

SOKOL TABOR 140th ANNIVERSARY



Standing: Jeremy Pros, Kaitlan Short, Ken Fron, Jr., Megan Petkus, Matt Petkus, Victoria Ritzenthaler, Zach Pros, Anna Mangia, Charles Malina, Melyssa Petkus, Ted Polashek, and Christina Curran.

Kneeling: Hallie Soulides, Kaitlan Fron, Alexandra Mangia, and Carmen Torres.

Full recap story – see page 6 ...

AMERICAN SOKOL

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ASO Executive Board meets every 4th Tuesday at 7:30 PM
(except July/Aug).

ASO Board of Instructors meets every 2nd Wednesday at 7:30 PM
(except July/Aug).

Calendar of Events

MAY

1	Svatek prace (May Day)
5	Kvetnove povstani ceskeho lidu - 1945 (Prague Uprising - 1945)
4-6	Sokol MN Participation in Festival of Nations - St. Paul, MN
8	Den osvobozeni od fasismu - 1945 (Liberation from Fascism Day - 1945)
12	Central District Artistic Gymnastics Competition (girls 5-9 yrs)
12	Sokol Gr. Cleveland Vcelky Dramatic Society Play
13	Sokol Gr. Cleveland Vcelky Dramatic Society Play & Duck Dinner
13	Mother's Day
13	Sokol Gr. Cleveland Duck Dinner
17	Sokol Gr. Cleveland Fish Fry
19	Central District Older Girls & Women's Gymnastics Competition held at Lyons Township North High School
19	Central District All Boys Gymnastics Competition - held at Sokol Spirit
19	Sokol San Francisco Picnic - Lake Chabot
19	Sokol MN Annual Tea Party Social
20	Central District Sokol Day - Location To-Be- Announced
22	Exhibition - Sokol Milwaukee, Norway House
28	Memorial Day

JUNE

1-3	Southern District SLET
2	La Grange Pet Parade - Central District
2-5	NE District Slet Weekend
15	Sokol Gr. Cleveland Fish Fry
15-17	Central District Traveling Camp held at Sokol Spirit
17	Father's Day
18-22	Sokol MN Culture Camp
28-Jul 7	SokolFest 2007 - Pittsburgh, PA

JULY

4	Independence Day
5	Den slovanskych verozvestu Cyrila a Metodeje (St. Cyril & St. Methodius Day)
8-14	Sokol USA Star Camp - Week One
15-21	Sokol USA Star Camp - Week Two
16-31	ASO National Instructor School - Sokol Greater Cleveland
21-22	Sokol Detroit Czech & Slovak Festival
22-28	Sokol USA Star Camp - Week Three
31-Aug 5	National Sokol Summer Camp



The Sokol Educator

Sis. EllenJeanne Schnabl, Educational Director

Hi – hoping you're keeping warm –our schools were closed for 2 days because of the wind chill!

“The March Wind doth blow,
And we shall have snow
And what will the Robin do then?
 Poor thing!
 “He'll sit in the barn
 To keep himself warm
And hide his head under his wing
 Poor thing!”

This may be an old poem found in children's books, but we have to be aware of the weather and all of its consequences:

Even though we don't sweat as much as in the summer, we still have to hydrate – meaning we must drink water. Dry skin and fly-away hair is noticeable, showing a lack of good old H₂O. There's no substitute for what comes out of your kitchen faucet. Drink water with your meals.

There are still fierce winds and proper precautions are necessary – like mittens instead of gloves and covering the head since this is where most of the body heat escapes.

You've heard this all hundreds of times, but it doesn't hurt to be reminded of ways to keep healthy so that you can keep up your Sokol activities. In this respect, we shouldn't forget that the old “bend and stretch” exercises should be done every day to keep ourselves lively and limber. This can be done at home, but a better place is at your own Sokol gymnasium where the camaraderie keeps everyone motivated to move and helps your mind stay alert and active as well. Remember to drink water before, in-between and after sessions of your Sokol classes.

