

American
Sokol
Sokol Los Angeles

SOKOL NOTES

* Issue #33 * Winter 2014 * Published by American Sokol Los Angeles, 22542 Chaparro Drive, Saugus, CA 91350 *

Sokol Los Angeles Children's School

The Children's School is currently in its 2014 winter session with 36 children enrolled. The photos below were taken by a talented parent at the children's Mikulas party that was held on 7 December 2013 at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Los Angeles. The beautiful collages below show children involved in cookie baking and wonderful food prepared by the parents for this event.



Editor's Notes



I wish for all a Happy and Healthy New Year! *Šťastný a zdravé Nový Rok!*

Since our last issue, Sokol Los Angeles members and friends have enjoyed memorable events that will be recapped in this edition. The year 2013 was a busy year for Sokol and in my personal life as well, leaving little time to devote to this publication. As you know, Sokol Los Angeles is an all volunteer organization and sometimes our personal lives offer us challenges that keep us from our volunteering activities. Without the help of other volunteers, this issue would still be on the back burner. Thank you to all who have submitted articles and photos for publication.

The year 2014 will be another busy year for Sokol Los Angeles with the upcoming ASO Convention in St. Louis in April and a trip in September to help Sokol San Francisco celebrate their 110th anniversary. Please be sure to save the calendar published on the last page so you don't miss out on any events.

Remember, this newsletter is about you and for you. Please continue to send your stories, news items and photos to SokolNotes@SokolLA.org to share with your Sokol friends.

NAZDAR!

Sister Lillian Roter, Editor

Letters to the Editor: e-mail: SokolNotes@SokolLA.org
U.S Mail: 22542 Chaparro Drive, Santa Clarita, CA 91350-1501



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CORRECTIONS to Sokol Notes Previous Edition

In the last Sokol Notes, within the article on the Labor Day Camp, the name Susana Kay Cohen was used. Susana's name is Susana Kay. Extending her given name was our error. Our apologies.

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President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to 2014. We are in the midst of an unusually warm winter in California that feels like spring with our beautiful sunny days. Still, we have short days and cool nights to remind us of the season. It is days like this that I realize how thankful I am for my family as well as my extended Sokol family.

The upcoming National Convention to be held in St. Louis, MO, in April will be attended by a contingent of Pacific District delegates from both Los Angeles and San Francisco who look forward to a productive convention. Be sure to read the important messages in this issue from our District President Yvonne Masopust with more information about the Convention, attendees and procedures.

I am pleased that we are able to maintain our membership at 99 members and that others are showing interest in joining. We are currently working on methods for bringing in new members and plan to revise the process by allowing interested individuals to become non-voting members if they attend our classes and/or events on a regular basis while unable to attend meetings on Saturdays.



The Czech Consulate in Los Angeles continues to be a major source of advertising for Sokol Los Angeles. We are grateful to Consul General Michal Sedlacek and his staff for their continued support.

There comes a time in your life when you walk away from all the drama and people who create it. You surround yourself with people who make you laugh. Focus on the good and leave the bad behind. Love the people who treat you right and pray for those who don't. Life is too short to not be happy. Falling down (failure) is a part of life; it's what we learn from our failures that makes us stronger individuals.

We are exactly where we are meant to be in life and should be content with how we are. We must not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in ourselves and in others. We must allow our souls the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us. Free your heart from hatred; free your mind from worries; live simply, give more and expect less.

Nazdar!

Lillian Roter, President

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SOKOL Los Angeles 2014 Dues Notice

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you to all who have submitted your membership dues for calendar year 2014.

If you have not yet paid your dues, please remember that annual dues are payable at the beginning of each calendar year. This being a Convention year, please mail your check for the appropriate amount payable to **Sokol Los Angeles** to Lillian Roter, 22542 Chaparro Drive, Saugus, CA 91350 by February 28, 2014. It is important that you meet this deadline as Unit dues to American Sokol must be paid by March 24, 2014 to secure our delegate a seat at the Convention to cast your votes.

If you have any changes to your home address, phone number or e-mail address, please include that information along with your payment.

If you no longer wish to be a member of Sokol Los Angeles, please respond by return mail. It is important that resignations be in writing.

Nazdar!

Darine Klega
Financial Secretary
Sokol Los Angeles



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Officers and Directors for 2014 Elected on November 16, 2013

President -- Lillian Roter **Vice-President** -- Zdenka Svitek
Secretary/Financial Secretary -- Darine Klega **Treasurer** -- Lillian Roter
Education Director -- Jim Buchanan **Membership Director** -- Yvonne Masopust
Public Relations Director -- Zdenka Svitek
Men's Physical Director -- Otto Notzl **Women's Physical Director** -- Libby Pelc
Editor Sokol Notes -- Lillian Roter **Bylaws Chairman** -- Lillian Roter
Property Chairman -- Larry Phillips

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In Memoriam

Jaromir Turek 8/16/1923 – 11/06/2013
Irene Marlow 1920 – 11/28/2013
Vlasta Lindenlauf Cerny 1913 – 12/10/2013
Jana Marie Bednářová 11/19/1940 – 12/17/2013

I AM

*The "I" that is me – you cannot see.
You see only the form that you think is me.
This form that you see will not always be;
But the "I" that is me – lives eternally.
~Anonymous*

* * * * *



Jaromir Horak Turek
8/16/1923 – 11/06/2013
-- submitted by Kristina Ariniello

My father loved his native country, Czechoslovakia.

