Dear Sokol Minnesota Members and Friends,

Sokol Minnesota is joining the community in following the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) “Strategies to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 in Minnesota.”

See:  www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html

Based on the MDH guidelines, the Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors made the decisions to cancel or postpone these upcoming events:

- The Flavors of Slovakia Dinner scheduled for March 22 has been postponed indefinitely.
- The Spring Breakfast with Koláče and Craft Sales scheduled for April 5 has been cancelled.

In addition, the Sokol Minnesota gymnastics instructors have cancelled classes through at least March 27. Certain folk dance practices have been cancelled. Rentals of the C.S.P.S. Hall are affected.

The International Institute of Minnesota (iimn.org) has cancelled The Festival of Nations, originally scheduled for April 30 to May 3.

As the Coronavirus situation continues to evolve, please be assured that the health and safety of our activity participants, guests, and volunteers remain our top priority. Sokol Minnesota will continue to closely monitor the guidance from public health officials and make additional decisions on cancelling or postponing events and activities.

Please check the status of upcoming events and activities on our calendar at: www.sokolmn.org/at-our-hall/hall-calendar

We would like you to know how thankful we are for your support of Sokol Minnesota activities and events. We look forward to welcoming you back when it is safe to do so.

Sokol Minnesota
2020 Sokol Minnesota | C.S.P.S. Hall, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102
Dear friends,
I struggle every month to write something worthy of your reading. As I near my last year of gainful employment at Hennepin County, I think of what I can contribute both at work and as a Sokol member. I realize the key to making any organization vibrant and successful is to have employees or members that want to make a difference. Here at Sokol Minnesota, we have dedicated members who are committed to make this organization better, exciting, and fun. Although our membership might have a growing percentage of older members (but still young in spirit), we have active members of all ages who are working to make this organization a place where both younger and older families grow together. I would like to think we all are working to promote common ethnic identities.

At our March Board of Directors meeting, we approved a concept proposal to advance an annual youth leadership and volunteer award as a way to acknowledge our youth and their contribution to Sokol. There will be up to three awards. Each award is a way to say thank you to those youth who are especially active.

We are entering spring and summer, and with that is the attempt to bring new growth and vitality to an organization steeped in history. We have members whose parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents were members. We have members such as myself who are first-generation members. This mix of members creates an organization with both members that have traditions and a set of members who may be looking for something new. My efforts are to continue to have the C.S.P.S. Hall be a place where Slovaks, Czechs, and Rusyn can call home, and where the values of the Sokol philosophy of “a strong mind in a strong body” are promoted in all our activities. My goal is to help Sokol become an organization that my daughters and your children will choose to support.

We are saddened, although we fully understand and support the reason, that the Festival of Nations, originally scheduled for April 30 to May 3, has been cancelled to help reduce Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). This is only the second time in its 88-year history that the Festival has been cancelled. Sokol Minnesota has participated at every Festival.

Additional upcoming events may also be affected by social distancing measures intended to reduce COVID-19. Later this spring, Minneapolis is currently scheduled to be the site of the Czech That Film film festival. In June, the 23rd annual Czech and Slovak Cultural Day Camp is planned for the C.S.P.S. Hall. New activities planned for this spring and summer include group bike rides and mushroom hunting. For both young and old, these activities are opportunities to try something different. For event status, check our calendar at www.sokolmn.org/at-our-hall/hall-calendar/

Work at the Hall continues with some structural work in the boiler room. I want to personally thank Bob Kotek, who has accepted the position to be the chair of our Board of Trustees. These are members, like many of you, who continually work behind the scenes. The BOT has identified the priorities where we need to put our time and talents. The heating plant was originally identified as needing immediate replacement, and, while replacement continues to be needed, after bringing in a second heating company to evaluate it, the immediacy has changed. We know we need to replace the boiler, but it most likely will not be this year.

We have many volunteers behind the scenes who cook and prep for dinners and do work to improve your C.S.P.S. Hall; do not forget to tell them ‘děkuji mnohokrát!'

Nazdar!

