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# SOKOL TIMES

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## GBU Celebrates 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Five District Board Officers and several spouses represented Sokol USA at the GBU 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration held on Saturday, April 1 at the Westin Convention Center Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pa. The evening began with a cocktail hour and an assortment of hot and cold hors d'oeuvres. Each attendee received a goody bag containing the banquet program and a souvenir. The women received a silver 125<sup>th</sup> GBU Anniversary Christmas ornament and the men received a small bronze commemorative plate.

The main event began with a welcome given by GBU National Vice President Matthew Blistan, followed by the invocation. Next, Rachel Blistan led the National Anthem and then GBU National Secretary/Treasurer James R. Stoker gave the toast. Following a delicious filet mignon and lobster dinner, GBU Chairman of the Board Lea Ann Hazi addressed the attendees and fraternal greetings were expressed by President and CEO of the American Fraternal Alliance Joseph Annotti, President of the Fraternal Societies of Greater Pittsburgh Larry Golofski and President of the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance Albert Suess. The closing remarks were given by James Stoker and then a group of GBU members led the attendees in singing *God Bless America*. The celebration continued with dancing to excellent music and singing performed by the *City Heat* Band.



Representing Sokol USA at the GBU 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration are (from left) President Joseph Bielecki, Fraternal Activities Chairperson Nancy Shurina, Sherry Brandt, Finance Committee Member Tim Brandt, Sasha Banjak, Finance Committee Member Stephen J. Banjak, Sports Fitness & Wellness Director Chris Yatchyshyn and Rich Yatchyshyn.

## Officer candidates share views about Sokol USA

### Joseph Bielecki President

I have served as President of Sokol USA since 2009. Previously, I served two terms as a member of the Sokol USA Finance Committee. Additionally, I have served two terms as a member of the Board of the World Sokol Federation in the position of Auditor. I presently serve as Sokol USA's advisor to the GBU Board of Directors and have worked closely with Brother Kovac to bring into effect the Sokol USA/GBU merger.

Following graduation from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa., with a Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Juris Doctorate, I worked as in-house counsel at a large Pittsburgh financial institution for four years. Subsequently, after 11 years of working for a law firm specializing in civil litigation, I established my own private practice in 1997. Through my various activities, I have been exposed to banking and insurance law, civil law and estate planning, and real estate transactions.

I have had great involvement  
(Continued on Page 2)

### John Kamenitsky Chairman, Finance Committee

I continue to serve Lodge 2, Bridgeport, Conn., as Treasurer, Recording Secretary and Chairperson of its Scholarship Committee. I have been a member of Sokol USA's Supreme Lodge's Finance Committee since 1998 and have served as its Chairman for 14 years.

After graduating from high school in Bridgeport, I studied at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y., receiving my Bachelor of Arts degree. After college, I served in the U.S. Air Force as the intelligence officer of a fighter interceptor squadron.

My business career spanned over 45 years with assignments at Remington Electric Shave, Sate National Bank of Connecticut as Vice President of Advertising and Public Relations and Marketing Outlooks, and with a Cendant Company as vice president and general manager. My responsibilities included supervising budgets of over \$1.5 million.

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### Nancy Shurina Chairperson, Fraternal Activities

I am a long-time member of Lodge 68, Blairsville, Pa. I have served as Financial Secretary of the lodge since 2002. I have represented Lodge 68 as a delegate at the last three conventions. I am also active in MCT District serving as first, a trustee and, now, as the Vice President.

I am a 38-year employee of Westinghouse. I have been the scheduler of the Blairsville Site Maintenance Department since 1996. My responsibilities include purchasing of tools, parts and services for the craftsmen, supervisors and engineers to support preventative maintenance and capital projects of the Blairsville location. I also am a member of the union negotiating team.

I am very active in the Elks Auxiliary, having served as Treasurer, President and, currently, Trustee. I have served on the Scholarship Committee and chaired many of the events.

Since 1985, I have been  
(Continued on Page 2)

### Debbie Golden Trustee/Auditor

I am a third generation Sokol, President of Lodge 39, Berwyn, Ill., and Recording Secretary for District L. Stur. I have been a member of the Finance Committee and on the Milan Getting Scholarship Committee for almost 12 years. I am seeking re-election for the same position, or under the proposed by-laws, position of Trustee/Auditor.

I love Sokol. I have grown personally through my involvement with Sokol. Sokol has given me the opportunity to meet many wonderful people and develop lifelong friendships. I have attended every Slet, both ours and American Sokol, since 2001. As a participant, I was a competitor in gymnastics, marching and, of course, calisthenics.

For my profession, I am an ultrasonographer and the Technical Director for Echocardiography at Centegra Health System, which includes three hospitals. I am responsible for quality improvement and maintaining accreditation standards. I also perform  
(Continued on Page 2)

### Ellen Kovac National Sokol Board Member

At the 2013 Sokol USA Convention, I ran for a position on the Supreme Lodge, soon to be renamed the District 4000 Board by GBU and known to us as our National Board. I was looking forward to the positive changes that we could make after our merger with GBU. It seemed clear that the future success of Sokol USA would depend not on selling a lot of life insurance but on building physical fitness programs based on our motto "A sound mind in a healthy body."

During the four years since that Convention, our change in focus has occurred much less quickly than I had imagined. Now, it has become apparent that we must quickly adapt to our new status as a physical fitness-oriented organization if we are to survive. Our fitness programs are our strength and our means to attract new members: children, young adults, young families, and older adults. To attract these new members, it is imperative

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# SOKOL TIMES

official organ of the  
**SLOVAK GYMNASIAC UNION SOKOL  
OF THE USA**

*Sokol USA - District 4000 a Division of GBU Financial Life*

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## DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED

### To the Milan Getting Scholarship Fund

From Joann Kuhn, Denton, TX <i>In Memory of Sidney Kudlac</i>	\$100.00
From Lance Kovac & Family	\$25.00
From Sokol USA Lodge 258, Campbell, Ohio <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$50.00
From Sokol USA Lodge 164, Detroit, Mich. <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$100.00

### To the SokolUSA Sport, Fitness and Wellness Fund

From Milan S. Kovac <i>In Memory of Joseph Massar</i>	\$25.00
From Anonymous	\$150.00
From Sokol USA Lodge 248, Campbell, Ohio <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$50.00
From Sokol USA Lodge 164, Detroit, Mich. <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$100.00
From District Pavel Mudron <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$90.00
From Sokol USA Lodge 15W, Binghamton, N.Y. <i>In Memory of Sister Sidney Kudlac</i>	\$50.00

**Lodge 26 Guttenberg, NJ**  
will hold its next meeting  
on Saturday Sept 9<sup>th</sup>.

For location and time,  
please contact Brother Buddy Burkhardt  
at 201-766-0002 or [abukh2130@gmail.com](mailto:abukh2130@gmail.com).

