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SOKOL TIMES

APRIL 12, 2018

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From the President's View

While the winter is lingering and we are still shoveling snow well into March, spring is just around the corner. It is time to think about working off all of the pounds put on during the long, cold winter and the holiday season.



Joseph Bielecki

Sokol sports are a very good way to work off the excess calories that have accumulated over the winter months. Our rhythmic gymnastics and calisthenics provide great cardiovascular exercise. Additionally, the Bicycle Club provides a great opportunity to do spinning as a weight-loss technique. For those who prefer to bicycle long distances, it provides excellent outdoor exercise opportunities as well. Many participate in the Walking Club and work off the winter weight in this fashion. For older members, this is a very healthy form of exercise. I myself have seen the benefits of the walking program, having shed quite a few pounds in the course of the past year by walking daily for one hour.

With the advent of spring and its warmer weather, I encourage all of our lodges to meet and engage in the many fraternal activities associated with our Sokol movement. Fraternalism has always been one of Sokol's greatest strengths in the United

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Calisthenics and Marching Competition



Lodge 306 held a Calisthenics and Marching competition for all of the Central District. Above at left, Ginevra Kellogg from Sokol USA Lodge 306 took first place in her division! Above at right, there were four winners in the Junior division (from left) Rosie Palacios, Piper Campus and Matthew Pracko from Lodge 306, and Tammy Bajek from Sokol Naperville. Congratulations to everyone who participated! Everyone did a fantastic job. Both American Sokol and Sokol USA gyms in the Chicagoland area came together to participate. Below are some of the competitors during the awards ceremony.



SOKOL TIMES

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

Sokol USA - District 4000 a Division of GBU Financial Life

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SOKOL OFFICE:
Telephone: (973) 676-0281
E-mail: SOKOLUSAHQ@aol.com

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To the Milan Getting Scholarship Fund

Sokol USA Lodge 15, Yonkers, N.Y. \$100.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

Sokol USA Lodge 248, Rossford, Ohio \$450.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

To the Sport, Fitness & Wellness Fund

Sokol USA Lodge 15, Yonkers, N.Y. \$100.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

Sokol USA Lodge 248, Rossford, Ohio \$450.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

WE HAVE MOVED!

For future correspondence, please note the change of address for Sokol USA Headquarters:

**SOKOL USA
301 Pine Street
P.O. Box 677
Boonton, NJ 07005-0677**

Our telephone number and e-mail address remain the same. However, the fax line has been cancelled.

Scholarships and Coming Events

Have you sent in your applications for both the Sokol USA and GBU Awards? Remember, GBU also offers a Freshman Award to young people entering high school. Contact Sokol headquarters for our applications and renewal of your applications by calling (973) 676-0281 or email SOKOLUSAHQ@aol.com.

GBU initial Post- Secondary applications are included on page 4 of the January/February copy of "The Reporter" magazine. For an application of the High School Freshman Grant, call the home office at (800) 765-4428 or go online to www.gbu.org/benefits/#HSgrant. Again, the January/February Reporter provides an excellent explanation of this on page 12. Post-Secondary Applications are due on May 1, 2018, and the high school grants with a required essay are due by May

31, 2018.

Recently, Counselor Terezia Filipejova of the department of the Slovak Embassy in Washington, D.C., has provided information concerning a new one-year scholarship for Slovaks living abroad to study at Slovak universities in certain disciplines. Applications are due May 30, 2018. Further information can be obtained at helpdesk@studyabroad.sk. The application can be found online at www.vladnestipendia.sk. A copy of the full release can be obtained from Sokol Headquarters.

Even though it may not feel like it now, March 20th signaled the start of Spring. Another early Easter fell on April 1st, the favorite holiday of our prankster friends and relatives, April Fools' Day. So Happy Easter and watch your back! After the end of winter and start of warmer weather,

take time to consider joining one of our fitness clubs: walking/running or biking. Track your miles and submit the results for rewards to GBU. As always, start slowly and, if you have any health issues, consult your doctor first.

Due to scheduling conflicts, there have been changes to our spring meetings. The Sokol USA board meeting has been moved to the weekend of April 27th and 28th at Boonton Hall. Also, Region MCT has moved their meeting to May 20th at 1 p.m. at the Quality Inn in Tarentum, Pa. The current number is now 24 members getting ready to attend the XVI PAN SOKOL SLET in Prague during July 1-6th. Good luck and have a safe trip to all members.

NAZDAR

Sister Nancy Shurina, Chair
Cultural & Fraternal Activities

Mini Sokolfest and Pig Roast

Women's Competition - all Xcel levels
Men's Competition - Sokol Level 2 & 3,
USAG Level 4 & up
All Ages Welcome
Followed by Pig Roast dinner!

Saturday

May 19, 2018

Cost - \$50 per athlete

Register by 4/10/2018

There will be a clinic
to teach the 2019 cal
on Sunday.