Jaromir Horak Turek was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia on August 16, 1923. At that time, Czechoslovakia was an independent and free country, newly formed after World War I. He was raised a sportsman; he loved volleyball, ping pong and kuželky. He also developed a love for singing folk songs and dancing to the big band sounds of his era. While his prowess on the dance floor fades as he entered his ninetieth year, his singing voice never faded.

Mirek was quite linguistically accomplished starting as a young boy when he was sent to learn German with a German family during his summer vacations. He went on to also master French, Italian, Spanish and English in addition to his native Czech. His formal education included a Vocational High School, *Realne gymnasium*, 1941, *Totalní nasezení*, *Vojenska služba* 1945-1947 and also in 1947 he started *Vysoká Obchodní*; University with a business major.

In August of 1948, following the communist occupation of Czechoslovakia, Mirek escaped through Germany. He spent the next year in refugee camps in Germany and Italy before emigrating to Santiago, Chile in 1949. While he intended his time in Chile to be only a way point on the path his ultimate destination of the United States, he remained there for 10 years establishing a sewing machine shop with sales and repairs, wedding his first wife Katy and fathering his sons Peter and Paul.

In 1959, Mirek finally received an emigration visa for the United States and moved his family to Los Angeles where he worked in the now historic garment district in downtown L.A. repairing sewing machines and eventually earning enough to support to stake himself in a small business of his own. During the 1960's he succeeded by purchasing and operating two coin Laundromats in the L.A area. Now self-employed and financially stable he expanded his family with the addition of his only daughter, Kristina (me) and his youngest boy, Viktor.

Now life was good. The whole family participated in Sokol events, from gymnastics, volleyball, dancing, operettas, Slets and of course the camps. Through the 1960's he helped many Czech immigrants find housing and work. In the 1970's he improved his economic circumstances through the purchase of a donut shop in Van Nuys and later that same decade he remarried to a lovely young Czech woman Libuše.

The 1980's found Mirek spending his early retirement traveling and building his dream home followed by building a more modest home in the 90's for his final years which he used in the winter months while summering in his family home in Praha. We traveled together extensively throughout Europe and one of the fondest memories I have was when we were in Vienna, we enjoyed the pasteries so much that we went to the Conditorai for breakfast, lunch and dinner! I loved these years when we would join together as a multigenerational family from Děda down to the littlest granddaughter, Karina and sing Czech folk songs every Friday night. He even wrote us our own anthem in which "we have pockets full of songs".

My father was many things in his long and rewarding life including being a Sokol member for 52 years in L.A., ten (10) years in Chile and 17 years in Prague. He was a good friend to many and a proud parent and loving grandparent to Nicholas and Karina but, first and foremost, he was a Czech patriot through and through.

* * * * *



Jana Bednářová – age 73 -- submitted by K Hanken

Jana Bednářová was born Jana Marie Kazdová, November 19, 1940, in Libeň section of Prague, Czechoslovakia. She emigrated from Prague to the United States in 1949 with her mother Emily Kazda and sister Alenka, joining her father, Tony, who had been in the US since 1948. Jana passed away unexpectedly in Palmdale, California on the evening of Tuesday, December 17, 2013.

The Kazda family settled in the Highland Park area of Los Angeles, where Jana attended Franklin High School, graduating in 1959. Jana and her sister were active in American Sokol Los Angeles and met their husbands at the Sokol Hall in Hollywood.

Jana married Jan Bednář, who was born in the Vynohrady district of Prague, Czechoslovakia. He arrived in the USA in April 1955 with his parents, František and Mařenka and sister Káťa. The Bednar family changed their names to the American versions of

Frank, Marie, John and Katherine. John enlisted in the US Air Force after graduating from Dorosey High School. He was stationed in Nevada when he and Jana were married in Carson, Nevada on February 17, 1962, settling in Sparks, Nevada. After his tour in the Air Force, John and Jana returned to Southern California, moving to Eagle Rock with their young son, David. To their good fortune they had two more sons, Dwayne and Dean, who are both Southern California natives.

The whole family participated along with their children in Sokol Los Angeles activities. Jana volunteered for many positions, John was the instructor for young boys. They both also belonged to CSA Lodge #458, attending meetings, volunteering for the annual CSA Heritage Dance organizing committee and other CSA activities. Their children and grandchildren were also members of CSA Lodge 458. As the boys grew up they continued to be involved with Czech heritage activities. Jana's son Dwayne was one of the Sokol Czech Dancers under the direction of Helen and Joe Jakl. They performed during the 1984 Olympics in LA. The family also belonged to WFLA Golden West Lodge #377.

The five members of her family all remember the good times at Dinkey Creek camp as they were growing up. They spent many annual vacation trips there with their many Sokol friends. The parents and the boys participated in the local Sokol exhibits. Jana and John were dedicated to Sokol and other Czech American organizations. John participated in many of the plays performed at Sokol Hall in the late fifties and early sixties.

When their youngest son graduated Eagle Rock High School, Jana and John moved to Quartz Hill in the Antelope Valley. They liked the dry heat, sunny days, and clear days and nights. Their sons married and gave them the joy of grandchildren. Eight wonderful young adults of a new generation of Bednar family was the result of Jana and Jan's loving family. Both were and are very proud of their children and grandchildren. They are a very close family that gathers together to help each other with every challenge they face. Though the far reaching family is now living in South Dakota, Nevada and California, they still get together several times a year.

Jana loved shopping and decorating her house. The house always looked picture perfect like the model houses in Home and Garden magazines. How she managed to do that with three growing boys is a mystery. She also liked her job in helping disadvantaged children of the local school. She traveled across the hills from Quartz Hill to Eagle Rock to continue her work until she retired from the LA school district less than a decade ago.

