



SOKOL NOTES

Sokol Los Angeles

*October 2015 * Published by American Sokol Los Angeles, 4817 Neblina Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92008 *

Editor's Notes

We apologize that we have not been able to publish Sokol Notes during the past year. Sis. Lillian Roter, unit president and Sokol Notes editor, has had a very difficult year. Her husband Marv became seriously ill in April of last year and passed away in January 2015. She has relocated to be closer to her son in Carlsbad. All of these events and changes have been very difficult, and without additional help, she has been unable to devote time to publishing the Notes. Before sis. Roter became Editor of Sokol Notes in 2001, I was the editor and am helping with this issue so that our membership is kept informed.

Na zdar!

Yvonne Masopust

Acting Editor of Sokol Notes

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President's Message

The year 2015 is a bitter sweet year for Sokol Los Angeles. On the upside, we are happy to be celebrating the American Sokol Organization's 150th anniversary of its founding in St. Louis, Missouri on 14 February 1865. We officially celebrated at our Heritage Event on 25 October 2015 at Knollwood Country Club.

On the downside, we have lost more of our dear members. Regretfully, Florence Fagnan, Mildred Kelly and John Zitny passed away in 2014; Marvin Roter, Rocky Hanken, Danny Klega, Cheri Riddle's husband Gary and George Azadian passed away since the beginning of the year; Vojtech Zeman resigned due to failing health. They will all be missed and we will always remember them fondly.

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 Sedláček and his staff for their continued support. Mr. Sedláček has returned home to the Czech Republic and his replacement Mr. Pavol Šepel'ák has committed to continue with established programs.

We will miss all that Mr. Sedláček has done to support the Czech communities in California. He helped establish the Czech school for children, which is still quite active with a full agenda for the school year that began 13 September 2015. In addition, the Saturday adult Czech classes will continue with some of the older children transferring to that class.

In April 2014 Pacific District officers and delegates participated in the ASO Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. The following report was prepared for publication following the convention; however, due to circumstances explained above, Sokol Notes has not been published since the 2014 Winter issue in February 2014.

* * * * *

Report on American Sokol Organization's XX General Convention St. Louis, MO, April 24 - 27, 2014

Reported by Yvonne Masopust, President of Pacific District

American Sokol Organization (ASO) has a representative form of government. ASO representatives from all over the U.S. convene periodically in a General Convention. This year the XX General Convention took place in St. Louis, Missouri (the birthplace of American Sokol) on April 24-27, 2014.

Information detailing a convention's proceedings was previously published in our Winter 2014 issue. Some of the same information is included below to reinforce our membership's knowledge of the manner in which our organization is structured and governed.

Currently, 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 attend a convention?

A: There are usually between 80 and 110 convention participants. This includes all of the District officers and Unit delegates, plus members of the ASO executive board. At this convention we had **87 convention participants**, as detailed below. The number of votes for unit delegates is determined by the size of their unit's membership.

Q: Who represented Pacific District at the 2014 Convention?

A: The following seven (7) representatives have attended and represented the Pacific District:

| | |
|---|------------|
| Yvonne Masopust, President, Pacific District and Membership Director, Pacific District | (2 votes)* |
| Lillian Roter, By-Laws Chair, Pacific District (President of Sokol LA) | (1 vote) |
| Miloš Živný, substituting for Otto Notzl, Men's Physical Director, Pacific District | (1 vote) |
| Zdenka Svítek, substituting for Cheri Riddle, Women's Physical Director, Pacific District | (1 vote) |
| Jara Dušátko, Education Director, Pacific District (President of Sokol SF) | (1 vote) |
| Darine Klega, Delegate, Sokol Los Angeles | (8 votes) |
| Želmíra Živný, Delegate, Sokol San Francisco | (6 votes) |

TOTAL PACIFIC DISTRICT VOTES

20 votes

2014 Convention delegates – distribution of representatives and votes

| | <u>Attendees</u> | <u># of Votes</u> | <u>% of Total Votes</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| ASO Executive Board | 12 | 12 | 3% |
| ASO Board of Instructors | 4 | 4 | 1% |
| Eastern District | 11 | 37 | 9% |
| Northeastern District | 13 | 71 | 18% |
| Central District | 20 | 109 | 28% |
| Western | 14 | 67 | 17% |
| Southern District | 16 | 75 | 19% |
| Pacific | <u>8</u> | <u>20</u> | <u>5%</u> |
| TOTALS | 98 | 395 | 100% |

Adjustment for delegates
representing more than
one office included in total* (- 11)

Total Convention Delegates 87

*) Yvonne Masopust represented two separate offices at this convention: 1) Pacific District President and 2) Pacific District Membership Director (position vacant) to get all entitled votes for our District.

