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SOKOL USA TIMES

DECEMBER 11, 2008

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To all our members

Vesele Vianoce A Stastny Novy Rok!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

From the
Supreme Lodge Officers
of Sokol USA

SOKOL TIMES

official organ of the
SLOVAK GYMNASTIC UNION SOKOL
OF THE USA

Published monthly on the 2nd Thursday of the month.

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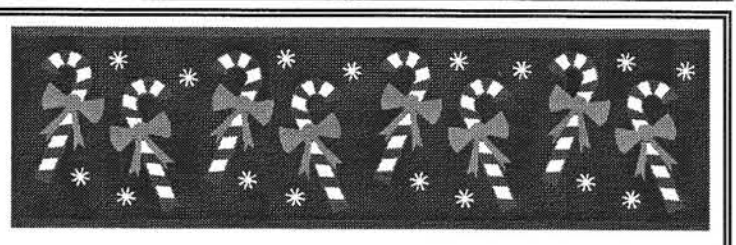


HOLIDAY DONATIONS GRATEFULLY APPRECIATED

To the Sokol USA Gymnastic Fund

From Milan S. Kovac $50.00
To all, a Very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year

From Lodge 66W, Bethlehem, Pa. 50.00
May everyone have a Very Merry Christmas And a Prosperous New Year

From Lodge 500, East Orange, N.J. $100.00
Wishing all a Very Merry Christmas And a Healthy and Happy New Year

From Lodge 74, Plymouth, Pa. $25.00
Best Wishes for the Holidays and The coming New Year

From Lodge 17, Perth Amboy, N.J. $25.00
May your Holidays be filled with lots of Joy and Laughter, may you have a Happy New Year

Debbie Golden $100.00
Holiday Greetings and Best Wishes to Everyone
May you have a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

To the Milan Getting Scholarship Fund

From Lodge 39/40W, Chicago, Ill. $100.00
To All our Sokol Friends near and far,
May your Christmas be a Happy one,
Filled with Joy and Cheer,
And may God Bless and Keep you
Throughout the New Year

From Lodge 12, Newark, N.J. $100.00
Holiday Wishes – Peace to all

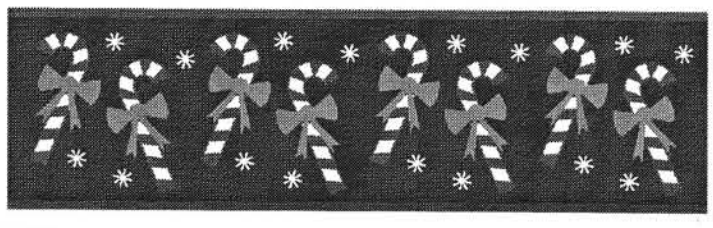
From Milan S. Kovac $50.00
May the Spirit of Christmas Fill Everyone
To Delight, and Health and Joy be yours
In the upcoming New Year.

From Lodge 66W, Bethlehem, PA $200.00
Best wishes for the Holidays and the Coming year.

From Lodge 500, East Orange, N.J. $100.00
May the Joys of this Holiday Season
Bring Health and Happiness to All

From Lodge 74, Plymouth, Pa. $25.00
May everyone have a Merry Christmas
And a Prosperous and Healthy New Year

Debbie Golden $100.00
In memory of grandparents, John and Betty Sadecky



BOONTON SOKOL LODGE UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 9 – Slovak Dinner
4:30 to 7:30 p.m.; Adults $10, Children $5
Grandma Klacik's stuffed cabbage, homemade perogies, chicken paprikash, kielbasa & kraut, salad, rolls, dessert, coffee and tea. Soda and beer available.
Snow date: Jan 10.

Feb 1 – Super Bowl Pancake Breakfast and Used Clothing Drive
8:30 a.m. to 12 Noon; Adults $6, Children $3
Featuring Regular and Blueberry Pancakes, Bacon and Sausage, Home Fries, Scrambled Eggs, Coffee, Tea and Juice.

Clean out your closets over the holidays, then drop off your used clothing in the evenings between Jan 26 and 30 at the gym or Sunday at the Pancake Breakfast.

March 6 – Lenten Fish & Chips Dinner
4:30 to 7 p.m.; Adults $8, Children $5
Featuring batter fried fish or chicken tenders, fries, coleslaw, hush puppies, coffee, tea and dessert. Soda and beer will be available. Snow Date: March 7.

April 25 – Murder Mystery Night
Details to follow.

LADIES LODGE 15, BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Another year is almost to an end! I am happy to report that Lodge 15W is still in existence and hopes to remain so for the coming New Year 2009. Our faithful officers agreed to remain in the office they now serve. A "thank you" goes to our sisters for carrying on and keeping our Ladies Lodge 15W active.

Officers of Lodge 15W for 2009 are as follows:
President: Lil Bakic
Vice President: Zabby Tomik
Financial Secretary: Zabby Tomik
Treasurer: Sidney Kudlac
Trustee: Florence Fertig
Recording Secretary: Anne Perham

As the new year starts, policy payments will be due, as well as social member dues. When making a payment, kindly mail your check to our treasurer's address, which is:

Sidney Kudlac
11 Villa Court
Endicott, NY 13760

Our monthly meetings are held very second Monday of the month. Each officer takes their turn in hosting a meeting.