Jana adored her grandchildren, they were her pride and joy. The grandchildren are all very close to their grandparents and loved their Babi. She left too soon and very unexpectedly, shocking and saddening this loving family.

In February 2013, Jana and John celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary. She is survived by her husband, John, their three sons, David, Dwayne and Dean with their wives, Pam, Wendy, and Tara and her eight grandchildren, Emily, Andrew, Lauren, Katelyn, Tyler, Weston, Cody and Madison. She called her grandchildren the "Bednar 8". She always sent her Christmas cards early, right after Thanksgiving. This year she included the "Bednar 8" picture at Dodger Stadium inside the greeting card.

Jana also left behind her sister Alena Hlaváčková, along with her two sons, Allen and Steven Hlaváček and her daughter, Carrie Ridenour, their spouses, Ilona and Christine Hlaváček and Dan Ridenour. Her two nephews and three nieces on the Kazda family side, Jonathan and Anthony Waite and McKinzie Ridenour, Shania and Chrysta Hlavacek. She also leaves behind her sister-in-law, Kathy Hanken with husband Rocky, and a niece and nephew on the Bednar side of the family, Samantha and Richard Hanken with their spouses, Eric Hurd and Marlene Hanken. The large extended family in the USA and the huge Košnar and Kazda family descendants in the Czech Republic mourn her passing as well as all her friends

She was laid to rest in a crypt at Forest Lawn at Hollywood on Friday, December 27, 2013.

Forest Lawn Hollywood has a place for leaving memories of Jana online at web page:

<http://forestlawn.tributes.com/show/Jana-M.-Bednar-97376927>



David, Dwayne, Dean, John, Jana Bednar 2002



The "Bednar 8" grandchildren – Summer 2013



The Bednar Clan May 2013

Lauren Bednar submitted the following write-up for her grandmother.

Jana Marie Bednar
11/19/1940- 12/17/2013

No words could ever express our appreciation for the love and support you have shown our family after the passing of my wife, our mother, and grandmother. We are so grateful for all of the friendships that have formed over all these years. Jana would be overwhelmed, as we are, with all the love and support everyone has given us during this difficult time.

Per Jana's wishes we will not be having a memorial service, as she would want everyone to remember her and the lives she touched in her own unique way.

In loving memory of my wife, our mother, and grandmother please reflect on this poem in her memory.

Husband John

Sons: David, Dwayne and Dean

Daughter-in-Laws: Pam, Wendy and Tara

Grandchildren: Emily, Andrew, Lauren, Tyler, Katelyn, Weston, Cody and Madison



Miss Me, but Let Me Go

When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want no rights in a gloom-filled room
Why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little but not to long
And not with your head bowed low
Remember the love that we once shared
Miss me but let me go.

For this is a journey that we all must take
And each must go alone
It's all a part of the Master's plan
A step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick of heart
Go to the friends we know
And bury your sorrow in doing good deeds
Miss me But Let me Go!



In lieu of flowers please make a contribution to the charity of your choice.

Words of Wisdom:

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation,
Because your character is what you really are,
While your reputation is merely what others think you are.
~John Wooden, player and coach of basketball (1910—2010)

Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position or prestige.
It is discovered in goodness, humility, service and character.
~William Arthur Ward, motivational speaker (1921—1994)

We get mail!



Invitation from Pasadena Beseda President Mirek Vondruš:

Česko-slovenský klub Pasadena Beseda, srdečně zve všechny krajany na pravidelná setkání, která se konají každou druhou sobotu v měsíci od 13.00 h. v 403 S. First Ave, Arcadia, CA 91006.

Případné dotazy pište na: Pasadena Beseda, 5258 Vincent Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90041 nebo e-mail : pasadenabeseda@gmail.com

Czech-Slovak Club Pasadena Beseda, cordially invites all compatriots to our regular meetings, which are held the second Saturday of every month from 1:00 pm at 403 S. First Avenue, Arcadia, CA 91006.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please write to: Pasadena Beseda, 5258 Vincent Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90041 or e-mail: pasadenabeseda@gmail.com

Hello to all from Tim and Lori Kis at home in Nevada enjoying the snow!!!



To Your Health

Four Quick Tips to Curb Hunger

Nobody likes feeling hungry. But who doesn't love watching the numbers on the scale get smaller and smaller? Follow these four quick tips to keep your healthy eating habits on track without battling a grumbling tummy.

1. Drink More Water. Did you know that sometimes the physical symptoms that our brains interpret as hunger are actually signs of thirst? The next time you feel like munching, try a tall glass of water instead of a snack. Water is an essential component of your body's makeup and your metabolism can't function without it. It's important to ensure you drink enough on a daily basis, especially if you exercise a lot.

2. Turn up the Volume. Studies have shown that most people have a specific "set point" for food intake, so simply eating less volume can trigger hunger. By eating a higher volume of foods that are lower in calorie density (non-starchy vegetables, for example), you can reduce your caloric intake while still feeling full and satisfied and you will naturally create meals that are higher in key vitamins and minerals.

3. Get Moving. You already know that exercise is good for you. It releases feel-good endorphins, supports a healthy heart and helps to stave off chronic disease. Even though you might feel a bit hungrier right after beginning a workout program, in the long run, people who exercise on a regular basis tend to have better appetite control; while making better nutritional choices they are more successful at maintaining a healthy weight.

4. Press Pause. It is also important to recognize the difference between true hunger and a craving. Hunger is a physiological request from your body for you to give it fuel. If your blood sugar is low, or it's been more than four hours since your last meal, you probably are hungry. But if you're just hitting a mid-afternoon, "mmmm-potato-chips-sound-amazing" slump, that is not hunger but a craving. Studies show that if you don't cave in, cravings usually pass in about 10-15 minutes.