**SOKOL USA**  
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## Sokol USA Officer Candidates

### Joseph Bielecki

(Continued from Page 1)  
with many of the Slovak fraternal societies in western Pennsylvania where I presently serve on several advisory boards to a variety of Slovak societies. Additionally, I am a member of the Executive Committee of the Pittsburgh Festival Opera and am active in many Pittsburgh area church and community organizations where I reside.

I believe that my experience will be helpful to Sokol USA and ask the delegates to our Sokol USA Convention to re-elect me as President of Sokol USA District 4000 of GBU Financial Life.

### John Kamenitsky

(Continued from Page 1)  
After my retirement, I remained active in Sokol, with my Church as treasurer, with the New England Fraternal Alliance as secretary-treasurer and as a director of the local ten-pin bowling association. I am married to my wife, Mary, and we reside in Stratford, Conn.

I believe I can help Sokol reach its goals by using my experience to aid in the administration of its assets. I ask that the Delegates to our Convention vote to elect me as a financial trustee of Sokol USA, District 4000 of GBU Financial Life.

### Debbie Golden

(Continued from Page 1)  
diagnostic testing on patients.

I want to continue serving Sokol to the best of my abilities. Thank you for your consideration and support. Nazdar!

### Nancy Shurina

(Continued from Page 1)  
married to Frank Shurina, President and life-long member of Blairsville Sokol Lodge 68. Our blended family includes four sons and one daughter, as well as seven grandchildren. We live in Blairsville, Pa.

In my first term, I have started a Sokol biking program, "Wheeling in Fitness," which has been adopted as a GBU program for the entire organization. I also initiated the first National Community Service event across the entire Sokol USA at our 2016 Slet, a food bank collection. I hope to continue developing and promoting new initiatives of shared fraternal and community activities for all our Sokol USA members. I ask for the votes of the delegates to allow me the privilege of continued service as Chair of Fraternal Activities, Sokol USA District 4000.  
Thank you.

### Ellen Kovac

(Continued from Page 1)  
that we retain and support the instructors, the lodge leaders, and the programs that we have.

Families in the United States badly need the kinds of programs that Sokol can offer. The American people are less fit than ever before. Basic, life-long gymnastics and related fitness activities and sports provide a valuable component of healthy lifestyles and are needed now more than ever. The focus of the National Board from now on must be to do as much as it can to further Sokol activities in local communities. If we don't take bold action now to promote these health and fitness activities, we will have missed a unique opportunity to survive and to grow our active membership. The original goals of the Sokol movement to strengthen the Czecho-Slovak people are just as relevant in the United States today as they were in central Europe in 1862.

My credentials for National Sokol office, in addition to my current Finance Committee position, include a lifetime of Sokol activities: competing in gymnastics, instructing and coaching, composing apparatus routines and calisthenics, judging as a Nationally-rated USA Gymnastics and NFHS Gymnastics official, and many years of participation and leadership with Sokol camping programs. I value the Sokol way of life and remain happy to do my part for Sokol USA.

Nazdar! On to success!

### Milan S. Kovac

**Supreme Secretary 1995-2013**  
**Fraternal Secretary 2013-**  
**Present**

Twenty-three years is a pretty lengthy service. My predecessor, the late Brother Jan Sopoci, told me, "Milan, you will know when it is time to step aside" and he was correct. I know it is time and I will not seek the office of Fraternal Secretary.

Much has happened since I became the Supreme Secretary and I will not recount the activity of 23 years. At this time in our history, our Society has reached the point where we've merged with GBU, and distributed more than \$3.8 million back to the membership in the manner of additional paid up insurance for almost everyone. And SOKOL USA has more than \$1.5 million of assets under its control.

I anticipate that prior to yearend, we will have divested ourselves of our real estate and most mortgages. Our financial position will be such that almost all our assets will be cash or cash equivalents and I estimate we will have about \$1.7 million.

There are some among us that believe we do not need a

finance committee to manage cash. I strongly believe we need a finance committee for oversight and management of cash.

The proposed by laws to be discussed and hopefully adopted at the upcoming convention have both good and bad aspects from my view. In my opinion, the reduction in the size and scope of responsibility of the Finance or Trustee Committee is a diminishment of checks and balances. I don't oppose change, but change for the sake of change is not productive. Additionally, I hear rumors that there will be an attempt to eliminate the Executive Board or Committee. This would severely impair the ability of oversight and accountability. It is very important that the delegates carefully discuss and consider each and every amendment offered and ask whether the ultimate action will protect the assets of Sokol USA. Remember, all the assets are ours or every member's, not a particular group or segment of Sokol USA. In my view, accountability and checks and balances should be part of any organization structure and particularly when a great deal of cash is involved. We are not talking about "bake sale" or "cookie jar" money, and yes, it is extremely important when we are referring to one million and five hundred thousand dollars! (\$1,500,000.00) Please be diligent!

I thank everyone and, in particular, the lodge financial secretaries for their many years of cooperation and participation in our Society. It has been a wonderful experience.

Thank you all!

## Silent Auction at National Convention

As is customary at our National Convention, there will be a small silent auction to raise money for the Sokol USA Milan Getting Scholarship Fund. Every silent auction held in conjunction with either a Slet or Sokol USA Convention has raised several hundred dollars which has been used to assist Sokol USA students with their college tuition.

Any lodge, district or delegate wishing to donate items for the silent auction should contact President Joe Bielecki at 412-390-0900 or [bielecki1@earthlink.net](mailto:bielecki1@earthlink.net).

# AMERICAN SOKOL XXIV SLET & FESTIVAL



**News from the 2017 Slet Committee**

The Slet schedule is set and the venues have been booked. Check out the venue websites listed below.