\$10 dinner only



For more info call: **724-544-1721**
email rosters to:
falcongymnasticsteam@gmail.com

Falcon Gymnastics
226 Nazareth Drive
Belle Vernon, PA
15012

SOKOL USA DISTRICT 4000 Board Meeting Notice

The National Board will meet
on **Saturday, April 28, 2018**
at the **Boonton Sokol Hall,**
301 Pine Street, Boonton, NJ.
The meeting will commence at **9:00 AM.**

The **Finance Committee Trustee's** will
meet **Friday, April 27, 2018.**
The **Trustee meeting** will commence
at **10:30 AM sharp!**

**All correspondence, recommendations,
grievances and motions for the good
and welfare must be sent to:**

SOKOL USA
Attn: Fraternal Secretary
P.O. BOX 677
Boonton, NJ 07005-0677

*All correspondence must be received
no later than April 12, 2018*

Joseph S. Bielecki
President

Edward Bohon
Fraternal Secretary

June 9, 2018 Golfers – Save the Date!



NINTH ANNUAL SOKOL USA FARRELL, PA FOUR PERSON OPEN GOLF SCRAMBLE

SHENANGO LAKE GOLF CLUB
99 Birchwood Drive, Transfer, PA 16154

American Sokol Instructors School July 15 – July 29, 2018

Hosted by Sokol Greater Cleveland – Cleveland, Ohio

Levels – Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Advanced II

Minimum Age – 13

American Sokol will once again hold a summer Instructors School. This program is part of a strong tradition of training instructors to provide high-quality Sokol programs for our members and local communities. Instructor Training Schools are for teens and adults and offer four levels of instruction. Participants attend a two-week, all-day intensive program and are trained to instruct gymnastics and other physical fitness activities. There is a strong emphasis on safety and spotting, as well as the responsibilities associated with being an instructor.

Attendees participate in student teaching lessons and are taught how to read and write Sokol terminology, which is used to write calisthenics and beginner gymnastics routines. Students are also taught different levels of gymnastics routines provided by USA Gymnastics, the leading authority in the sport. Sokol history, Czechoslovak and Sokol songs, and folk dancing are part of the curriculum, as are marching and games. Students can attain safety certifications from USA Gymnastics, along with other sports-related certifications. Sokol schools have produced many excellent instructors and Sokol leaders over the years. Most attendees develop lifelong friendships at Sokol School and have fond memories of their days at "Kurz" (school).

As in previous years, the Sokol USA Board approved reimbursing lodges for the full tuition for any Sokol USA member who is recommended by their lodge director as a candidate for attending the school. Contact the national directors for application forms.

Instructors School is one of the best ways to ensure that your lodge programs have sufficient instructors to continue your gymnastics programs. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity that is extended to us by our sister Sokol organization. Nazdar!

ATTENTION LODGES and REGIONS: SFW Department Reports are due Saturday, April 21st

All Lodges and Regions are requested to submit a report detailing activities, for the purpose of creating an annual report to be presented by the National Directors to the District Board.

SFW activities include gymnastics, fitness and exercise, weight training programs, as well as bowling, volleyball, golf, baseball, softball programs, etc. We encourage every Lodge to update us regarding your SFW activities so that we can compile a complete report. All Regions are also requested to submit a report detailing activities of the Region.

As detailed in the Sokol USA By Laws Article IX, "*Regions are established for the purpose of facilitating the SFW activities, contests, public exhibitions, as well as educational work of Sokol U.S.A.*"

"It is the duty of the Region Directors to prepare and submit to the National Directors statistical reports containing data on membership taking part in the gymnastics, SFW activities, and exhibits of the lodges within their region."

If your Lodge or Region did not elect directors, then any officer may complete the report.

At our last Convention, a motion was passed directing a review of the Region and Lodge Sections of the By Laws. Your current reports will better inform the SFW Department and the District Board about the activity levels in your Regions and assist the committee assigned to review the By Laws.

Lodge and Region Report Forms were e-mailed or mailed to Lodges and Regions for which we had current information. If you did not receive a form, please contact Director Chris Yatchyshyn.

All Lodge and Region reports are due no later than Saturday, April 21, 2018
Return to Director Chris Yatchyshyn at cyatch1258@gmail.com
or mail to 404 E. Laurel Ave., Pen Argyl, PA 18072

Note:

If you represented your Lodge or Region (District) at the 2017 Convention, you received a form via e-mail if an e-mail address was provided. The forms were also e-mailed to one or more active members within your Region, including District Board members who may be able to assist with completing the form.

Of the 12 Regions listed in our By Laws, seven had representatives at the last Convention. For the other five, we have an e-mail address for one Region and a mailing address for another. At present, we do not have any contact information for the Adirondack, Pavel Mudron or Jan Holly Regions. If anyone has a contact in these Regions, please share that information with the National Directors. Nazdar!

Lifetime Fitness

How are you doing with your fitness program? If you have been working on it, you feel better already. If not, it's *never too late* to begin.

First, a review of advice from the last issue, in the form of a quiz. Which of these pieces of advice is correct?

- a.) For better health, eat about half of your daily food intake in the form of vegetables and fruits.
- b.) Your body doesn't want to have to deal with junk food.
- c.) Don't eat until you feel full. You will feel full a few minutes after eating a moderate amount.
- d.) Sitting still for more than an hour at a time is detrimental to your health.
- e.) Good posture includes keeping your stomach in, back flat, chin up, shoulders down, and weight evenly distributed on both feet.
- f.) Any exercises that include balancing on one foot are good for core (back and abdominal) muscles. Stand near something that you can grab on to if you start to lose your balance.
- g.) A good back stretcher is lying on your back with your legs bent (or straight) up over your stomach.
- h.) Any movements and simple exercises that you can comfortably do, you should keep doing throughout the day.
- i.) Stretching should be done bilaterally, stretching both right and left sides equally.

