

Slovak



Sokol Minnesota

Providing fitness and community for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural, and social programs.

SLOVO

July/August 2009 vol. 32 no. 6

Booya & Picnic



Sunday, August 9, 2009
Noon to 5:00 p.m.
Sokol Camp, Pine City, Minnesota



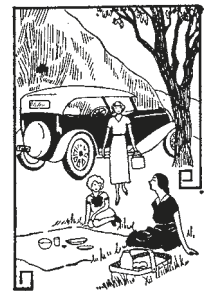
Minnesota Sokol Camp on beautiful Cross Lake in Pine City is hosting its Annual Booya & Picnic on Sunday, August 9, 2009 from Noon to 5:00 p.m.

Join us for an incredibly beautiful and sunny day filled with fun activities and great foods. There will be delicious chicken booya for sale by the bowl or in bulk. Bring a jar or pot to fill to take home and enjoy or share with friends. There will also be *jternice*, brats, hot dogs, meatloaf sandwiches, cabbage rolls, kolače, and candy. A cold *pivo*/beer or refreshing soda pop will satisfy any thirst. Old time music, dancing, bingo, a cash prize raffle, kiddy games, a country store and a performance by the St. Paul Czech & Slovak Folkdancers will take you back in time.

To get to the campground, follow the signs that will be put up on the day of the event once you take the first Pine City exit off of Interstate 35. You can also view a posting on Facebook under "Sokol Camp Booya". There are pictures of the road signs and other fun pictures of past events.

Get away for a day and enjoy life at the Sokol Camp Booya & Picnic on Cross Lake in Pine City, Minnesota.

Our Country Store is always in need of white elephant donations. Please call Pat Andrlé at 651-484-6360 for pick-up coordination or bring your donation to the Sokol Camp on the day of the picnic. For any other questions, please call Ray Vanyo at 651-222-6448.



Upcoming Events

Summer Work Day at the Hall
 July 18, 8 am to noon
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Booya & Picnic at Sokol Camp, Pine City
 August 9, noon to 5
 Page 1

Slovo Sept Deadline
 August 10

Membership Meeting
 August 28, 7 pm
 Page 9



Sokol Minnesota takes first prize (and \$200!) in Festival of Nations Cultural Exhibits

Congratulations to Jakub Dajc and his language-class student Kate Aubrecht who developed Sokol Minnesota's culture booth. They researched the topic, created posters, and designed the booth, and had able assistance and advice from Jean Hall during installation. Jason Zastera, another student, created little posters we used that contained pictures of Krtecek (a little mole that is a popular cartoon character among little Czech kids). Many volunteers who worked at the booth during the festival should be thanked for representing us at this festival.



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Sokol Minnesota
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President Komentář/President's Note

By Joe Landsberger

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings brothers and sisters

On the 15th of May I attended a day-long archive seminar at the Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus thanks to a donation by the Friends of the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC). The seminar, *Association Archives... Managing Your Institutional Memory* was given by Anne Ostendarp of the Society of American Archivists.



Several participants in the Society of American Archivist workshop, hosted by the Immigration History Research Center, on archiving historic assets had connections to Sokol Minnesota. In the top row (l-r) is Marlon Heise, past board member with Joe Landsberger, current President, next. The tallest figure is Tony Kadlec (5th in) of the Bohemian Reading and Educational Society, and at row's end Gwen Willems of the Czech-Slovak Culture Center.

The past year Sokol has benefited from several members' work in this regard, and the seminar was helpful to guide our work. Sis. Joan Sedlacek has helped me organize the new office workroom and has an incredible memory for Sokol minutia. Bro. Denis Novak is organizing our collection of plays in Czech published between 1880 and 1930. Bro. Frank Trnka is similarly working on our folk music collection and refers to our musicologists/senior singers led by Georgiana Dolejsi. So in these efforts I ran across a collection of 38 small hard-bound books, most stamped with a circular logo *Česká Socialistická Sekce v St.Paul, Minn./The Socialist Party: Workers of the World Unite!*

The books, almost all in the Czech language, were either published in Prague or Chicago, with various content. Several have the hand-written name Josef Vitek and perhaps this is his collection? *Konfese Literáta* by J.S. Machar, Dil. I, Psano v Letch 1900-01 was published in Prague in 1920; *Penezomenci/The Money Changers* by Upton Sinclair translated by J.E.S. Vogan was published in Chicago, date unknown. The only English volume is *The Russian Revolution* by Wm. Z. Foster, published by the Trade Union Educational League, in 1921.