Sorry to report, but none of our members attend meetings. Our old faithful seniors, who used to do so, are encountering health problems, don't drive anymore and some are in nursing homes. We certainly miss you!

We. the officers. are all in the 80-plus age group. All of us were gymnasts since our early youth and into adulthood. The "Sokol way of life" has been instilled in us and remains with us to this day. Reminiscing about our Sokol days is a topic frequently discussed while enjoying refreshments after the adjournment of our meetings.

With the Christmas season approaching, Lodge 15W extends their Christmas greetings to all members of Lodge 15 as well as to all existing Sokol USA Lodges. May you all be blessed to enjoy your Happy Holidays.

Remembering our Slovak heritage: "Sbor 15 prajeme nasim Sokolske zbori Vesele Vanace a Stastlivy Novi Rok. Spyme Dal."

Nazdar!
Anne Perham
Recording Secretary

USA GYMNASTICS

See top U.S. and World gymnasts compete in Chicago!

The 2009 American Cup comes to Chicago on February 21, 2009.

The best in men's and women's international gymnastics will take center stage when Chicago plays host to the 2009 American Cup, one of the world's most prestigious gymnastics events, on February 21 at the Sears Centre Arena in Hoffman Estates, Illinois.

Tickets to the 2009 American Cup go went sale to the public on November 13th.

From the President's View

Bea Walko

Recently a friend and I were discussing the state of the world and all the disaster that surrounds us, the fact that Christmas was soon upon us and that that fact alone might ease the pain. He agreed and suggested I read an essay entitled "Early Christmas." I find myself thinking of the thoughts expressed by CJ Heck and decided to share them with you.

"I have found that time has a way of getting away from me, the older I get. Wasn't it just yesterday that I carefully packed away all the Christmas ornaments and decorations, took down the outside wreaths and ribbons, and swept up the last of the pine needles?

Geez, oh man. Christmas seems to arrive on or about the day after Halloween these days! Santa Claus is already everywhere and Thanksgiving is still around the corner. The stores in the malls have ordered abundantly to ensure that after the holiday sales they can show a hefty bottom line at year's end. The malls themselves put up their holiday signs and Christmas decorations increasingly early to entice us, knowing full well our propensity for overindulgence.

I find it distressing that Christmas has become, for most people, an "over" time. We overspend, we overeat, we over-party, and we end up trying to fit church and God – the very reason there is a Christmas – in between everything else on our overabundant holiday lists. About the only thing we don't overdo in, is taking the time to think about those less fortunate by dropping a few extra coins into the buckets when we see Santa's helpers ringing their bells in front of the stores around town.

Please don't misunderstand everyone who knows me, knows that Christmas is my favorite time of the year. I can't help myself. I get all swept up in the nostalgia and the warm and fuzzy feelings that surround this wondrous holiday.

Every year, I watch all the classic Christmas movies, crying as I watch *The Gathering,* laughing until I cry at Chevy Chase in *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation,* and I think Barbara Stanwyck is hilarious in *Christmas in Connecticut* (the original, not the remake with Dyan Cannon). Then who could ever forget Jimmy Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life*? And finally, at least for me, Christmas just wouldn't be complete until I watch Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* and help them sing the theme song, "White Christmas". Corny? Guilty as charged. Heck, I even play Christmas carols and Christmas music while I cook Thanksgiving dinner, much to the amusement of my family and friends.

I vow to try harder this year, though. I'm going to remember and truly celebrate who this wonderful holiday is named for and what it's about. I'm going to focus my 'over' time on the people I care most about, those who care most about me, and those who have never had a visit from Santa Claus."

In the true meaning of the season I wish each and everyone a very blessed Christmas. No matter what challenges life presents, we know that with this season comes hope and love.

Merry Christmas.

Bea Walko
President

MCT OCTOBER 2008 MEETING

Members and delegates arrived on time through the very cool October 26, 2008, Sunday afternoon for the good of the fraternal leadership.

President Matt Blistan welcomed all 21 members in attendance, including Brother Milan Kovac and Brother Joseph Bielecki.

Brother John West gave his printed financial report for April 21 through October 26, which was accepted favorably by all.

Delegates gave their lodge updates – some struggle to attend and may be considering of merging. Brother Kovac would like to be advised about who needs consultation and where. Students in school and scholarships were of interest. Brother Kovac did encourage us all with Sokol gifts to use and to spread the Sokol name.

Brother Bielecki spoke as our "world traveler." Events of his recent trip to Europe with President Bea Walko included the Czech Republic World Sokol Federation meeting held in Prague. Brother Bielecki showed photos he snapped and assembled in a mini-album with spectacular skill.

The winner of "wealth" today was won by Sister Nancy Shurina of Blairsville, our bowler and MCT Trustee. Cheers for her active joy.

The next MCT meeting is scheduled for Sunday, April 26, 2009, at 1:15 p.m. Mark your calendars and do attend.

Nazdar!
Sister Amelia Blistan, Reporter
MCT District

Announcing

The XXXIII CONVENTION
Of The
Slovak Gymnast Union Sokol of the U.S.A

August 2, 3, & 4, 2009

To be held at:
Wyndham Pittsburgh – University Place
3454 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

The Gymnastic Department of SOKOL USA will conduct its Annual Meeting at this site on Saturday, August 1, 2009.