ANSWERS: All statements are correct. If you got a few wrong, go back to the top of this article and reread the advice, letters a to i. Then, put the advice into practice. After that, you will be ready for more fitness advice.

Meanwhile, what is Sokol "gymnastics?"

As an active Sokol gymnast for about 60 years, I learned long ago that the term "gymnastics" in Sokol is to be construed in the broadest possible sense,



Walking on the beam requires good posture, and even adults can benefit. Practice on a line on the floor, and with a book or a beanbag on your head. Then some day you may be able to walk easily on a low beam! In the photo at left, the shoulders and arms could be pressed down a little more. But don't take your eyes off the end of the beam! Don't have a gym near you to get on a balance beam? At right, find a park with a fitness circuit. And don't forget to try the other items on the circuit.

including all kinds of physical movement. Look through your "Sokol Gymnastics Manual," written by Miroslav Tyrs, who founded the Sokol system in 1862 and organized a system of exercises by type.

You don't have your Sokol Gymnastics Manual handy? Here's a summary:

There are four "Departments" in the Sokol Manual. The first includes calisthenics and marching-type exercises. That is, exercises that can be done alone and with no equipment. In modern times, various yoga, zumba, dancercise, modern dance, aerobics, Pilates, and numerous similar activities fall into this category of the Sokol System of fitness, along with

walking, hiking, running, and jogging.

The second department includes exercises with equipment, such as weight lifting and free weight exercises; other equipment found in modern fitness centers; rhythmic gymnastics with rope, balls, clubs, and hoops; field events such as shot put, high jump, relay race, and javelin throw; bowling, golf, hula hoops, juggling, hacky sack, even walking while balancing a cup on your head. It also includes exercises on apparatus such as parallel bars, vaulting, rings, and balance beam – the events that have evolved into the competitive gymnastics events we think of today.

The third department includes exercises done with the cooperation of others, primarily pyramids and hand balancing. And the fourth department includes "combatives": all kinds of wrestling, tug of war, sports and games, and the like.

So, gymnastics in the Sokol way of life does not seek to develop gymnastics champions such as we see competing in the Olympics. Rather, it seeks to develop physically fit individuals who are, by their lifelong dedication to any of a variety of regular physical activities, healthy and able to participate actively in and contribute to society.

CONCLUSION: Wherever

you are, and whatever your current physical ability, using the Sokol system of "gymnastics" will increase your fitness.

FINAL ADVICE: Keep track of your exercise efforts in a log book or on a calendar so you will know how much you are doing. A total of three to four hours per week of fairly vigorous physical activity, plus regular stand-up-and-stretch breaks when sitting for long periods (at work, driving, on a plane, or wherever), is needed for you to see an improvement in your level of fitness.

When I begin my April column by asking "How are you doing with your fitness program?", you'll be proud to reply "pretty well."

MINUTES OF M.M. HODZA DISTRICT MEETING

OCTOBER 14, 2017
TARRYTOWN, NY

President Judy Bindas called the meeting to order at 10:30AM. The following people were in attendance:

Name	Lodge
Judith Bindas	32 – President / Co-Director
Teddy Fernandez	1 – Vice-President
Brandi Kovac	12 – Co-Director / Secretary
Norah Valentin	12 - Treasurer
Ellen Kovac	12

Sis. Bindas led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for deceased members followed. The officers made special mention of Bro. Joe Massar, former District Officer, as well as Bro. John Walek, former President of Sokol USA and

Lodge 32 and Sis. Emily Puchatz, former Lodge 12 officer, both of whom were "the heart and soul" of their respective Lodges and this District for decades.

Minutes from the 2016 meeting were read. A motion was made to accept the minutes. Motion seconded and carried.

Sis. Bindas thanked all the District Officers for their dedication and commitment to District MM Hodza.

Treasurer's Report

As always, Sis. Valentin presented a professional, detailed annual report of the District's finances, as well as a comprehensive ten-year summary. She categorized each expense and listed what we've spent on average over the ten years in each category. This average provides a great perspective on our spending and helps highlight differences from year to year.

In examining the 10-year summary, since US of E is re-vamping how the annual fees will be billed, there is one year where it looked like we paid twice, but there is one year where it looked like we didn't pay at all. (read New Business for more info)

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Yoga at Lodge 306



Lodge 306 is trying new types of cool down activities in their classes. At left, Junior instructors are leading the Sokolettes class through a group yoga session. They even turned down the lights to them the feel of a yoga studio! They began with some simple yoga skills and progressed to more difficult ones to help challenge the gymnasts. To mix it up, the Junior instructors also had the gymnasts try some more combative styles of yoga. At right, they are working on some partner yoga type skills.

MINUTES OF M.M. HODZA DISTRICT MEETING

(Continued from Page 4)

There haven't been any donations from other Lodges for years. Bro. Fernandez will continue the outreach he began last year. He emailed Headquarters for the contact info of Officers from other Lodges in our area, and this year he will attempt to re-connect with those other Lodges and see if they have any activity. Regardless, we'd like to be in touch to see if they'd like to attend and support our activities.