One fascinating aspect of this St. Paul Bohemian organization is that Minnesota and political historians do not know of it. Also mysterious is how and why this series of books came to be in our collection. Is this one more Czech-Slovak organization that took residence in the CSPS Hall?

In the early part of the 20th Century there were several ethnically-based Socialist organizations. Prominent in socialist party history is the Organization of Finnish Socialists/Yhdysvaltain Suomalainen Sosialistijärjestö with roots on the Iron Range in northern Minnesota and extensive collections in the Immigration History Research Center. National "Socialist Party Officials" included "Translator-Secretaries of Language Federations" who were officials of the Socialist Party of America in charge of communicating with the various foreign language federations affiliated with the party. One of the primary tasks of these officials was the translation of party communications into the foreign language for publication to the membership and translation of membership communications to the National Office into English -- thus the name of the position. In 1916 the Bohemian (Czech) Federation Translator-Secretary was Joseph Novak, based in Chicago, and in 1925-26 it was James Brantner of Cicero, Illinois.

If you have any information regarding this Bohemian organization, or our collection of these books, please contact Joe Landsberger, jfl@studygs.net 651 297 9000. Minnesota historians and Sokol archivists will be most pleased to research this little bit of our history!

Exciting Fall Events at Sokol Minnesota

By Marit Lee Kucera, Publicity Director

Mark your calendars now for the annual Czech and Slovak Festival on Sunday, September 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. outdoors in the parking lot and Michigan Street and upstairs in the main hall at C.S.P.S. Hall. There will be fun for the whole family, with great ethnic foods including pivo and kolache (by the dozen or singles), folk dancing and singing, children's games with prizes, bingo, silent auction, and merchant vendors. Czech and Slovak Festival is a great way to spend a glorious fall afternoon. Beautiful weather has been ordered.

Our other Sokol Minnesota events include (see upcoming Slovos for more information):

- October 18, Sunday, will feature a Family Night, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. with a potluck and fun games and stories for children. Louise Wessinger (651-452-6240).
- October 26, Sunday, annual Czech Pork Dinner. Save your seat. Reservations: Jeanette Pafko (952-831-1440).
- November 22, Grandparent's Day Breakfast and Crafts, 9:30 – 1:30.
- December 4, 7 p.m. Sv. Mikulas Party for Children.
- December 6, Adult Christmas Party



Finance Committee: Thank you for your donations!

By Jeanette Pafko

Sokol acknowledges all donations as they are received. They are listed in two categories, Building Fund and General Operating Fund although programs within each are not listed. Amounts are now grouped in five categories: under \$100, \$100-\$499, \$500-999, \$1000-\$4999, and \$5000+.

Building Fund (We use these funds to match our grant requirements)

Under \$100 – Ken Wyberg - JoAnn Wanous Parvey;
In Honor of Ken & Sharon Wyberg's 45th Wedding Anniversary; Tillie Dolejsi and Georgiana Dolejsi;
\$100 - \$499 – Bessie O'Neill, Wally Schovanec

\$5000+ – Joyce Tesarek & Norm Petrik

General Fund (We use these funds for general operation of programs, etc.)

Under \$100 - JoAnn Wanous Parvey; in Honor of Ken & Sharon Wyberg's 45th Wedding Anniversary:

Mary & Ivan Krizan, James & Mary Jo Chlebecek,
Donald & Catherine Haselbauer, Kent & Marlene Hinshaw



Page 1 photograph, "Roofs of Mala Strana/ Splet malostranskych strech," from Praha ve fotografii Karla Plicky. This book of photography has been donated by Wally Schovanec: "Od Rodina Schovancu Ve Boise Idaho June 1, 2009. Wally a Loizi: With all good wishes to my Sokol brethren and in memory of my beloved parents, Rudolph and Antonie!"