The Convention is the highest legislative body and judicial tribunal for the Sokol U.S.A., and shall consist of Supreme Lodge officers, delegates of the local lodges, representatives of the districts, Honorary officers, appointive officers, and guest delegates.

Each lodge in good standing is entitled to one (1) delegate for every fifty (50) members in good standing or major fraction thereof as of December 31 of the year preceding the Convention. Each lodge having less than fifty (50) members is entitled to one (1) delegate. The Supreme Lodge will reimburse the traveling and lodging expenses of not more than two delegates per lodge.

The lodge delegate shall be an adult member in good standing of the lodge for at least one year.

Lodges, districts, or individual members having motions or suggestions for the good of the Sokol U.S.A., or petitions, shall forward the same on forms furnished by the Supreme Secretary, not later than sixty (60) days prior to the Convention, to the Supreme Secretary, who shall deliver the same to the appropriate convention committee.

We encourage the membership and lodge officers to begin planning and selecting delegates as promptly as possible. In addition, we encourage submission of motions or appeals at the earliest possible time so that these topics can then be presented to lodges and delegates prior to their departure to the Convention. It is the intent of the Supreme Lodge to have certain Convention Committees meet prior to the opening of the Convention, which will require the attendance of at least one additional day.

Lodge Secretaries will begin receiving material concerning the Sokol USA Convention no later than February 1, 2009. The tentative schedule of Convention events will be published in the next issue of the SOKOL TIMES.

Nazdar!

Milan S. Kovac
Supreme Secretary

Beatrice Walko
Supreme
President

6% Annuity Rate

The Single Premium and Flexible Premium Annuities offered by the Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol earn a 6.00% rate of interest. Annuities are a very sound investment for your retirement years. For information and an application, write to the home office at 276 Prospect Street, P.O. Box 189, East Orange, NJ 07019 or call our toll free number at 1-888-253-0362.

Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol Of USA
Profit & Loss
January through September 2008

	Jan – Sep '08
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
SCHOLARSHIP-MILAN GETTING	3,734.87
ACCIDENT & HEALTH PREMIUM	69.75
AMORTIZATION-IMR	38,910.00
ANNUITY	206,247.82
ASSESSMENTS-GYMNASTICS	1,070.93
ASSESSMENTS-INDIGENT	216.88
ASSESSMENTS-LIFE	
RETURN OF PREMIUM	-48.00
ASSESSMENTS – LIFE – Other	28,828.09
Total ASSESSMENTS – LIFE	28,780.09
DIVIDEND ON STOCK	51,898.27
GAINS/LOSSES – BONDS	
LOSS ON SALE OF BONDS	-381,482.00
Total GAINS/LOSSES - BONDS	-381,482.00
GAINS/LOSSES – STOCKS	
GAIN ON SALE OF STOCK-PREF	720.00
LOSS ON SALE OF STOCK-PREF	-63,400.00
Total GAINS/LOSSES – STOCKS	-62,680.00
GYMNASTIC INCOME	
NAT. BOWLING TOURN	3,389.00
GYM FUND DONATIONS	1,586.38
Total GYMNASTIC INCOME	4,975.38
INCREASE/DECREASE BONDS	
INCREASE/DECREASE STOCKS	-65,180.00
INCREASE/DECREASE BONDS – Other	452.33
Total INCREASE/DECREASE BONDS	-64,727.67
INTEREST INCOME	
INVESTMENT INCOME-Other	2.78
ACCRUED INT. PURCH OF BONDS	-17,838.69
BONDS – INDUSTRIAL	445,546.08
CAPITAL RESERVE	3,354.50
COLLATERAL LOANS	658.34
GYM DEPT-INVESTORS SVGS BK	3,084.62
MORTGAGE LOANS	38,175.13
PNC CHECKING	85.21
INTEREST INCOME - Other	290.86
Total INTEREST INCOME	473,358.83
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	51.00
RENTAL REAL ESTATE INCOME	
Total RENTAL REAL ESTATE INCOME	18,900.00
Total Income	319,324.15
Expense	
PAYMENTS TO MEMBERS	
CASH SURRENDER	21,390.04
DEATH CLAIMS	90,357.75
ENDOWMENTS PAID	1,000.00
INTEREST – ANNUITY	4,931.13
INTEREST ON ENDOWMENTS	50.00
Total PAYMENTS TO MEMBERS	117,728.92
ACTUARIAL & ACCOUNTING FEE	57,242.00
BANK CHARGES	555.90
BOOKS & PERIODICALS	271.00
CAMPAIGN REWARDS	498.22
DECREASE-LIFE RESERVE	172,260.00
DIVIDENDS	1,425.50
DONATIONS & ADVERTISING	1,156.67
EXPENSE OF SUP. LDG. MTG.	13,780.98
FRATERNAL EXPENSE	8,861.55
GYMNASTIC EXPENSES	
SAFETY CERTIFICATION	565.00
USAG PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP	411.00
SCHOOL EXPENSE (KURZ)	1,100.00
GYMNASTIC BOWLING	4,675.25
GYMNASTIC MISCELLANEOUS	1,330.00
GYMNASTIC NATIONAL MEETING	3,793.47
STAR CAMP	2,600.00
Total GYMNASTIC EXPENSES	14,474.72
HOSPITALIZATION	17,823.88
INSURANCE (EXCEPT REAL ESTATE)	15,089.29
INVESTMENT EXPENSES	11,556.99
MISC OFFICE EXPENSES AND SUPP	815.02
OFFICE EXPENSES	22,166.57
OFFICERS' TRAVELING EXPENSE	10,477.67
OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS	13,905.00
PAYROLL TAX EXPENSE	7,437.33
POSTAGE, EXPRESS, TEL & TEL	2,492.00
PRINTING & STATIONARY	340.07
RENT EXPENSE (Rent)	18,900.00
RENTAL REAL ESTATE EXPENSES	
Total RENTAL REAL ESTATE EXPENSES	19,052.06
SALARIES	
SALARIES-SUPREME OFFICERS	5,125.00
OFFICE	37,537.86
OFFICER	53,711.48
Total SALARIES	96,374.34
SCHOLARSHIP	
MILAN GETTING SCHOLARSHIP	2,000.00
SCHOLARSHIP EXPENSES	4,000.00
Total SCHOLARSHIP	6,000.00
STATE LICENSE FEES	3,399.42
TELEPHONE EXP	4,499.49
Total Expense	695,024.59
Net Ordinary Income	-375,700.44
Net Income	**-375,700.44**