This year, there was more income than expenses because there were no Slet reimbursements. We had 2 members (from Boonton) ask for Safety Certification reimbursement. Sis. Valentin was owed some per diem because she represented the District at this past summer's Sokol USA Convention. Sis. Valentin didn't want the bank balance to dip below the minimum just so she could get her per diem. She helped cover her own expenses by selling T-shirts at the Convention – what a business savvy move – this is why we love Sis. Valentin! But still, she deserves reimbursement for representing us at the Convention, so motion made, seconded and carried that she make sure she has reimbursed herself all she is due from being a Convention delegate.

The fees for the bank account are still a dilemma, but Sis. Valentin has yet to find a better bank as an alternative. The bank balance had dipped below the \$3,000.00 minimum last year. There is an \$18.00 per month fee assessed when the balance is under \$3,000.00. Sis. Valentin often has called and gotten Bank of America to waive the low balance fee, but there's no guarantee that the Bank will continue to waive the fee.

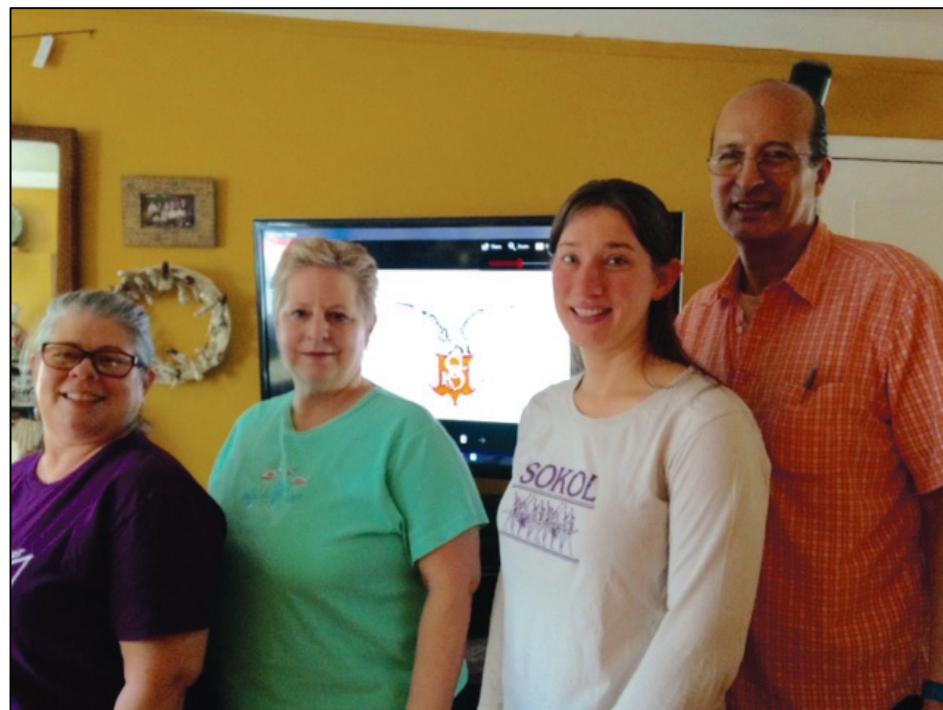
REMINDER FROM LAST YEAR'S MINUTES: Motion made for Sis. Valentin to investigate the financial services at PNC and Investors Bank. For the District purposes, we need an ATM card, no monthly fee, low minimum balance, and still conveniently located to Sis. Valentin. We'd like the new account to have two signatures authorized (on file), but only one signature required on check. Motion seconded and carried. A separate motion was made giving Sis. Valentin pre-approval to change banks if given criteria is met. Motion seconded and carried.

To temporarily solve the minimum balance dilemma, Sis. Ellen Kovac made a motion that we transfer Promissory Note #27 for \$1,000.00 into the District account. Motion made and seconded.

Motion made and seconded to accept the financial report as read. The District applauded Sis. Valentin for the exceptional and conscientious care she takes with our finances.

Gymnastics

Sis. Brandi Kovac attended the United Sokols of the East meeting held at Sokol NY on 10/11/17. Due to logistical and space limitations, the US of E will NOT offer a Novice level for the Sokolettes. They will offer Level 1, 2, 3 and Xcel for Sokolettes. They will offer Xcel for Juniors and Seniors (as per the rules of last year's Slet). The boys competition will be held on Friday, April 20, 2018 and the girls competition will be held on Saturday, April 21st. There will be 3 sessions of girls. Tentative times are 9:30, 12:30 and 3:30pm. However, final times will be set at the February meeting



Newly re-elected officers of District/Region M.M. Hodza are (from left) Norah Valentin, Treasurer; Judy Bindas, President and Co-Director; Brandi Kovac, Secretary and Co-Director; and Teddy Fernandez, Vice President.

when a more accurate headcount of gymnasts in each level is known.

We will tentatively schedule the District competition for Saturday, March 24, 2018. If this ends up being a conflict at the Boonton Hall, Sis. Bindas will let us know. We WILL offer a Novice division for Sokolettes, and possibly a Super Novice division, in addition to the other divisions that are offered by the US of E. Sis. Bindas and Sis. Valentin will make sure Lodge 32 and Lodge 12 are teaching the same Novice rules.