Q: How many votes did Pacific District have in the 2014 convention elections?

A: Each attending district representative was entitled to one vote, or six (6) votes total. In addition, each unit delegate was entitled to votes based on the number of voting members of his unit. The Sokol Los Angeles delegate had eight (8) votes; the Sokol San Francisco delegate had six (6) votes. Pacific District was entitled to cast a total of **20** votes at the Convention as detailed above. The aggregate total votes of all convention participants was **395** votes. Therefore, **Pacific District held 5% of total votes.**

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

A: The short answer is Sokol membership. Travel reimbursement of delegates is limited to actual air fare or gasoline expense plus actual hotel costs based on double occupancy. Most meals are provided to the delegates. All of the expenses related to the convention are financed by a convention fund that is funded annually by contributions from units based upon voting membership. The contribution is now \$5/year/voting member. All delegates must be present at all convention sessions, which is documented by a formal roll call at the opening of each session; they must be present for the entire session in order to have expenses reimbursed. 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. Units were encouraged to sponsor coffee breaks. The two units of Pacific District jointly sponsored one coffee break (\$250). Neither the district nor the units have incurred any additional expenses related to the convention.

Q: How often is a convention held?

A: In the past, conventions were held once every five (5) years. At the 2010 convention, this was changed to once every four (4) years. Therefore, the 2014 convention was the first time that ASO convened after the shorter period of four (4) years.

Convention Agenda is typically packed with business and activities and the 2014 Convention was no different. On Friday, for example, the session started at 8am and ended at 11pm. That was a long day, 15 hours total, including a couple of coffee breaks and about an hour for each lunch and dinner. Saturday was likewise a very long day, although the evening was more enjoyable, since instead of discussing proposed by-laws changes and the budget we attended a banquet hosted by Sokol St. Louis.

The entire convention took place in one location, the Comfort Inn West End in St. Louis, where all of the convention participants stayed. This arrangement had the benefit of making it easy for us to move between our rooms and the hotel's banquet room where the convention took place. Convention sessions were planned with periodic breaks during which we were able to network and socialize. Our meals were catered by a local catering company owned and operated by members of Sokol St. Louis. When transportation was needed, such as from/to the airport or Sokol St. Louis Hall for the Saturday night banquet, it was provided by local Sokol members.

At its 2013 annual meeting on October 25, 2013, Pacific District resolved to support the candidacy of Jean Hruby for ASO President over the incumbent Tom Pajer at the XX Convention in 2014. In short, we were unhappy with the direction American Sokol was headed. We all recognize that some changes have to be made for the organization to adapt to the changing realities of the 21st century. However, we did not agree with the existing agenda. We were a small group with a small number of votes (5% of total). We were able to participate in discussions, strongly and successfully supporting our preferred candidate for the future ASO direction.

Sis. Jean Hruby, who formed strong ties with the Czech Sokol and Czech government representatives as the chief ASO organizer for the 2012 Prague slet, easily won the presidency with about 250 votes to incumbent Tom Pajer's 150, becoming the first-ever woman president of American Sokol. A new ASO Executive Board was elected. It was announced that the next ASO slet will take place in June or July 2017 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. We also voted on the location of the next ASO Convention, which is scheduled for April 2018 and will take place in Cleveland, Ohio. This will be the same year as the next slet in Prague, one that we hope we'll again be participating in. ASO Budget for the next four years was approved and some changes were made to the by-laws. The most major change as far as our district is concerned is the initial fee that new members will be asked to pay when joining Sokol. Instead of the \$5 previously charged, they will now be charged a fee of \$15. Pacific District delegate bro. Zivny had a very sensible proposal, to raise the dues of all Sokol members by just \$2/year instead of placing the burden of raising extra funds on new members when we are already struggling with attracting new members in sufficient numbers. Unfortunately, his motion was not passed.