CASH BASIS

Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol Of USA
Balance Sheet
As of September 30, 2008

	Sep 30, 08
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
CASH – PNC CHECKING	191,668.65
CASH – CANADIAN BK OF COM	3,780.96
CASH – M/M GYMNASTIC	32,543.35
PETTY CASH	500.00
Total Checking/Savings	228,492.96
Other Current Assets	
BONDS	
BONDS	8,291,725.88
Total BONDS	8,291,725.88
STOCK	
PREFERRED STOCK	737,484.00
COMMON STOCK	223,278.00
Total STOCK	960,782.00
MORTGAGES RECEIVABLE	
Total MORTGAGES RECEIVABLE	1,170,426.53
COLLATERAL LOANS	
Total COLLATERAL LOANS	399,835.99
CERTIFICATE LOANS	2,508.00
BENEFICIARY TRUST FUND	
RESERVE FOR TRUST FUND	-16,942.33
TRUST FUND FOR BENEFICIARY	16,942.33
Total BENEFICIARY TRUST FUND	0.00
BOND INTEREST DUE	153,576.00
EXCHANGE	-5,354.28
MORTGAGE INTEREST DUE	1,072.00
PREMIUMS DUE	3,143.84
Total Other Current Assets	10,977,695.96
Total Current Assets	11,206,188.92
Fixed Assets	
AUTOMOBILE	
ACCUM DEPREC – AUTO	-9,027.00
AUTOMOBILE – OTHER	30,095.95
Total AUTOMOBILE	21,068.95
REAL ESTATE - BUILDING	
ACCUM DEPREC - BUILDING	-47,111.40
REAL ESTATE – BUILDING – OTHER	67,898.25
Total REAL ESTATE – BUILDING	20,786.85
Total Fixed Assets	41,855.80
TOTAL ASSETS	**11,248,044.72**
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
NON-ADMITTED COLL. LOAN	34,000.00
A&H RESERVE	1,634.00
ADVANCE PREMIUMS	505.81
AVR	156,369.00
CLAIMS – LIFE	25,884.00
DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS	92.57
DIVIDEND ACCUMULATION	88,570.28
EXPENSES PAYABLE	76,511.00
FOREIGN EXCHANGE	-91.50
IMR	417,721.00
LIFE RESERVE	4,359,626.00
MORTGAGE LOAN ESCROW	
Total MORTGAGE LN ESCROW	-26,839.05
NON-ADMITTED – MORTGAGE	469,900.00
NON-ADMITTED – AUTO	21,068.95
RES. FOR UNPRES. CHECKS	3,746.65
TAXES DUE	32,355.45
Total Other Current Liabilities	5,661,054.16
Total Current Liabilities	5,661,054.16
Long Term Liabilities	
ANNUITIES – LEFT WITH SOCIETY	108,412.76
MATURED ENDOW. – LEFT W/SOC	180,638.50
Total Long Term Liabilities	289,051.26
Total Liabilities	5,950,105.42
Equity	
EQUITY-GAIN ON FOREIGN EXCH.	623.50
CHANGE IN NON-ADMITTED ASSETS	70,626.10
UNASSIGNED FUNDS	
UNREALIZED LOSS	-21,941.16
INDIGENT FUND	8,974.41
DECREASE-AVR	-61,338.00
ACCIDENT AND HEALTH FUND	53,610.29
Total UNASSIGNED FUNDS	-20,694.46
CONSOLIDATED FUND (Retained Earnings)	5,623,084.60
Net Income	-375,700.44
Total Equity	5,297,939.30
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	**11,248,044.72**

CASH BASIS

See Page 5 for a message from the Supreme Secretary.

From the Supreme Secretary

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

This issue of the Sokol Times (Page 4) contains our third quarter 2008 unaudited, cash basis, financial results.

The results indicate a loss in surplus, which is due to the writing down of the value of securities of two firms which have filed bankruptcy.