**Thursday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Scottish Rite Temple** [www.CRScottishRite.org](http://www.CRScottishRite.org)  
 Coaches Meeting, Cal and Marching Competition, Opening Ceremonies

**Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Iowa Sports Center** [www.iasportscenter.com](http://www.iasportscenter.com)  
 Volleyball and Fitness Challenge  
**National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library** [www.ncsml.org](http://www.ncsml.org)  
 Banquet

**Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**Sokol Cedar Rapids** [www.sokolcr.com](http://www.sokolcr.com)  
 Gymnastics competition  
**Clarion Hotel** [www.clarioncr.com](http://www.clarioncr.com)  
 Victory Dance

**Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**Google - Kingston Stadium Cedar Rapids for pictures**  
 Slet Program rehearsal and Program

The Clarion hotel located at 525 33rd Ave., SW, Cedar Rapids is also the host hotel. It has an indoor pool, offers a full free breakfast, and free off-street parking. It is within walking distance of many restaurants, a bowling alley, and convenience stores. To reserve a room, call direct 319-366-8671.

More information about the upcoming Slet can be found in the Slet Manual located on the American Sokol BOI website at <http://american-sokol.org/board-of-instructors/>.

For the calisthenics and folk dance music and videos, contact Chris Yatchyshyn for the link at [cyatch1258@gmail.com](mailto:cyatch1258@gmail.com).

**Note from Sokol USA Directors:** For Sokol USA lodges interested in participating in the American Sokol Slet, the Sports Fitness and Wellness Recommendation requesting 50% travel reimbursement for Slet participants was approved.

# ANNOUNCING THE XXXV CONVENTION OF SOKOL USA

Commencing August 11, 2017 thru August 14, 2017  
 Omni Hotels & Resorts – William Penn – Pittsburgh, PA

**Mark your calendar now! Plan on Attending.**  
**Details in the next issue of the Sokol Times.**

At our last convention, we were tasked with revising our bylaws to adapt to our current operations as a district of GBU. After many meetings, we have finally completed the revision. "Draft" copies have been mailed to all lodges and officers will be available to explain and answer inquiries concerning the document. Therefore, if a lodge or group of lodges wish to have an opportunity to discuss the bylaws prior to the convention, please contact Headquarters to arrange such an event. We hope to adopt the revised bylaws at the upcoming Convention of Sokol USA.

Milan S. Kovac, Fraternal Secretary

## Fraternal Activities Update – Summer 2017

As this arrives in the mail, our SFW groups will have finished another season. Congratulations. Many will be competing at the ASO Slet in Cedar Rapids. Good luck to you all, have a wonderful time with all the other sister Sokols, and a safe trip home.

All lodges have received their seed money for the community service and membership growth initiative. Brother John Kamenitsky asked that it be stressed that the money can be used to fund a program to grow lodge membership, as well for community services to promote the Sokol lodges.

In the same mailing, quarterly forms to report on all lodge activity were included. Kudos to Lodge 30 Danbury, Conn., Lodge 32 Boonton, N.J., and Lodge 410 Pen Argyl, Pa., for their prompt

return of those forms! To the rest of the lodges, please take the time to fill them out; the first quarter of 2017 is done and I'm sure there are many events and activities to report.

Later this summer, for members in the Western Pennsylvania and Ohio area, Kennywood's Annual Slovak Day is July 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be lots of Slovak food, music and fun for all. Also, Pittsburgh will be the location of the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Czechoslovak Genealogical International Society. This will take place October 17-21, 2017. There will be many sessions and speakers providing insight on the Slovak culture. Additionally, there are three options for guided bus tours in the area focusing on the history and impact of Slovaks and other nearby neighbors in

the Western Pennsylvania area. Our president, Brother Joseph Bielecki, will be the host for one of these tours. Early registration is due by September 12, 2017. Reservations can be made by calling 1-888-421-1442. This conference is a wonderful opportunity to further develop personal knowledge of the impact of immigrant Slovaks in the Pittsburgh region. The web site for the society is [www.cgisi.org](http://www.cgisi.org).

To all delegates, members and guests attending the Convention of Sokol USA, to be held August 11-14, 2017, at the Omni William Penn hotel, thank you in advance for your time and service at this important Sokol USA gathering. See you there!  
 NAZDAR  
 Sister Nancy Shurina

## 2017 District MM Hodza Competition Boys' Results

	Floor	Pommel Horse	Rings	Vault	Parallel Bars	High Bar	Total	Place
<b>Sokollads Level 2</b>								
Peter Harbeson	6.75	8.80	8.50	8.80	8.00	8.40	49.25	1
Ben Kleid	8.60	7.60	8.40	9.00	7.30	8.10	49.00	2
Julian Fredericks	7.35	8.30	8.75	8.00	8.00	7.50	47.90	3
Parker Smith	7.70	8.00	8.95	7.00	7.90	8.20	47.75	4
<b>Junior Boys Level 2</b>								
Josh Caso	8.20	8.70	8.60	8.80	7.20	7.60	49.10	1
Aaron Caso	8.50	8.40	8.80	8.00	6.80	7.30	47.80	2
Jonah Caso	8.80	7.70	7.95	7.80	7.40	7.40	47.05	3
<b>Junior Boys Level 4</b>								
John Smith	8.50	8.00	9.20	9.20	9.20	8.20	52.30	1

## BLACK & GOLD PARTY PLANNED AT NATIONAL CONVENTION

One of the events planned for our Sokol USA District 400 National Convention is a "Black and Gold Party" at the host hotel, the Omni William Penn in downtown Pittsburgh. It will feature cocktails and tailgate-style party food.

All delegates and their guests are encouraged to attend in Pittsburgh's sports black and gold apparel. Terrible Towel waiving is optional!

## Senator visits Lodge 410



From left: Pen Argyl Lodge 410 Vice President Richard Yatchyshyn, Pennsylvania State Senator Mario M. Scavello, Lodge 410 Director Erl Perrson, and Lodge 410 Trustee Todd Yatchyshyn. Senator Scavello recently accepted an invitation from Lodge 410 to visit the Sokol 5 Tool Fitness Gym and was very impressed with the programs. The senator was invited because he is Chair of the Community, Economic & Recreational Development Committee. During the visit, Todd informed Senator Scavello that a colleague of his, State Senator Lisa Boscola, had been a gymnast in the Bethlehem Sokol Program. Senator Scavello said that Senator Boscola is also on the committee and he hopes they can work together to support the lodge in the future.