Much of the convention's time was devoted to American Sokol's chief problem – declining membership – and different ways of how to reverse this trend.

American Sokol membership peaked at 30,000 in the 1930's just before WWII. 45 years ago (1970) we had 13,000 members and 30 years ago (1985), 7,000 members. In 2000, only 5,000 members. In 2014 our membership was only 4,000 nationwide. Clearly, our membership population is not replacing itself and our numbers are decreasing. Our membership is aging with about half of our membership nationwide over 65 years of age. The future of the organization and finding the means to reverse this trend was obviously a focal issue at the convention.

There is no one magic "one size fits all" fix. Our units are highly diverse and must deal with this issue at the local level, each according to its own situation. National ASO will work on increasing American Sokol's visibility and general public awareness of our organization. Any national promotion will most likely not have much impact on us, if any, as Pacific District recruits new members primarily from the Czech-American community, and we plan to continue on this path, which works for us. However, it was clear that elsewhere in the U.S. Sokol units depend primarily on recruiting new members from the general public. It was also evident that the units that are experiencing the greatest hardships are those that still own their own halls (53% of total). The cost of building ownership (maintenance, taxes, insurance) is too high and draining unit resources. There is no doubt in my mind that our units' decisions to sell the San Francisco and the Los Angeles Sokol halls were the correct ones.

Below you will find Unit Data Summaries that we received at the convention, which give a perspective of the American Sokol as a whole. Operations Advisor Mary Cushing visited each and every one of the 32 ASO units and compiled the Unit Data Summaries as part of her report on the State of American Sokol, which she delivered at the convention.

We left the convention with a feeling of a job well done and with a boost in morale. We met so many absolutely wonderful and dedicated Sokol brothers and sisters from all over the U.S. We are confident that the new leadership of ASO is on the right path and that our organization will continue to prosper in the future.



Panoramic view of St. Louis, MO

Thursday, April 24, 2014



*Pacific District President sis. Masopust &
Sokol Los Angeles President sis. Roter*



*The convention room during session -
Comfort Inn West End, St. Louis, MO*

Friday, April 25, 2014



*The convention room during session –ASO Financial Secretary sis. Barb Vondra
discussing the ASO budget*

Saturday, April 26, 2014



The very hard-working By-Laws Committee. Our sis. Roter is second from left

Saturday, April 26, 2014



Going to the dinner & social hosted by Sokol St. Louis – members of the Pacific District delegation (minus Jara Dušátko, who took the photo) with Jean Hruby, soon to become ASO President-elect



We shared our table with Renata Green, President of Sokol Detroit.



Dance number presented by junior girl of Sokol St. Louis

Sunday, April 27, 2014



Swearing in of the newly elected ASO officers. Outgoing president Tom Pajer on the right. President-elect Jean Hruby center of photo.



Pacific District delegates on the last day of the session – we're ALMOST done!



Pacific District delegates

"Only three things happen naturally in organizations: friction, confusion, and underperformance. Everything else requires leadership."

Peter Drucker

Report of Operations Advisor

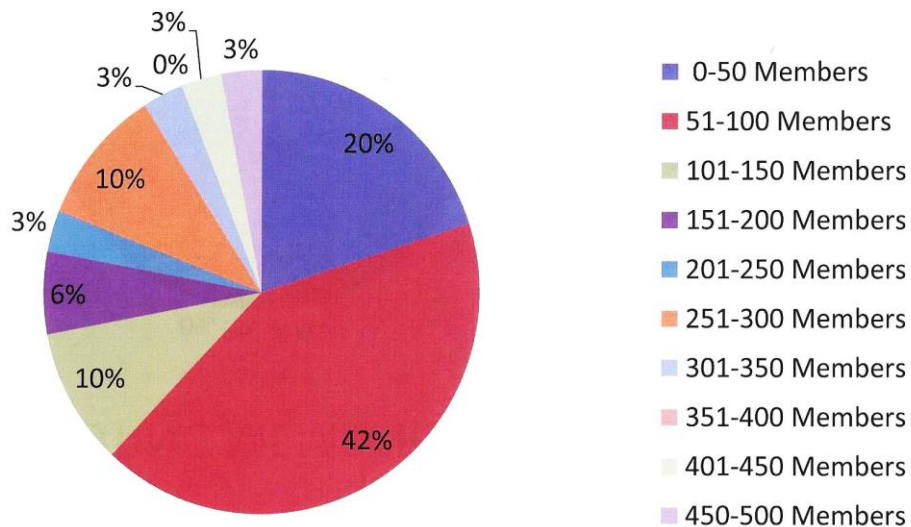
During the Convention, Operations Advisor Mary Cushing gave a comprehensive report on the state of the organization. She used many charts, which is presented on the following pages to give our membership the same type of experience that we had when sis. Cushing reported it.