We also gratefully acknowledge these special purpose donations from:

Joan Sedlacek for American, Czech & Slovak three by five foot flags, a storage container, fee for Recertification Course for Food Manager for our hall's kitchen, and the Minnesota certification fee;

Sarah Johnson for the donation of 18 ivory tablecloths tailor made for Sokol's long tables traditionally used for dinners, receptions, etc.;

Tony Kadlec for a database structure for cataloging our archives;

Friends of the Immigration History Research Center, a \$250 scholarship for Joe Landsberger to attend the Society of American Archivist workshop on archiving materials, hosted by the Immigration History Research Center

Song of the Month

By Georgiana Dolejsi



Zelena se Zelena/The Grass is

Turning Green

Polka arranged by J Jankovec

Musical score for the polka 'Zelena se Zelena'. The score is written for voice and piano. It features a melody line with lyrics in Czech and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: Ze - le - ná se ze - le - ná, na za - hrá - doc trá - va kař - dá hoř - ka na ja - se ra - da pů - so dá - vá, Ze - le - ná se ze - le - ná trá - va ze - le - ná, ná ko - mu se ze - le - ná to - mu se ze - le - ná, nic pla - tno to ne - ní muslí být má má. The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p'.

Movie Favorites from the Czech and Slovak Community

Czech Dream *Český sen*

By Cinnamon Whaley

What would your reaction be if you were exposed to advertising for months about a new store that sold everything you need at the lowest prices only to find that the whole thing was a sham? This is what the film *Czech Dream* wanted to discover. Two arts school student accept a grant which helps them create commercials, consumer studies, hire a professional ad agency, and distribute adverts in subways, bus stops, and in hand outs such as you'd receive in the Sunday paper. Months after the campaign begins 2,000 people arrive for the grand opening of *Czech Dream*, the latest high class Hypermarket. Their reaction to this farce is varied. Some say that it is a beautiful day and to get 2,000 people outside is a blessing in disguise. Some snort in anger and say that "this is what the 'Czech dream' really is, a sham." Yet others are very angry that they have had the wool pulled over their eyes, their time wasted, and more so that the elaborate hoax was essentially funded by tax payers.

There is another topic that the two students intended to bring to light. The film was made in 2004, during the same period the Czech Republic was in the process of joining the European Union. Watching their country move towards consumerism, hypermarkets, and the unnoticed greed and lemming like attitudes that can come from slowly moving in this direction made the creators question the population's support for joining the European Union. Were people cheering it on because they were told to, saw it as the new exciting thing? Did they understand and question the state motives or run towards the next "Hypermarket" they were offered?

The film offers many interesting views on this single event, some that may or may not be relevant for each viewer. I found it to be a very interesting modern view of the people of the Czech Republic - multiple generations, multiple view points. Surely a film that will keep you thinking well after the movie ends.



Recipe Favorites from Czech and Slovak Kitchens

Mile High Strawberry Pie

By Phyllis Vosejпка and Cinnamon Whaley



Crust:

1/2 cup Oleo or butter, 1/4 cup brown sugar, 1 cup flour,
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Mix and put in a ungreased 9 x 13 pan and bake for 12 minutes at 350 degrees;
Remove and cool.

Break into crumbs with fork and set aside 3/4 cup of topping and put the rest
back in the pan.

Filling:

3 egg whites; 1/2 cup & 2 tablespoons of white sugar; 1 tablespoons lemon
juice; 1 10 ounce package frozen strawberries; 1 & 1/2 cup whipping cream
(add 1 teaspoon vanilla while whipping).

In large bowl beat egg whites until frothy and add sugar and lemon juice.
Then add strawberries and juice and beat at highest speed for 12 minutes.

Fold in 1 & 1/2 cup whipping cream.

Heap on to crust and add topping. Freeze. Remove 15 minutes prior to serving.
Enjoy!

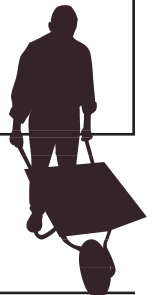
Board of Trustees Summer Work Day at the Hall

Saturday, July 18,
2009

8 a.m. to 12 noon.

Tasks include tree
trimming (bring your
chain saw!), yard
upkeep, painting the
fire escape steps, and
indoor repairs.

All invited!



This issue's recipe: The Importance of the Fold

By Cinnamon Whaley

With the success and compliments we received on the pineapple dessert dish and the heat of summer in full swing, this month we're sharing a strawberry and freshly whipped cream dessert! The ingredients in this recipe are mostly things that you'll have around the kitchen and with a quick, cheap trip to the grocery you can have a terrific and simple dessert.