The boys will register and group stretch at 9:30AM and warm-up / compete immediately. The girls will register and group stretch at 12:30PM and warm-up / compete at 1:00PM. Just as a reminder, the uniform policy is as follows: female competitors must wear a leotard that is red, white, and blue or any combination thereof, and male competitors must wear blue shorts, with a red, white, or blue shirt.

Special thanks also go to the National Officers who attended. Sis. Ellen Kovac and Bro. Emil Trgala helped with judging and tabulating, respectively. Sis. Kathy Naccarato, Assistant Sports, Fitness & Wellness Director, also helped. Special Discussion turned to how to get a few more adults/parents involved to help out either: selling the fundraisers (there are backpacks, t-shirts and cookbooks left) or helping in the kitchen that day.

Both Bro. George Dano and Bro. James Malik might enjoy attending the competition; the Officers will get in touch with them.

Our ANONYMOUS DONOR saved the day again and surprised us with a donation to

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MINUTES OF M.M. HODZA DISTRICT MEETING

(Continued from Page 5)

keep our ice cream social tradition alive (we've been doing this at the end of the District competition for several years now). The ice cream sundae treat following the competition is such a fun way for the athletes to socialize. We can't thank our ANONYMOUS DONOR enough!

The Sports, Fitness and Wellness Department (formerly the National Gymnastics Department) Meeting

This year, the Sports, Fitness and Wellness Department Meetings were a few conference calls throughout the year. Several District members were able to call in; we thank them for their time. The focus of the calls was the next Slet being planning for Buffalo in 2019 and to nominate Sis. Chris Yatchyshyn and Bro. Todd Yatchyshyn as Co-Directors (as the Department's recommendation to the Convention). Sis. Chris Yatchyshyn emailed minutes from the SF&W meeting, so please refer to them.

Lodge Reports:

Lodge 1, New York: Bro. Fernandez is not a Lodge #1 Officer, and is not sure if the remaining Lodge #1 officers are meeting regularly. The District is thrilled that Bro. Fernandez continues to serve as a District Officer. Bro. Fernandez and Bro. George Dano are still active with some activities at Sokol New York. Bro. Fernandez is going to communicate with Headquarters about getting in touch with other local Lodges.

Lodge 12, Central Jersey: They are in the same location: Henderson's Gymnastics Academy in Edison, NJ on Friday nights. There are other groups in the gym while we work out; our Sokol group has no time alone in the gym until almost the end of the evening. However, we have a wonderful relationship with the gym owners and they have provided a flexible schedule of when the Sokol gymnasts can be on the equipment. Lodge 12 is happy to have a few Tots now, as well as a few Senior Men. We are lucky to have enough instructors, and have room for more gymnasts. We would love to have more participants! Sis. Ellen Kovac represented Lodge 12 at the 2017 Slet in Cedar Rapids. She won awards in the Fitness Challenge and Artistic Gymnastics. Way to go! Lodge 12 was proud to have Sis. Anna Rehwinkel represent the Lodge at the 2017 Convention. She served on the By-Laws Committee; we thank her for her dedication, time and energy.

Lodge 32, Boonton: Boonton holds classes on Monday (boys) and Tuesday (girls) evenings. Boonton has 16 Sokolettes, 7 Junior Girls, and 5 Sokolads. As always, Boonton fundraises throughout the year. They have a Fish & Chips dinner, holiday calendar raffle, and more! They are holding a pancake breakfast next weekend. Back by popular demand, Boonton will have The Giving Tree, which gives back to the local community. Also, the Lodge occasionally rents out the hall out to generate income. They've had a mini-ninja kids training program rent out their hall for six-week sessions. Their bowling league is doing great. Boonton participated in the National Bowling Tournament last May, which was open to the Polish Falcons and the Catholic Sokols. Boonton had 2 teams – hurrah! Two instructors renewed their Safety Certification. The downstairs meeting room at the Boonton Lodge is now being rented out by Sokol USA Headquarters. Bro. Ed Bohon, President of Lodge 32, at the Convention was elected to be the National Financial Secretary. Boonton reached out to former gymnasts to see if anyone was interested in helping coach. Boonton initiated a "work bond" with parents of gymnasts. Parents have multiple opportunities to volunteer at Boonton activities in exchange for a discount on the cost of the program. Boonton is deciding to make donations to hurricane relief, and then to supplement The Giving Tree.

Sis. Bindas congratulated the Lodges on their great activities and all of the instructors' hard work. Sis. Bindas applauded the Lodge 12 Directors for keeping the program going, considering advertising is word of mouth. Motion made & seconded to accept Lodge Reports.

Motion made for quick break and then resume for working lunch. Meeting resumed at 12:15PM.

Recommendations from the co-Directors for 2017-2018

1. The District help finance District students sent to Sokol Instructors' Schools by reimbursing 50% of the most reasonable means of transportation.
2. The District host at least one Eastern Area training session, if needed, during the 2017-2018 season, with reimbursement provided by the Sport, Fitness and Wellness Department.
3. The District reimburse Director(s) travel, lodging and food expenses arising from

District participation in authorized activities.