## From the President's View

Before you know it, August and our Sokol USA National Convention will be here! A great deal of planning has gone into preparing for the National Convention in Pittsburgh. It is my hope that as many lodges as possible have selected their delegates and sent the delegate materials to headquarters.

Many issues, including by laws changes and officer elections, will be addressed at the convention. It is important to consider the proposed by law changes and elect officers for our society. These matters address the on-going functioning of Sokol USA and will be discussed and voted on at the convention.

It is important that our lodges have participation and input into the District Board via these elections. I encourage those interested in running for office to do so.

The convention will be held at the Omni William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh. The hotel, centrally located in the downtown area, has been newly renovated and is a short walk from many sporting and cultural activities. Please be sure to bring your black and gold



Joseph Bielecki

apparel as one of the evening entertainments will be a "Black and Gold Party" featuring tailgate-style party food. Don't hesitate to bring and wave your Terrible Towel!

Additionally, there will be a silent auction to raise money for the Milan Getting Scholarship Fund. I encourage anyone who wishes to donate items for the silent auction to bring them to the

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## NATIONAL BOARD MEETING SOKOL USA OCTOBER 15, 2016 HELD AT THE EMBASSY SUITES, PARSIPPANY, NJ

1. Meeting called to order at 9:18 AM by President Joseph Bielecki
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Moment of Silence in Memory of Deceased Members  
Brother Banjak read a statement from the recent Czech Day of Remembrance
4. Roll Call The following were present  
Joseph S. Bielecki, President  
Scott Pracko, Vice President  
Milan S. Kovac, Fraternal Secretary  
Arthur Burkhardt, Treasurer  
John M. Kamenitsky, Chair Finance Committee  
Stephen J. Banjak, Member Finance Committee  
Tim Brandt, Member Finance Committee  
Deborah Golden, Member Finance Committee  
Ellen Kovac, Member Finance Committee  
Emil Trgala, Member Finance Committee  
Nancy Shurina, Chair Fraternal Activities  
Christine Yatchyshyn, Co-Directress Sport, Fitness & Wellness  
Todd Yatchyshyn, Co-Director Sport, Fitness & Wellness  
Absence due to previous commitment in local community David Walko
5. Greeting by President  
President Joe Bielecki welcomed everyone and thanked all for attending the meeting. He also expressed a thank you to everyone who worked on the 2016 Sokolfest. Attendees enjoyed the Sokolfest and there was much positive feedback.
6. Introduction of guests - None
7. Presentation of Agenda  
Motion made, seconded, and carried to accept agenda as amended.
8. Appointment of Secretary  
Brother Bielecki asked Sister Golden if she would accept the appointment as Secretary for these deliberations. Sister Golden graciously accepted.

9. Approval of Minutes for the National Board Teleconference July 28, 2016  
Motion made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes.

### 10. Committee Reports

#### a. Finance Committee

The minutes of the Finance Committee were read aloud.

One of the recommendations of the Finance Committee was to send each Lodge a grant of \$2.00 (two dollars) per confirmed member in 2017 for its community activities and membership campaign programs. Each lodge will report to Headquarters how it utilized this grant money.

Motion made and seconded to approve the recommendations of the Finance Committee.

Discussion followed. Motion carried.

Meeting recessed for break at 10:20 am.

Meeting reconvened at 10:41 am.

#### b. Sport, Fitness and Wellness

Brother Todd Yatchyshyn said that he has been collaborating with other Sokol organizations to have joint participation in Golf and Bowling Tournaments.

#### i. Sokolfest Report

Sister Chris Yatchyshyn gave a recap of our recent 2016 Sokolfest. There was more positive feedback for this Sokolfest than ever before. Brother Banjak wrote the Opening Ceremonies program. We tried to do most of the performances with our own members. The exceptions were the nice Rhythmic Gymnastics performance by the Sokol Naperville girls and the calisthenics written by four Junior Boys while at Sokol Instructors School. We had 189 gymnastics participants and 124 participants for the Fitness Challenge. Team Marching Competition had two teams, volleyball 8 teams, and the 2 basketball teams were from Sokol Cleveland. 140 participated in the Fun Walk, it was a great first time for the event.

Calisthenics performances were well done with 337 participants. The Tug-of-war was fun and Sokol USA pulled out a win for the Relay Race. There were only 11 participants in the Golf Tournament, but they all enjoyed it. The Fun Bowling had mock prizes and 20 participants. 338 tickets to Kennywood Park were issued. 19 people toured the Nationality

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# Collaborative Efforts Help Meet Needs and Overcome Challenges

By Todd Yatchyshyn

In a time when membership in fraternal organizations is in decline, in order to survive it is necessary to find new and innovative approaches to sustain our programs and extend our mission. In February, I attended the Future Leaders Conference hosted by The Polish Falcons of America. This was made possible after a series of conference calls that included Sokol USA, American Sokol, The Slovak Catholic Sokols and the Polish Falcons of America. During the calls, we discussed our current organizations' programs, our present needs and our challenges. In many cases, they were very similar – especially when it comes to keeping our young people interested in our organizations and preparing young people for future leadership roles. During the calls, we shared the activities we each sponsor and how we could possibly help one another going forward.

To date, the Catholic Sokols have invited us to attend their National Bowling Tournament that is held the third weekend in May. Since a Sokol USA Tournament, which is traditionally held on the same weekend, was not yet planned for 2017, the Sports Fitness and Wellness Department decided to promote our sister organization's event and encourage our members to participate in the Catholic Sokol tournament which typically draws over 100 participants and includes members from the Greek Catholic Union. The Catholic Sokols also run a very successful national golf tournament and have again extended an invitation. Sokol USA has not been able to run a national golf tournament in many years, though two of our lodges, Farrell and Chicago, are doing a great job of holding local tournaments and a small two-man scramble was held during Sokolfest 2016 in Pittsburgh.

