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SOKOL



TIMES

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From the President's View

As I write this article, it is mid-July and summer is almost half finished. 2020 has been an extraordinary year with many unusual events and difficulties. The first of these was the COVID-19 pandemic. Many things ground to a halt, many states went into lengthy lockdowns and many things were changed due to the COVID pandemic.

In large part, the quarantines have ended, and the country is trying to resume its pre-COVID life as much as possible.

In many regions, our SOKOL halls and gyms were shuttered due to the pandemic. In some areas, they are still closed due to state regulations. Many lodges saw large scale meetings suspended by state governmental authorities as a result of the pandemic. Our membership became creative and many lodges found alternate ways to meet such as by using the Zoom program. Our National District Board and Executive Committee had multiple meetings via Zoom. While these are not the same as in person meetings, they are effective ways to maintain communication and to keep in contact with the membership.

The pandemic did not kill our SOKOL spirit. Fraternalism has been one of SOKOL USA's big focuses since its inception. At the height of the pandemic in March and April, GBU's National Fraternal Office set forth a challenge to all districts. GBU would match up to \$1,000 (in the case of large districts like SOKOL USA, they matched up to \$5,000). Solicitation letters were sent out to all of our members. SOKOL USA District Board designated five charities to receive the donations and first responder matching funds from the GBU program. Our SOKOL USA District 4000 raised \$2,480 in donations from SOKOL USA members. GBU matched these funds plus donated the sum of \$5,000 in total to the SOKOL designated charities. The first responder and foodbank

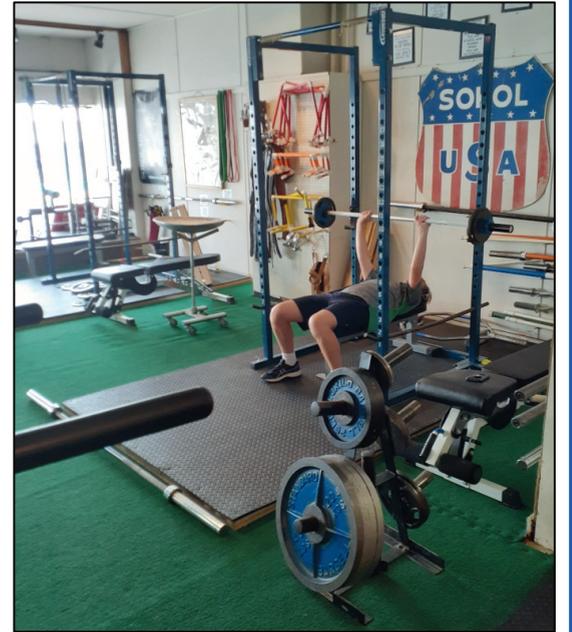


Joseph Bielecki

charities designated by the SOKOL USA District Board were the Connecticut Food Bank, the New Jersey Food Bank, the Lehigh Valley Health Network, the UPMC pre-hospital service (which provides ambulance and life-flight services) and the Amita Health Foundation in the Chicago area. Throughout the entire GBU network, \$249,772 was donated to first responder and food bank charities. Half of that money was GBU matching money from the program. These were spectacular results and showed how strong the fraternalism is in the entire GBU network.

While many of our lodges were not able to operate due to the extended quarantine and state restrictions and limitations on the reopening of gyms, some have tried to keep in contact with their membership and to encourage their membership to do sports. Our Central Jersey lodge has been doing home exercises. The Chicago Lodge has done some fundraising events. These were take-out dinners of chicken paprikash and halushky. These fundraisers were important efforts for the lodge. They were very successful and kept their membership in contact and active with each other.

Some facilities, such as Pen (Continued on Page 2)



Sokol Lodge 410 Pen Argyl PA announces re-opening!

We are happy to announce that the gym at Lodge 410 is back open. Following Pennsylvania guidelines, our athletes are coming in to work out by appointment with a limit of five at a time in the gym along with a coach. Each athlete works out at their own weight station keeping six feet apart from others and sanitizes the station along with all the equipment they used at the end of their session. Many of our members continued at-home workouts with Coach Erl via video chats. We are thrilled that our members not only continued to support us while we were closed but have enthusiastically returned while staying safe.