4. The District retain its membership with the United Sokols of the East. (The \$100 annual membership fee will be paid as follows: \$30 by the District, \$35 by Lodge 12 and \$35 by Lodge 32.)
5. The District sponsor an annual competition for Children, Juniors and Seniors to be held March 24, 2018 in Boonton; and the District financially support this event by paying for awards, and the participants' and volunteers' meals (@ \$3 per meal).
6. The District have representation at the 2018 Sokol USA National Sport, Fitness and Wellness Department Board meeting; paying for expenses not covered by the National Sport, Fitness and Wellness Department.
7. The District subsidize expenses for District participants in any 2018 Sokol USA National sports tournament (golf, bowling, volleyball, etc.), excluding Sokolfest activities, by paying \$10.00 per participant, per tournament.
8. The District reimburse member instructors one-half their tuition for completion of the USAG Safety Certification Course.
9. The District pays for the Professional Membership in the USAG for each of the District Officers, if the Membership is not paid by the Supreme Lodge.
10. The District subsidize expenses for District participants in the 2018 International Sokolfest in Prague, by paying \$100.00 per participant in a sanctioned event or official Slet activity (up to a maximum of \$1,000.00 reimbursement).

Motion was made and seconded that the recommendations be accepted. Motion carried.

Convention Report

The Minutes of the Convention this past summer held in Pittsburgh, PA will be printed in the Sokol Times, so please refer to them. Sis. Ellen Kovac was present as a National Board member, Sis. Norah Valentin was present as our District MM Hodza representative. Sis. Bindas thanked them both for the time they took out of their summers to represent us!

In general, the deliberations were pleasant as Sis. Bea Walko is an effective Chairperson. Sis. Valentin re-capped the goals of the committee on which she worked. Her committee suggested that Lodges reach out to former athletes and members, which she is happy to note that Boonton already does. She was interested in hearing about the community service that some other Lodges and Districts do. Sis. Valentin hopes that more of the Lodges participate in / on more of the SF&W conference calls and meeting. One issue up for a vote was to dissolve our current Districts (now called Regions). Sis. Valentin was happy to report that the Convention voted to keep the "Regions". Sis. Valentin reported on the brainstorming sessions that occurred throughout the Convention. The Convention resulted in several relatively new members being elected to the National Board. We wish them the best of luck, and we hope this brings about positive changes in our organization!

Old Business

The District had a training session led by Sis. Ellen Kovac and Jeanne Devanney, on December 27, 2016 at the Boonton Hall. Attendance was low, possibly because athletes and coaches are already comfortable with the Xcel rules. Even still, it was a really productive day!

New Business

The District moved to send a letter to the newly elected officers and sent to be published in Sokol Times. Sis. Brandi Kovac will draft the letter to be approved via email by other officers.

Sis. Ellen Kovac brought information about a new, free online course called SAFESport. The course explains "grooming", and how it often leads to inappropriate behavior and abuse of power by a coach. We suggest that instructors, junior instructors, lodge officers and parents take the course to help them recognize the signs of grooming. There's also USAG's certified instructor courses, U100.

As stated in the Treasurer's Report section, the US of E is re-vamping how they will bill going forward. Instead of receiving a bill after the competition, each organization is being asked to bring a check / credit card with them and pay on the date of the competition. So for our District, even if Sis. Valentin isn't present at the US of E meet, she can hopefully coordinate getting the check to the meet.

We can continue fundraising at our District competition by selling products we already have in stock: retro t-shirts, back packs and cook books, etc. Sis. Valentin may buy a few more sparkly t-shirts as well.

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Three Legions for Czechoslovakia

Submitted by Br. Ed Chlanda
Sokol Museum & Library

The three Czechoslovak Legions in France, Italy and Russia of Czechs and Slovaks in 1918 were of enormous political and practical help to Masaryk during World War I ("the Great War"). When Masaryk had to deal with the Allies, seeking their support for a democratic new country from the impending ruins of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the three Legions brought attention to the cause. Readers are certainly familiar with the common greeting used among the legionnaires. It was "Nazdar!", since many had been Sokols at home. In 1917, Masaryk was the presumed leader of then just a dream of a nation. From 1914 to 1918, he had no country to claim when dealing with the representative of the Allies and, if he returned home, he had already been sentenced in absentia for treason. What Masaryk did have to bring to the Allies' table were three armies, the Czechoslovak Legions in France, Italy and Russia. The Legions assisted Masaryk, Benes and Stefanik in the creation in 1918 of a new republic, rising from the destruction of an empire.

The Allied countries that had Czechoslovak Legions on their front lines (Italy, France, and Russia) all supported the formation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, as did Britain and the USA. Masaryk, Stefanik and Benes achieved this in part thanks to those three legions of Czechs and Slovaks, with many Sokols in their ranks. What did gymnastics at Sokol give you? Courage in the heart, strength in the arms, and the nation in the mind. The Legionnaires all understood that maxim then, and it carried them through the war. They served in the most desperate times, in the trenches of France, the Alps of Italy and across Russia. The Sokol movement across the Slavic provinces of the empire had given them discipline, physical fitness, morale, and a yearning for democracy. It was not "incidental" that under the Emperor Franz Joseph of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire Sokols addressed each other as "brother," without regard to social rank. Bohemia and Slovakia were provinces of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire that ruled over Central and Southern Europe with a heavy hand. The Turners in Germany were similarly viewed as suspect in their monarchial homeland for their progressive, democratic views.

Funding was needed for the political and military efforts. At times, it was illegal in the "neutral" US to support any of the combatants, but it was done anyway

in cash, with Sokols as the "bag men" carrying cash contributions from Sokols and immigrant groups across America.