Through discussions, we learned that while we may not all offer the exact events, all four organizations still offer an event similar to our national Slet every so many years and we will extend invitations to each other whenever possible. It was interesting to learn that while we in Sokol have been struggling to bring back the National Camping Program, the Polish Falcons still run an annual two-week camp that attracts many young participants; however, they are short on instructors. On the other hand, Sokol does a great job of training instructors through the annual American Sokol Instructors School, so there will

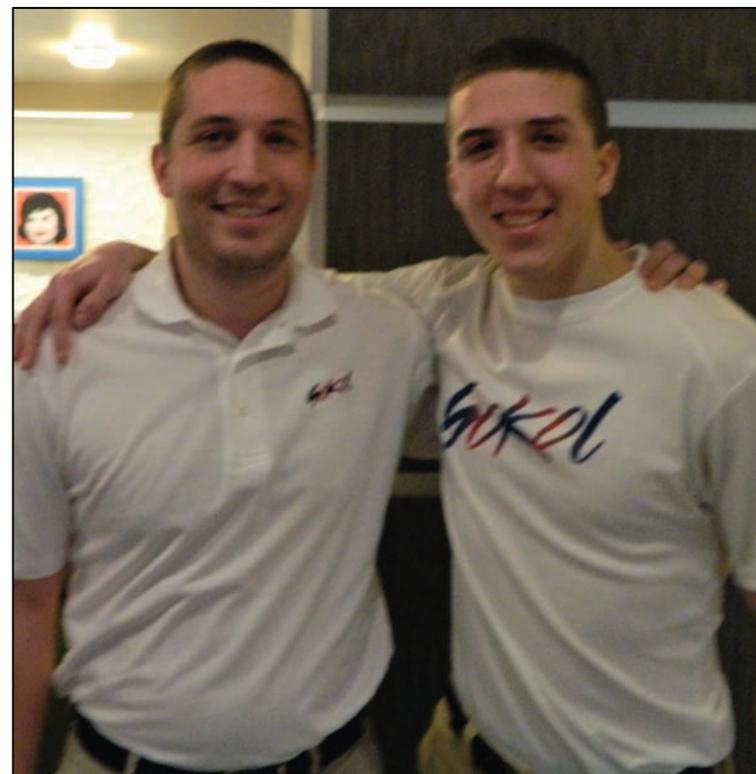
most likely be some collaboration in that area this summer.

Futures leaders were a major topic and, while Sokol USA in the past had a successful program through the YES! Council and American Sokol is in the beginning stages of facilitating a similar program titled SALT (Sokol Aspiring Leaders of Tomorrow), the Polish Falcons were able to share their current program and invite the other organizations to participate in the weekend training program. I think the best idea for Sokol that came out of the Future Leaders Conference was putting the responsibility of planning a national event into the hands of the youth attendees and allowing them to work uninhibited by adults to formulate their plans. Polish Falcon leadership, including their Director, President, and Vice President, played a role in advising and

encouraging the attendees along the way.

I could go into more detail about what else occurred during the weekend, but the two American Sokol brothers who attended the event have already written excellent reports, so I would like to share Dan and Joe Bajak's impressions of the Future Leaders Conference. To say the least, this was a wonderful experience and we are looking forward to more collaborative efforts that can benefit all of our organizations.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 4<sup>th</sup> when we will meet in person at the Polish Falcons headquarters in Pittsburgh, Pa., to work on logistics for participating in each other's events and collaborative scheduling to avoid duplication of events and conflicts preventing organizations from participating with one another.



Brothers (left) and Joe Bajek, American Sokol members from the Naperville Tyrs Unit, represented American Sokol at the Future Leaders Conference hosted by The Polish Falcons of America. Director Todd Yatchyshyn represented Sokol USA. The Bajek Brothers and Todd will also be on staff at the American Sokol Instructors School that will be held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

## Sokol Meets Polish Falcons of America

By Dan Bajek

Have you ever met someone who participates in an organization almost identical to the one you are a member of? I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend a Future Leaders Conference hosted by the Polish Falcons of America (PFA). This event was located in Pittsburgh, Pa., from February 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The central focus of this weekend was to offer youth members the chance to meet, develop leadership skills, and create plans for upcoming events hosted by their national organization. Joe Bajek and I were sent to represent American Sokol and Todd Yatchyshyn was sent to represent Sokol USA. Upon arrival, Joe and I were greeted by Christine Puskar, Physical Education Director of PFA, who showed us to our room. We both had about an hour to relax and get in our Sokol uniforms for a group picture. This picture was taken with all individuals present at the conference. There were around 20 youth members in attendance with ages ranging from 12 to 20 year olds. After, we all entered the conference room to begin the activities. The room setup contained round tables with name cards for assigned seats and posters on the walls. Each poster was blank with a question prompt at the top. Christine led an open discussion regarding answers left on the posters. The second activity was an ice breaker that allowed people to meet others at each table. The final activity was a leadership conversation led by PFA president Tim Kuzma. He

described attributes he has mastered in order to lead his organization and the youth members all gave examples of strengths and areas for improvement in relation to their own leadership skills.

At the end of the activity, Tim reviewed the history of the PFA and responded to questions from the conference attendees. I was amazed to discover that the history/values of the PFA are almost identical to those of Sokol. Their organization was formed to regenerate the Polish nation by using physical fitness to prepare citizens for independence. National pride was increased and the people of Poland had an outlet to exercise and form lifelong relationships. Additionally, they used the motto of "sound mind, sound body" and selected the falcon to be their symbol of freedom. Sokol has units/lodges and Slets. PFA has nests and Zlats. Sokol uses Nazdar. PFA uses Czolem.

Finally, both Sokol and PFA have districts as well as a national board/organization.

The second day was designed to give the youth members a chance to plan upcoming national events. I loved this idea because these members were given the chance to have a stake in their organization on a national level and have their voices/ideas heard. An art exhibition and family weekend were the two main events planned. The attendees divided up into small groups to delegate which tasks would be completed by each. Todd and I walked around to guide the thoughts of the groups and Joe was fully involved in one group, as he seemed to mesh well with the kids. The day ended with a tour of their national office, some leadership activities, and ice cream. The final day was used for travel.

Todd and other members of Sokol have been in contact with

the PFA in the past. This was the first time the two organizations met face to face. The meeting of both groups was the beginning of something extraordinary. We need to attend each other's events and partner where appropriate due to likeness and lowered membership problems we both experience. Sokol youth members will have the chance this summer to attend the National Camp hosted by PFA. Before we left, Christine asked Joe and myself to be on staff for this camp.