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 OF THE USA**

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The Strained Summer of 2020

Hope everyone is staying safe and sound as the COVID-19 crisis doesn't seem to want to disappear anytime soon. Most activities for large groups have been either postponed or cancelled for the rest of the summer, so the Sokol Board will be using Zoom meetings instead to keep its members safe. That said, we hope a time will come soon where we can have face-to-face meetings again.

The Flu-Shot Initiative program finally had enough participation to allow for five members to receive \$25 awards in gift cards. Members from Lodges 2, 32 and 68 were pulled by Brothers Burkhart and Kovac and witnessed by Brother Bohon. Many thanks to them for their help. We want to have even more folks send in the form from the Sokol Times to increase the pull.

I'm sure many of us have enjoyed Sister Ellen Kovac's articles with fitness tips to help keep us active during this stressful time. I know that I have. Thank you, Ellen, for helping our Sokol members to stay on the path of Strong Minds and Strong Bodies during this crisis.

The coming year activities of 2021 are very unsettled at this time. The American Sokol Organization is to be hosting the Sokolfest in the Chicago area next summer. Likewise, our quadrennial convention is also scheduled to be held next year. As more information is made available, it will be sent out to all members.

In January, I attended GBU's initial Fraternal Activities Council meeting in Pittsburgh. Members from different GBU groups were invited to plan a course forward to increase

membership participation and activities and increasing membership in the GBU's various organizations as well. Another meeting with the GBU was scheduled in April but was cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak. Instead, the Fraternal Department created a website with a review of all the items we discussed at the January meeting, which we were able to respond to by email. The FAC is scheduled to have another Zoom meeting on September 19th. Events still scheduled for the year are a day at the Pittsburgh Zoo for all GBU members on September 13th, as well as Operation Reach Out for October 16th & 17th, with a plan of filling 10,000 boxes for the military. Additional information on these and other potential events will be available in the GBU Reporter or questions can be sent to me directly at fna240@verizon.net or by phone at 724-459-8170.

As we move forward through the year, hopefully we will be able to resume our normal activities and meetings, reopen our gyms, and return to both our lodges and normal lives. Please continue to follow the safety guidelines of our CDC professionals and check on our at-risk members, family, and friends regularly. Remember, America and the Sokol have always come through times of crisis in the past and will this time as well. Stay safe and responsible.

NAZDAR
 Sister Nancy Shurina
 Chairwoman of Fraternal Activities

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For the Milan Getting Scholarship Fund

From Sokol USA Lodge 258, Campbell, Ohio \$100.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

From Sokol USA Lodge 74, Plymouth, Pa. \$405.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

From Sokol USA Lodge 36, Binghamton, N.Y. \$125.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

From Sokol USA Lodge 15, Yonkers, N.Y. \$130.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

For the Sport, Fitness & Wellness Fund

From Sokol USA Lodge 258, Campbell, Ohio \$125.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

From Sokol USA Lodge 74, Plymouth, Pa. \$405.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

From Sokol USA Lodge 36, Binghamton, N.Y. \$100.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

From Sokol USA Lodge 15, Yonkers, N.Y. \$130.00
In Memory of Deceased Members

From the President's View

(Continued from Page 1)
 Argyl, are able to re-open due to their state regulations but on a reduced participation level. The same holds true for the Monessen lodge. Many lodges are dependent upon their respective state and local authorities to issue guidelines for gyms in order to determine whether sport participants can attend or be in a facility at any point in time now that the regional quarantines are beginning to be lifted. There are many struggles and many activities which were regular activities in the past but have had to either be canceled or postponed until a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation becomes available.

The Farrell, Pa., lodge sustained water damage to its equipment due to a roof leak in the building. Other lodges, such as the Bethlehem lodge, are attempting to reopen and see what is possible due to the capacity limitations set by state authorities.

Two letters and emails were sent to all SOKOL USA lodges during the protracted quarantine of the pandemic asking lodges if they had any special needs. If there are special needs or requests or problems facing individual lodges, please let the National Board know. Everyone wants to see our lodges be successful! If there are any special needs,

the National Board will attempt to see what assistance it can give to the membership.