I did my grocery shopping at Target and was disappointed that their nut selection contains a dozen or more types of peanuts and cashews but there were no containers of pecans. I'll be snacking this week on my jar of mixed nuts with the pecans picked out! The crust was very easy to put together. I think I might make two batches of crust next time - I didn't end up with enough for as much crust or topping as I would have liked.

I had the Kitchen Aid mixer going with the eggs, sugar, and fruit mixture as I was whipping the cream. If using a Kitchen Aid stand mixer, I don't recommend using the highest speed or you will have strawberry flavored floors and counter tops! The cat was happy for it though, an extra treat for her! I had pretty good whipped cream after a few minutes and began adding it to the mixer. And with that I realized I strayed from the instructions. Rather than folding in the delicate whipped cream, round and round the mixer it went. The whipped cream lost its whip!

My mile high pie turned out lacking when looking at the name of the recipe but it tastes great! It turned out very similar to strawberry ice cream in flavor and texture. Ice cream made with fresh fruit chunks and fresh cream - can't go wrong with that! If you remember the importance of the fold, mile high your dessert will be, but I won't complain about having ice cream on these hot days!

Editor's note: Cinnamon regrets not having a photo but the opportunity was lost due to consumption!

The Sokol Cookbook:

If you're interested in purchasing the *Sokol Cookbook*, they are \$15 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling. We ship twice per month: Check to Sokol Minnesota, memo cookbook. Addressed Sokol Minnesota attention gift shop, 383 Michigan Street, St. Paul MN 55102.

Correction:

The Pineapple Dessert in the May issue of the Slovo calls for Keebler Town House crackers. We regret the error-but we were close! --ed



Meadowlands, Minnesota Attracted Czech Farmers-and Still Survives

By Ginger Simek, President, Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International www.cgsi.org

Meadowlands, Minnesota is located approximately 45 miles northwest of Duluth. In the February Slovo I wrote about ads from the mid 1920s placed in a Czech language agricultural and horticultural journal, *Hospodař*, promoting the area as a place of opportunity for Czech farmers. Reasonably priced land, good

prices for crops such as sugar beets, potatoes, alfalfa hay, and vegetables were reasons to come.

Curiosity got the best of me so on a trip to Duluth, 45 miles more did not seem that far. Meadowlands still survives. According to the postmaster it is a community of approximately 600 to 700 people. I did make contact with a Czech couple who live in town; Mary & Chuck. Mary told me her family was one of six families that together came from Nebraska in the 1920's to settle in Meadowlands; there was a large population of Czechs living there at that time.

Construction of a National Hall began in 1921 by the men who had founded the Meadowlands Lodge #65 which was part of *Západní Česko Bratřská Jednota* (Western Bohemian Fraternal Organization). This organization was started in the late 1890's and provided insurance for Czech immigrants and the local lodges offered a social outlet as well. Men with the last names of Kopic, Krutina, Vodochodsky, Kucera, Karasek, Sramek, and Kadera were some of those that provided trees from their own land to be brought to a local sawmill and turned into boards to build the lodge.

The first meeting of Meadowlands Lodge #65 was held in the completed hall in December 1925. In July of 1926, "a Gymnastic Society called the Sokols of America was organized in Meadowlands". It continued until some time after WW II. The hall was used by Sokol and Lodge members to put on plays, and hold dances and parties. Early in the 1930's a man by the name of Fryzek came to Meadowlands from Nebraska. He offered to paint the inside of the hall with castles of Czechoslovakia on the upper sides of the walls. He also painted 3 sets of flats to be used for plays and a curtain with advertising on it.

In 1935, Meadowlands Jrs. was started made up of younger members who wanted a lodge where business could be conducted in English. Later in 1973, the original Meadowlands Lodge #65 merged with Meadowlands Jrs. #361 and from that time became known as Z.C.B.J. Lodge #361. The Lodge is located several miles out of town. Currently, there are 365 members but the building itself is certainly not used as much as it once was. It is "pretty much the same as it was when it was built. We have no plumbing, no running water, with the original barrel stove for heating that they put in when they first built it. However, we do have electricity but the fixtures are still the original ones."