Days in March to remember:

16th – St. Urho – a Finnish hero who cased the grasshoppers from Finland, saving the nation's grape harvest. Purple and Nile green are the colors for this day.

17th – St. Patrick's Day – wear green if you're Irish.

18th – the buzzards return to Hinckley, Ohio – signifying that Spring is coming.

19th – St. Joseph's Day – patron saint of workers; a day for fun and gaiety. Czechs wear RED on this day – Some even serve red beer and make red bread, along with red flowers in table decorations.

NAZDAR !
EllenJeanne Schnabl
American Sokol Educational Director

AMERICAN SOKOL STRATEGIC PLAN

Submitted by Maryann Fiordelis, Interim Strategic Plan Manager

American Sokol Strategic Plan Takes Off – Part 3

The Strategic Planning Task Force is looking for enthusiastic, energetic members with forward-thinking ideas to assist in the next phase of the strategic plan. We are looking to build ten Strategic Imperative Teams for this phase.

The teams will be composed of (1) Strategic Planning Task Force members (to bring continuity and experience around the plan), (2) Executive Board Members, (3) other Executive committee members, and (4) additional people (members and non-members) skilled in the development topic. Each team will have at least one Strategic Planning Task Force member on it. However, that person will not necessarily lead the team. Team members will assist in selecting the leader based on expertise in the topic area as well, as leadership ability.

Typical responsibilities of these teams will be (1) define action steps and procedures to help ensure achievement of goal, (2) documentation of methods and procedures to ensure uniform implementation, (3) initiate implementation of new programs and procedures, and (4) address cross-over issues. They will provide ongoing updates to the Interim Strategic Plan Manager or Executive Director and aid in the transition of responsibilities to the permanent organization.

These ten teams are: (1) **Branding & Marketing**, (2) **Leadership Development**, (3) **Volunteer Management**, (4) **Communication**, (5) **Personnel**, (6) **Organizational Development**, (7) **Membership**, (8) **Database**, (9) **Program** and (10) **Finance**.

Each of these teams need a single leader who can coordinate workings between these teams. Until the hiring of an Executive Director, this leader will be called the Interim Strategic Plan Manager. Some responsibilities of this position include providing clear definitions, responsibilities and timetables for the teams, facilitate team sessions (when requested), motivating teams (to keep them on track and moving in the right direction), follow through to make sure deadlines are met, develop tracking measures and tools, and track and report on the measures by providing monthly updates to the Executive Board.

This plan does include a permanent structure with three paid positions. The exact roles and responsibilities have not been fully defined - as that will be a responsibility of the Personnel Team. However, some general guidelines have been developed.

Executive Director will be responsible for the general management of the administrative office activities, take over the management of the strategic plan as well as identifying and developing new imperatives, secure funding via grants, gifts and program income, and be a resource to the Executive Board regarding activities and issues.

Development Director (another full-time, paid, professional position) will be responsible for assisting in the implementation of our four core programs, writing grants at a national level, and provide assistance to units when requested.

Administrative Assistant (the last position in this permanent structure) will assist the American Sokol Executive Officers, Executive Director and Development Director as well as the day-to-day operation of the American Sokol office.

Now, you've read about the Strategic Plan. You've heard about steps being taken, and had a glimpse at a new permanent structure for the National Office. I bet you're asking yourselves "**What will this cost?**" Let's take a look at some projections.

We anticipate each team will require \$1,000 each quarter they're active (to cover miscellaneous expenses such as phone call, copies, etc.). The Interim Strategic Plan Manager will require \$2,000 a month. The Executive Director is projected at \$90,000 a year. The Development Director is projected at \$76,000 per year, and the Administrative Assistant at \$50,000.

The cost through 2007 will be \$24,000 for the Interim Strategic Plan Manager (who started in the 4th quarter of 2006 and will continue through the 3rd quarter of 2007). Four teams with two subsets will begin this year staggered across the quarter: Programs in the 1st quarter, Personnel in the 2nd with Finance and Membership during the 3rd quarter or \$11,000 for the year. We anticipate hiring the Executive Director by the 3rd quarter for \$45,000. This totals \$80,000. These funds have already been allocated to cover these expenses, with approval from the Executive Board.

