All Sokols are invited to gather in Buffalo, NY, June 26-30, 2019 for the XXVIII Sokol USA Slet

Let’s Gather in Buffalo

By Director Chris Yatchyshyn
Sokol USA invites all Sokols to gather for Sokolfest 2019 from June 26-30 in Buffalo, N.Y., where Director Todd Yatchyshyn has secured venues and is working with local establishments to plan the competitions, social events and Slet performance.

The Buffalo Marriott Niagara will serve as the Sokol USA XXVIII Slet headquarters. This fine hotel is located in Amherst, N.Y. It offers over 300 rooms, complimentary on-site parking, an airport shuttle, free high-speed internet, an indoor/outdoor pool, whirlpool, fitness center, a bar and grill, and plenty of banquet space to host our events. Arrangements are being made for discounted rooms that include a continental breakfast and the hotel will serve as the site of a pool party, polka dance and celebration dance.

Sweet Home High School, conveniently located just four miles away from the Buffalo Marriott Niagara, will host the volleyball tournament and fitness challenge in the high school gym and the Slet performance on the football field. The gymnastics competitions will be held at Greater Buffalo Gymnastics, also just four miles from the Buffalo Marriott Niagara.

Opening Ceremonies will be held at Fantasy Island, the local amusement park that’s just a 16-minute drive from the hotel, and the Amherst Audubon Golf Course, just 1.4 miles away will host the Golf Scramble. If you’re interested in seeing the world-famous Niagara Falls, you can visit the New York-side Niagara Falls State Park with no passport or bring your passport to see the falls from the Canadian side at Tourist Promenade in Ontario. Both are just a short trip away and well worth the visit.

Buffalo, N.Y., was chosen as the site of Sokolfest 2019 because it offered all the nec- (Continued on Page 7)
Pen Argyl Lodge 410 volunteered with the Parks and Recreation Department to run the concession stand, as a fundraiser, during the five summer concerts that are offered every other week on Sunday evenings from June through August at Weona Park.

Pen Argyl officers, parents and teens signed up to help on one or more Sunday evenings to sell hot dogs, hamburgers, sausage, perogies, chips and drinks during the summer concerts. The town offers a variety of musical groups playing oldies, big band and Elvis songs. Besides hosting the concerts, Weona Park offers miniature golf and an over 100-year-old carousel.

Members of the Pen Argyl Lodge working the concession stand. The group is responsible for ordering, cooking and selling the food and, in return, they keep the profits. The goal is to raise at least $1,000 during the five concerts to cover one month’s rent during the summer when gym participation is slow and there is less money to cover the bills.
More than 20 Sokol USA members and officers attended an All-Sokol Festival in Prague, Czech Republic, from June 30 through July 7, 2018. They joined over 1,000 Sokols from the Czech Republic and from other countries around the world to march in an opening parade through the streets of Old Town Prague. The week-long festivities, which featured many demonstrations of physical fitness activities on podiums in downtown squares and in indoor venues, as well as cultural events and lectures, culminated in a huge two-day outdoor program of specialty numbers performed by Sokols in groups of hundreds of performers each.

Prague: Fitness, Fraternity & Fun 2018

Returning from the XVI Pan Slet in Prague, I realize what a bucket list moment this was for me. It probably is the same for many of our members who went there as well. To be lucky enough to make the trip to the birthplace of our Sokol movement. To return to where our founding fathers started this journey. To touch down in beautiful historic Prague and explore what the crown jewel of Central Europe has to offer. Such a special feeling.

Starting Sunday with the march through historic old town Prague, it was the beginning of such an exciting week for us all. Every day, there was a variety of spectacular performances on a small, medium and large scale for the Sokols to enjoy. These highlighted our organization’s ideals of group fitness, high level sport performance, and the cultural importance of drama, music, art and dance. The opening ceremony held at the beautiful National Theater focused on our cultural aspect by featuring a full-length traditional Czech play. The Gala event at the O2 arena, a similar venue to Madison Square Garden in New York City, showcased various types of athletics performed by our members and guest performances. Finally, the Slet itself was held over a two-day period and featured a marvelous display of large numbers of Sokols from all over the world as they performed together at the grand Eden Arena. It was a truly incredible, unifying and inspiring sight to behold.

At all of the events and programs, it was so nice to meet and spend time with our brothers and sisters from around the world. I was delighted to have the chance to get to know members from Canada, Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and more; as well as meet a delegation from Russia. During a July 4th river dinner cruise organized by ASO, we had a chance to share food, drink and stories with our fellow travelers from ASO, PA Sokol, and other sister American members. We talked to each other (Continued on Page 4)

From the President’s View

The Prague Slet was an amazing coming together of people and an incredible celebration. Sokols from all over the world came to Prague to celebrate the All Sokol Slet. People came from the United States, Canada, Australia, Paris, England, Vienna, Munich, Sweden, Serbia, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia and many, many other places.