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*** Past Events ***

Annual Bus Trip to San Diego – October 13, 2013

Due to a scheduling miscommunication, our annual bus trip to San Diego entailed a visit to the Polish Festival followed by a visit to the House of Czech and Slovak in Balboa Park to say hello and explain why we would not attend the Lawn Program on October 20. We enjoyed traditional Polish food and beer at the Polish Mission in San Diego and left early to visit Balboa Park. The Polish Mission is rather small with insufficient space for spectators to enjoy the staged program. A few of us found some shade – relief from the sun and heat of the day.



Pacific District Annual Meeting – October 26, 2013

-- Submitted by Lillian Roter

The Pacific District annual meeting was held at the Roter residence in Saugus, CA. A brief meeting was held followed by the election of officers and directors for the upcoming year. Treasurer Jiri Jancarik reported that the Dinkey Creek Camp netted a positive gain resulting in a slight growth in the District accounts for 2013.

Voted into office are the following: President -- Yvonne Masopust; Secretary -- Darine Klega; Treasurer/Financial Secretary -- Jiri Jancarik; Education Director -- Jara Dusatko; Men's Director/Activity Director -- Otto Notzl; Women's Director -- Cheri Riddle; Bylaws Chairman -- Lillian Roter. Unit Presidents Jara Dusatko (San Francisco) and Lillian Roter (Los Angeles) serve as Vice-Presidents. The Unit Presidents also serve as Public Relations point of contact for their respective units.

Annual Heritage Event– Knollwood Country Club – October 27, 2013

-- Submitted by Kathy Hanken and Lillian Roter

On 27 October 2013, Sokol Los Angeles celebrated The Czech National Day (October 28) at Knollwood Country Club in Granada Hills, CA. Sokol members from San Francisco, Fresno and San Diego attended this event that included music by a live band, dancing, good food and camaraderie. There were 175 Sokol members and guests in attendance, including 21 children and the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Los Angeles, an increase of 67% over previous events. You may ask, "What caused this increase?" A *parada kroji* to be presented by Sister Yvonne Masopust attracted people interested in our heritage and in seeing and learning about the various regional national costumes (*kroje*).

Sister Masopust displayed a map of the Czech Republic and Slovakia that depicted the regions of origin for the various *kroje*. *Kroje* were modeled by Sokol members, family and friends as Sister Masopust identified each region and described the details of that region's national costume. The audience was amazed as each costume or group of costumes paraded around the dance floor while Sister Masopust spoke.



The hour-long presentation (seemingly shorter) was an absolutely fabulous display of colors and styles. Many of the *kroje* have not been seen by our membership for years. In several cases the grandchildren of former Sokol members proudly donned the beautiful outfits worn years ago by their grandparents. The movement of the national costumes in all their colors twirling on the dance floor was a beautiful sight.

Sokol Los Angeles is proud to have Sister Masopust as a member. She spent months preparing for this presentation, making sure the costumes were complete. In addition to encouraging those who own costumes to participate, she searched for other individuals who would be willing to participate. She borrowed costumes, sewed missing pieces, and made sure all “models” were properly fitted for the presentation. In addition to all this, she prepared her talk, ensuring all facts were accurate.

We thank all the volunteers who helped to make this event a huge success and such a hit with everyone. Without our volunteers this and other activities could not be possible.

Note: The presentation was such a success, Sokol San Francisco has requested a repeat performance for their 110th anniversary celebration in September 2014.

National Day of the Czech Republic -- Consul General's Residence -- October 28, 2013

-- Submitted by Lillian Roter

In celebration of the National Day of the Czech Republic, a special concert of music by Antonin Dvořák, Leoš Janáček and Bedřich Smetana was performed by renowned Czech violinist Ivan Ženatý accompanied by pianist Sandra Shapiro (photos following page). The duo gave a stellar performance to a full audience at the Consul General's residence.

After the performance, recognition and presentations were made in the beautiful gardens. One such presentation was a special certificate presented to Consul General Michal Sedláček by Lourdes Saab, Deputy Chief of Protocol for Los Angeles County (photo at right).



Another presentation was made to Consul General Michal Sedláček by Deputy of Protocol of the Los Angeles Mayor's Office Jonathan Yang (photo at left).



Christmas Luncheon – December 15, 2013

-- Submitted by Kathy Hanken

The Sokol Christmas Luncheon and Party was a hit, especially since we had a surprise visit from Mikuláš. What a treat! She and her helper handed out mandarins, a treat that I remember from my childhood. Our gifts in the US refugee camps in Germany were mandarins and walnuts and we looked forward to them with delight. The nice surprise was the idea of Sisters Eva and Susie Riesner. They attended with their sons, changed clothes and surprised all of us.



Beckham Grill on Walnut Avenue in Pasadena is easily accessible from the 210 and 134 freeways. One of our members, Eric Rueber, is a maître'd at the restaurant. He attends the Czech class religiously even though he has to work at the restaurant late into the night on Saturdays. Eric is a student of many languages and a world traveler. His pictures of the architecture of the Czech Republic that he shared with the Czech class were absolutely beautiful.



The majority of members ordered the duck, which was crisp and delicious. I had the salmon -- a huge serving that was cooked just right. It was a nice upscale dinner that all enjoyed, and the service was fantastic and friendly.