During 2008, three of the remaining four teams will begin with Organization Development in the 1st quarter, Communication in the 2nd quarter and Branding & Marketing in the 3rd. The Executive Director and the Administrative Assistant will be on board for the full year with the Development Director being hired by the 2nd quarter. Team costs would be \$9,000, Executive Director \$90,000, Administrative Assistant \$50,000 (of which \$37,000 is already budgeted) and the Development Director \$57,000 or \$169,000 of new funds being needed.

Where and how can this money be obtained? Several ideas include an “Invest in the Future” Campaign where requests will go out to Units and all members, additional program fees, national fundraising events, and grants and sponsorships. We also took a look at some long-term funding sources such as new programs, increased in members and units, special events, grants, contributions, sponsorships and increased facility utilization. These funding sources are not only intended for the benefit of National but for individual units as well.

Now comes the hard work. In order to develop the action steps to meet the goals set forth in this Strategic Plan, we need assistance in manning the teams.

Let's take a closer look at the Strategic Imperative Teams. Some of the general qualifications team members need include being a team player, highly motivated as lots of work in a short time period needs to be done to stay on track. We're looking for people who have knowledge, experience and expertise in the various team areas who are able to commit the required time. Although specific time commitment is hard to pinpoint, start and end dates have been established. At least several hours a week is a reasonable estimate. We're also looking for people who have people skills as there will probably be many heated discussions and we need to walk away from the table with relationships intact. They also need to know when to compromise and when to stick to their guns. It will be beneficial to have good writing and/or computer skills.

How will this process work? Each team has specific areas of knowledge and expertise listed on the forms. Fill out appropriate form(s) and return by deadline. The candidates will be reviewed and selected by the Strategic Planning Task Force. Candidates will be notified of outcome. The member of the Strategic Planning Task Force who is on the specific team will call the first meeting.

These sign-up forms are located on the American Sokol website and can be viewed at www.american-sokol.org, click on Members, then click on Member Forms; password is nazdar. Download and print out the form and send it in. Our webmaster is currently working on being able to submit on line.

If you have questions, comments or concerns, please email me at mfiordelis@yahoo.com or send to me at 6785 Lake McGregor Circle, Ft. Myers, FL 33919 (will be here until end of April).

Nazdar,
Maryann Fiordelis
Interim Strategic Plan Manager

From the cover...

SOKOL TABOR OF BERWYN CELEBRATED ITS 140TH ANNIVERSARY

Sokol Tabor of Berwyn celebrated its 140th Anniversary at the Skylight West Banquets in Berwyn on November 11, 2006. The evening commenced with a guest appearance during the social hour from Sokolice Tabor member State Treasurer Sis. Judy Baar Topinka who presented Sokol Tabor with a proclamation from the State of Illinois.

Guest speakers were The Honorable Marek Skolil (the Consul General of the Czech Republic) and Larry Laznovsky (President of American Sokol).

Honored guests included The Board of Governors: Bohus Beta, Mary Cushing, Mary Steinman Hargiss, Barb Kucera, Gary Masek, Bob Podharsky, and Barb Vondra; members of the Executive Board; and Sokols from across the country: Cedar Rapids, Chicagoland, Corpus Christi, Detroit, Ft. Worth, Greater Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Naperville, New York, Omaha, St. Louis, South Omaha Spirit, Stickney, Town of Lake, Washington DC, and West.

Sokol and Sokolice Tabor 50 plus members in attendance were Mae Linhart, Martha Houdek, Vlasta Chloupek, Milly Homolka, Vivian Navratil, Annette Schabowski, Jean Sivak, Leo Pajer, Len Navratil, and Frank Sivak.

The American Sokol presented Sokol Tabor with a plaque; The Central District presented Sokol Tabor with red, white, and blue flowers and an American flag in a vase with Sokol Tabor's 140th logo on the front; and Sokol St. Louis also presented Sokol Tabor with a plaque.

