funerals at the Prague crematorium. He has lost his previous job at the Czech Philharmonic (the Stern Quartet, Czech Philharmonic plays) due to having been half-accidentally blacklisted as "politically unreliable" by the authorities. A friend (Broz, the gravedigger) offers him a chance to earn a great deal of money through a sham marriage to a Russian woman, his niece, Nadezda to enable her to stay in Czechoslovakia. The woman then uses her Czechoslovak citizenship to emigrate and join her boyfriend in West Germany. After her aunt unexpectedly dies, Louka finds himself in custody of his new "stepson", due to a concurrence of circumstances.



DVD Lending Library (continued)

16. Lemonade Joe or The Horse Opera/Limonádový Joe aneb Koňská opera, DVD: 1964; 97 Minutes; Black/White; Comedy Satire; G Rating. At the Trigger Whiskey Saloon, Stetson City, 1885, a beautiful temperance crusader (from the Arizona Revival) is threatened by hard-drinking villains. Riding to her rescue is Lemonade Joe, who—as his moniker indicates --doesn't touch the "firewater". A sweet and funny spoof of Hollywood westerns.....with a dedication to the Rough Diamond Buffalo Riders.

17. (The) Makropulos Case/ Věc Makropulos, DVD: 1995; 95 Minutes; Czech w English subtitles; Opera; R rating. It is a three-act opera by Czech composer Leoš Janáček. The libretto, based on a play of the same name by Karel Čapek, was written by the composer between 1923 and 1925. The Makropulos Affair was his penultimate opera and, like much of his later work, it was inspired by his infatuation with Kamila Stösslová, a married woman much younger than himself. It is part grotesque comedy and part profound personal tragedy that examines the mystery of human existence with a uniquely life-enhancing vision.

18. Most, the bridge/ Most, DVD: 2003; 33 minutes; in Czech with English subtitles; PG rating. Live action short film, story of a single Czech father who takes his eight-year-old son to work with him at the railroad drawbridge where he is the bridge tender. A fateful day when both try to head off a rail disaster, a desperate woman witnesses this act of virtue which changes her life.

19. (The) Shop on Main Street/Obchod na korze, DVD: 1965; 126 Minutes; Black/White; Czech with English subtitles; PG13. During World War II, a mild-mannered Slovak carpenter Anton "Tóno" Brtko is offered the chance to take over the sewing notions store of an old, near-deaf Jewish woman Rozália Lautmannová as a part of the enactment of an Aryanization regulation in the town. As Tóno attempts to explain to Mrs. Lautmannová, who is oblivious of the world outside and generally confused, that he has come to be her supervisor and owner of the store, Imrich Kuchár, a Slovak opponent of Aryanization, steps in and reveals to Brtko that the business itself is less than profitable, as Lautmannová herself relies on donations.

Sokol Slets

1. Days of Glory 1948 Slet in Prague, DVD (Reels 1-6) shows the Sokol Festival Winter Games in the Tatra Mountains. It also includes the Sokol Youth Boys and Girls Mass Drill. The Men and Women on Apparatus is included and the Men's Mass Drill.
2. Days of Glory 1948 Slet in Prague, DVD (Reels 1-10) shows the Women's Mass Drill, Gymnastics and Dancing Displays, Czechoslovak Army Days, and Ceremonial Procession and Festival Conclusion. (NOTE: The American Sokol did not participate in the 1948 Slet in Prague. The DVD's are very long and it is recommended to view them in sections.)
3. SLET XIV: Vsesokolsky was held in Prague in July 2006. . DVD; 60 Minutes; Color; Czech language commentary without English subtitles; G rating. This includes opening parade, mass calisthenics, special presentations, and concluding ceremony.
4. SLET XIV: Vsesokolsky was held in Prague in July 2006. DVD; 60 Minutes; Color; Czech language commentary without English subtitles; G rating. This collection is three discs that highlight the Gala on July 3rd and the Programs on July 5th and 6th. It includes opening ceremonies, the parade, special numbers, and mass calisthenics.



American Sokol Donations

ASO FOUNDATION FUNDS

ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

- In memory of Joseph Bachna and in honor of Rudy Bachna, brothers; Donna Bachna
- In memory of Val Kuisle, Mary & Dennis Cahill
- CVS Health, Matt Carlozzi
- Janet Kirch
- In memory of Jan Kucera Sr., Jiri Kucera
- In memory of Sister Annette Schebowski & Vera Matustkova, Czech. Rep., Henrietta & Jerry Milan
- Gerald Novotny
- In memory of Otto and Blanche Polacek, Janice Polz
- Sokol Little Ferry

FUTURE SOKOL LEADERS

- John & Colleen Capodice

GATEWAY TO THE FUTURE

- Susan Lucak

UNIT GROWTH

- In memory of Charles R. Borvansky, Nancy Mae Borvansky

ASO OPERATIONS FUNDS

- CVS Health, Matt Carlozzi

☐2023 INSTRUCTOR'S SCHOOL

- Future Sokol Leaders Fund
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, 2023 Award

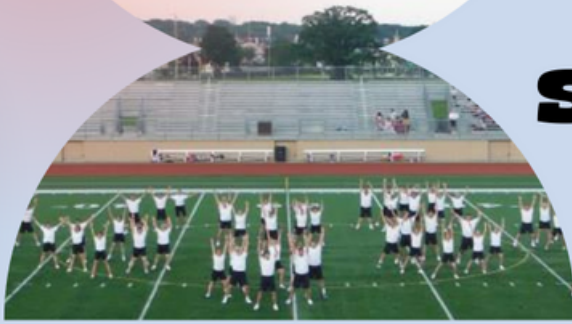
INSTRUCTOR'S SCHOOL ADOPTION

- Maryann Fiordelis
- Lida O'Donnell

Need a refresher about what each of these funds mean? Head to our [Donation page](#)!



Save the Date - XXV ASO Slet!



**SAVE THE
DATE!**

CHICAGO



XXV AMERICAN SOKOL SLET

American Sokol is
solidifying dates for
the 25th ASO Slet in
June of 2025!

Stay tuned for more details.



2022 - 2026 Executive Board

Adam Wilt - President
Marla Breidenbach - 1st Vice President
Nancy Sijansky Hellegers - 2nd Vice President
Andrea Scheirer - Secretary
Bob Barcal - Treasurer
Allison Gerber - Financial Secretary
Anna Cooková - Educational Director
Kathy Barcal - Membership Director
Matt Carlozzi - Public Relations Director
Meribeth Tooke - Foundation Director
Mary Cushing - Physical Director
Shelley Cairns - Board Member
Dáša Měrková - Board Member
Joan Sedlacek - Board Member
Rhonda Liska - By-laws Chair

Editor's Note

Due to space constraints, some submissions/details were omitted from this print version. All submissions are available on the interactive e-newsletter, which is posted to www.american-sokol.org.

Contact Us

American Sokol
9126 Ogden Avenue
Brookfield, IL 60513
office@americansokol.org

Visit us at www.american-sokol.org or our Facebook page for more information!