Some regions are planning fundraising efforts. The MCT District in the Pittsburgh area has been planning a fundraising event for the scholarship program. This has been delayed now until 2021 due to the COVID pandemic.

The National Fraternal Department at GBU is making available some events. In September, there will be an event for members and children at the Pittsburgh Zoo. Immediately prior to the pandemic, the GBU National Fraternal Department also created two events which it had hoped to make available to districts as a way of reinvigorating the districts. One was a Disney princess event for children and the other was an Easter egg event. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic arrived before these could be implemented. It is our hope these will be available in the future once become more certain regarding the pandemic.

Our National Board has approved some assistance to the Danbury, Conn., lodge. Our membership may recall that a year or two ago the lodge building sustained serious damage due to hurricane strength winds that crashed large trees on to the lodge building.

While times are still uncertain due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are still many things our SOKOL members can do. Our members can do home exercises if it is not possible for them to meet at their lodges. Lodges can attempt to hold Zoom or conference call meetings. Fraternalism is always strong with our lodges. Many donate money or volunteer time to local community causes. These sorts of things are still possible during the COVID pandemic times.

As Labor Day approaches, I encourage our members at our lodges to meet when safely possible. Please remember to observe Health Department guidelines in terms of physical meetings at lodges or gyms. The guidelines are important for the health, safety and well-being of the people coming to the SOKOL halls. We are lucky that technology offers us alternative ways to meet, such as by video meeting, in the event that it is not possible to have gatherings at SOKOL halls.

These are extraordinary times and the SOKOL USA National Board understands this. If there is some extraordinary need arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Board is here to assist the lodges. If any lodge needs
 (Continued on Page 7)

FIT FOR LIFE

Guarding your mental health during the pandemic

These past months have been difficult for all of us. Regardless of your circumstances, life during the COVID-19 pandemic has been excessively stressful, and excessive stress is not good for our health. To help us during this unprecedented time, I've collected some suggestions for coping.

The American Cancer Society reminds us to keep positive and cultivate a sense of humor, such as by watching comedies on TV. Also, they suggest getting in touch with nature and adding beauty to your surroundings (as well as adding fresh foods to your diet) by gardening.

A recent Public Radio program recommended a "one-minute getaway" daily or as needed while remaining at home. It's not quite meditation, but it's helpful in relieving stress. Follow these instructions:

Sit up straight and tall. Close your eyes.

Notice any tension in your body.

Relax your jaw, shoulders, arms, fingers, belly, legs. Pause and focus on your body.

Notice the rise and fall of your belly as you breathe.

Concentrate on staying relaxed.

Take a deep breath in and hold for a second.

Slowly and completely breath out through your mouth.

Repeat the deep breath in, pause, and out.

You can now go back to

your daily routine of feeling more calm and relaxed.

Athletes will tell you that one of the many benefits of exerting themselves in their sport is that it lifts their emotions and mental outlook.

As an example, in an article in the Sokol Times of December 2019, Sister Amy Pracko described the effect of training for marathons like this: "To run with my coach and running group...is where I found the 'sound mind' part. Running along the lake, talking with my running partner or just listening to our feet hitting the pavement was the most relaxing part of my week."

Now you'll have to excuse me for a few minutes. I've been sitting for an hour and I'm going out for a run.

Thank you. I'm back and feel re-energized and with an adjusted attitude.

In a recent NPR podcast "The Happiness Lab," the host, a psychologist who teaches at Yale, has these suggestions for increasing feelings of well-being:

-- The simple act of writing down a few things every day that we are grateful for can actually increase one's positive attitude.

-- Expressing gratitude to someone else can make both you and the person you are thanking feel better.

-- In fact, any reaching out to others in a friendly way makes both the sender and the receiver of the message feel happier. Remember, "The smile

that you send out returns to you." Do it.

Positive thinking is a powerful motivator, but ironically can be self-defeating, because when we imagine something that we want, we may feel almost as satisfied just by thinking about that thing as if we have already achieved it. According to social scientist Gabrielle Oettingen, this kind of positive thinking is "Wish-Outcome," or W-O thinking. It's incomplete. Instead, we need W-O-O-P, or Wish-Outcome-Obstacles-Plan, thinking. By moving from the wished outcome to thinking about the obstacles you would have to overcome to reach the outcome, you can plan how you could overcome the obstacles. Or, you can decide that the wished-for outcome is not worth the time/effort/cost to reach that particular outcome. W-O-O-P thinking makes Positive Thinking a good motivator in our lives. So don't do W-O; do D-O-O-P.