Mary told me she and her husband are some of the few Czechs still living in the area. She still writes to family living in the Czech Republic (in Czech) and has been back to visit many times over the years. And the lodge hall still gets used upon occasion. So there are still Czech footprints in the area: just not as visible or as numerous as they used to be. Always something to consider when researching family is to uncover some of the history of the area where your family lived-it can lead to some interesting stories.

Quotes were taken from a history of the hall given to me by Mary and written sometime before 1985.



Bohemian Reading and Educational Society/ Česky Čtenářsky V Zdělavajici Spolek

By Tony Kadlec

On January 9, 1876, a small group of Bohemian settlers in McLeod County met at the home of Josef Zila in Hutchinson township for the purpose of providing social and educational advantages for themselves and their children. The charter members of the Bohemian Reading and Educational Society were Josef Kadlec, Paul Chernausek, Josef Janecky, Vaclav Pessek, Josef Zila, Jan Kasper, Anton Zeleny, Josef Friauf, Frank Kasper, and Vaclav Zavoral.



Bohemian Reading and Educational Society picnic, held at the Bohemian Hall, on the Northwest corner of the intersection of what is now State Highway 7 and Major Avenue, sometime between 1884 and 1895.

Meetings were held on the first Sunday afternoon of each month, at the home of John Danek or John Drahos, and dues were ten cents per month. Incorporated into the bylaws was a resolution that the Society purchase \$20 worth of Czech books each year; teach school in the Czech language; organize a Czech choir and dramatic club. In 1882, membership had increased to fifty, too large for any home, so it was decided to build a Hall. In 1883 a committee of Frank Danek, Paul Chernausek, J.V. Kadlec, Frank Mikulecky, and John Vojta bought an acre in the southeast corner of section 35, for \$60. The dimensions of the Hall built that summer were 52 feet long, 30 feet wide and 16 feet high, and was first used November 10, 1883.

The original library collection of the Bohemian Reading and Educational Society still remains today, under the ownership and care of the Lodge Lumir #34, Z.C.B.J (Western Bohemian Fraternal Association) and is comprised of nearly 800 books, all in the Czech language, with the earliest books dating back to 1825. The vast majority of the collection is comprised of secular works of world literature and philosophy, published in Prague during the Austro-Hungarian Empire (i.e. before 1918 when the country of Czechoslovakia would come into political existence, later to become the Czech Republic in 1993). Also surviving are the original hand-written record books that include circulation records indicating ‘which members read what books and when’, and an early index of the library collection holdings.



From a book in the Bohemian Reading and Educational Society Library on how to identify the diseases of a horse, from *Zlatá Kniha Pro Farmera (Gold Book for Farmers)* published by the “Slavie”, Racine, Wisconsin, 1894.

Efforts are underway to re-catalogue and preserve the historical Library collection of the Bohemian Reading and Educational Society (*Česky Čtenářsky V Zdělavajici Spolek*) The catalogue and database of the publication information includes titles, authors, and a digital image of the cover of each volume.

For more information about the collection or how you can contribute towards the ongoing preservation of it, please contact Tony Kadlec at (651) 271-0422 or tkadlec@gmail.com .

Editor's note: In 1870, Czech/Slovak immigrants to St. Paul established their first organization Slovanska Lipa/Linden Tree which was a reading and library association. Its financial and book loan records are in the archives of Sokol Minnesota. In 1878, Slovanska Lipa was absorbed into the CSPS.



Sokol Minnesota holds 13th Annual Cultural Day Camp

By Louise Wessinger and Judy Aubrecht

It's always like a family reunion! Lots of familiar faces mixed with a few new ones. Every year the third week in June has filled the Sokol hall with happy campers, busy volunteers and lots of fun and learning. Since 1997 Judy Aubrecht and Louise Wessinger have teamed up to direct our Sokol Czech and Slovak Cultural Day Camp. Georgiana Dolejsi has been there since the beginning too helping all of us to learn the music of our heritage, pronouncing each vowel correctly.

This year we were pleased to have 27 campers, 11 boys and 16 girls and almost as many volunteers! We also had 6 junior leaders, including Chloe Ahlf who had been a camper since 1999 and her friend Rachel Blais who started camp the following year!