Through counsel with our CPA and Actuary, it was decided to write down these assets now rather than wait for the bankruptcy proceedings to be completed, as this would take years. The overall impact of these write downs is a minor financial setback to Sokol USA. Our solvency still remains very strong at 200% and we have a cash flow that is more than ample to meet our needs. It should be noted that though we wrote down the values of these assets, our operations have continued to provide gains.

The complete 2008 financial results will be available by March 1, 2009 and will be published soon thereafter. Please contact Headquarters should you have any questions concerning this matter.

Nazdar!

Milan S. Kovac
Supreme Secretary

Day Camp at Sokol Woodlands

Sokol Woodlands was brimming with activity this past summer. In this photo, participants in Week Two of Sokol Woodlands Day Camp posed in front of the Sokol USA sign.

SOKOL ALUMNI 2009 REUNION

This is the time for a gallant Sokol to step forward to take the baton to orchestrate the next Reunion of old colleagues in the gymnastic world of Sokol.

While the previous committee members have not reneged, it is felt some new people can enjoy the fun of planning this exciting event. I am ready and willing to give support with all the experience gained at the 2006 event.

Please contact me with your interest in getting on board to host a summer 2009 Sokol Reunion at Sokol Woodlands in Barryville, N.Y.

Adelaide Darula
203-531-9532
adelkadarula@aol.com

Holidays bring good change for Lodge 276

On November 2, 2008, Lodge 276 members attended the 18th Annual Slovak Heritage Festival at the Oakland Cathedral of Learning. The Slovak displays, music and group dancing always brings young memories to all. November truly is the month of thankfulness!

On November 9th, the Sen. John Heinz History Center National Library was the place for the WPSCA program, presented by Executive Director Joseph T. Senko with the President of the Heinz History Center, Andrew Masich. The Pittsburgh Agreement for Slovaks will have a special place there. The exhibit throughout the library was shown for the first time in the United States on this day. Historical Slovak photographs and postcards were on display.

WPSCA President Joseph Bielecki spoke well regarding the presentation. The Slovak embassy was represented by Brother Andry Droba, Deputy Chief of Missions.

Slovak cultural music followed for the afternoon and featured opera singers Andrea Cajova, a soprano, and Ondry Saling, a tenor, with romantic piano pieces played by Daniel Buranovsky. It was a very special and memorable afternoon.

Our Annual Lodge Christmas Party was held December 7th. December 14th will be the members' annual meeting and luncheon. Christmas joy is in the air!

Nazdar!

Amelia Blistan, Reporter
Lodge 276, Pittsburgh

LODGE 2 BRIDGEPORT ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Lodge 2, Bridgeport, Conn., Sokol USA has initiated a scholarship program for high school graduates, it was announced by Lodge President Miguel Alicea. "Up to two $500 scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors accepted for admission to an accredited four-year college/university who are Slovak or Carpatho-Russian descent and residents of Bridgeport, Stratford, Trumbull or Shelton, Connecticut," said Alicea.

"Criteria to be used in judging are overall merits of applicants, cumulative grade average, community activities, college acceptance, financial need and essay content," he continued.

"The essay content," said Lodge Secretary John Kamenitsky, "is somewhat unique. Rather than the usual 'why do I want this award,' we are asking the applicants to discuss the history, culture or traditions of Slovak or Carpatho-Russian heritage or stories about their ancestors in Slovakia."

Applications were sent to all high schools and churches in the area and are available from the Lodge at jkamenitsky@snet.net.

Slovakia admitted to Visa Waiver Program

By Joseph T. Senko
Slovak Honorary Consul

Effective November 17, 2008, Slovaks traveling to the United States will no longer need a visa under certain conditions. Slovaks will be allowed to travel to the United States for 90 days or less, for business or pleasure without a visa. This does not apply to Slovaks traveling to the United States for work or study.

To be eligible under the new Visa Waiver Program, you must fulfill several requirements. First of all, you must have a biometric Slovak passport. All Slovak passports issued after January 15, 2008, are now biometric. Secondly, you must fill out an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) application on-line.

Got to the ESTA website at https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov and complete the simple, on-line application in English. A traveler must provide their name, birth date, passport details and travel plans. A friend, relative or travel agent may file an application for someone else. A Slovak-language ESTA form will be introduced as soon as possible. Applications may be submitted at any time before travel; however, Department of Homeland Security recommends that applications be submitted no less than 72 hours in advance. In most cases, travelers will receive a response within seconds. Responses will be one of the following three:

- Authorization Approved: Travel is authorized, no further paperwork is necessary.
- Authorization Pending: Check the ESTA website for a final response within 72 hours.
- Travel Not Authorized: Traveler must obtain a visa at the U.S. Embassy before traveling to the United States.

An approved ESTA is not a visa. Individuals who possess a valid visa will still be able to travel to the United States on the visa for the purpose for which it was issued. Individuals traveling on a valid visa will not be required to apply for an ESTA.

ESTA is valid for up to two years or until the traveler's passport expires, whichever comes first, and is valid for multiple entries into the United States.

For future trips or changes, applicants can easily update addresses or itineraries through the ESTA website. An approved ESTA is not a guarantee of admissibility to the United States at a port of entry. Border control officers make the final decision at the border.

The Visa Waiver Program cannot be used by those who plan to study, work or remain more than 90 days in the United States. Also, it cannot be used by people who have previously been refused a visa, or arrested (even if the arrest did not result in a criminal conviction), those with criminal records, those with certain serious communicable illnesses, those who have been refused admission into or have been deported from the United States and those who have previously overstayed on the Visa Waiver Program, even by only one day. Such travelers must apply for visas at the U.S. Embassy.