They all came to celebrate the All Sokol Slet and the 100th Anniversary of the Independence of Czechoslovakia. Many thousands flocked to Prague for a week of Sokol sports events. The week-long events began with The Grand March of Sokols through the center of Prague. People from many countries assembled on Wenceslaus Square and marched for several hours along a historic parade route through central Prague. Thousands marched in the parade and many thousands lined the parade route to cheer on the Sokol marchers.

The Sokol movement was one of four major factors leading to the independence of Czechoslovakia from the Habsburg Empire in 1918. For this reason, the Czech national government also joined in with Ceska Obec Sokol to celebrate the historic centenary of the birth of the Czechoslovak State. This historic occasion marks the coming together of two different peoples to form a common state based upon democracy and the parliamentary system. It was the first such union in modern history. This historic coming together of peoples was rooted in the Pittsburgh Agreement of May 1918.

It was the Sokols in the historic Czech lands who seized the military garrisons of the demoralized Habsburg Army and liberated Czech lands. The Sokols continued onwards and helped liberate Slovakia from 1,100 years of Hungarian rule.

The Prague Slet focused on the centenary of independence. People came from all over the world to celebrate this anniversary.

Following the grand march on July 1st, the week of festivities began. There were (Continued on Page 7)
Scenes from the XVI Pan Slet in Prague

Above and below, four of many different groups, each wearing a distinctive uniform, performed in the culminating large-numbers program of the XVI Prague Sokol Slet.

Above, the huge statue of Jan Hus, an early Reformation leader, can be seen in the center of Old Town Square, this is where the parade ended and Sokols were able to linger and meet with Sokols from many Czech units and from many other countries.

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about our programs, challenges and goals while enjoying the food and admiring the lovely waters of Prague.

Prague itself is just a treasure trove of adventures to be had while conversing with charming natives and seeing breathtaking architecture. The Czech people were so friendly and eager to help with directions and touring advice on the many attractions to be enjoyed. The transportation system is excellent and consisted of a subway, buses, and trams or street cars. The added bonus of travelling was the easy walkability of the city. Sightseeing in Prague is both easy and astonishing as one can view the famous Astronomical Clock, the Prague Castle, Charles Bridge, the Jewish Quarter and many more beautiful churches, palaces, historical buildings and landmarks. Taking in a show at the National Marionette Theater with life-size puppets performing Mozart’s opera Don Giovanni is a spectacle never to be forgotten. Attending a Laterna Magika performance at the theater beside the National Theater was so different, fresh and particular to the city of Prague. And, last but not least, we got to enjoy the delicious Czech food and partake of their pure, fabulous beer. All in all, I’d recommend it to any of our members if they should have an opportunity to visit the homeland of the Sokol. I know I’ll be forever thankful that I did.

NAZDAR
Sister Nancy Shurina
In the Main Slet program, girls in red outfits with white ribbons performed an especially attractive routine which delighted the audience with patterns of ribbon movements and formation changes.

Groups of women in colorful uniforms combined to perform a spectacular number with white hoops. In the top right corner of the photo, a large screen simulcast the performances to the audience throughout the evening’s main Slet program.

Some of the many, many Sokol groups from the Czech Republic and different countries, all with a beautiful flag representing their group, in old town Square following the opening parade. At top at left is a group from Austria, at top at right is a group from Serbia and a above at left is a group from Russia.
LIFETIME FITNESS

Special International Slet Report

By Ellen Kovac

As written in the Sokol Gymnastics Manual (written some 150 years ago), taught in Sokol Instructors Schools for decades, and summarized in the April LIFETIME FITNESS column, the Sokol System of gymnastics includes four departments categorizing virtually every possible kind of physical activity. At the 2018 All-Sokol Slet in Prague, Czech Republic, examples of that philosophy were on display all throughout the first week of July.

Many examples of the inclusiveness of the Sokol system of fitness was seen by those who attended the Sokol Gala on Tuesday, July 3rd. This program highlighted varied activities for all ages, in small to large groups, and from many different Sokol units. Some examples:

- The Gala opened with aerial rope and trapeze acts as spectacular as those that might be seen in a circus.
- Young people played floor hockey, badminton, modified volleyball, table tennis, and a version of handball.
- Another group of youngsters made games out of the basics of basketball, such as dribbling and passing.
- Six couples dressed in formal attire danced with skill and beauty to an expertly choreographed Viennese waltz.
- Fencing, wrestling, judo and taekwondo – examples of the Sokol system category of Combatives – were demonstrated.
- Jumping rope, including Double Dutch and several precision jumping maneuvers, dazzled the audience.
- Pairs of tumblers jumped on and off “see-saws” while performing different coordinated flips.
- A group of young people, seemingly freelancing, demonstrating what I might call “street gymnastics,” “punk” style. Not my style, but there was something for everyone in this Gala show.
- Four trampolines, surrounded by plenty of matting, were the apparatus for yet another highly-skilled group of gymnasts performing synchronized somersaulting jumps on and off the trampolines.
- Children in small groups, each group with a soft mat, demonstrated cleverly-arranged simple tumbling skills.
- Older men performed more traditional gymnastics: routines and pyramids on the parallel bars – these guys were in great shape – and a calisthenics exercise with wands.