Our members will remember that Mary Cushing visited our unit on March 15, 2014. Sis. Cushing had visited every one of American Sokol's 32 units in person and presented very effectively a "state of the union" type report.



XX GENERAL CONVENTION – APRIL 24-27, 2014

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP IN GENERAL

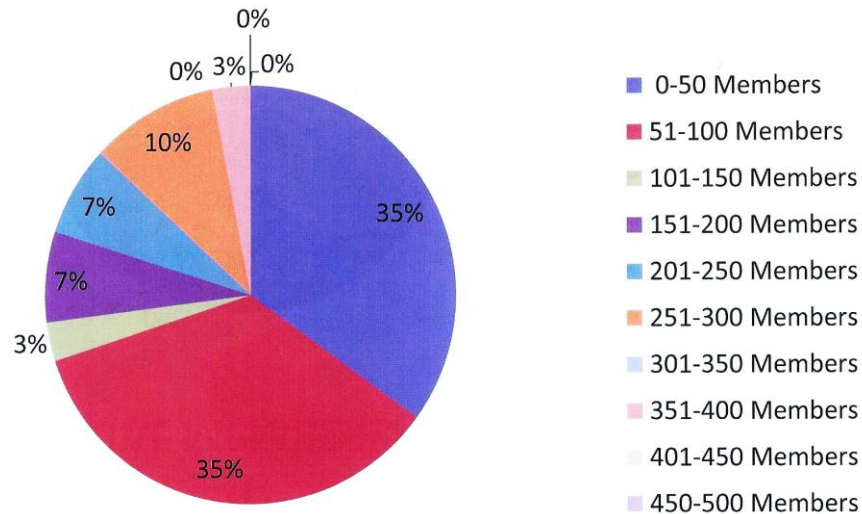


Sokol LA - 101 total members; Sokol SF - 60 total members (as of 9/30/2013 – date ASO used)
Sokol Los Angeles is included here in the 10% of units with 101-150 members, shown in gray



XX GENERAL CONVENTION – APRIL 24-27, 2014

VOTING MEMBERSHIP IN GENERAL

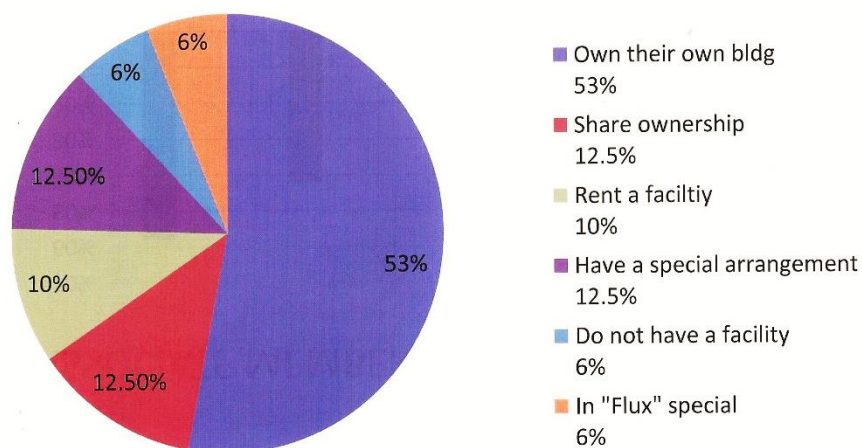


Sokol LA - 85 voting members; Sokol SF - 60 voting members (as of 9/30/2013)
Both units fall in the 35% of units shown in dark red with membership of 51-100 members