"A Visit from St. Nicholas"

By Clement C. Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap;

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

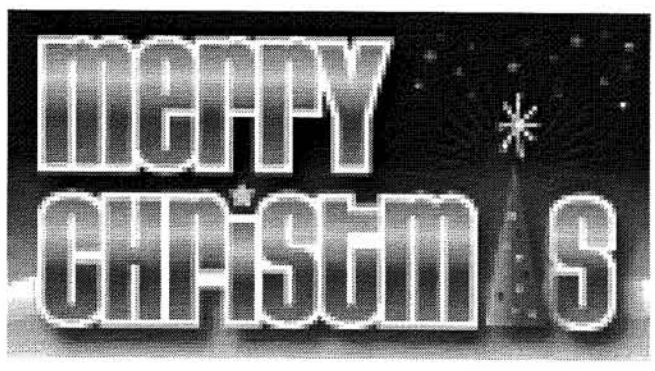
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be Saint Nick.

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now, *Dasher!* now, *Dancer!* now, *Prancer* and *Vixen!*
On, *Comet!* on *Cupid!* on, *Donder* and *Blitzen!*
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys, and Saint Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney Saint Nicholas came with a bound.

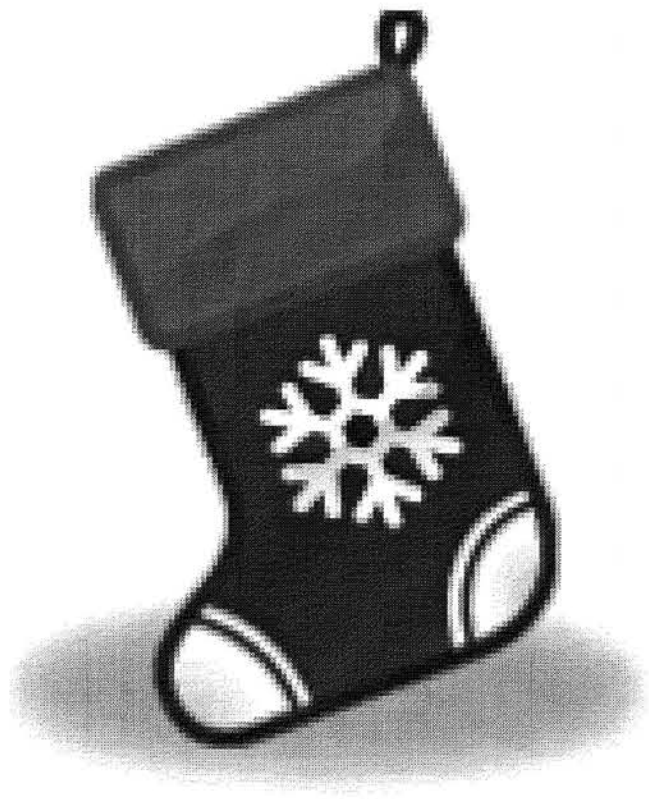
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.



His eyes — how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow.

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.



He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

Beware of 'Phishing,' e-mail scams

Definition:
Brand Spoofing is a scam in which perpetrators disguise themselves as well-known companies and **"phish"** for personal information.

What are Identity Thieves Looking For?
Social Security Numbers
Date of Birth
Passwords or Personal Identification Numbers (PINS)
Account Numbers (credit card, bank)
ATM/Debit Card Number

How is the Crime Attempted?
E-mails are often sent to people asking them to click onto a link (spoof web site). Disguising themselves as your company, they ask you to provide, confirm, or update confidential information. The e-mails generally express a sense of urgency, importance, or threatening situation regarding your account. Even if you don't provide the requested information, the act of just clicking onto the link makes your computer susceptible to Trojan Horses (key logging software) or other viruses.

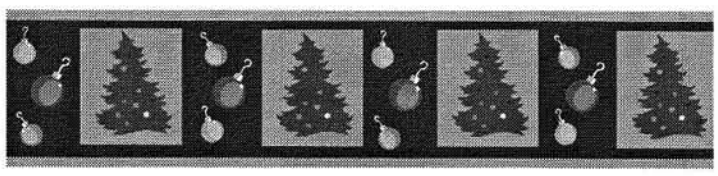
You may not do business with the company or financial institution used on the scam. The perpetrators send e-mails to thousands of individuals, hoping to hit on a person who has an account or does business with the named company.

Common Subject Headers Used to Attract Your Attention:

- Security Update
- Proposed Account Suspension
- Please Confirm Your Account
- Fraud Check Verification
- Confirmation needed
- Dear Client of _____

Be on the Lookout For:

- Spelling errors in the e-mail.
- Awkward sentence structure (sentence fragments).
- Links embedded in the message narrative that contain all, or part, of a legitimate company's name.



How to Protect Yourself

- Don't open unsolicited e-mails, unless you're certain who they're from.
- Don't click on links in unsolicited e-mails. Doing so may allow thieves to access your computer, record your keystrokes, and capture your PIN and passwords, even if you don't supply any information.
- Change your password frequently. Create unusual passwords. Mix and match letters and numbers. Don't use children or spouse's names.
- Consider using different passwords for different online accounts.
- Install personal firewalls. Use the most current anti-virus software, and frequently update the software to guard against new viruses.
- If in doubt about the veracity of the e-mails, **do not** open it. Contact the company directly via telephone or send a new e-mail message to them.