This weekend was very eye opening for me. It showed me how similar their organization/youth members are to us and inspired me to someday plan a comparable leadership weekend held by Sokol. I am thankful that I was chosen to represent our organization. Now that we have formed a connection to this neighboring group, it is time to partner with them more often.

## Polish Falcons of America

By Joseph Bajek

During the weekend of February 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, my brother Daniel and I attended the Future Leadership Conference for the Polish Falcons of America (PFA) in Pittsburgh, Pa. The American Sokol BOI encouraged us to attend this event and covered transportation/hotel costs. When we arrived at the hotel, we were immediately greeted by the National Physical Education Director Christine Puskar and other board members. They were friendly and grateful that we could come out all this way for this occasion. When the conference officially began, we participated in various activities throughout the weekend. We did ice breakers, group work, how to improve

future conferences, and discussed what attributes a quality leader possesses. The big project we worked on was creating rules and regulations for an art show to be held at their future national events. There were three leaders that monitored the conversations by taking everyone's different opinions into account, including mine, while we engaged in several discussions and brainstormed various ideas. While I partook in these activities, Daniel and Todd Yatchyshyn observed and included their opinions/feedback when necessary. Right away I could tell the members of PFA were welcoming and friendly. In fact, there are numerous parallels between them and American (Continued on Page 7)

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Rooms. 78 people attended the Banquet. The entertainment was very nice and there was a Silent Auction. 100 people attended the Beach Party and it was a rousing success; while over 300 attended the Celebration Dance. Sister Chris Yatchyshyn said that we all need to help with future Sokolfest planning duties. DVDs of the Sokolfest were additional work that could have been handled by other than the SFW department. She also mentioned that the number of ASO participants was way down, probably due to the ASO Anniversary that was held in November of 2015. It was disappointing that other GBU District members did not participate or watch. We held it in Pittsburgh so that there could be more of an audience and other GBU Districts could learn about Sokol.

President Bielecki mentioned that GBU is planning a 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the entire organization and had been impressed with the location of our banquet, the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Club. President Bielecki told them that we appreciated their financial support, but were disappointed that even their directors didn't attend Sokolfest.

Brother Banjak mentioned that the United Lutheran District may have interest in Farrell's gymnastic program. How would their membership in Sokol be handled? He would like this to be addressed with GBU as soon as possible.

### Finances for Sokolfest

Brother Trgala gave a summary of the income and expenses. Only income and expenses that passed through the Sokolfest check book were reported upon. He mentioned that future Sokolfests should use the same format for accounting. Payment methods for future Sokol events, such as accepting credit cards or PayPal payments were discussed.

Sister Chris Yatchyshyn said the SFW department had two conference calls. All six gyms are active. Each lodge is paying liability insurance individually. We need to talk about social memberships. The lodges are doing their best with limited funds and not the most desirable locations.

Meeting recessed for lunch at 12:00 pm.

Meeting reconvened at 12:40 pm.

Brother Todd Yatchyshyn discussed the SFW participation. The programs are doing well and growing. We no longer have a Cheerleading programs. We are hoping to have another year of decent growth. Pen Argyl is sponsoring its first youth tournament team. Each lodge has given descriptions of their programs. Oct 29-30 ASO is holding a Development Conference in Cleveland which Todd and Sister Chris will attend. Saturday evening we will hold our SWF meeting. Oct 28 is the District Directors' meeting which Todd and Chris will attend.

Todd wants to try to add some additional national activities, like tubing tied into our traditional activities. We will hold a Gymnastics competition in May along with a Calisthenics rehearsal. We have had some discussions with other Sokol organizations about our programs and what we may collaborate on.

The Polish Falcons are holding a national youth leadership weekend in February that a couple of our youth may attend, and a camping opportunity later in 2017. They are having a Youth Bowling tournament the third weekend in May.

The Slovak Catholic Sokol want to participate in our gymnastics competitions. It will be an opportunity for the recreational gymnasts to participate in competitions. We will hold a District Slet May 20-21 2017 in Monessen. It will be a gymnastics competition as well as a calisthenics rehearsal for the American Sokol Slet. The directors hope to hold a weekend instructors' school for the eastern lodges and Sokol Baltimore wants to attend.

ASO is holding a Slet in Cedar Rapids in 2017. The Polish Falcons are holding their Zlot in 2018. They have moved away from gymnastics, but they may give us time for gymnastics competitions if we can cover the costs with the registration fees. The location is still to be determined. A schedule of events is being worked out to allow inter-organizational participation.

Sister Chris has said it was very useful to speak with the leaders of the other Sokol organizations and find out what their challenges have been. Our upcoming Slet dates are June 26-30 2019.

A possible new schedule to attract greater participation is: Wednesday will be basketball, opening ceremonies, Thurs gymnastics and fitness Challenge, and barbeque. Friday we will have the Fitness challenge again, and the Slet performance on Friday night. To increase participation in Volleyball, it will be held Saturday

along with a trip to a Water Park, and the Dance Saturday evening.

Todd is exploring a location in the Detroit area. We need to find a suburban location that has a hotel with pool, a high school with a stadium and gymnasium. Todd has been in contact with Lynn and Jonathan Conrad, who own a private gym that could accommodate the gymnastics competitions. Brother Banjak stated that the location is important to get people to come. Buffalo was suggested as a possible area with Niagara Falls as a draw.

Motion made, seconded and carried to accept the report of the SFW Department.

### c. World Sokol Federation

President Joe Bielecki said that he and Bro Banjak attended. There was a lot of discussion regarding how video shows submitted to the WSF are judged.

A committee of the North American Sokol organizations including Sokol USA, American Sokol, and DA Sokol was formed to develop tools for the Special Number criteria to make the requirements more fair and transparent. The recommendations were sent to the Czech Sokol Directors for evaluation. Part of the recommendation was that each WSF member organization receives a copy of each entry and judges them. President Bielecki said that Brother Banjak accomplished a very positive outcome.

The next WSF meeting will be held in Vienna Austria in 2017, and in 2018 it will be in Prague. Brother Banjak said that there will be an instructor course after the 2018 Slet in Prague and we should send some people to participate.

Motion made and seconded that a request be made to ASO to hold a North American Sokol conference meeting after the ASO Slet in Cedar Rapids in 2017. Motion carried.

Motion made, seconded, and carried to accept the report of the WSF.