Our day started with a special guest each day. On Tuesday, Kate Aubrecht, coordinator of the Sokol Festival of Nations Cultural Booth, told us about the many Slovak and Czech inventions and showed us the award winning display. On Wednesday, our guest was Olivia Cada, Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota who sang for us and told us about her program. On Thursday, Sokol President Joe Landsberger held a camper Sokol meeting on the third floor. Friday brought Slovak Honorary Counsel, Don Pafko and his wife Jeanette.

Don told campers the story of the Slovak "Robin Hood" Janosik, who was a real person and a national hero to Slovak people. Don dressed 6 year old camper, Preston Mansfield, in folk clothes that were bigger than Preston himself!

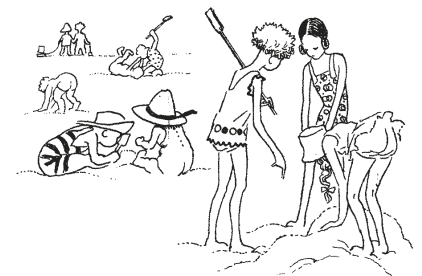
Our cooking sessions were taught by "master chefs" teaching their own favorite dishes. MaryJo Chlebecek taught Bublina. Tiffany Pavlish helped the children make blueberry dumplings. Bobbie Jo Chandler and Sue Marabella taught cabbage rolls aka "holupky". Several helpers made kolache with prune, poppyseed, apricot, and cream cheese filling. On Friday, Dave Stepan and George Hruska helped the children make rye bread with caraway seeds and the children made their own butter from cream using a glass jar and a marble and shaking to mix! Carole Horak and her daughter handled the kitchen duties and prepared snacks for the children.

Daily Czech lessons were offered by Jim Chlebecek and gymnastics and tumbling by Sokol director, Alisa Hollibush and volunteer, Liz Rheume. Special this year, an all camp production of "Maruska and the 12 Month Brothers". Sokol members Jean Verner and Chuck Draheim, veterans of Heritage Theatre in Maplewood, took on the duties of director and stage manager, to give the play an authentic feel. Debbie Keller helped a group of campers bring to life our puppet theatre with "Bad Boy Budulinek". Debbie, Georgiana and Jim also provided us with live music for singing and folk dancing.

Volunteers not only helped with camp duties but also helped clean, organize and pick-up our beautiful Sokol Hall. Volunteers not already mentioned included Sharon Liska, Nancy Pavlicek, Dawn Bulera, Virginia Budka, Anne Newton, Doreen McKenney, Peg Pursell, Krystyna Reisdorfer, Brittany Stepan, Taylor Rynda. Special thanks to Emilie McMillan of Pony Pals, who brought our special four-legged friends to ride. Look for our 14th camp next year! Nazdar!



Guiding lights of the Annual Sokol Cultural Day Camp, l-r, Judy Aubrecht and Louise Wessinger.



The Secret's Out: American Sokol Announces Ambitious New Program

By Jyni Koschak

Sokol MN has received details of a new strategic plan for all Sokol units in the U.S. Developed over two years by American Sokol's Strategic Planning Task Force, the plan outlines standardized core programs for each of the four Sokol focus areas: cultural, physical, educational, and social. The goal is twofold: to address the current lack of program uniformity across units, and to ensure that all units achieve the Sokol mission of providing their surrounding communities with programs in the focus areas. Additionally, Sokol leadership hopes that the new programs will attract many new members to replenish our ranks.

A Taste of Sokol is a cultural program that will teach cooking to people of all ages using different ethnic recipes, while at the same time providing cultural information about the various countries. Recipes from sixteen nations are featured, including Kolaches, Mexican Pizza, African Peanut Soup, and Cambodian Banana Rice Pudding.

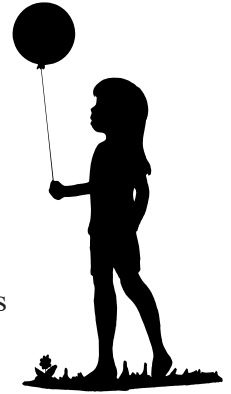
Sokol Fitness is a general fitness program for people of all ages to improve their health, fitness level and overall well-being. The exercises include warm-ups, stretching, and cardio, as well as strengthening for all areas of the body.