A dance performance entitled "To Sokol Tabor with Love" was performed by the young adults of Sokol Tabor to show their "LOVE" of Sokol Tabor. It was choreographed by Sis. Christina Curran, Bro. Ted Polashek, and Sis. Kaitlan Short.

During dinner a slide show was presented commemorating Sokol Tabor's 140 years.

The evening culminated with the guests dancing to music by Mario Mongello who played traditional Sokol songs such as the Mazurka.

Letter to the Editor:

American Sokol reader Paul Nemecek writes:

Dear editor,

I am a volunteer on two days a week in the CSA Fraternal Life Building in Oak Brook, Illinois that houses an American Sokol office. I see people in the Sokol office on occasion, particularly the office manager who may work there daily.

Unfortunately, though I read copies of the American Sokol Journal that I find available in the office I don't find the name of your office manager (or whatever title she may have). The list of people on page 2 of the journal doesn't indicate an office manager at Oak Brook, only a Library/Museum Curator. I've asked others for her name but then usually forget it. Could I ask that this apparent important person in your organization be listed in future journals? Thanks for your consideration of this message. Keep up the excellent work on the rest of the journal.

Paul Nemecek
President - Czech & Slovak American Genealogy
Society of Illinois

Paul:

You are correct. This very important American Sokol individual is Jean Hruby – a tremendous asset to American Sokol. From now on, Jean's name is included on Page 2.

Thank you for reading and for taking the time to contact us.

Editor – Nancy Imbrone

Jean – we apologize for such an oversight.

To submit information to the Editor:

Email: Editor@American-Sokol.org

Mail: **Nancy Imbrone**
321 Dennison Avenue
Shoreview, MN 55123

Phone: **651-470-6153 or 651-481-7949**

AMERICAN SOKOL GYMNAST

Pages 7-10 are specifically designed to be a benefit to the Gymnastics programs of American Sokol.
Please pull, copy and distribute to your participants as you see fit.
Kandi Pajer – 117 Oakland Grove – Elmhurst, IL 60126
KandiPajer@American-Sokol.org

NATIONAL SOKOL SUMMER CAMP 2007

Sponsored by

Sokol USA, DA Sokol and American Sokol



Location:

Sokol Woodlands Camp, Barryville, NY
(2 hours north of NYC)

Monday July 30 - Sunday, August 5, 2007
Ages 12-17



Registration Fee - \$325

\$275 for American Sokol Youth Members
(ASO BOI makes up the \$50 difference)

Registration & Fee Deadline May 1st 2007

Sokol Fun, Sports, Games, Arts, Outdoor Activities,
Water Sports, Special Events, and
1-2 days Sightseeing in New York City!
(Hosted by Sokol New York)



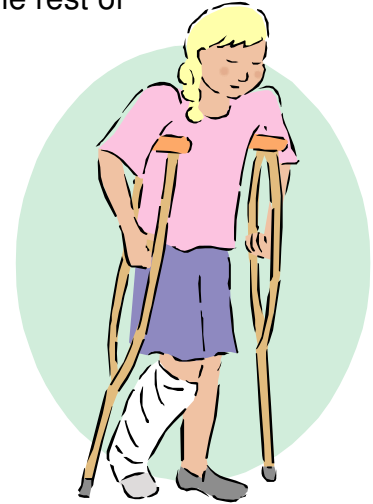
Look for additional information on the American Sokol Website at
www.american-sokol.org

Or email questions to camp administrative assistant at
sokolsummercamp@american-sokol.org

Quick Tips for Strengthening a Weak Ankle

By Jennifer Gruenemay, LifeScript online magazine, Tuesday, February 27, 2007

An ankle injury is no excuse to drop your exercise program. In fact, it's a really good reason to strengthen the joint so you don't have a weak ankle for the rest of your life. If you broke your ankle or tore ligaments, working with a physical therapist or personal trainer will ensure that you'll do the right exercises, won't aggravate your injury further and will help heal your injury faster. But if you just have weak ankles from old sprains or from constantly rolling your ankle, then you can most likely do some ankle strengthening exercises on your own.