XX GENERAL CONVENTION – APRIL 24-27, 2014

BUILDING STATUS DATA

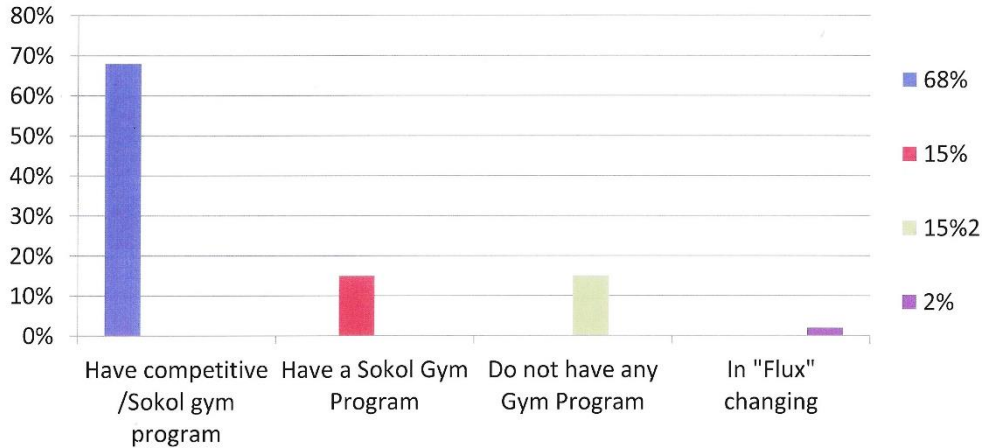


Sokol Los Angeles hall was sold; rent facilities for meetings and other events.
Sokol San Francisco sold its hall; rent facilities on an "as needed" basis.
Both units are included in the 10% shown here in gray as "Rent a facility".



XX GENERAL CONVENTION – APRIL 24-27, 2014

HAVE A GYMNASTICS PROGRAM

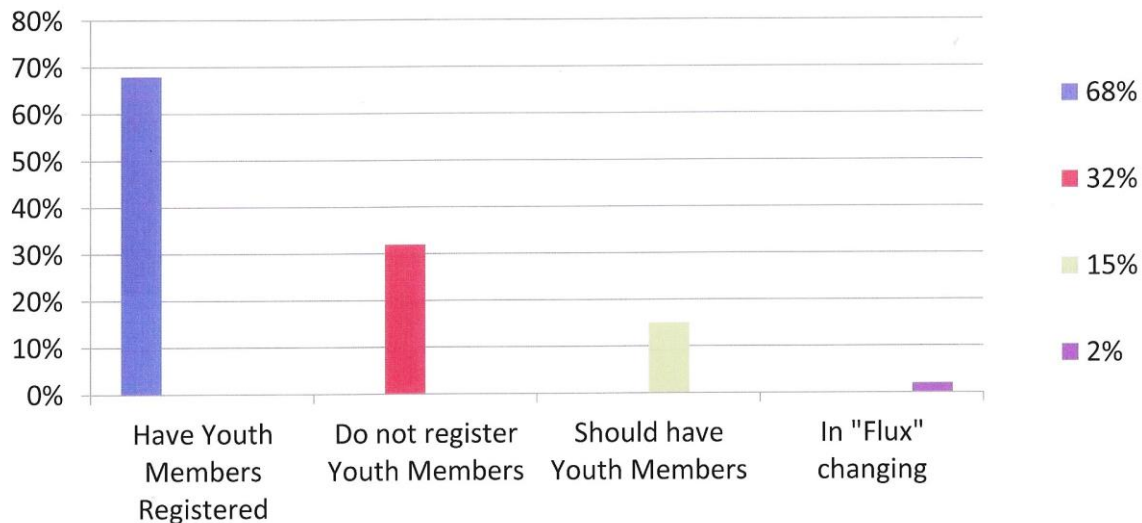


Sokol LA has a physical fitness program for seniors called "Věrná Garda" that meets once a week in a community center in North Hollywood. No traditional gymnastics program (tumbling, balance beam, parallel bars, etc.). Sokol SF has an ongoing "Walk for Health" program. No traditional gymnastics program. Both units are included in the 15% of units that "do not have any gym program" shown in gray here.