From Bottom Line Personal newsletter, September 2002: "Ten Secrets of Inner Peace" by Joan Borysenko, PhD, Clinical Psychologist.

1. Practice patience. Allow life to unfold at its own pace.

2. Enjoy soothing classical music such as Beethoven's *Piano Concerto#3 in C Minor*; Mozart's *Symphony #35 in D Major*; Chopin's *Piano Concerto #1 (Op. 11)* or Pachelbel's *Canon*.

3. Make small changes that are not too difficult to keep up.

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THE PLANK IS ESSENTIAL TO HOME EXERCISE ROUTINE

The Plank is something that everyone should be doing as part of their at-home exercise routine. It's an excellent means of strengthening the "core" muscles, essential for good physical health, and takes only a very short time each day. It's the last thing I do at night.

The plank has been part of the Sokol USA Fitness Challenge at recent Sokolfests. Points are awarded according to how long each contestant is able to hold the position with only the forearms and balls of feet touching the mat or floor. Contestants who were able to hold the plank position for 4 minutes received the maximum score in that event. An impressive number of the gymnasts participating in the Challenge were able to reach the maximum of 4 minutes, but that's a high goal if you're starting from holding a plank for only a few seconds. Better, simply keep doing it and see whether you can double or triple your initial number of seconds over time. If you can eventually hold it for one or two minutes, good for you.

Directions: Get into the position as in the photo. Stay there as long as you can and make a note of that time. Do it daily, and your holding time should begin to increase. Important: Keep your body as straight as you can.

Update on Sokol USA Gym Programs

By Chris Yatchyshyn

Spring 2020 certainly has been an unusual time for our country and all around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has played havoc with everything from businesses to schools, to how we interact with one another, and even what is happening in our homes. Our Sokol Programs were no exception; by mid-March all activities had ceased.

Typically, our programs are slower during the summer months, but activity abounds from March through June. There should have been competitions, fundraisers, and indoor and outdoor exhibitions, but nearly all of them had to be put on the back burner this year. And, everyone is anxious about what happens next.

During this crisis, we have all learned the three Ws – **W**ear a mask, **W**atch your distance and **W**ash your hands. These have become our normal everyday routine and they will remain part of our daily habits for the foreseeable future, while scientists and medical personal work diligently on developing a vaccine for this novel coronavirus.

Most of us know people who have contracted

the disease. Some were lucky enough to have only mild symptoms; others have been extremely sick. Some have lasting health issues and, unfortunately, many, too many, have lost their lives. This is a very scary time. Many people are mentally fatigued; others are stressed to their financial limits, as the effects of the virus left them jobless. Please continue to check on your family members, friends and our Sokol brothers and sisters who may need some help during this unprecedented time.

Our gym programs are also facing great challenges, logistically as well as financially. Moving forward will not be easy. Each lodge faces its own unique set of obstacles, but every lodge must maintain the safety precautions outlined by the CDC, as well as meet all their state and local guidelines, as they try to re-start their programs.

Re-opening is daunting; just trying to meet safety regulations is a challenge and then there are the added costs to sanitize the gyms, continually clean equipment before and after every participant, as well as monitor the health of all athletes. It takes continuous effort and

strong communication.

Despite all this, our directors attempted to stay connected to our athletes during the shutdown, while formulating plans to allow programming under the new regulations. Their positive attitudes and determination to get back to a "new normal" is inspiring.

We must remember that the majority of those handling all these responsibilities are volunteers. This is no easy task; it will be a major test for our lodge officers, directors, and instructors. We need to lend our greatest support to those who are trying their best to carry on our Sokol traditions.

Throughout the past few months, Todd and I have been in contact with the directors or officers of each of the gyms. What follows is the latest information we have received.