Lillian Roter, Rocky Hanken, and Eric Rueber



Czech Class January 12, 2014

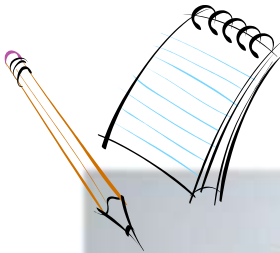
-- Submitted by Kathy Hanken



Our first class of 2014 had some very special visitors. Jim Buchanan family and Marcie's father, Jan Konecny. Jan was visiting for a few weeks to meet his first grandchild. He does not speak any English but is just fascinated with our beautiful California weather, especially all the flowers and blooming trees that are non-existent in Brno in the winter.

The class was able to converse with Jan -- a good exercise for all the students. Each student had to ask at least one question. Many asked lots more questions. Jan is a retired roof installer, which he did in all kinds of weather. He mentioned it was a tough job in the winter time. Jan loves our ocean -- his favorite place to visit while here and something he does not see in a land-locked Czech Republic. He is definitely enjoying himself and takes delight in his first grandchild, little Daniel. He also thought it was admirable that students want to learn the Czech language.

Daniel Buchanan is now four months old. He is the cutest blue-eyed little darling and he understands Czech. What a joy to the whole family. From observation, the parents just adore Daniel. He is a really good baby. Some of the students met at Polka restaurant in Glendale after the class. Daniel slept through the meal and we all enjoyed some good European food. Jan wanted to eat Czech food, but when the Buchanan's drove all the way to Redondo Beach, they found the new Praha restaurant was closed and Zina's restaurant is no longer serving lunch.



Marci, Jim and Daniel Buchanan, Jan Konecny and Kathy Hanken. Photo by Rocky Hanken

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A Few Things You Probably Didn't Know

The first novel ever written on a typewriter is Tom Sawyer.

The San Francisco cable cars is the only mobile National Monument.

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse with both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died of wounds received in battle. If all four legs are on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

Honey is the only food that doesn't spoil.

*** News About Town ***

Bridget (Prochazka) Otero: Home Life in New Zealand



ASO Representative ~ Unit Advocate Mary Cushing ~ to visit Pacific District March 11-15, 2014

Submitted by Yvonne Masopust, President, Pacific District

On February 5, 2014 the three presidents of Pacific District, Sokol Los Angeles, and Sokol San Francisco were notified that Mary Cushing, ASO Unit Advocate, is planning to visit our district.

Mary will arrive in San Francisco on Tuesday, March 11. Members of Sokol San Francisco are planning to take her on a nature hike that afternoon, weather permitting. On Wednesday, March 12 Mary will attend the regular monthly meeting of Sokol San Francisco and in the evening will fly to Los Angeles. On Thursday, March 13 she will visit our senior fitness class led by Libby Pelc at the North Hollywood Senior Center. We encourage all our members to attend the class if possible, as they will have a unique opportunity to meet Mary and chat one-on-one with an ASO representative. Here are the details:

March 13 Verna Garda – Fitness Class
Thursday 11am – 2pm (meets weekly, every Thursday)
 North Hollywood Senior Center
 5301 Tujunga Avenue
 North Hollywood, CA 91601
 Center number (818) 763-7651
 Activity contact: Libby Pelc (Women's Director, Sokol LA)

Thursday evening and Friday Mary will have to herself, although we hope to get a group together to have dinner with her on Friday. On Saturday, March 15, she will visit the Sokol Los Angeles regular monthly meeting at the Joe Bridges Clubhouse. She plans to deliver a presentation and meet our members.

We urge all Sokol Los Angeles members to come to the March 15 meeting, since this will be our opportunity to have someone from ASO listen to our concerns. Here are the details for attending the meeting:

March 15 General Meeting – Sokol Los Angeles
Saturday 11am – 3pm (Doors open 10:30 am)
 Joe Bridge's Club House
 2531 E. Glenoaks Blvd.
 Glendale, CA 91206
 Activity contact: Lillian Roter, President, Sokol LA (661) 297-8110
 <http://www.sokolla.org/>

The unit provides lunch for all members who attend.

The year 2014 is important for all Sokols, because in April of this year representatives of all Sokol units will meet in St. Louis, Missouri to discuss and pass by-laws changes, retain or change the current leadership, and in general, discuss the state of our organization and determine what its future direction should be. Please read the articles elsewhere in this issue to understand what challenges we are facing and what may be at stake. We hope you will be motivated to make the effort and come to the March 15 meeting to let your voices be heard.

Message from Pacific District President Yvonne Masopust to ASO President Tom Pajer

Below is ASO President Tom Pajer's message and my recent response in which I address the situation at Sokol Los Angeles and the challenges we face. I welcome your input and hope that you will be motivated to attend our unit's next general meeting on March 15 to express your feelings and wishes for Sokol's current and future direction to Mary Cushing. Mary will deliver a presentation as representative of ASO. More information about Mary's visit can be found elsewhere in this issue.

*Yvonne Masopust
President, Pacific District*

From: Tom Pajer
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 6:06 AM
To: Yvonne Masopust
Subject: Pacific District
Yvonne,

It's been good to have someone from the Pacific District that is as engaged as you have been. We have not had that for many many years.

As you know, Mary Cushing will be coming out to talk with your group. With your involvement, I now think that it's a good idea for her to make that trip.

We had a recent BOG meeting where we began to talk about the Pacific District, but didn't have much time to discuss. I mentioned that we would set up a special meeting to discuss. Do you want to do that now, or wait until after your meeting with Mary?