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota
2020 BOD
(Board of Directors)

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First Vice President
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Second Vice President
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Denise Stibal
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Ed Hamernik, Chair
Telephone: 651-290-0542

Past issues of Slovo and Hall Calendar of Events: www.sokolmn.org
I’ve been dancing with Ms. Louise in the Taneční Mládež and Taneční Teens for 12 years and I cannot imagine a Saturday morning without our practice. My knowledge of Czech dance definitely helped me to understand some of the steps performed. As soon I started dancing, I was able to recognize and pair together the traditional steps in Czech dancing with some of the ballet steps I was learning. My experience really helped, and it is nice to see that all of the years spent Czech and Slovak dancing are also applicable outside of the folk dancing realm.

After watching the dynamics of the group for many years, I think it is safe to say that nothing would be possible without Ms. Louise. Not only did she start both the children’s and teen’s dance groups, she has taught almost every Saturday morning for 30 years. She is encouraging, helpful, and clearly loves what she does. Ms. Louise’s enthusiasm and dedication have influenced many dancers over the years, including me.

Performing at the Festival of Nations, the holiday party, and the annual Czech and Slovak Festival are always highlights of the year, partly because so much work goes into them.

Our year is divided into different sections. At the very beginning of the season, we prepare for the Czech and Slovak Festival at the C.S.P.S. Hall. After that, we slowly begin to work on dances for the children’s holiday party, occasionally with another performance added to our schedule. After roughly a month-long holiday break, we begin to prepare for and look forward to the Festival of Nations. We usually learn several new dances and polish up on some old favorites. I have many fond early memories of performing at these events and of the practices on Saturday mornings.

One of my favorite things that I have done with the group is our performance in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Last spring, we were there during the Houby Days festival. The entire town was decorated and there was Czech food and evidence of Czech culture everywhere. Another favorite was our performance at the American Swedish Institute. Every year during the Christmas season, a different culture’s Christmas traditions are chosen for display at the Institute. We had the opportunity to perform a selection of our dances and present some of the Czech Christmas traditions. These events are especially enjoyable for me as I am able to see the Czech culture that I grew up with exhibited for others who have not yet experienced it.

About six years ago I started dancing outside of Sokol. While it was not exactly the same, my

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Easter Celebration and Puppet Show

plus a puppetry presentation by Seth Eberle

Saturday, April 11

C.S.P.S Hall, 383 West Michigan Street, Saint Paul

Join us for this exciting day of crafts, potluck, puppet show, and presentation!

10:00 a.m. Easter Crafts
11:30 a.m. Easter Potluck
12:00 p.m. Puppet Show: With Stars Above

A puppet show for the young and the young-at-heart
In the Winter when the sun sets early, it is easy to feel down. Elvis Otter is lonely and sad. His friends try to help, showing him the ways in which Winter is wonderful and how to find joy, even in the darkest of seasons.
However, as soon as his friends leave, the goblins come and gobble up his happiness. How can Elvis chase away the darkness and convince his friends that the goblins are real?

1:00 p.m. Presentation about Puppets and Puppet Making
Seth Eberle talks about Czech-style marionettes from his experience apprenticing for one month with puppet maker Mirek Trejtnar in Prague and working with director Peter Varga to stage Popelka with puppets, including a brief history of puppetry in the Czech Republic.
Presentation: $5 suggested donation

Note: There is the possibility that this event may be cancelled because of COVID-19.
Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Proudly Announces the Youth Leadership Award

The award is designed to encourage and reward the outstanding participation of youth members of Sokol Minnesota and to foster a future generation of leaders and members for our organization.

The following are the criteria for selecting candidates:

- Applicants need to be in their junior or senior year of high school at the time of the application. Applicants and their parent(s) need to be active members of Sokol Minnesota for at least the current and the immediately preceding calendar year.
- Actively participate in Sokol Minnesota youth activities, such as Taneční Teens dancers, gymnastics, Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities, or Czech and Slovak Children’s Cultural Day Camp junior leader or teacher.
- Volunteer at one of the two largest Sokol Minnesota events: the Festival of Nations or the Czech and Slovak Festival, and at least one additional Sokol Minnesota volunteer activity, such as the Czech Roast Pork Dinner, Roast Duck Dinner, Flavors of Slovakia Dinner, Spring or Fall Pancake Breakfast, or other Sokol Minnesota sponsored special event.