Safety And First Aid Education (S.A.F.E.) is training in safety, first aid and CPR to prepare people of all ages for emergency and non-emergency situations. The classes will be based on training programs created by the American Red Cross.

Sokol Nights is a social program of twice-monthly structured social activities organized for families and individuals of all ages, such as Movie Night, Hobby Night, Game Night, Craft Night, and Open Gym.

Sokol's new strategic plan includes marketing Sokol to all its neighbors in the community--including people who may not have Czech or Slovak heritage. "All four core programs are written specifically to allow our Units to expand outside of their current member base and invite the community into our world," said Sokol Central District President Gregory T. Harris in a recent email. Sokol leaders have been concerned for some time that the number of traditional Sokol members has been dwindling. "At one point, the American Sokol had over 100,000 members. Today, it has under 5,000," says Harris. "At one point, we had over 60 Units. Today, we have just over 30," he continues. Leaders feared that the membership decline would continue unless they took decisive action. With a focus that is not specifically Czech or Slovak, this plan brings Sokol back to its original purpose. "The original intent of Sokol, in whatever country, was not a repository for Czech culture, but more to spread the systematic method (Tyrs methodology) of growing and strengthening citizens through mental and physical fitness," says Harris. "The cultural piece that remains in our mission is intended to build our members' mental fitness level to understand that they live within a multi-cultural world," he continued (The Czech/Slovak activities will continue, he said, but they are not the main focus).

The variety of Sokol's offerings has sometimes made it a challenge to define, says Harris, "this has made our ability to market ourselves a real trick." But our communities still have a need for what Sokol provides, he says. "There are many "niches" that Sokol has that a YMCA, Bally's, Park District, etc... cannot provide." Harris feels the welcoming community and family environment can provide "long time" Americans with a home away from home, while new Americans can find a welcoming community plus a source of education. "Sokol has mastered the ability to make you feel more than just a member. That is our true niche," says Harris. These new programs, geared towards all members of the community, proudly continue the Sokol ideal of strengthening society--by educating and strengthening its members. "With this plan, we are looking to ensure that this organization will be prosperous and viable for our kids in the future," Harris said.



Sokol August Membership Meeting

The next Sokol Membership Meeting will take place Friday, August 28 at 7 p.m.

The agenda will include preparations for the Czech Slovak Festival and discussions on programming and agendas for future membership meetings.

Looking for something to do?

**Czech and Slovak Festival
Sunday, September 20, 2009:
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Sokol could use your help, and invite you to join the fun! The Czech Slovak Festival Planning Task Force could use your help in any number of ways!

The following are opportunities you can place your skills: publicity, permits, silent auction, volunteer coordinator, program group, food and beer and wine sales; children's games, booths, bingo, setup/layout/take down. Other is also a great category. Join us!

Contact Ed Hamernik, First Vice President and Festival Chair, eahamernik@q.com or 763 571 6091. If you would like to help, call Doreen McKenney (952-941-0426), Joyce Tesarek (612-822-6147), Ed Hamernik (763-571-6091), or Marlene Hinshaw (651-222-4073). They would love to hear for you to volunteer.

Also: donations of items and prizes for our Silent Auction are being requested. Quality individual items, baskets or groupings of related items, as well as certificates for goods and services, dinners, entertainment, etc. make exciting prizes to bid on. For questions or to find out where to drop off items, please call Louise at 651-452-6240.

Czech and Slovak Language Classes

Czech and Slovak Language Classes will begin again the week of September 28th for eight week sessions. Beginning Slovak will be offered along with beginning, advanced beginning, intermediate, and conversational Czech. Classes will be offered on the first floor of the Sokol Hall week night evenings. If there is enough interest a review class of Czech and/or Slovak will be offered beginning in mid-August through September. Please call Louise at 651-452-6240 for further information.



Taneční Graduates 2009

By Louise Wessinger

Two Taneční Teen Dancers are heading off on new adventures: Krystyna Reisdorfer and Emma Martin each graduated from high school this spring.

Krystyna Reisdorfer, daughter of Dan and Mary Reisdorfer, graduated from the School of Environmental Studies at the Minnesota Zoo in Apple Valley. She was attracted to this school by their special Animal Care Program. Krystyna was on Student Council, a member of SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), and loves animals especially horses. Her plans for next year involve college and joining the Air Force.