Thanks,
Tom

From: Yvonne Masopust
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 2:29 PM
To: Tom Pajer
Subject: RE: Pacific District

Hi Tom: I'm not sure what you mean by "discuss Pacific District". The teleconferences do not work for me. . . as I do not have free long distance. . . . I figured that my participation in the few I attended cost me about \$50 and that was it for me; I said I would not cover these costs out of my pocket and I know it would be a hassle to try to get reimbursement from the district, which doesn't have much money.

I think it will be productive to have Mary Cushing visit us. I believe she is already getting some idea of the obstacles we face here. In short, we had to reinvent Sokol based on the conditions and members' needs as they exist here, rather than to adhere to the standard Sokol model that worked once but with changing times became obsolete and unworkable here in California. For this reason, Sokols here do not focus their activities on regular weekly gym classes, as I believe is the practice elsewhere. While the current ASO leadership considers Sokol to be primarily a gymnastic/physical fitness organization, this is not true for Pacific District; I can lay out the reasons why very clearly in any meeting. I'd like to emphasize that this is not something that needs to be "fixed"; it is rather something that needs to be "accepted". These are our realities:

1. **Great distances** – Urban sprawl, which started in the 1960s, resulted in the movement out of central locations into the suburbs. The result is that no matter where we hold meetings or events, about 90% of attendees will drive at least 25 miles one way to the event, and a substantial number of those will drive more than 50 miles (one way). Several Sokol families will have to drive at least 100 miles one way to participate in Sokol activities, no matter where they are held. I myself drive 100 miles one way to Sokol Los Angeles monthly meetings. I once drove 150 miles one way to take part in a Sokol Christmas luncheon. District meetings are even more complex. Pacific District has members in San

Diego, CA as well as in Portland, OR – these two locations are 1,100 miles apart. To understand our challenges, one must first understand the great distances of the American West, where we are located, and accept that this is a factor we cannot change. With these distances, combined with the high cost of gas and congested freeways, any type of weekly get-togethers becomes unworkable. For this reason, our activities tend to be spaced to be about once a month and to last at least three hours. Otherwise, it doesn't pay for people to make the trip, nor would they be willing to make the effort on a weekly basis.

2. **Proliferation of other physical fitness venues** – Our members do not need Sokol to offer physical fitness activities because they can find anything they could possibly desire very close to their homes. Sokol cannot compete with the convenience of other organizations that are directly in our members' neighborhoods, and believe me, California is saturated with children's and adult physical fitness clubs, organizations, and opportunities like no other place on earth. Nobody will spend hours on congested freeways to go to a Sokol-sponsored gym class when there is a YMCA or some similar organization a few blocks from their home and is open any time they want to go there. There are countless fitness opportunities for children, usually connected to a specific school or school district. Since all parents work, transporting children from school to after school activities is a must. These other organizations are for-profit professional organizations with excellent management, well-trained personnel, convenient locations, good equipment, proper insurance, etc. Parents don't mind paying, they have the money, and they just don't have the time to be much involved with their kids' activities. Full time employment of all parents changes greatly how they view their children's activities and their own free time. We in Pacific District accept this situation as a given and understand that Sokol here will never again be the neighborhood gym where children go after school and where adults congregate in the evenings. This worked once upon a time: before urban sprawl, before the era of the automobile, before women working outside the home became the norm. It works no more, and as times have changed, we were forced to change the format of Sokol activities here in California.
3. **Pacific District demographics are different from the rest of US Sokol units** – Whereas other districts have members who are 6th, 7th, or even later generation descendants of the original Czech immigrants, or possibly have no connection whatsoever to the Czech culture, approximately half of Pacific District's membership are first-generation Czech immigrants. This means they were born in the former Czechoslovakia and speak Czech. Sokol San Francisco is the last and only unit in the US where meetings and official business are still conducted in Czech; 100% of their membership is Czech-speaking. Sokol Los Angeles conducts business in English, but we still have a large percentage of Czech speakers. First generation immigrants come to Sokol primarily to meet others who are like themselves. They seek camaraderie, moral support, practical advice, social interaction. Even those who do not speak Czech come to Sokol primarily to get in touch with their Czech roots. They want to learn about Czech food, Czech music, Czech traditions and customs, some even want to learn the Czech language. For this reason, Pacific District recognizes that Sokol's primary function here is to offer social interaction, moral guidance, and recreational activities, as well as to promote Czech culture. (We usually also include Slovak culture because several of our members have Slovak heritage.) We work closely with the Czech Consulate General, because we share many of the same goals in this respect.

Please let me know what you expect of me regarding any discussion about Pacific District. While we aim to expand district-sponsored activities in the future, they would probably fit into the "nontraditional" mold by ASO standards. There is no "fixing" the situation. Sokol in California will never be what it is in the Midwest, because the conditions of these two locations are fundamentally different. I understand that ASO leadership sees Sokol primarily from the viewpoint of their own base in the Midwest. But you must also understand that what works there does not necessarily work here.

Members of Pacific District go to great lengths to participate in traditional Sokol activities – we sent I believe 12 participants to the Ft. Worth slet in 2009 and had 18 participants at the Prague slet in 2012. Due to the

distances, it was extremely difficult to practice for the slets, but we did it. Our members are definitely interested in traditional Sokol slets and we already have people excited about going to Prague again in 2018. Unfortunately, the recent decision to call Sokol events "Gymnastic Festivals" was very detrimental to our members' interest to participate in these. Also there is absolutely no interest to participate in the Gymnaestrada that is currently being promoted. These may be important events for gymnasts but our members support Sokol because of its close ties to the Czech culture, not because of its association with gymnastics. However, you can be sure we will enthusiastically support future slets where Sokol tradition is honored and takes center stage.