Lodge 12 Central Jersey

Lodge 12 has not held classes since mid-March. Since the Central Jersey lodge rents a private gym, they won't be able to return until Henderson's Gym is open again. Director Ellen
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***We miss our Sokol athletes.
We hope to re-start all our programs very soon.***



Remembering the 2018 Slet in Prague



Sokol USA Lodge Update

(Continued from Page 3)

Kovac, on behalf of the staff, wrote the following encouraging note to their gymnasts in June:

Hello Sokol gymnasts and families,

Henderson's is still closed, and we would ordinarily be winding down our classes for the season in a week or two, so it appears that we won't be having another Sokol class until the fall. I miss seeing everyone and hope you are all well.

I just wanted to touch base with everyone, former and current Friday night gymnasts, to emphasize the need to get regular daily exercise at home and, when possible, at a park or playground. You should have a routine for various activities. Children especially need to use up energy and build their muscles, and adults actually need the same. An hour a day of physical activity is recommended for optimum health. Doctors are reporting that some children are gaining excessive weight from insufficient activity at home. Please don't let this happen to you and your family.

At home, some exercises like varieties of jumping jacks, Burpees ("squat-thrusts," squatting with hands down and thrusting legs back into a push-up position, return to squat, stand; repeat), and "mountain climbing" (from starting position for a sprint, "run" with legs behind your supporting hands) are good, as are hopscotch and seeing how many times you can go up and down stairs, carefully and continuously. Lively music that you like is surprisingly helpful to add enjoyment to exercise including vigorous dancing.

You'll have fun tapping a balloon up with your palms, seeing how long you can keep it in the air. Two or three people can play "volleyball" with a large balloon or small beach ball. When you can, walking or jogging is great exercise, as is climbing on jungle-gym equipment. Play tennis, shoot baskets, or kick a soccer ball around if you can.

Of course, keep social distancing and wear a face mask when you are near anyone outside your family unit.

We will resume in September or as the situation returns to normal. Meanwhile, have a happy and a healthy summer!

Lodge 306 Chicago

Lodge 306 recently held a Chicken Paprikas and Halusky Dinner via curbside pick-up. They served about 70 dinners. As with all the lodges, it has been very difficult to do fundraisers, which supply a major portion of funding for most of the gyms. This was a creative way to accomplish at least one fundraiser; normally Lodge 306 does a half dozen or more fundraisers each year. Here's an update from Director Kristin Greenberg:

Financially we are in the same situation as when you last spoke with Scott. We are currently working on getting 1-on-1 clinics for the months of July and August. This would start more towards mid to late July. We have our meeting on the 8th to get all our ducks in a row for the summer clinics.

For the remainder of our session from March through June, we offered Zoom classes weekly. We did this and coordinated with Sokol United and opened it up to the entire ASO District to keep the kids engaged in some way.

The ASO Central District held a virtual calisthenics competition in which three of our gymnasts submitted calisthenics: Violet Thornton, Dejalyn Garcia (took first in her division) and Juliet Hernandez.

We have not yet made a decision on classes for the fall, but we have had discussions about how different that would look, which coaches would feel comfortable entering the gym with kids, how to sanitize the equipment (we are currently having difficulty identifying the best means to sanitize equipment like balance beams and vaulting table due to the material - so if you have any suggestions that would be helpful).

Please let me know if you need more and I can send a more detailed email later with our plan for

sanitizing, temperature checks, etc.

Farrell

The Farrell gym shut down on March 13 when the governor gave the mandate. While they do not own the Slovak Home, they have a strong relationship with them so at this point they are not having a financial issue with rent. Unfortunately, since they were not in the gym due to the shutdown, it was a while before anyone realized that they had water damage from a roof leak. The water did the most damage to the gymnastics equipment – mainly the spring floor. See Director Steve Banjak's explanation below.

We have not had a meeting which focused on the gym as yet. I am assuming we will follow the lead according to what the public schools are doing, or if there is some sort of guidance from the state on what we should be doing. I do believe it is going to be difficult to get people to come into the gym with things the way they are right now.

As you may have seen on Facebook, we had a successful Golf Scramble, but, our profit was minimal because we elected to give small businesses that have supported us in the past, who may have been closed or minimally open, sponsorship at the same level as in the past for free, so as to keep good relationships with them. Our model is to make most of our profit from sponsorships. The weather was great for the 11th straight year.