IS YOUR FAMILY COVERED?

Insurance coverage for all family members is an essential part of personal financial planning. Don't put off taking care of this responsibility.

See your lodge Financial Secretary or call Sokol Headquarters toll free at 1-888-253-0362 for additional information or membership applications.

SOKOL USA

276 Prospect St.
P.O. Box 189
East Orange, NJ 07019

Brothers and Sisters:

Why not take a little time and check your's and your children's (if you have any) insurance coverage. Most likely, you will discover that the amount is not sufficient and you need greater coverage.

Why not act on it right now and apply for an additional certificate?

Please Send _____ New Member Applications to:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

SHARE YOUR FAMILY EVENTS WITH YOUR "SOKOL FAMILY"

The Sokol Times Social Page is a new 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 07109-0189. Information and photographs also may be e-mailed to: SOKOLUSAHQS@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.

The 2009 International Sport and Cultural Festival June 23 to 29, 2009 Forth Worth, Texas

Welcome

American Sokol has joined forces with USA Gymnastics, Pan American Gymnastics, Union Gymnaestrada, Special Olympics and others to create a week-long extravaganza of sport, recreation, culture and fitness. Each organization will be holding its own competitions and activities for all to enjoy in the Fort Worth Convention Center.

American Sokol Slet events will include artistic and rhythmic gymnastics, volleyball, basketball, bowling, team marching and calisthenics, a fun walk/run, fitness challenge, golf tournament and, of course, our demonstration of mass calisthenics.

Combined events will include the opening and closing ceremonies, an exhibition gala showcase, a parade in downtown Fort Worth, socials and vendor displays.

We would be honored to have you and your organization present for all or part of this upcoming event as a participant or as a spectator. A tentative schedule of events and housing information follows.

You can also visit our website, www.2009iscfestival.com, to view updated information on the event and view a wonderful promotional video.

Please extend an invitation to all of your staff and friends and extend a hearty Sokol greeting from all of us at American Sokol. This event promises to be a dynamic international gathering where bonds of friendship will be strengthened or forged anew.

We look forward to having you "Saddle Up" with us in June 2009.

Nazdar!
Larry Laznovsky
President, American Sokol

Tentative Schedule

Monday, June 22nd

7 PM	Coaches and VIP Reception

Tuesday, June 23rd

12 Noon	Coaches Meeting
3 PM	Fun Run/Walk
5 PM	Opening Ceremony Rehearsal
7 PM	Opening Ceremonies
10 PM	Evening Social

Wednesday, June 24th

8 AM	Volleyball
10AM	Team Marching
5 PM	Sokol/USAG Gala Rehearsal
7 PM	Sokol/USAG Gala
10 PM	Awards Ceremony Social

Thursday, June 25th

7 AM	Golf Tournament
7 AM	Artistic Gymnastics Competition – Children
11 AM	Artistic Gymnastics Competition – Jr./Sr.
3 PM	Artistic Gymnastics Competition – Opt. Lvs.
5 PM	Pan American Gymnastics Rehearsal
5 PM	Archery Competition
7 PM	Junior/Children Social
7 PM	Pan American Gymnastics Gala
10 PM	Awards Ceremony Social

Friday, June 26th

8 AM	Downtown Main Street Parade
12 Noon	Fitness Challenge, Female
12 Noon	Archery Competition
12 Noon	3-on-3 Basketball
12 Noon	Artistic Gymnastics Special Olympics
2 PM	Fitness Challenge, Children
4 PM	Fitness Challenge, Male
7 PM	Slet Program Rehearsal
10 PM	Awards Ceremony Social

Saturday, June 27th

8 AM	Artistic Gymnastics Competition – Children
8 AM	Archery Competition
12 Noon	Bowling Championships
7 PM	Slet Program Performance
10 PM	Final Awards Ceremony Social

Sunday, June 28th

8 AM	Farewell Texas Social at Sokol Fort Worth

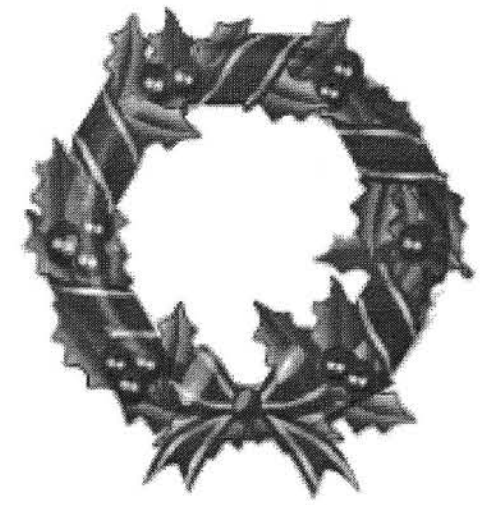
Housing Information

Omni Fort Worth Hotel
1300 Houston Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102
Phone: 817-535-6664
Fax: 817-882-8140