In this Gala, a wide variety of equipment – or no equipment at all – and performers of all ages, showed what can be done to maintain physical fitness.

There were so many other impressive performances during this week of Sokol events that it’s impossible to describe them all. There were “small podium” outdoor performances of unique compositions in squares throughout Prague, and there were two final Slet performances containing elaborate numbers with hundreds of performers, just ordinary people with a desire to stay in shape through regular exercise.

But I want to conclude this month’s LIFETIME FITNESS column with this:

I walked around Tyrsov Dom, the huge Sokol building which now houses the headquarters of the World Sokol Federation, and saw walls with old black and white photos of prominent Sokol athletes through the years. These champions are depicted in sports from archery to kayaking to wrestling. So choose the kind of exercise you like, from A to Z, and develop a fitness routine that will suit and benefit you. It’s all Sokol gymnastics.

Apology: I was going to discuss healthy eating this month, but the impressive events of the Prague International Sokol Slet took precedence. Just start eating more healthily on your own.

Note: The next Prague Slet is scheduled for six years from now, in 2024. Don’t miss it!

Soaring Falcons Wanted!!!

Do you know of a member young or old who you would like to recognize for their contributions, representations, and/or commitment to your Lodge?

You can submit an article with a picture for consideration to Sokoltimesubmissions@gmail.com.

Let’s recognize our members and show them how much we appreciate them on all levels!!!
Let's Gather in Buffalo!

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essay venues within close proximity, which seemed to be the most important request when we asked for input. It was also chosen for its location to Niagara Falls, a major tourist attraction that we hope will attract more participants and spectators.

In addition to the falls, other local attractions include the Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens, The Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park, the Buffalo Lighthouse, the Buffalo Zoo, the Aquarium of Niagara, the Niagara Power Project Visitors Center, Old Fort Erie, the Broadway Market and Old Fort Niagara. If those aren't enough reasons to come to Buffalo, we have one more to share. To our delight, the "Travel + Leisure" survey results published online October 20, 2017, ranked Buffalo #1 on the list of "America's Friendliest Cities!"

Melanie Lieberman wrote:

Every year in our annual America's Favorite Places survey, we ask Travel + Leisure readers to dish about their hometowns – the place they grew up or have lived in and know better than anywhere else on Earth. The America's Favorite Places survey is a way for locals to share what their hometowns do best. Readers ranked their hometowns and cities across a range of categories, from the quality of the pizza to the demeanor of the locals.

And when it came to general friendliness – not just hospitality toward tourists and neighborly love but also manners, politeness, and warm dispositions – there weren't too many surprises. This year's list was still dominated by cities in the American South and the Midwest, as well as destinations with year-round good weather and natural beauty. And yet it was an East Coast city in famously frigid upstate New York that earned the No. 1 spot on this year's list of America's friendliest places.

"I've said for years that Buffalo is a Midwestern city dropped on the other side of Lake Erie," one reader explained.

"People smile at each other on the streets. We talk to strangers all the time and are just overall willing to help each other," said one local Buffalo resident.

"They don't call us the 'City of Good Neighbors' for nothing." One reader recommended that visitors ask for directions – not because they're lost, but because a local might just escort them to wherever they're going.

I hope we've convinced all Sokols to gather with us in Buffalo next June, not just for the great local attractions and friendly people, but for an exciting and sure to be memorable Sokolfest 2019. Watch for details in upcoming issues and on the Sokol USA website. Nazdar!

Happy 60th Anniversary

Joseph and Barbara (Kloo) Raykos of Bethlehem Township, Pa., celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 14th with dinner at the Marblehead Restaurant with their son, Michael and his wife Andrea, and daughter, Diane and her husband James Kacer. They also have six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Joseph and Barbara both retired from the Bethlehem Steel Corp. Joseph served four years in the Navy during the Korean Conflict and is a 68-year member of Lodge 93.