For some reason, the insurance company did not pay for the damage to our gym and equipment. We paid \$900 to a restoration company to come in and dry things out. Our floor mat is still not put together since all of our focus has been on the golf event.

We awarded two new scholarships for the fall which means we have currently nine members receiving \$500 awards this academic year. Each award is \$2,000 over a period of four years, providing membership and grades are maintained.

We are planning our 115th Anniversary banquet for June 6, 2021.

Monessen

Lodge 47 by far had the hardest decision to make. They decided to take out a large Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL). Director Charity Ruhl says the EIDL loan should be sufficient for covering bills from the past few months and if they are forced to close again in the upcoming months. This was a huge undertaking, but the lodge saw no other recourse. Monessen rents their gym space and the only way they can pay bills is to hold classes.

During the shutdown, the gym offered weekly Zoom classes for several different age groups. The classes were received well by lodge and class members. They were also shared with Americana Sokol and some of their members participated weekly.

The gym reopened for classes on June 8, after being closed for over 2½ months. However, to provide socially distanced spaces while accommodating enough gymnasts to make financial sense, they had to again rent the field house which they had previously stopped renting in December due to financial restraints. Then they divided the equipment up between the two gyms to meet CDC regulations. They have an agreement to rent the second space through April 2021 and will re-evaluate the need for the additional space at that time.

Luckily all 79 team gymnasts have returned; they began working out again on May 31. Knowing that the bills were beginning to mount up, the team members surprised Charity with a \$2,500 check on June 7. They raised the money by selling T-shirts and somehow managed to do this without Charity knowing. Way to go, Falcon gymnasts! Their efforts show true Sokol spirit during a time of adversity.

To date, Falcon Gymnastics has 230 kids registered for classes. Normally they have between 300-400 in classes per week. They are hoping more will return as word gets out that classes can be held



Monessen gymnasts surprised Charity Ruhl with a \$2,500 check to help the lodge with its expenses during the pandemic.

safely by taking all recommended precautions.

According to Charity, the planning for the fall is "terrible" because they don't know what schedule the schools will follow. Prior to the shutdown, the gym had plans to offer classes/babysitting for parents while schools were closed, but then the gyms were also ordered to close. If schools close again and the gym can remain open, they will offer something similar, especially if kids are attending an every-other-day or half-day schedule.

Please go to the Falcon Gymnastics Facebook page and watch the video posted on June 6 that details the plan to reopen. Charity and her staff are doing an amazing job despite the many challenges they are facing.

Pen Argyl

Our newest lodge is also our most vulnerable. Finances are always tight, but the shutdown has really made it difficult to pay the bills. For the past several months, the lodge has only paid half of their monthly rent and now they are faced with the normal summer slow-down, smaller classes due to social distancing, and ongoing expenses for cleaning products, hand sanitizer, wipes, etc. Recently they paid Stanley Steamer \$529 to sanitize the turf flooring and walls in preparation for reopening.

In addition, the town's summer concerts have been canceled so the gym staff will not be able to run the concession stand. The profits from the stand have paid the rent the last two summers when gym participation is slow, so this is an added concern.

The lodge recently began Monday-Friday classes. They can safely accommodate seven athletes per class, which is about half the size of a regular class. The first session is held from 2:30-4:00 p.m., followed by 30 minutes for sanitizing. The second class is held from 4:30-6:00 p.m. Participants are allowed to participate twice in one week and then three times in the following and continue alternating each week, for example Tuesday and Thursday one week and then Monday, Wednesday and Friday the following week. All instructors wear masks and participants are masked unless they are lifting weights or performing other physical exercises.

Plans for the fall will be based on how the summer classes go and what rules Pennsylvania may enforce in the future. The Pen Argyl gym is in Northampton County. Early on, cases of COVID-19 and deaths were relatively high, with the majority coming from one of the largest county-run nursing homes in Pennsylvania. As a result, Northampton was one of the last Pennsylvania counties to reopen. While cases of the virus on the eastern side of the state are leveling off, cases around Pittsburgh are

(Continued on Page 7)

LODGE 26, GUTTENBERG, N.J.

To all of our members and their families, have a safe and healthy summer. Looking forward to seeing you all in December at our meeting and election of officers.