### d. Milan Getting Scholarship Committee

Committee Chairman Scott Pracko said that we are now giving scholarships for deserving member who will be starting at a Junior College, as many students are starting college in that direction. He also mentioned that GBU has an incoming High School Freshman scholarship to which our members can apply. He stated the names of the current scholarship renewal recipients.

Motion made, seconded, and carried to accept the report of the MGS Committee.

Meeting recessed for short break at 2:10 pm.

Meeting reconvened at 2:20 pm.

## 11. Old Business

### a. Advertising Committee

Brother Kamenitsky stated that Sister Chris Yatchyshyn did a great job with selecting advertising media. She compiled a list of questions for Sokol USA to consider and John created a list for local lodges to consider before beginning an advertising initiative. Also included were current lodge initiatives and what the active lodges would like to be able to accomplish. Currently word of mouth has been the most successful method in gaining new members. Sister Shurina said that the last two pages list great ideas that she will feature in an article in the Sokol Times. Sister Yatchyshyn said that Farrell Lodge has created a nice brochure that they are willing to share with other lodges. She asked if we still have or could make a business card template.

Motion made and seconded to allocate \$1000.00 for brochures for the gymnastic lodges.

Discussion followed. Motion carried. Bro. Todd Yatchyshyn mentioned that they sell apparel with the Sokol logo on it. Bro. Banjak mentioned car window clings with a logo and the child's name as something to look into.

Motion made, seconded, and carried to accept the report of the Advertising Committee.

### b. Convention 2017

President Bielecki has approached several hotels with the possible dates of either the first or second week in August next year to hold our convention. He got proposals from the Seven Springs, the Hilton, and the Omni William Penn, which has been recently renovated. The advantage of being downtown is no need to rent cars. The downtown hotels have attractions nearby. Joe is looking into an after-hours tour of the History museum. The Seven Springs offers a pool and access to

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hiking trails, but is quite a distance from the airport. President Bielecki feels that the William Penn Omni is the best option because of cost savings and location. The cost per room is \$139.00 a night. The number of rooms, dates, and meeting room facilities limited the hotels that could accommodate our convention. Secretary Kovac suggested we check prices with the Embassy Suites. President Bielecki recommended we go with the William Penn Omni unless the Embassy Suites can beat the prices.

Motion made and seconded to go with the William Penn Omni Hotel unless the Embassy Suites can come in with lower prices. Arrival will be Thursday, August 10<sup>th</sup> through departure Monday August 14<sup>th</sup>.

Candidates are encouraged to declare their intentions to run in advance. Resumes should be submitted for publication in the Sokol Times by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017.

Motion made and seconded to vote on the by-law changes as the first order of Convention business, and then hold officer elections. Motion carried.

Brother Trgala had to depart the meeting at 4:00 pm.

Meeting recessed for a short break at 4:00 pm.

Meeting reconvened at 4:13 pm.

### c. Transition Committee Power Point

Sister Chris Yatchyshyn recapped how the subject of our districts came up during the Transition Team meetings. Bro. Banjak had presented a proposal for redistricting the lodges to the Transition Team. President Bielecki said that Lodge 410 should be assigned to the closest geographical district. Bro. Todd stated that the two districts closest to them are non-functioning. Bro. Kovac said the closest functioning district is Jan Kollar. Palmerton's district has dissolved. There was discussion about which districts are still functioning. Bro. Banjak explained the context in which he developed the concept. He thought it was a great opportunity to change the organization and be a starting point for change discussion. He feels it is necessary for the National Board to be more pro-active and direct the organization from the top down. Bro. Banjak then went through his power point presentation. Bro. Banjak was thanked for his presentation. Bro. Banjak and Sister Yatchyshyn felt that the ideas presented by Bro. Banjak were dismissed without sufficient discussion at the transition committee since it was meant to be a starting point to generate ideas about restructuring, which they felt was never addressed by the Committee. President Bielecki countered by indicating the Transition Committee did review and objected to the structure presented by Bro. Banjak. He also said that a great amount of time and resources were spent in the past year creating the proposed by-law changes; it was voted on last year and passed by the National Board to present to the Convention for adoption at the Fall National Board 2015 meeting.

Motion made and seconded to reduce the number of districts to four.

Motion made to table the above motion until the spring 2017 meeting.

Discussion followed. No action taken .

### d. Assignment of Lodge 410 to a District

Motion made, seconded, and carried to assign Lodge 410 to district Jan Kollar.

Meeting recessed for break at 5:35 pm.

Meeting reconvened at 6:05 pm.

### e. By-Laws – Review of Officer positions

Several Board members feel that it will be difficult to find people to fill these positions, particularly due to all of the of duty requirements.

## 12. New Business

### a. Education for Lodge/Region Officers

Sister Yatchyshyn feels that local lodge officers don't conduct meetings the way Sokol meetings should be conducted because they are unfamiliar with the Sokol philosophy and and history. We need to offer and encourage them to attend developmental conferences on how to follow procedures, fill out tax forms, apply for grants, be prepared to answer insurance questions, etc. If Sokol USA cannot offer a conference, lodge officers should be encouraged to attend the American Sokol Administrative Conference.

Sister Shurina suggested that we send some officers to a GBU producer training session. Bro. Banjak feels this is a Sokol problem and we need to create an initiative to educate officers on Sokol. Bro. Kamenitsky

suggested we have a couple hours training session at our next Convention. Motion made, seconded, and carried to have a motivational/educational session at the 2017 Convention.

### b. Growth of Lodge Membership & Activities

A proposal was made by Bro. Banjak to explain how to organize initiatives to lodge officers.

The SFW Directors are trying to reach out to lodges that still have buildings but don't have fitness programs. Former Sokol Gymnasts are meeting at Penn State May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### c. Discussion on Social Membership

Motion made to table until next meeting. Motion did not carry.

Discussion followed. Secretary Kovac pointed out that our current by-laws state that social members cannot vote, or be elected to hold any office in the Sokol USA.

## 13. Correspondence

E-mail from Sister Kathy Naccarato. It was decided at the Finance Committee meeting that Secretary Kovac would draft a response to her.

## 14. Other

Date for next meeting

Teleconference meeting to be held on Sunday November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 8:00 pm EST.