To strengthen this joint, focus on one-legged balance exercises. Even doing biceps curls while standing on one leg can help strengthen your ankle. Any exercise that forces your ankle to stabilize your leg is a worthy exercise. Single leg squats are a perfect example of one such exercise. Hold onto a table to steady yourself in the beginning and then work up to not holding on to anything. Once you've mastered this, do the same exercise with your eyes closed. Perform balance exercises on a regular basis and you can make sprained ankles a thing of the past.



KP;) You should also do all exercises on both legs. You don't want to over strengthen one ankle over the other-so always do exercises bi-laterally. You can also balance on one leg on a mat to make it a little more difficult. You can also play catch while balancing on one leg.

You can also do toe (or calf) raises with your feet straight on, your toes facing out and your toes facing in. This aids in strengthening the muscles on all sides of the lower leg. Walking on the inside of your ankles and on the outside of your ankles also strengthens all muscles in your lower leg. Jumping in a star or front to front and side to side on a line and jumping up and down from a low mat are very good as plyometric exercises also.

Exercise Cuts Young Adults' Hypertension Risk

Content provided by Reuters, LifeScript online magazine, Sunday, March 18, 2007

New York (Reuters Health) - Physically active young adults are less likely than their more sedentary peers to develop high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, a new study confirms. Exercise has been demonstrated to reduce older adults' likelihood of developing high blood pressure, but there is little information on how physical activity affects hypertension risk in younger adults, blacks, and women, Emily D. Parker of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and colleagues note in the American Journal of Public Health.

To investigate, Parker and her team analyzed data on 3,993 black and white 18-30 year-old men and women who were followed for 15 years. The men were the most active, followed by white women and black women.

Study participants' risk of developing hypertension during follow-up dropped by 11 percent for every additional 300-exercise-unit increase in activity, equivalent to about five weekly exercise sessions burning 300 calories each.

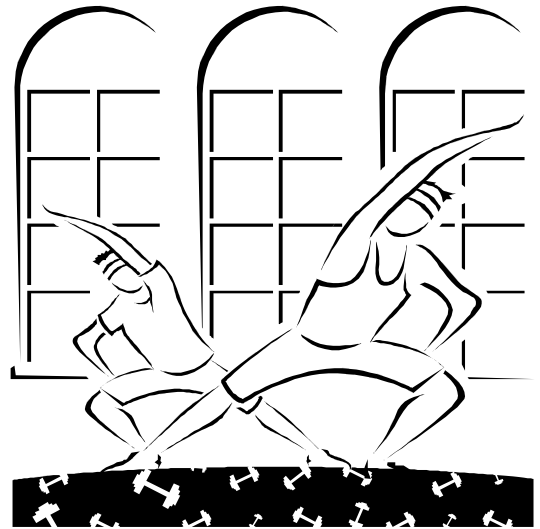
The most physically active individuals were 17 percent less likely to develop hypertension than the least active ones, and the effect was the same for both men and women and blacks and whites.

When the researchers adjusted for waist circumference and sensitivity to the blood sugar regulating hormone insulin, the exercise-hypertension link was somewhat weakened, suggesting that abdominal fat and insulin sensitivity are involved in the relationship.

But adjusting for participants' body mass index (BMI) had no effect. BMI is a standard measure used to classify people as normal-weight, overweight or obese based on their weight and height.

Based on their results, Parker and her colleagues say "physical activity merits attention in the prevention of incident hypertension among young adults, particularly as they move into middle age."

KP;) It is known that at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day, three times a week aids in keeping weight down, helping build strength of muscles and bones, creates feelings of positive self image, increases energy level, helps eliminate depression and decreases the risk for most life threatening diseases. Sokol has been helping its members be active for many - many years. More people should jump on board, join Sokol and increase their physical level and thus decrease risk of developing hypertension. Pass the word on!!