James Malik,
President Lodge

Keith Burkhardt,
Financial Secretary

From the President's View

(Continued from Page 2)
assistance or has concerns, please do not hesitate to contact SOKOL USA headquarters.

It is very important that our members stay well and stay safe. It is also important that our lodges remain viable and active following the conclusion of the pandemic.

Be well and stay safe.

NAZDAR!
Joseph Bielecki
President
SOKOL USA

Lodge Update

(Continued from Page 6)
now spiking.

Our lodges are at the mercy of the virus and what is happening in their immediate areas. This makes it all the more difficult to plan for gym classes. The longer the gyms are closed, or if they are mandated to close again, it reduces their ability to cover normal expenses, let alone the additional expenses for the ongoing sanitizing and cleaning.

We must also keep in mind that this situation is not only affecting our lodges with gym programs. Lodges with buildings that have bowling leagues and other social programming are also facing hardships when trying to meet their bills. We thank all the lodge officers and directors who are admirably trying to tackle these issues and urge any lodge who is experiencing insurmountable circumstances to contact the National Board.

Nazdar!

Fit for Life

(Continued from Page 3)

4. Give yourself downtime. Your work will become more productive.

5. Every day, jot down three things for which you are grateful.

6. Do one good deed daily.

7. Communicate openly and honestly.

8. Take care of yourself first so you can better take care of others.

9. If you lose the need to be a perfectionist, you will become more creative and feel better about yourself.

10. Don't worry what others think about you.

An article in the Washington Post on July 7, 2020, included hints from experts on how to stay focused and in the flow when working from home. Basically, the advice involves reducing stress by eliminating distractions.

First, clear off your work area, removing anything not related to your task out of your line of sight.

Second, needs such as being hungry or thirsty should be taken care of so they don't pull attention away from the task at hand.

Third, "guide your brain into a positive direction with a gratitude practice, a meditation or mindfulness practice, and exercise." (See the previous sources above in this column for details and examples.)

Fourth, "let the myth of multitasking go, because switching between unrelated tasks causes fatigue and lost time." (I can't help but comment that those who have been working from home while parenting and even trying to home-school their children can't avoid some multi-tasking. At least you can know that the extra fatigue and lower productivity you feel at your work is due to your need to multi-task and is not your fault.)

Finally, making a list in the evening of your tasks and goals for the next day, in order of priority, will give you structure so that you will know where to start the next morning.

Now, It's time to quiz yourself.

How are you doing with your fitness program?

Circle T for True and F for False for each statement about yourself.

T F 1. I stretch every part of my body every day.

T F 2. When washing my hands, waiting for a bus, train, or elevator, or talking on the phone, I keep my feet moving.

T F 3. I walk or jog a least one mile a day or until my heart rate increases.

T F 4. I exercise with a friend and/or with music to keep exercise fun.

T F 5. I stand up and move around for a few minutes after every hour of sitting.

T F 6. I eat several portions of fruits and vegetables every day. (Yes, they can be small portions.)

T F 7. I snack on healthy foods such as raw veggies and fruit rather than snack foods that contain added sugar, salt, or fat.

T F 8. I spend time outdoors every day and get enough sleep every night.

T F 9. I have not gained any weight since March, when I started working and schooling from home.

T F 10. I stay in contact with someone who might be feeling isolated.

T F 11. When out near other people, I wear a face mask and stay at least 6 feet apart from others.

T F 12. When I return home, I wash my hands for 20 seconds.

T F 13. Bonus: While washing my hands, I hum or sing and either stand on one leg or hop, jump, or dip my knees.

How did you do?

Be honest with yourself. Nobody else needs to know how you did. But keep this quiz and take it again in a month. Work on improving items that are not satisfactory to you.

More ways to maximize your fitness at home

-- Take long, purposeful strides, even if just between the stove and refrigerator.

-- Raise your knees as high as you can while going upstairs. See how fast you can climb the stairs (carefully). For those who can, run upstairs two steps at a time.

-- A great stretch: Reach high, spine straight. Look at your upstretched hands. Slowly spread your arms outward,

squeezing your shoulder blades together and arching your chest.

-- Watching TV?