Krystyna joined the Taneční Mládež four years ago after attending Sokol Cultural Day Camp. Krystyna says "I like all the cultural activities and learning about my Czech heritage."

Emma Martin, daughter of Dave and Sue Martin, was one of the top ten students in her class of over 700 at Burnsville Senior High School. She has been a member of the Taneční Mládež and Taneční Teens for five years following her younger sister Livi. Emma says: "I love Czech and Slovak folk dancing because it makes me happy. The teen group has created a strong sense of community which has been really great."

Emma was coeditor of the school paper, a leader of the Diversity Team, coleader of PROUD (a student club for understanding diversity) and the Burnsville Swingers (a performing swing dance group). She also served on the Burnsville Parks and Natural Resources Commission and the Welcoming Committee for the Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. The winner of several scholarship awards, Emma will attend the University of California, Berkeley, to study sociology/pre-law.



Left to right, Krystyna Reisdorfer, Louise Wessinger, and Emma Martin.



We will miss both these fine young ladies and wish them happy and successful futures.



Dr. Josef Mestenhauser

Each one teach one (to avoid information overload)

By Dr. Josef A. Mestenhauser

Ten years ago we had the privilege of welcoming Vaclav Havel to the Twin Cities. Few people know that the visit was made possible largely due to one of our friends from Washington D.C., Dr. Vladimir Kabes, who helped the Havel Symposium Committee and the Czechoslovak Society for Arts and Sciences persuade President Havel to include the Twin Cities on his U.S. trip. Vladimir became a founding member of the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center and continued his regular membership— until last April 28th when he passed away at the age of 91 after a long illness. Vladimir was not only very

active in the Czech and Slovak affairs here and there, but was also its intellectual champion. He was deeply committed to democracy and wrote prolifically about its demise and re-birth. We owe him a great debt and want to keep his memory alive.

During my career I managed to get involved in many networks that keep me posted about developments in the Czech and Slovak Republics. Each time I get ready to write this article, I get the feeling of swimming in the sea of information that ought to be conveyed to our members, but there is so much of it that it is a major problem of what to deselect. But it is also a problem for our members to keep in touch with the developments in the “old countries”. Some ethnic organizations have elaborate publications, electronic networks and sophisticated programs that help digest the most significant pieces of information, but we seem to not only lack them – but possibly an interest in creating them. If our ethnic communities lack fresh information, how can we expect the general American public to follow the news of two small countries?

Yet there is much that we ought to know about. For example, about the demise of the government and the method of how that happened.* The consequence that this has for the reputation as leader of the European Union* The appointment of a new Prime Minister who joined the Communist party at the beginning of “normalization” and remained in it until 1989.* The vote of both houses of the Parliament to approve the Lisbon Treaty that President Klaus is holding hostage by withholding his signature * The sudden rise – and fall – of an able candidate for the President of Slovakia during the recent presidential elections * The forthcoming visit of the Pope to Prague in September 26–28* The rise of extremism in Central Europe that sent a wave of “political refugees”, mostly Romas, to emigrate to Canada* The apparent re-arrangement of political forces with some new parties appearing on the scene with several key politicians changing their membership in them * The forthcoming special national elections in October 9–10.

Not all information is political. For example, in the Czech Republic the Immunological Laboratory of the famous Motol University Hospital reports success with some experimental medication designed to arrest various kinds of cancer and are now ready to seek approval for testing on patients. A firm in Pardubice has announced the production of a new radar capable of “seeing” persons through cement walls.

These examples of knowledge we ought to have not just to keep our heritage up-to-date, but primarily to help explain and interpret our backgrounds to others. The need to do this is greater the more we face the challenge of the U.S. remaining the leaders of the world. How can we lead it without knowing enough about it to lead. This raises the question of what kind of responsibility we have to keep the knowledge flowing in the face of information overload. It could be done in three ways. First, by accepting individually our responsibility to do so, and second by organizing ourselves to meet this goal. Thirdly, by training our brains to expand their capacity so that it can absorb the magnitude of information we face. Yes, the brain can be “trained”. How about beginning our board meetings with a brief summary of “what’s new in the “old” countries”? How about a breakfast club once a month discussion what is happening there and what consequence it has for us here? How about using the old fashioned “Each one teach one”.



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