Qualified applicants will submit:

- Completed Youth Leadership application form.
- A Personal Essay outlining their youth activity(s) and volunteer service to Sokol Minnesota and how the activity and service have impacted his/her life.
- A verification form signed by the adult director of the applicant’s Sokol Minnesota youth activity(s).
- Letter of recommendation from the adult director of the applicant’s youth activity(s) with Sokol Minnesota.
- A form signed by an adult leader verifying the applicant’s volunteer activities with Sokol Minnesota.
- Deadline to apply: June 1. Forms will be available at www.sokolmn.org

General information:

- The selection committee will consist of three Sokol Minnesota members who hold leadership roles in the organization.
- Up to three youth leaders are eligible to receive this award annually.
- Eligible applicants can apply multiple times, but may receive the award only once.
- Each award includes a $300 honorarium. For this first year of these awards, these honorariums include donations from Louise Wessinger and the Honorary Czech Consul.

Award recipients will be announced by September 1.
The awards will be presented during the annual Czech and Slovak Festival.

2019 Language Camp in the Czech Republic

(L-R) Richard Sargent, Dustin Lehrke, Heidi Lehrke, M. L. Kucera, Jerry Karel, Pam Langworthy, Kristi Simmons, Sam Simmons, John Warinsky, Ally Grym, Austin Palma, Janet E. Balej, Andrea Manolov, Kris Palma, Richard Palma, Steve Ernest. Allyson Grym and Austin Palma’s presentation on January 12 on their 2019 Czech language camp experience at Poděbrady last summer in the Czech Republic had a great turnout.

Several people have applied to attend the 2020 camp in Poděbrady.

United States Census 2020: declare your Czech or Slovak Ancestry

The United States will observe the National Census Day on April 1, 2020. Everyone living in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories is required by law to be counted in the U.S. census 2020.

The census will include all persons who have a “usual residence” (the place where a person lives and sleeps most of the time) in the United States, without regard to a person’s legal status or citizenship. Only foreign citizens who are visiting the United States on vacation or business on April 1 should not be counted.

The U.S. Census Bureau maintains and makes available data concerning different aspects and trends associated with the population and demographics of the United States.

In past censuses in the United States, more than 1.5 million people declared Czech ancestry and more than 730,000 declared Slovak ancestry. If you are of Czech or Slovak origin, remember to declare your ancestry on April 1!

4 April 2020 Slovo
As United States ambassador to the Czech Republic from 2011 to 2014, Norman Eisen was fascinated with the extraordinary house in which he lived. His book, The Last Palace, focuses on the house itself, biographies of several residents of the house, and the life of the author’s persecuted Jewish Czech mother, all intertwined with details of almost a century of Czech history including wars, democracy, occupations, and revolutions. All of Eisen’s topics are of great interest to me, but The Last Palace reads like several linked short books, with a very ambitious scope for one volume to try to cover.

Construction on the palace, with a neoclassicist design by German architect Max Spielman, began in 1924 on prime Prague land amassed by the Jewish Otto Petschek (1882-1934). As a result of his wise investments in mining, this wealthy financier became the King of Coal at the end of World War I. Petschek was so obsessed with the grand mansion that, as it was built, he would have parts torn down and reconstructed. He also bought full-grown trees and had an entire room shipped in by train.

Living earlier in a small house with a view of the hill above Old Town, just north of Prague Castle, Petschek would rise every morning and look out on the five-acre parcel. A well-educated and well-traveled businessman, his idea was that, “He would build a palace there—one that would compete with any other in the city. It would be huge, more than one hundred rooms, the entire length of a city block. Its façade would marry the mathematically elegant columns of ancient Greece and the muscularity of Roman sculptural forms with the golden ratios of Italian Renaissance architecture and the majesty of the French baroque,” wrote Eisen. Petschek filled it with antiques, paintings, tapestries, and objets d’art he bought while traversing the continent.