How to Help Kids Memorize More Easily

By Jim Sarris, Your Article Logo Website

KP;) With competition time coming up soon-it is now time to help your gymnasts memorize routines-here are some suggestions that teachers use in school that may help you teach them retention of their routines, and help parents teach the routines as well.



1. Know what you have to study. Sounds so simple (it always sounds so simple!) but it's true. Personally part of the problem most students have is that they are not clear on what to study. So, they go home and waste valuable time trying to figure out if what they are looking at is important or not. Don't make that mistake. Ask the instructor if you can take a copy of the routine home-or instructors-print the routines out for your students. (You can even go as far as writing the cues you give them on the paper to reinforce what you tell them to help them remember as well-example:for the coupe walks if you call them knee walks, write that on the paper for them.)
2. Make sure you understand the material before you begin to commit it to memory. Read it through and make sure you as a teacher and/or parent know the routine well enough to be able to teach it well. Once you have an understanding of the routine and its sequences, you can begin to group skills and poses to splice it into parts to make retention easier to recall the next day, or the next class time.
3. Make sure you use memory strategies when you study. Kids need a game plan each time they begin to work out. They like a steady routine each time they come to class. When you teach the routine make sure you do it the same way every time! It is also wise to have the same teachers teach the same apparatus each time-the regularity is good for their retention and you may notice it helps them remember better also.

A few tips I use – Repeat, repeat and repeat!! Break the routine up into small parts and go over it a few times, then add on. You should also always begin teaching a routine from the beginning. If you start in the middle-it may cause confusion. The most important thing is to teach it early and practice it often. Remember, practice makes perfect! Good Luck!!



Czech Language Classes Being Held in Pasadena, California Sponsored by Sokol Los Angeles

Submitted by Sis. Kathy Hanken, Sokol LA



The Czech class sponsored by the American Sokol Los Angeles is held once a month, on the first Sunday of the month, at the Pasadena City College. The beautiful lecture room is ours from 9 am to 1 pm. To our dismay, the Czech teacher we had for five years, Romana Matouskova, resigned with regret, so a Sokol member, Kathy Hanken, was volunteered to continue to teach the class. Our Educational Director, Milly Urbanski, keeps the emails coming. She makes certain the



students know what the homework is and do their homework, reminds them that class is coming this week, and keeps us entertained with clever stories and jokes. It was because of her tenacity that we now enjoy the lecture room with many blackboards and lots of room to spread out.

We have learned the basic grammar, so we now concentrate on speaking and conversation and practice. There are pictures to describe, and stories to make up. The class is very enthusiastic, a great set of dedicated students that also bring in items and suggestions for the learning experience. We have a few students who have traveled to the Czech Republic recently, and are sharing their pictures and stories with us. We also have some people that share the current political issues of the Czech Republic, after reading their weekly Czech newspapers; they summarize the status for us monthly. Many also enjoy a social lunch at various local restaurants after the class.

Many people miss one of two classes due to travel, church requirements, vacations and other commitments. They then play catch-up to the rest of the class. In total, we have over two-dozen students. This is a photo of the students that attended the April 1st class. All students shown are Sokol members. I feel very lucky to have such wonderful students that are eager to learn. They help me to modernize my "antique Czech language". Many expressions have been added to the living language since I left my former homeland.

Nazdar, Kathy Hanken

I see American Sokol publication reporters hiding out there in every single Unit. Are you that person? Can you take digital photographs? Can you email them? Can you tell a story about the photograph?

YOU'RE HIRED! Payment (in the form of seeing your photo on the cover or being the top story of the month) will arrive in your mailbox in record time.

Send your photos and stories to:

Editor@American-Sokol.org



AMERICAN SOKOL INSTRUCTOR SCHOOL

Looking for a few good men and women

Instructors In Training (IT) and Assistant Instructors

- Are you interested in becoming a Staff Member at the National Instructor School?
- Are you at least 18 years of age and have five years teaching experience in your Sokol Unit?
- Are you available July 15 to 30 to be in Cleveland, Ohio?