-- From sitting on the floor, bend your knees with feet on floor. Place hands on floor behind your body. Lift your seat up as high as possible. Try for a straight body from shoulders to knees, like a tabletop. This is also the starting position for Crab Walking, forward, backward, and sideward.

-- Tuck your legs up and do slow cycling with your legs in the air.

-- During commercials, do push-ups. You can make them easier by bending your knees down or make them more challenging by putting your feet up on a chair.

What else have you added to your repertoire of ways to exercise at home? What else can you add?

A way to get more exercise doing chores? Something just for fun?

JUST KEEP MOVING!

Finally, In the News: Yes, you should exercise while pregnant

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that most pregnant women get 30 minutes of exercise a day.

In a study at Baylor College of Medicine, pregnant mice who were put in cages with running wheels voluntarily ran an average of more than six miles a night, decreasing to about two miles late in pregnancy. A control group of mice went through their pregnancies in cages with no running wheels. The offspring of the mice who were able to run turned out to be about 50 percent more physically active throughout life than the non-running mothers' offspring.

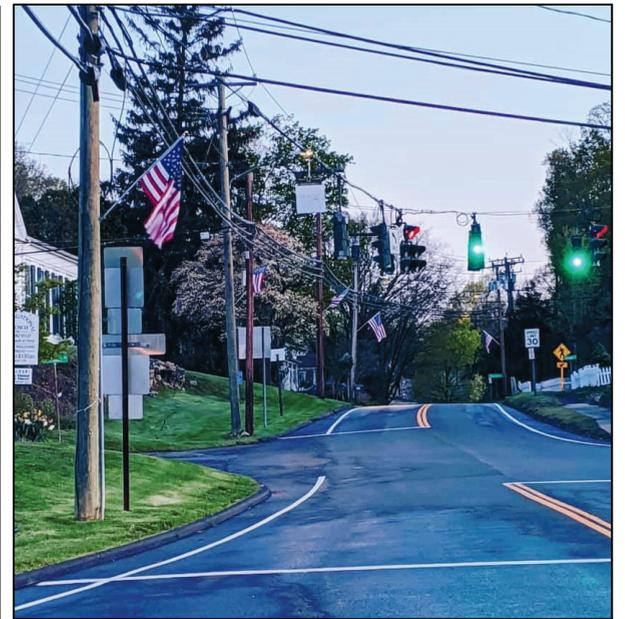
The lesson for humans is that exercise is not only good for expectant mothers but potentially provides lifelong benefits for their babies.

Submitted by Ellen Kovac

Back in action



Sokol Lodge 410, Pen Argyle, Pa., has reopened and is following proper public health protocols during the pandemic.



Sokol Pride

Sokol Lodge 30 and the Jason D Lewis Brookfield Memorial VFW Post 10201 joined forces and hung over 125 American flags throughout the town of Brookfield, Conn.



Milan Getting Scholarship Deadline Extended

Looking for some help to achieve your goal of attending college? Each year Sokol USA is proud to award the Milan Getting Scholarship to a limited number of qualified Sokol USA members who are furthering their education at an accredited college or university.

If you or a family member will be entering college or a university this coming fall, please contact Sokol USA headquarters at SOKOLUSAHQs@aol.com and ask for a Milan Getting Scholarship application. **Applications for the 2020-2021 academic year are due by August 31st.**

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.

- KELLY BAUERLEIN** – (1968-2019) A member of Lodge 1, New York, N.Y.
- EDWARD BENICK** – (1933-2019) A member of Lodge 276, Pittsburgh, Pa
- SUZANA HEFTER** – (1931-2019) A member of Lodge 12, Central Jersey, N.J.
- RICHARD HINES** – (1936-2020) A member of Lodge 12, Central Jersey, N.J.
- NIKOLINA HLUCHAN** – (1923-2020) A member of Lodge 26, Guttenburg, N.J.
- MILAN LAPAR** – (1930-2019) A member of Lodge 1, New York, N.Y.
- JOSEPH MAYEROS** – (1930-2020) A member of Lodge 244, Westfield, Mass.
- PAUL PAVELKO** – (1943-2019) A member of Lodge 93, Bethlehem, Pa.
- ANNA ZAKOVIC** – (1921-2019) A member of Lodge 12, Central Jersey, N.J.