XX GENERAL CONVENTION – APRIL 24-27, 2014

YOUTH MEMBERSHIP

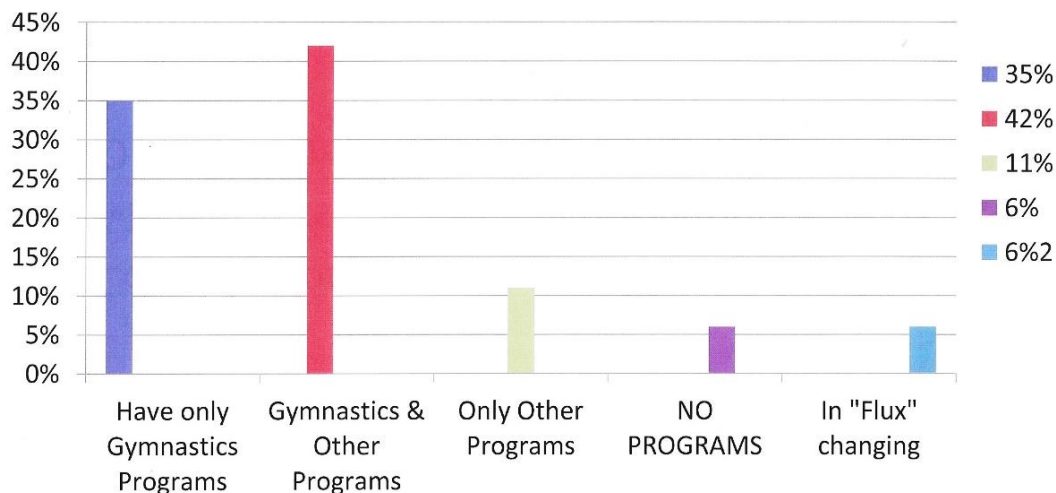


Sokol Los Angeles and Sokol San Francisco do not currently have any youth members. Both units sponsor a Czech School in their area, but children attending those schools are not required to be Sokol members.



XX GENERAL CONVENTION – APRIL 24-27, 2014

PROGRAMMING IN GENERAL



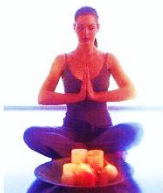
Both Sokol Los Angeles and Sokol San Francisco do not have traditional gymnastics programs. Both units are included in the 11% of units described as "Only Other Programs" shown in gray in this graph.



XX GENERAL CONVENTION – APRIL 24-27, 2014

OTHER PHYSICAL PROGRAMS

- Co-ed Senior
- Mom & Tots
- Outside Competition
- Dance
- Familyz in Motion
- Zumba
- Other Fitness
- Parkour



- Martial Arts (variety)
- Rhythmics
- Hiking Club
- Yoga
- Volleyball
- Camps
- Wheels
- Silks

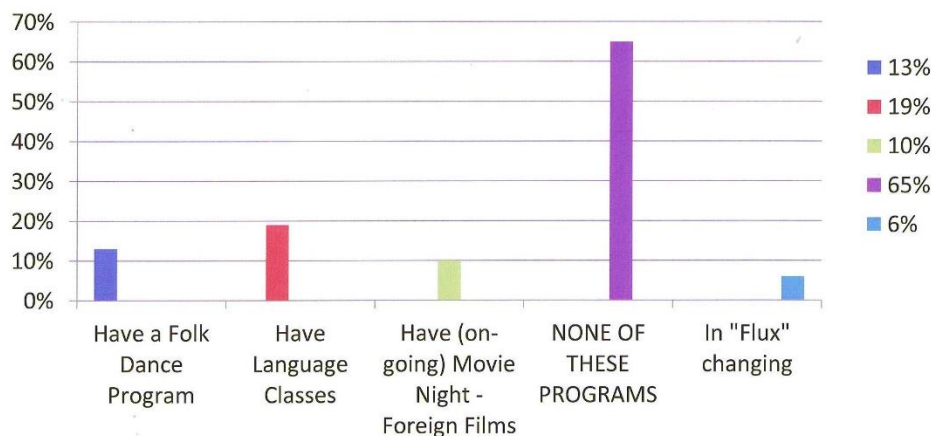


4/21/2014

Sokol Los Angeles has a Verna Garda program for seniors that meets once a week.
Sokol San Francisco has an ongoing Walk for Health program with local hikes.
Pacific District organizes the Sokol Family Camp once a year at Dinkey Creek.