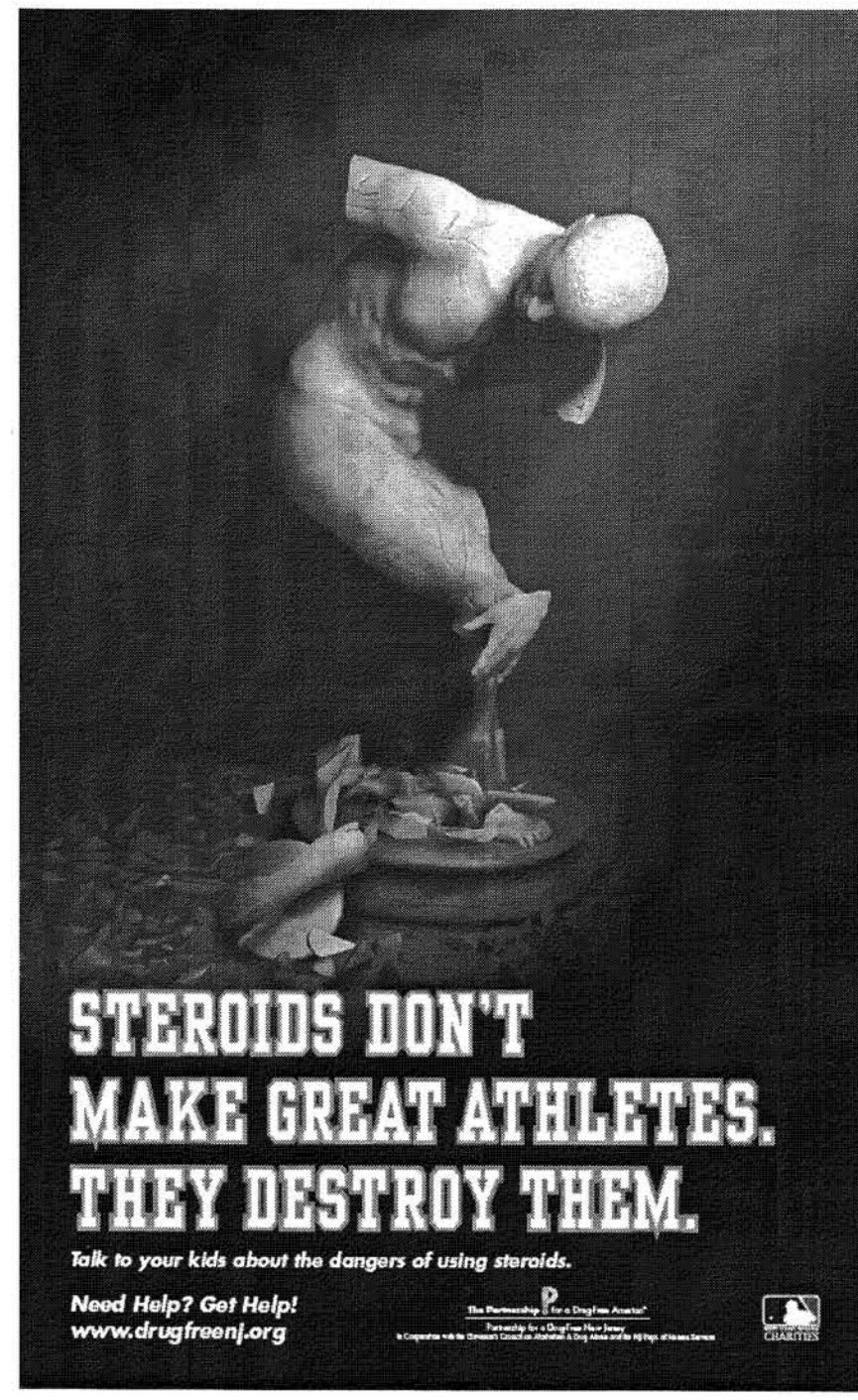
Rooms can by booked by individuals by going to the web site. The special code needed for our rate will be automatically entered when booking here.

http://www.omnihotels.com/FindAHotel/FortWorth/MeetingFacilities/2009InternationalSportsandCulturalFestival6.aspx

The hotel is located directly across the street from the Convention Center.



Merry Christmas!!



IN MEMORY

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

EDWARD GANLY – (1956-2008) A member of Lodge 30, Danbury, Conn. He is survived by his wife, Kristie, and two daughters, Chelsea and Mallory.

BETTY GALITSKY – (1913-2008) A member of Lodge 258, Campbell, Ohio. She is survived by her daughter, Betty Ann Detec.

ANNA ZOLCK – (1905-2008) A member of Lodge 209, Rankin, Pa. She is survived by her daughter, Anna Wisnewski.

ANNE W. HILL – (1905-2008) A member of Lodge 276, Pittsburgh, Pa. She is survived by her daughter, Elizabeth and her son, Jerry.

THOMAS M. HALKO – (1939-2008) A member of Lodge 146, Youngstown, Ohio. He is survived by his wife, Rita; three daughters, Laura, Patty and Sarah, and a son, Thomas.

DONALD R. FISKE – (1946-2008) A member of Lodge 244, Westfield, Mass. He is survived by his wife, Rebecca; a son, David, and a daughter, Holly.

EDWARD YABLONICKY – (1921-2008) A member of Lodge 75, Jersey City, N.J. He is survived by his wife, Irene; three daughters, Joyce, Patricia and Carol; and their families.