I trust the above summary of Pacific District's situation and challenges will answer many of your questions and concerns. Mary's visit here will add her input as well. I am awaiting further instructions from you regarding what you may need from me.

Nazdar!
Yvonne Masopust
President Pacific District

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American Sokol Organization 2014 Convention St. Louis, MO, April 24 - 27, 2014

Every four (4) years, representatives of all Units and Districts of the American Sokol Organization (ASO) convene together in what is called a "Convention". The next convention will take place April 24-27, 2014 in St. Louis, Missouri.

The city of St. Louis is known as the "Gateway to the West." It has this nickname because it was the starting point for the westward movement of settlers in the United States during the 1800s. The Gateway Arch in St. Louis symbolizes the city's nickname. It was also the cradle of the Sokol movement in the United States. The first Sokol unit was founded in St. Louis in 1865, only 3 years after Sokol's creation in the mother country (now called the Czech Republic, then part of the Austrian Empire).

Presently, ASO is comprised of 32 Units that are organized into six (6) Districts:

1. Eastern District (New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC)
2. Northeastern District (Michigan, Ohio)
3. Central District (Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin)
4. Western District (Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota)
5. Southern District (Texas, Oklahoma)
6. Pacific District (California)



Pacific District is comprised of two units:

Sokol Los Angeles	(founded in 1909)	85 voting members	(as of 9/30/13)
Sokol San Francisco	(founded in 1904)	60 members	(as of 9/30/13)

Q: What happens at a convention?

A: Delegates from all the Units, representatives of the six Districts, and the national (ASO) executive board discuss and vote on proposed by-laws changes, propose new programs or abolish old ones, discuss membership, and perhaps most importantly, vote on the direction in which the organization will proceed on the national level over the next four years. To this end, ASO executive board officials are elected and resolutions are approved.

Q: How many people will attend the convention?

A: There are usually between 100 and 110 convention participants. This includes all of the District officers and Unit delegates, plus members of the ASO executive board.

Q: Who will represent Pacific District at the 2014 Convention?

A: The following seven representatives will be attending and representing the Pacific District:

Yvonne Masopust, President, Pacific District
Lillian Roter, By-Laws Chair, Pacific District (President of Sokol LA)
Milos Zivny, substituting for Otto Notzl, Men's Director, Pacific District
Zdenka Svitek, substituting for Cheri Riddle, Women's Director, Pacific District
Jara Dusatko, Education Director, Pacific District (President of Sokol SF)
Darine Klega, Delegate, Sokol Los Angeles
Zelmira Zivny, Delegate, Sokol San Francisco



Q: How many votes will Pacific District have at the convention elections?

A: Each attending District representative will have one vote (5 votes). In addition, each Unit delegate will be entitled to vote based on the number of voting members of the Unit. The Sokol Los Angeles delegate will be entitled to eight (8) votes. The Sokol San Francisco delegate will be entitled to six (6) votes. Pacific District will be entitled to cast a total of 19 votes at the Convention.



Q: Who pays for the travel expenses of the delegates?

A: Travel reimbursement of delegates is made from a convention fund that is funded annually by contributions from Units based upon voting membership. All delegates must be present at every convention session, which is documented by formal roll call at the opening of each session. Units are encouraged to sponsor coffee breaks. Convention participants are responsible for all expenses not directly related to the convention. Prior approval must be obtained to receive reimbursement for any other expenses.



Submitted by Yvonne Masopust
President Pacific District

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Year-End 2013 Message from the President of Sokol Greater Cleveland

Following is the year-end 2013 President's Message written by Alice J. Kohl, president of Sokol Greater Cleveland. It was published in that Unit's equivalent of our Sokol Notes. This will give you the viewpoint from another part of the country as well as tell you about the importance of the upcoming 2014 ASO Convention.

*Yvonne Masopust
President
Pacific District*

President's Message

As we approach the end of another great year here at Sokol Greater Cleveland, I can't help but wonder what lies in store for the national Sokol movement as we continue to look ahead to the future. In April of 2014, the American Sokol Organization will hold another national Convention, at which time the delegates from all 32 Units and six Districts will get together with the national Executive Board to vote on potential bylaw changes and, also, to discuss and vote on the direction in which our organization will proceed over the next four years. To be honest with you, I have to admit that I have some concerns as to where, exactly, the national Sokol organization is heading.

In order to discuss the future of American Sokol, it is important that we have a very clear understanding as to where our organization currently stands. Since I became president of Sokol Greater Cleveland three years ago, I have had the great pleasure of renewing old friendships with many extraordinary long-time Sokols from New York to Chicago. What we all seem to have in common is our love of the Sokol organization, our faith in the Tyrš-system of teaching and, perhaps most of all, our passion for passing along to future generations the life-long lessons we learned as young Sokols. Unfortunately, of the thirty-two Sokol Units throughout the United States, several of them are struggling quite a bit just to keep their heads above water. Either because of a lack of critical finances, a lack of qualified instructors, or a lack of a building to call their own, there are a lot of obstacles that have prevented many of our staunchest Sokol Units from being able to maintain the great programs they once had. Our most critical necessity at this time is to find a leader who can unite all the Sokols and develop a plan that can help restore the pride that we all have deep in our hearts for this precious organization. We have watched a few "innovations" come into play over the past four years, but these programs (such as the wheels program) never had a realistic chance to jump start the turnaround we desperately need at this time because these programs were never geared toward **the masses**, which has always been one of Sokol's greatest strengths. In addition, while our leadership has established goals such as increasing our yearly membership by 5%, it has paid no attention to the fact that, over the past nine years, our total American Sokol membership has dropped by almost 26%.