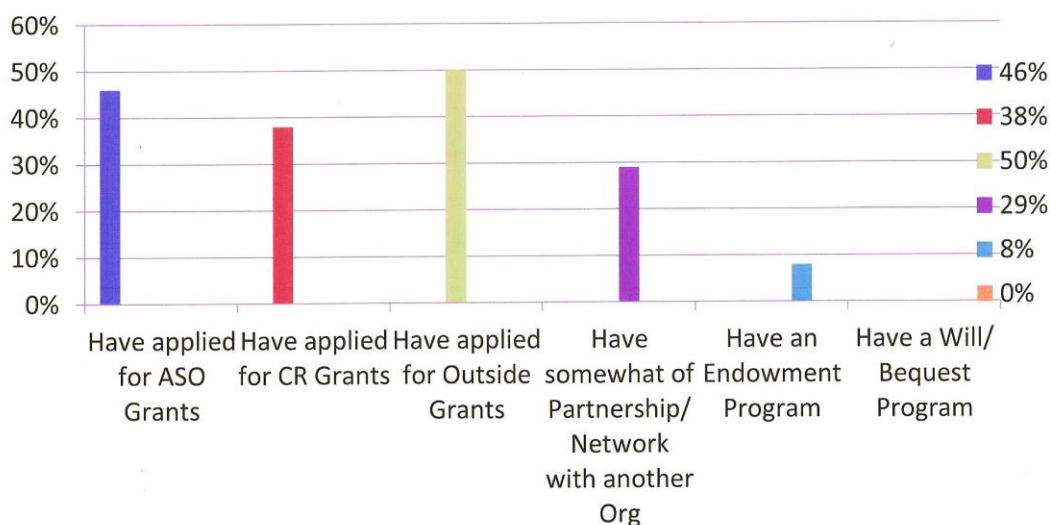
OTHER PROGRAMMING



California is the fitness capital of the United States. Due to intense competition, huge distances, and the fact that our members can find just about any type of sport, athletic, or fitness activity close to their homes, both Sokol LA and Sokol SF have discontinued their traditional Sokol gymnastics & calisthenics programs. Both units focus primarily on promoting Czech culture and social interaction of persons of Czech heritage or those interested in Czech culture. Both units sponsor local Czech language schools for children and adults.



GRANTS & PLANNED GIVING



We hope the above gives you, our members, a good feeling as we are compared to other units.

* * * * *

2015 Sokol Family Camp at Dinkey Creek

Our annual Sokol Family Camp, sponsored by the Pacific District, took place this year during the week of July 19-26 at its usual venue – Camp Fresno Jr. at Dinkey Creek (elevation 5,987 ft), located 13 miles east from Shaver Lake in the beautiful California Sierra.

Pacific District has been sponsoring this camp since 1969 and it remains our most popular and enduring event, this being its 47th year. What started originally as a children's camp has evolved into a family camp where everyone feels welcome. Pacific District reserves the camp and provides organizational structure and leadership. Campers bring and cook their own food and are free to join in the planned activities or skip them and make their own plans. All share in the various camp chores and in providing entertainment.

This year we had a total of 49 campers – 34 adults and 15 children – which is about average attendance, although not all campers stayed the full week. The camp is open to all – members and non-members alike – but Sokol members have priority. Most campers are "regulars" – returning year after year, many for decades. We have parents who started attending the camp years ago as children still coming to camp, now with their children. Meeting at camp year after year, sharing both joys and sorrows, our campers are like a closely-knit family. Still, every year we welcome someone new and it's always exciting to discover what their unique contribution to our camp family will be. About half of our campers are Czech speaking, a few are French speakers, and of course everyone speaks English – though for many it's their second language.

The camp is a wonderful place for families and singles alike. Children love having playmates. Singles never feel alone. There is always a group to join, a conversation to take part in. While all of the camp buildings are very rustic, all comforts of home are there: a walk-in cooler, a well-equipped kitchen with a large gas stove, a freezer, and a microwave. We have flushing toilets and hot showers. Dormitories have decent beds and the camp has electricity. Yet we are surrounded by the majestic wilderness of the Sierra and can hear the steady bubbling of the creek all night long. It's the best of both worlds.