In WWI, the polyglot Slavs of draft age were drafted into the Austrian-Hungarian Army, and were taught a minimal number of military commands in a language they otherwise mostly did not understand. Naturally, the Czechs and Slovaks were not the best of drafted soldiers to support an empire that oppressed them culturally and politically. Many were captured or just deserted. Indeed, the 28th Regiment from Prague deserted in formation to the ire of the empire. There was a wartime joke recounted by Professor Claire Nolte in "European Culture in the Great War" (Cambridge University Press): "Three soldiers, one French, one German, and one Czech all die at the same time and appear at the pearly gates. St. Peter asks them why they fought in the Great War. The French soldier says 'For the Republic and the nation!' The German says 'For the Emperor and the Fatherland!' The Czech soldier says 'For eight Kreutzer's a day.' " Why did they desert, or get captured and then rejoin the war? No mystery, but with clear risks. Under the Geneva Convention of 1905, POWs that turned against their "country" (officially the Austrian Hungarian Empire), were traitors, and many were hanged when captured.

The POWs in Russia became the famed Czech/Slovak "Družina," first comprised mostly of émigrés living then in Russia that helped save the day for the Russians in the battle of Zborov. "Družina" translations vary from troupe, band (of artists), clique, to even gang or family, but easiest understood here as a "Legion." After the overthrow of the Czar in 1917, Masaryk visited with the many prisoners of war in Russia, encouraging them to join the Družina, and stirred their passion for a free democratic Czechoslovakia. Masaryk's portfolio still lacked a country, but he now had three legions. They were one of Masaryk's bargaining chips in dealing with the Allies to form a new nation with disputed borders.

In France, there were the Czech and Slovak volunteers, including over 2,000 from America. You can see the plaque at Sokol New York that lists the volunteers to the Czech Army then, before the US joined in the war. I am sure that at many of the remaining Sokol lodges across America today there are similar plaques. Unfortunately, lost today are the plaques and histories of the more than 100 Sokol units that faded away in recent decades. When those units

and lodges faded away, the histories mostly disappeared. We can only wish they had left us their histories, photos, their plaques.

You can read the memoirs of a Sokol volunteer in "The Wartime Experiences of a Cleveland Czechoslovak Legionnaire" as an example of the over 2,000 volunteers from America who joined the Czechoslovak Legion in France before the US entered the war. When Masaryk, a Sokol too, visited them in Darney, France, in 1919, he ended his speech with "Nazdar!" And reminded them of the difficult road ahead. The troops answered with a "thunderous Nazdar!!!" And it is noted that during the war, when circumstances permitted, Sokols in all the legions did gymnastic exercises from their Sokol days back home.

In Italy, an Ally in WWI, the Czechoslovak Legion was formed mostly by deserters, and prisoners of war, including my two Sokol uncles from Bohemia. Jan Papánek was the official assigned by Masaryk to Rome to guide the legion in Italy. In 1948, after the communist coup in Czechoslovakia, he remained in the US and became the founder of the American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees, now AFCSLS.org. Another story for another day. See "The Great War's Forgotten Front" for a memoir. My stepfather was a draftee then and he would tell the almost funny story of marching off as a draftee toward the Italian Alps with the Austrian-Hungarian army. In every little village, the local priest came out to bless the troops and cannons. After a few villages, he realized with fear that the Allied army in Italy was coming toward him, being blessed by the Pope and Cardinals along the way! Mom downplayed the story and said he was always safe as a cook for the battalion. Well, every old Sokol will have some stories.

In Russia, the legionaries continued to serve years after the Armistice of 1918. To know why and how, I read the history of the legions in Russia, during the Bolshevik Revolution. It was the most dramatic and significant in historical terms. I cannot do justice to any of the legions' histories, so please add the books noted below to your Sokol Libraries. There were Czechs and Slovak émigrés in Russia when the war started and they formed the famed "Družina" augmented after a time by the Czech/ Slovak POWs (prisoners of war) when the Czar and his advisors finally assented to having these anti-monarchial soldiers help them.

(To be Continued)

MINUTES OF M.M. HODZA DISTRICT MEETING

(Continued from Page 6)

Reminder from last year: discussion ensued regarding how to more effectively announce our athletic and social events to other GBU members and get them to join our Central Jersey and / or Boonton programs.

As in the past, any urgent business and business that arises before the next annual meeting can be discussed and voted on via email.

Salaries:

President	\$75.00
Vice President	\$30.00
Secretary	\$55.00
Treasurer	\$75.00
Directors	\$75.00 each

Motion was made and seconded that the Secretary's salary be increased to \$75.00 for the following year. Motion carried.

Nomination of Officers:

Nominations of officers were opened. Sis. Kovac moved that the present slate of Officers remain the same. Judy Bindas nominated for President. She accepted the nomination.

Teddy Fernandez nominated for Vice President. He accepted the nomination.
Brandi Kovac nominated for Secretary. She accepted the nomination.
Norah Valentin nominated for Treasurer. She accepted the nomination.
Brandi Kovac nominated for Co-Director. She accepted the nomination.
Judy Bindas nominated for Co-Director. She accepted the nomination.
There being no more nominations, nominations were closed.