Unfortunately, Petschek had health problems and died three years after moving in. His extended family resided there only a few more years, escaping the Nazis in May 1938. Through the house’s various occupations, it was protected by Otto’s butler, Adolf Pokorný, until Adolf’s death in 1967. He and his wife lived in the little two-bedroom gatekeeper’s house.

Rudolf Toussaint, a Wehrmacht general and World War I veteran, but not a Nazi Party member, resided in the house during World War II. He ultimately negotiated a peaceful withdrawal, saving the house and Prague from Nazi and Soviet destruction. Laurence Steinhardt, the first U.S. ambassador to move in after World War II, wanted to keep Czechoslovakia as a post-war ally. He brokered the withdrawal of Russian and American troops and ensured the sale of the house to the U.S. State Department in exchange for wartime loan forgiveness. Shirley Temple Black’s international career was inspired by witnessing the Soviet invasion of Prague in Spring 1968. She was pleased to return as U.S. ambassador and take up residence in the house in 1989, when she bravely observed the demonstrations for freedom and let the people and authorities know she was there to witness history.

Times have changed again. The current resident is U.S. Ambassador Stephen B. King, who was nominated by President Trump.

Gwen is coordinator of the Literary Ventures: Czech and Slovak book discussion group. Literary Ventures is cosponsored by the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, and the Office of the Honorary Consul for the Czech Republic. For more information, go to www.cs-center.org or contact gwen@cs-center.org

Join Czech and Slovak Literary Ventures members to discuss Encounter in Prague, by Jarda Cervenka on Saturday, April 25, 11 a.m. to noon, in the first-floor classroom at the C.S.P.S. Hall. This will be followed by Cervenka’s talk on “The Importance of Reading Nonfiction Today,” 12:15-1:30 p.m., on the second floor of the C.S.P.S. Hall.

POSTPONED Czech and Slovak Films at the 39th Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Film Festival

In a March 13 announcement, the MSP Film Society announced the postponement of the 2020 Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival (originally scheduled from April 9 to April 25) until further notice.

This decision was taken to help contain COVID-19, in the interest of the safety and health of Society’s community, patrons and staff.
Member News

Sokol Minnesota welcomes New Member
By Norm Petrik
At the February 15 Board of Directors meeting, one new member was accepted: Janet Balej of Fridley, Guthrie Theater Director of Finance, with interest in language. Welcome to Sokol Minnesota!

Highlights of the February Board of Directors Meeting
By Denise Stibal
The meeting was called to order on February 15 at 9:15 a.m.
President Dave Stepan reported on a West 7th Business Association meeting on February 20. Steve Ernest will represent Sokol at the event. Our relationship with our renter, the Pajarito restaurant, is going well and we will allow them to use our third-floor meeting room for staff training.
Ed Hamernik reported that the trim boards, the final touches on the bar area structural repair, are near completion.
Jean Draheim requested to be informed of all meetings to include them in the Hall Calendar.
The monthly Gaming Report will be postponed until March.
Motion approved to work with Pelco for boiler room column and beam repair at a cost of $3,200.
June 13, 2020, is the West 7th Street / Fort Road Federation 13th Annual Garden and History Tour.
The purchase of an AED unit was discussed and Dave Stepan will research options.
Mary Cahill reported that the American Sokol Western District competition is April 18. We also have four youth instructors interested in attending the ASO Instructors School.
Steve Ernest, Membership Secretary, reported that as of January 1 we had 237 paid members, with 48% being seniors (65 or over).
Pat Slaber reported that we have 23 paid students in language classes. A “mushroom class” is in discussion for some time this year. Motion approved to book the camp in Pine City for Czech Language class this summer with the amount not to exceed $700.
Glynis Grostephan reported on contributions of $2,603 year to date between the Legacy and General Funds.
Judy Aubrechot reported on Publicity and the Rental Committee. Our rental advertising has been successful with an increase in inquiries and bookings. The Rental Committee will meet in March to review our progress so far this year. We have two students registered for Culture Camp so far.
Blanka Bricta, Member at Large, proposed a Youth Leadership Award for students who put forth an extra effort for participation in Sokol. Motion approved to create an award for three recipients at $100 each for 2020. An ad-hoc committee will propose criteria and application review procedures.
The Annual Retreat brainstorming session followed the meeting, with members sharing ideas of our strengths and what we can do better to continue to make Sokol a vibrant organization for the future.
Next meeting: March 12, 7 p.m.

Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors
By Glynis Grostephan
Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota greatly appreciates your donations supporting Sokol programs and the maintenance of our historic C.S.P.S. Hall.

LEGACY FUND:
Under $99:  Marit Lee Kucera in honor of Mary and Dennis Cahill for all their dedication to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota as we remember Dennis’ mother, Lois C. Cahill.
$100 - $499:  Karen Wald in honor of Jitka Sebek.

GENERAL FUND:
Under $99:  Barbora Carlson, Judy Metcalf, Terry and Bradly Narr, Maryann Tumasmith.
Judy and Tom Aubrecht, Katie and Don Haselbauer, Doreen McKenney, Louise and Chuck Wessinger in memory of Lois Cahill.
Katie and Don Haselbauer in memory of Dorothy Sladek.
Kathleen M. Philipp to the Taneční Mládež Dancers.
Kathryn Weese in memory of Yvonne Palka.

$100 - $499:  Allen Sladek in memory of Dorothy Sladek.
Joyce Tesarek and Norm Petrik in memory of Lois Cahill.

Legacy Fund:  $ 240.00
General Fund:  $ 737.00
TOTAL:  $ 977.00

Čert is similar to the German Krampus, a half-goat, half-demon, horrific horned beast with chains and a bundle of birch sticks to swat naughty children into being nice. Similarly, the Finnish evil spirits, nuuttipukkias, also are goat-like demons that go door-to-door demanding gifts and leftovers from households during the Yule feasts.

Dan Greenwood wrote an excellent story, Mardi Gras with a Czech Twist, for the Mankato Free Press, which featured two photos of the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers and also comments from Louise Wessinger, director, and Dave Stepan, veteran dancer, as well as M.L. Kucera, Honorary Czech Consul. <www.mankatofreepress.com/news/mardi-gras-with-a-czech-twist/article_aad49ae0-569f-11ea-8935-2701948ce307.html>

Visegrád Group (V4): Four Central European Countries

V4 is a cultural and political alliance of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland; all are members of the European Union and NATO. The Czech Republic took over the annual rotating presidency from Slovakia in June 2019. V4 traces its origins to summit meetings by leaders of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland on February 15, 1991, in the Hungarian castle-town of Visegrád, the medieval site of the Congress of Visegrád in 1335 between John I of Bohemia, Charles I of Hungary, and Casimir III of Poland. <www.visegradgroup.eu>


Additional contributors this issue: Adela Bragg, Mary Kucera, Kari and Scott Muyres, Joyce Tesarek, Gwen Willens.

Additional photographers this issue: Blanka Brichta, Doreen McKenney, George Mikisika.

March mailing: Mary Cahill, Joan Sedlacek.

More information at: www.sokolmn.org
Sokol Minnesota May Events
ATTEND and VOLUNTEER!

88th Annual Festival of Nations
The festival, originally scheduled for
April 30 and May 1 – 3
at the Saint Paul RiverCentre,
has been cancelled to reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Flea Market
Saturday, May 30
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
C.S.P.S. Hall

www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota
Check for event updates: www.sokolmn.org

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota SLOVO April 2020

Register by April 15 to qualify for the Early-Bird discount.
All camp registration materials must be received by June 6.
Our culture camp was totally filled last year, and it is expected that registration will close early again this year.

Registration materials for campers ages 6 to 14, adult volunteers, and junior leaders ages 15 to 21 are available to be downloaded at www.sokolmn.org