Just as important as the amenities the camp offers are those that it does not. There is no cell phone service at Dinkey Creek, no Wi-Fi, and nothing can be done to change that. A nearby pay phone is available for emergencies, but making outgoing calls is inconvenient and expensive. Imagine a world where nobody is texting, checking their emails or posting on Facebook, but instead engaging with others in good old-fashioned conversation! Come evening there is no TV, no video games. We sing, tell stories, play games, and we dance.

Camp Director Otto Notzl, who is also the Pacific District Men's Physical Director and Activities Director, does a wonderful job planning activities and organizing camp life. He always has something interesting planned for the children – the treasure hunt being a particular favorite. Pacific District Women's Physical Director Cheri Riddle is also wonderfully gifted when it comes to entertaining the children. She organizes the scavenger hunt and is especially creative with crafts. This year the children painted rocks that they had collected and also made little lanterns. And of course, every day started with a "*rozcvička*" – morning exercises.

Some of our planned activities had to be altered because of weather this year. It rained the first two days of camp – yes, pretty incredible for California to have rain in July, but it did happen! On our first day it drizzled in the late afternoon, so our Monday evening campfire program had to be moved indoors, which still worked out well. The children were asked to prepare skits at home and they presented songs, and a couple played musical instruments.

The second day of camp we had hard rain in the afternoon, but it so happened that most of the campers were spending the day at Shaver Lake where it was sunny all day! Only a few campers were in camp to witness the sudden downpour, which was particularly exciting for the youngest children – some have probably never seen a downpour before since California's drought is already in its fourth year.

The rest of the time we spent hiking in the vicinity of the camp and swimming in the creek or the nearby lake.

Thursday was our traditional group hike to Dinkey Dome. This is a relatively short but difficult hike because there is no trail, but it's so worth it! Our destination is always the base of Dinkey Dome, where there is a large waterhole with a waterfall. The water is ice cold, but it feels good to jump in anyway. Further up is a beautiful rock bed polished smooth by the creek, full of rock formations shaped by the water flow over hundreds of years.

Fishing is also a very popular activity, as well as mushroom hunting. Fishing is especially good at Wishon Reservoir, a 20-minute drive from the camp, and we have a few very dedicated mushroom pickers who always manage to find enough mushrooms for at least one dinner.

Every year we try to have one of our Czech cooks teach others how to prepare some traditional Czech dish. This year Jara Dušátko, president of Sokol San Francisco, conducted a workshop on how to make "*bramboráky*" – Czech potato pancakes. They were excellent!

Friday night we had a campfire that included an improvised memorial for one of our regular campers Lynn Miller, a former Pacific District officer, who passed away on July 9 at age 63, a victim of cancer. This was an emotional evening. Lynn's husband Richard Miller and daughter Allyson Rorro shared their memories and their sorrow, and other campers added their memories as well. Michelle and Breanna Schear sang a song about a shooting star that reminded them of Lynn, and Nick Schear played beautifully "Nearer My God to Thee" on his violin.

On Sunday we said our good-byes – until we meet again next year!

*Submitted by
Yvonne Masopust
President, Pacific District*



In honor of those members we have lost since the last publication of Sokol Notes, the next issue will include obituaries of Florence Fagnan, Mildred Kelly and John Zitny who passed away in 2014; Marvin Roter, Rocky Hanken, Danny Klega, Cheri Riddle's husband Gary and George Azadian who passed away during 2015. Because of everything that has happened during the past year and a half, it has been difficult to gather all the information necessary to pay proper tribute to all these amazing Sokols.

As I get settled in my new home (I am currently living among a multitude of boxes), I will have more time to devote to my Sokol family. I have not forgotten, nor will I forget, the many friendships that I have made since becoming a member at the beginning of the 21st century. I miss my home in Saugus, but I am now close to family – my son and his family and an extended family that includes nieces and nephews and their families. Perhaps one day I will be able to convince some of them to join Sokol.

Sokol Los Angeles President

Lillian Roter

Please note the new mailing address for Sokol Los Angeles and Sokol Notes has been changed to:

4817 Neblina Drive

Carlsbad, CA 92008

I do not yet have a new home phone, so please contact me via email at: gemplil@aol.com

NAZDAR!