National Board meeting to be held January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

## 15. Adjournment

Motion made, seconded, and carried to adjourn at 8:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Debbie Golden, Secretary

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW

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the convention. The proceeds will benefit our Sokol USA students.

With the beautiful summer weather, it is also time to get out and exercise and enjoy sports, whether traditional gymnastics, biking, walking, aerobics, or other physical activities. All these lead to good health and wellness, and are an ideal answer to how to get rid of the pounds that have accumulated during the long dreary winter. It is also a good time for our lodges to do fraternal activities and to make their profiles known in their local communities.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Convention in Pittsburgh. NAZDAR!

Joe Bielecki

President, Sokol USA

## POLISH FALCONS

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Sokol. For starters, PFA was originally created to produce stronger men to liberate Poland from captivity and train military fighters for the World Wars. Currently, it is a family, fitness organization rooted in Polish culture/traditions for all ages. They host gatherings every four years called "Zlots" where the youth compete in various sports like volleyball, track and field, along with other activities such as arts & crafts and camping. They have a phrase "Czolem" which means "I salute you" or "hello/howdy" and have a saying "A Healthy Spirit in a Healthy Body." They also offer insurance to members like Sokol USA. The members of PFA also have that same spirit and community that we have where we are all family and friends under one organization. PFA faces similar struggles as well, with enrollment and retaining members, so if we join forces with them, we could benefit from each other. PFA looks forward to doing any future partnerships with us as we do with them and if everything works out, this could be the start of something amazing.

Nazdar and Czolem!

**We gratefully acknowledge  
A continuing gift to the Milan Getting  
Scholarship Fund of \$1,000.**

**Given in memory of my beloved parents:  
Emma Radakovich Fronko (1910-2004)  
And Stephan Francis Fronko (1906-1993)  
By Barbara Fronko Froehlich**

*The Milan Getting Scholarship Committee sincerely thanks Mrs. Froehlich for her continued support of the scholarship program.*

## IN MEMORY

*Of our deceased Brother and Sister Sokols  
with a sincere expression of sympathy  
to their families from the  
National Officers of Sokol U.S.A.*

**REBECCA CAMPBELL** – (1981-2017) A member of Lodge 103, Farrell, Pa.

**EVELYN DOYNE** – (1932-2017) A member of Lodge 214, Palmerton, Pa.

**PAUL HARVILLA** – (1954-2017) A member of Lodge 93, Bethlehem, Pa.

**HENRY HILOVSKY** – (1925-2017) A member of Lodge 130, New Kensington, Pa.

**VINCENT ILOVSKY** – (1928-2016) A member of Lodge 103, Farrell, Pa.

**ELIZABETH JOHNSON** – (1925-2017) A member of Lodge 500, East Orange, N.J.

**DOROTHY KANIA** – (1928-2017) A member of Lodge 130, New Kensington, Pa.

**THOMAS KORCHAK** – (1920-2016) A member of Lodge 36, Binghamton, N.Y.

**CAROLINE LEBER** – (1925-2017) A member of Lodge 62, Ambridge, Pa.

**ANASTAZIE MOG** – (1921-2016) A member of Lodge 96, Cudahy, Wis.

**ANN MURPHY** – (1919-2017) A member of Lodge 32, Boonton, N.J.

**PAUL PAPAY** – (1941-2017) A member of Lodge 214, Palmerton, Pa.

**CHARLES ROSENBERG** – (1934-2017) A member of Lodge 276, Pittsburgh, Pa.

**RICHARD TOMKO** – (1933-2017) A member of Lodge 46, McKeesport, Pa.

# EIGHTH ANNUAL SOKOL USA FARRELL FOUR PERSON OPEN GOLF SCRAMBLE

SHENANGO LAKE GOLF CLUB  
99 Birchwood Dr., Transfer, PA 16154  
June 10, 2017

*Benefits Sokol Gymnastics Family & Youth Programs*

**ENTRY FORMS:** All Sokol members and non-members alike are invited to participate in the EIGHTH ANNUAL SOKOL USA FARRELL OPEN • FOUR PERSON GOLF SCRAMBLE at Shenango Lake Golf Club on June 10, 2017. SHOTGUN START: 9:00 a.m.

- Registration Fee Includes: Greens fees, cart, T-shirt, door prizes, line prizes, beverages, BBQ steak dinner, and food at the turn.
- All Sokol members in good standing may deduct \$5.00/individual from registration fee.

**FEATURING:**

**Team Prizes** (based on minimum of 25 teams)

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize:** \$800 per team

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize:** \$400 per team

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize:** \$260 per team (random draw)

- \$5000 Cash Prize for ANY Hole-in-One on #9 hole
- 50/50 raffle
- \$5.00 Skins Game
- \$5.00 or \$10.00 Bet Hole
- Prize Boards (\$25.00 minimum value)

Entries Accepted on "First Come" basis. Limit of 30 teams.

Information and entry forms can be downloaded by clicking the link: <http://sokolfarrell.org> > News and Events > Golf Scramble or by contacting: Bro. Tim Brandt, chairman; 1448 Hall Ave.; Sharon, PA 16146; Phone: (724) 866-8553.

**29 TEAMS WERE ENTERED LAST YEAR; ENTER NOW... BEAT THE CUT OFF!**

## SHARE YOUR FAMILY EVENTS WITH YOUR "SOKOL FAMILY"

*The Sokol Times Social Page is a great way to keep up with your old and new friends! Share your families' events with your Sokol family. We want to hear from you. Only news regarding members of our lodges will be printed.*

Complete one of the attached forms and mail the information and a photograph of clear quality to Sokol USA, 276 Prospect Street, P.O. Box 189, East Orange, NJ 07019-0189. Information and photographs also may be e-mailed to: **SOKOLUSAHQ@aol.com**

**ENGAGEMENTS,  
WEDDINGS &  
ANNIVERSARIES**



**NAMES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOMETOWN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SOKOL LODGE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**YEARS MARRIED (IF APPLICABLE):** \_\_\_\_\_

**BIRTHDAYS**



**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BIRTH DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOMETOWN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SOKOL LODGE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROMOTIONS,  
HONOR ROLLS &  
OTHER EVENTS**



**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOMETOWN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SOKOL LODGE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EVENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Photographs are not required, but they do add to the presentation.  
Please include a self addressed, stamped envelope if you would like your photograph returned.*