If you answered YES to these questions, you should request an application form from

School Director Mary Cushing

Phone 248-474-0689

Email marysokol@aol.com .

Historic exhibition “Czechs in America” & discussion panel on the importance and history of Czech immigration to the U.S. and the Chicago area

June 9 – August 31 (opening panel discussion on June 9), Czechoslovak Heritage Museum – CSA Fraternal Life HQ, Oakbrook (122 W 22nd St., Oakbrook)

Authors of the exhibition David Kraft and Ivan Dubovicky are to participate in the opening discussion panel. The exhibition is co-organized by the American Sokol, an organization founded by Czech and Slovak immigrants in 1865 and dedicated until today to the physical, mental, and cultural advancement of its members, and the Czech and Slovak American Genealogy Society of Illinois. The exhibition will take place in the premises of the CSA Fraternal Life insurance company, America's Oldest Fraternal Benefit Society, founded in 1854 by Czechs and Slovaks, where also the permanent Czechoslovak Heritage Museum can be found.

Czech-American community historic contribution to the development of Chicago is one of the themes explored by this exhibition. More than 1.6 million persons living in the United States have asserted their Czech ancestry. As a whole, they constitute the largest Czech minority abroad and represent an enormous potential for cooperation and strengthening of the ties between the two countries.

<http://american-sokol.com/sokol.asp>

<http://www.csagsi.org/>

<http://www.csafraternallife.org/>

What does the Czech Republic share with America?

trivia

From www.czech.cz Official Website of the Czech Republic

The name of the U.S. currency, the dollar, takes its roots from the Czech lands. It was in the Krušný Mountains that a coin called a joachimstaler was minted.



Because the name of the coin was rather long, it was subsequently shortened to the word “taler,” from which the Czech word “tolar” emerged. The name was then adopted in various European countries, and because of its pleasant sound, eventually found its way to England, where it evolved into the word “dollar.” In the 18th century, when the United States was looking for a suitable name for its currency that would be distinct from the names of currencies used in France or England, it settled on the word “dollar,” which had been used since the 16th century in England but had since fallen out of use.

ATTENTION ALL UNITS

Roster Information will be printed in the April/May issue of American Sokol.

We will print what is on file at the home office.

If you have not submitted a current Officer List and Contact Information since your Annual Meeting – you risk having incorrect information published.

Send your most current Officer List and Contact Information to the Home Office
TODAY!

Thanks for your help.

AROUND THE WORLD IN JUST ONE DAY

Used With Permission From The Naperville Sun, Chicago, IL, By KATE R. HOULIHAN Staff Writer, February, 2007

It's not every day a person can go around the world and back without leaving the Naperville city limits.

However, such a feat of global exploration was entirely possible Sunday. You only had to look as far as North Central College's Merner Fieldhouse.

The 11th annual International Festival featured enough colorful costumes, ethnic foods and dancing demonstrations to satiate even the most fervent world traveler. If people weren't captivated by the display of dances from around the world taking place in the middle of the fieldhouse floor, there were plenty of booths from groups such as the French Alliance of DuPage County, West Suburban Irish and Ray Chinese School to keep your eyes busy.

If chatting was preferred, six language immersion rooms were staffed with volunteers to teach basic words in Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Russian and Japanese to eager learners.


There were even tiny red souvenir passports a traveler could take from one table to the next, receiving a stamp at each station.

Jack Shindler, NCC's director of international programs, said attendance this year was estimated at 600 to 700 people. He said anywhere from 600 to 1,000 people have attended the annual event, which also serves as a scholarship fundraiser.

"This year seems to be about the same as last year," Shindler said. "I think the word is getting around more."

The scholarship monies are doled out both for those NCC students wishing to further their studies abroad and for those international students coming to the U.S. for higher education. Shindler said about \$3,000 is raised and set aside for the scholarships, thanks to the festival.

International students - often dressed in attire from their homelands - volunteer at the event, and Shindler calls them an important part of the day's success. Other volunteers include NCC students and staff. Those groups hosting booths have their own volunteers, Shindler said.