From the President’s View

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many stages featuring small scale gymnastic performances all over Castle Hill and Central Prague. Additionally, there was a grand scale evening at the Czech National Theater, a three-hour gymnastics performance showcasing Czech gymnasts and Czech Sokol athletes at the O2 Arena as well as two several hour large scale select performances at the open air Eden Stadium. The two Eden Stadium events focused on mass scale calisthenics and mass scale rhythmic gymnastics. The events were engaging and exciting. Many thousands filled both the O2 and the Eden Arena to capacity. It was fascinating to watch the presentations and to see the excitement and joy of the participants.

Many Sokol USA members and gymnasts traveled to Prague (especially from Sokol's Farrell, Pa., Lodge) under the leadership of Brother Steve Banjak. Another large delegation from the United States arrived under the leadership of the American Sokol Organization's Jean Hruby. Additionally, many members of the Sokol USA National Board of Directors also attended the Prague Slet.

The Slet was full of vitality and was engaging, especially for those who were first-time attendees. The Slet truly set forth the ideals of the Sokol Movement's founder, Dr. Miroslav Tyrs. People of all backgrounds, ages, economic circumstances, religions and nationalities came together for fraternalism through sports. The week was clearly the fulfillment of Sokol's founding ideals and values. On Saturday, July 8th, I attended the World Sokol Foundation meeting at Tsrnov Dum. The New World Sokol Federation is the advisory body to all of the national Sokol entities. It elected a new leadership and congratulations are in order as Sister Jean Hruby of the American Sokol Organization was elected to the presidency of the World Sokol Federation. I also was elected by the body to serve as an officer of the World Sokol Federation in the position of auditor. The Federation meeting discussed upcoming Slets, namely the Sokol USA Slet which will be held in Buffalo in 2019 and the Sokol Serbia which will be held in 2021.

The Prague Slet was a wonderful experience highlighting the coming together of people all over the world to share ideas through sports. I encourage all members to try to attend the 2019 Slet in Buffalo and other further Sokol events.

NADZARI
Joseph Bielecki
President, Sokol USA
Byram Sokol BBQ

On Sunday, July 1st, 45 Byram Sokols gathered for a family barbecue. It was an afternoon of meeting old friends, sharing stories and renewing friendships. We were so happy to welcome those who have moved away from the Byram area but came “home” to join the festivities: Ann and Barbara Chomko, Junior and Sharon Popp, Bob and Marge Hurta, and Joe and Marylou Jambriska. Of course, we love coming together with all our members and friends.

Captain John’s crew served barbeque chicken and ribs, sausage, salad, corn on the cob and watermelon. There is nothing that speaks more to “family” than sharing a meal. We shared so many memories of the good old days. We remembered those who have passed on and lamented the fact that we no longer congregate at the Sokol Club the way we used to.

Thank you to John Mihalec, who has been going through our lodge archives. John selected many old photographs, had them framed and hung them in the meeting room. All enjoyed finding loved ones and even their younger selves captured in photos.

To keep the spirit alive, we are planning a clambake in the fall.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Byram Sokol Reporter

LODGE 12 END-OF-SEASON REPORT

Sokol Lodge 12 Central Jersey gymnasts finished our 2017-18 season on June 8th by demonstrating exercises and skills practiced and learned during the year. Attractive T-shirts with the Sokol saying “Break Through, Jump Over, but Do Not Crawl Under” and an artistically stylized falcon (Sokol means falcon) were worn by all in attendance. Thanks, Neechee, for the great shirts!

After the program, excellent refreshments were enjoyed thanks to Neechee, Elizabeth Castro and an anonymous donor.

Everyone received a Participation Certificate and each family was given a thumb/flash drive with a video showing the history and current program of Lodge 12, starting with black and white photos from 1899 through to recent videos in bright color. William and Neechee Rehwinkel and Ellen Kovac spent many hours creating this visual record of the life of our lodge. First presented at the Sokol USA Convention last summer, the Lodge 12 video has been revised to highlight the programs we have now. We encourage our members to show our video to friends who might be interested in joining Sokol in September.

Anyone interested can contact me for more information at ellenkovac@aol.com. We will continue to meet on Friday nights at Henderson’s Gym in Edison, N.J., in mid-September. A reminder email will be sent out after Labor Day.

Members of Lodge 12 are (sitting from left) preschool group members McKenzie, assistant teacher Elizabeth and Lillian (unable to attend was Maya); (kneeling) pre-school group lead teacher Norah, Jessica and Samantha from the young Juniors group, and Ellen, co-director with Norah and instructor-at-large (missing from the girls’ group are Emeline and Katie, both immersed in softball, and Molly); and (standing) Junior girls’ instructor Neechee, Senior Men’s exercise leader Emil, William who was newly promoted from the Juniors to the men’s group, Philip who is in tennis training, Greg from the Senior Men’s exercise group and Madeline from the Junior girls’ class. Also missing were Helen, Wendy, Katherine and Robert.