So what do we do? At the local levels, we must continue to evaluate our programs and speak with our youth members and their parents to make sure the activities we are offering are meeting their needs. I know I say this all the time, but here at Sokol Greater Cleveland, one of our greatest treasures is clearly our young Board of Instructors, who have continued to remain passionate and focused on teaching **the person**, not just the gymnastics. What else must we do? One thing for sure is that we must stop alienating the long-time Sokols who still want to be part of this tradition-rich organization. Over the past four years, it seems that there has been a tremendous emphasis placed on eliminating many of the basic foundations of the Sokol program. At the "Sports Festival" in Milwaukee, we eliminated the word "Slet", which is a Czech word that describes a gathering of Sokols to engage in competitions, exhibitions and celebrations. All of our young class members and their parents know what the word "slet" means. It was a question on the Sokol quiz administered at our District competitions and, since I just happened to be the

judge at these particular quiz sessions, I can tell you for a fact that not one child got the answer wrong. However, if you asked them what a Sports Festival was, I'm not sure they could have answered that question. Another example of alienating our members was the elimination of playing the Czech and Slovak anthems at the Opening Ceremonies and not even mentioning the word "Sokol" until the very end of the program. My question to the decision-makers is simply this.....WHY? What did we gain from doing this? How did it make the program better? Was it really worth alienating the dedicated Sokols who were absolutely stunned that this absurdity took place? Did it make for better relations within the Sokol organization and unite our members, or did it do just the opposite?

Sokol has a long-running tradition of offering family-oriented gymnastics and fitness programs that are geared to the masses. It doesn't matter how physically fit a child is nor does it matter how talented they are. Our emphasis has always been on instilling within our classes the qualities of dedication, unselfishness, camaraderie and volunteerism. Here again, if we are to succeed we have to play to our strengths. Our programs must be adaptable to all skill levels and we must find a way to make sure that every child experiences success. That has also been one of Sokol's greatest strengths over the years.

In closing, I ask myself if Sokol is becoming a thing of the past and is no longer relevant in today's society. After talking to our members at Sokol Greater Cleveland as well as many long-time members from other Sokol units across the country, the answer is a resounding NO! Now, more than ever, we MUST focus our attention on teaching the people, not just teaching the program. We must focus on teaching critical lessons such as sportsmanship, dedication and unselfishness. We must teach our members how to help each other in order to build a great "team". These are some of the lessons that Sokol has always excelled in, but they are lessons that, in many cases, have been ignored by today's society. This is how we can again become relevant. This is how we can be unique in comparison to other recreational programs, where the focus is always on how to be #1. In today's world, it is obvious that not everyone can be #1 in their class. However, it is also obvious that, once you've been motivated and encouraged to always give your best effort, everyone can be taught how to be a winner.

Nazdar!

Alice J. Khol,
President

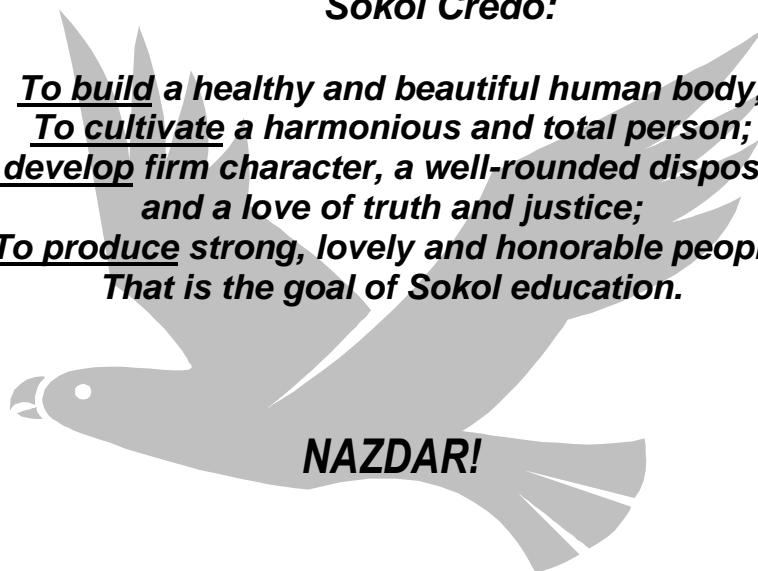


Calendar of Events Sokol Los Angeles:

CY 2014	General Meeting 3rd Saturday -- Joe Bridges Clubhouse Glendale, CA 11:00 am - 3:00 pm	Socials	Czech Class Pasadena City College -- 9:00 am to 1:00 pm Classroom R111
March	15-Mar	Spring Social Knollwood CC, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm March 23	9-Mar
April	19-Apr		13-Apr
May	17-May		18-May
June	21-Jun		8-Jun
July	No Meeting	Family Picnic -- 19-Jul Cerritos Regional Park	13-Jul
August	No Meeting	Dinkey Creek Camp -- Aug 3-10 Contact: Otto Notzl	17-Aug
September	20-Sep	5-Sep -- SF 110th Anniversary Celebration	
October	18-Oct	Bus Trip/ San Diego Balboa Park Czech Day 19-Oct All Day Event Heritage Event Knollwood CC, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm Oct 26	
November	15-Nov		
December	20-Dec -- Beckham Grill, Pasadena	Holiday Social -- Beckham Grill, Pasadena 20-Dec - 11:30 am	

Sokol Credo:

To build a healthy and beautiful human body;
To cultivate a harmonious and total person;
To develop firm character, a well-rounded disposition
and a love of truth and justice;
To produce strong, lovely and honorable people.
That is the goal of Sokol education.



NAZDAR!