**Motion made and seconded that the secretary cast one vote for the slate.
Motion carried.**

President – Judy Bindas
Vice President - Teddy Fernandez
Secretary – Brandi Kovac
Treasurer - Norah Valentin
Co-Directors – Brandi Kovac and Judy Bindas

Our next meeting will be on 10/13/18. The meeting location and time is TBD, please contact Brandi Kovac if you're interested in attending.

Sis. Bindas thanked Bro. Fernandez for his hard work organizing the lunch, and reminded him to submit his food expense receipts to Sis. Valentin for reimbursements.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Brandi Kovac, Secretary

Junior Board Bake Sale



Lodge 306 has recently created a new group to offer the younger members of their gym more leadership opportunities. The group is led by their Junior members and is referred to as the Junior Board. During the Cal and Marching Competition, the Junior Board held a Bake Sale to help raise money for the Lodge 306 gym program as well as future young adult outings. Congratulations on your first successful fundraiser of many!

From the President's View

(Continued from Page 1)
States. Many of our lodges engage in charitable activities in their communities and do wonderful acts of community service. It is also good for our lodges to meet so that our members can renew and maintain old Sokol friendships and experience fraternalism in this manner as well.

This year, during the first calendar week of July, Ceska Obec Sokol (COS) in Prague is hosting an All-Sokol Slet. 2018 marks the centenary of the establishment of the first Czechoslovakia Republic. The establishment of Czechoslovakia has its origins, in part, in North America during the first World War and the year 1918. It was at that time that Thomas Masaryk travelled throughout Western Europe and the United States promoting the idea of an independent state comprised of Czechs and Slovaks. One of the seminal events leading to the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia was the May 31, 1918, Pittsburgh Agreement.

There will be a very large-scale commemoration on May 31 of this year at the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center. The History Center houses the original, signed Pittsburgh agreement. It also houses a large collection of Sokol materials. Sokol was one of the pillars of Czechoslovak independence, the others being Thomas Masaryk and the

Czechoslovak legionnaires. As a result, COS in Prague is marking the centenary of Czechoslovakia with a large international Slet.

Many, many thousands of people from all over Europe and North America and other countries are expected to come to Prague and participate in the Slet. There will be a grand Sokol march through the center of Prague and several days of Sokol sport activities at large-scale sports stadiums in Prague.

Many of our members plan to attend and participate in the various sporting and cultural activities that are planned in Prague during the week of July 1-8, 2018, for the Slet. There will be many from our Board of Directors as well as from our Farrell Lodge and other lodges in attendance. There will also be members coming from the American Sokol organization, Sokol Canada, Sokol Slovenia, Sokol Serbia and many other Sokol groups. There will also be

a World Sokol Federation meeting during this time. It will be an exciting event for all who participate and there will be many photos and news articles published upon our return from Prague. I encourage all who are able to attend the Prague Slet. It is a stirring and wonderful experience.

I would like to send best wishes to all of our members for the Easter and Passover holidays. Since we will not be publishing this newsletter in May, I would like to extend a Happy Mother's Day greetings to all of our members who are mothers. You need not worry about eating the chocolate Easter bunny or too many Peeps, as they are calorie-free for this year only in celebration of the upcoming Slet in Prague.

Nazdar!
Joe Bielecki
President
Sokol USA

Do you have articles or pictures from events that you are interested in having submitted to the Sokol Times? Email these items to Sokoltimesubmissions@gmail.com.

If submitting pictures, please include a three to four sentence caption that can be included with the event.

Sokol USA District MCT Annual Meeting

Sunday, May 20, 2018
1 PM

Quality Inn
(former Clarion Hotel)
300 Tarentum Bridge Road
New Kensington, PA
Route 28 North, Exit 14

Please RSVP by calling
Patricia A. Blistan at 412-322-8865.

We trust all lodges will be represented!

Nazdar!
Patricia A. Blistan
Recording Secretary

Soaring Falcons Wanted!!!

Do you know of a member young or old who you would like to recognize for their contributions, representations, and/or commitment to your Lodge? You can submit an article with a picture for consideration to Sokoltimesubmissions@gmail.com.

The deadline for the next Soaring Falcon submission is May 19th! Let's recognize our members and show them how much we appreciate them on all levels!!!

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.

EMELIA BABIC – (1920-2017) A member of Lodge 42W, Tarrytown, N.Y.

ALMA BUCHER – (1931-2018) A member of Loge 276 Pittsburgh, Pa.

ROGER GATTI – (1943-2017) A member of Lodge 278, Masaryktown, Fla.

STEVEN KAYE – (1922-2017) A member of Lodge 33W, Johnstown, N.Y.

ANNE KOVINSKY – (1929-2017) A member of Lodge 130, New Kensington, Pa.

MICHAEL KRIVOSH – (1921-2016) A member of Lodge 103, Farrell, Pa.

VICTOR PRASCO – (1932-2017) A member of Loge 89W, Gary, Ind.

EDITH ROSE – (1936-2018) A member of Lodge 47, Monessen, Pa.

MARGARET STEFANIK – (1925-2017) A member of Lodge 66W, Bethlehem, Pa.

THOMAS STELL – (1933-2017) A member of Lodge 122, Kenosha, Wis.

MARIANNE WILSON – (1933-2018) A member of Lodge 130, New Kensington, Pa.