Barb Kucera was manning the Sokol Naperville Tyrs table, which offered information on the Czech Republic-based gymnastics organization that has been active in the city. Kucera was able to tell visitors about the family-friendly athletics program, which offers basic gymnastics instruction to both children and adults in the effort to promote physical fitness. In addition, those who stopped by could learn that the Czech word "sokol" means falcon and "nazdar" means on to success.

"(The festival) is a great idea," Kucera said. "It gives children the outlook that the world is not as big as it might seem. It gives them the opportunity, if they can't travel to a different country, to learn about the different cultures."

One of the most popular booths was run by NCC's Japan Club. Children gathered en masse to learn how to make origami cranes, see their name written in Japanese or have a portrait drawn in the Japanese style of animation.

"You get to have kids in who don't normally get to see this kind of stuff," said 19-year-old NCC sophomore Jenny Elgin.

Victoria Collins, 19, also a sophomore, said kids were eager to learn the Japanese words for basic colors and numbers, along with sayings such as please and thank you, in the immersion rooms.

"They seemed to really enjoy it," she said.

Laurel Holden, 49, leader of Girl Scout Troop 821 based out of Beebe Elementary School, said the event was "awesome." This was the second year she attended, and the troop, comprised of fourth-grade girls in the junior level of scouting, enjoyed participating in the opening Flag of Nations ceremony.

Next year it will be her troop's turn to host Beebe's International Night, which is the school's way of celebrating a scouting tradition held toward the end of February to honor Girl Scouts around the world, and she plans on bringing everyone to the NCC festival.

"It's so diverse," Holden said. "It's so kid-friendly. It's a great thing to do on a cold day. ... It's a great experience for these kids to step out of their Naperville home."

Editor Note: We have a similar event here in the Twin Cities called Festival of Nations. It's been going on for 75 years now. There are 97 ethnic groups represented. Sokol Minnesota coordinates a café, bazaar booth, culture exhibit and send our ever popular Taneční Mládež (Dancing Youth). The event runs (and I mean we run) for four days. Does your Unit get involved with something like this? We would all love to hear (and see) about it. Send in your photos and stories.

Thank you – Nancy

AMERICAN SOKOL YOUTH COMMITTEE ESSAY CONTEST

The American Youth Committee is sponsoring a contest whereby you could win **FREE TUITION*** to the National Instructors' School or Summer Camp. Four prizes are available for award.

Essay Topic:

The Youth Committee has run this Essay Contest for over five years with less than desirable results. Your challenge is to develop a contest that you think will generate an over-whelming response from the Teen Youth Members. In your essay you must devise and explain the rules of your contest. You must also detail the judging criteria you will use to select your contest winners. Remember the prizes are the same; four scholarship awards to either the National Instructors School or National Summer Camp.

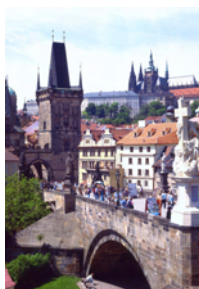
Good luck and who knows, we may decide to use your contest ideas next year!

*For entry information, instructions, and prize details please visit the American Sokol Website/Sokol Kids/Kids News/Teens or ask your Instructor or Director.

Mark Your Calendar

FESTIVAL PRAGUE - CHICAGO - JUNE 2007

March 12, 2007 News Release



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PROGRAM

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ORGANIZERS

Office of the Mayor of Prague, Prague Committee of CSCIP, Czech Consulate General in Chicago, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Office of Special Events of the Mayor of Chicago

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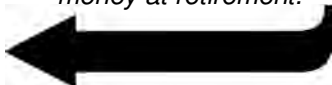
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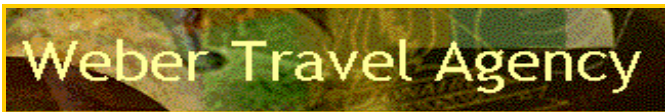
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