



SOKOL USA XXXVI NATIONAL CONVENTION
AUGUST 4th -7th, 2022
Pittsburgh, PA

Sokol USA Convention Session #1

The 36th Sokol Convention was called to order at 1:14 P.M. on Friday, August 5, 2022, at the Indigo Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by Bro. Jeff Richter.

The National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance was done and then a moment of silence.

Bro. Paul Brinley was called upon to give the invocation.

President Bielecki called upon for opening remarks. Leslie Man and her colleague Leah were introduced as the guests from GBU Life.

The National Board members were introduced

Bro. John Kennedy, Fraternal Secretary

Bro. Joseph Bielecki, President

Bro. Jeff Richter

Sis. Nancy Shurina, Chairperson of Fraternal and Cultural Activities

Bro. Todd Yatchyshyn, Co-Director of Sports, Fitness, & Wellness

Sis. Chris Yatchyshyn, Co-Director of Sports, Fitness, & Wellness

Bro. Mike Cunningham

Bro. John Kamenitsky, Executive Financial Trustee

Bro. Scott Pracko, Vice President

Bro. Arthur Burkhardt, Treasurer

Sis. Kristen Greenberg, Recording Secretary

Sis. Debbie Golden, Finance Committee Member

Leslie Man and Leah presented a GBU PowerPoint. They presented about what was going on in GBU and new/relaunched products. GBU is now in 39 U.S. states. There is a steady asset growth (12%) that was at \$3.8 billion in 2021. Also, a steady growth in life premiums and consistent, steady growth in members (4,000 District 4000 Sokol members; 3,877 adult and 152 juniors).

MYGA-Multi-year guaranteed annuity (single premium); minimum deposit of \$25,000 and max \$2 million. MYGA has a free withdrawal provision that can take 10% out or up to 20% later. There is a 2,3-,4-, or 5-year MYGA.

Youth 3 pay product was created specifically for Sokol that allows the junior to have both a Sokol and GBU membership. It is a \$3,000 policy for ages 0-17 at same price and paid in three annual payments. Also, has it with higher death benefit. The application process has become longer, and Bro. Steve Banjak and Bro. Milan Kovac rose concern over how that will sell with parents. They closed presentation with hopes that working together will allow both Sokol and GBU Life to grow.



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Bro. Jeff Richter moved to approve the agenda. Bro. Milan Kovac moved that we accept the agenda and seconded by Bro. Emil Trgala. The agenda was accepted at 1:53 P.M.

Members of the verification committee were brought up by Advisor of the committee Sis. Kristin Greenberg. Members are:

Bro. Greg Bender
Sis. Carolyn Coleman
Sis Arlen Von Schwedler

Each member attending the convention was asked to present themselves when their name was called. The total votes are at 133 votes.

Bro. Jeff Richter moved into New Motions and By-Laws. Delegates are limited to two, three-minute times at the microphone. There are no new motions to submit. First proposed by-law changes for 1.0 and 1.1. The proposed change is a language change to change the language from “District” Board back to “National” Board. Bro. Ed Bohon motions the change and Sis. Kathy Naccarato seconded the motion. The by-law change was passed unanimously.

The second proposed by-law changes are for 2.0, 2.1, and 2.2. The by-laws deal with how to punish/expel a lodge, dissolved lodges, and already abandoned lodges. The old text was vague, and the next text will be more specific of how many members it will take for a lodge to establish a new name and lodge. Bro. Ed Bohon motions to accept the by-law change and Sis. Debbie Kruger seconds the motions. The by-laws change was passed unanimously.

The third proposed by-law changes were for 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2. The proposed by-law change is to remove the word “shall” to the president “is recommended to” as follows. It also is proposed that every attempt to make a convention an in-person convention. Sis. Rachael Bender moves to motion the by-law change and Sis. Kerri Sommer seconds the motions. The by-law change was passed unanimously.

The fourth proposed by-law changes were wording changes of by-law 4.0,4.1,4.2,4.3,4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7. It moves to simplify the wording and remove unneeded words and strikes practices that are not used anymore. It was proposed to add how to become an Honorary Officer, as well as removing any deadline for by-laws. Also, it was proposed to change the wording that Sokol Times will be “published” and not “printed” but members will still have the option to receive a printed copy. The last proposed by-law change opens the Milan Getting Scholarship to any non-traditional post-secondary students. Sis. Ellen Kovac moves to approve the by-law change and seconded by Bro. Ed Bohon. The by-law change was passed unanimously.



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The fifth proposed by-law changes were for Lodge Officers. The first proposed change was to strike any “shall” and requires lodges to have a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Trustee. The other proposed by-law changes acts to remove the Juvenile Chairperson. Also proposed is that if a person is nominated from the floor, they must present qualifications. Bro. Ed Bohon motions to move the proposed by-law change and Bro. Thomas Kennedy seconds the motions. The by-law change was passed unanimously.

Bro. Jeff Richter moved to have a ten-minute break.
Session continues at 3:05 P.M.

The sixth proposed by-law change deals with membership. The by-law committee is seeking to clearly spell out what a member is, membership category, and what a membership category entitles a member to. The new text will lay out to general categories or membership, adult and junior. The adult sub-category has the adult and social member. Under the junior sub-category is a junior and a national sports member. The other proposed change has to do with what the spirit of the two sections say. The first is the math done to determine delegates. It adds juniors and adults into the determination of how many delegates each lodge gets. Bro. Ed Bohon motions to move the proposed by-law change. The by-law change was passed unanimously.

The seventh proposed by-law change was submitted by Sis. Helen Slaninka, MCT President. She proposes that no more than one member of immediate family should serve on the Board at the same time since there is relation. She also proposed that there only be one Board member of Fitness & Wellness when there is less than 300 and there no need for more than one peson considering numbers have greatly reduced. The by-law committee moves to dismiss the by-law change because it limits who can serve despite being a qualified candidate. Discussion goes back and forth to determine if the proposed by-law changes should be separated. Bro. Matt Reynolds motions to separate the two proposed by-laws and Bro. Ed Bohon seconds the motion. The motion was passed. No more than one member is now by-law 7.0 and one voting Board member of Fitness & Wellness is by-law 7.1. Sis. Rachael Bender moves to accept the by-law committee to defeat the recommendation 7.0 and Bro. Jerry Pereira seconds the motion. The motion was defeated. Bro Jerry Pereira moves to accept the by-law committee to defeat the recommendation 7.1 and Bro. Bryan Pracko seconds the motion. The motion is defeated.

Bro. Milan Kovac moves to reduce the size of the Trustees from 5 to 3 and Bro. Ed Bohon seconds the motion. Discussion leads to the belief that 3 Trustees would be too little. Bro. Milan Kovac withdrew his motion.



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The By-Law Committee session concluded, and the Convention Expense and Salary Committee was called up. The Committee is advised by John Kamenitsky and Arthur Burkhardt. The members include:

Sis. Kerri Sommer
Bro. James Malik
Sis. Helen Slaninka
Sis. Natalie Smith

The committee elected Sis. Rachael Bender as Chairman. The committee proposed the Chair and Vice Chair should only receive \$150 per diem; the Sergeant at Arms should receive \$100 per diem. Air travel should be reimbursed if there is proof of ticket and car travel will be reimbursed at 0.625/mile. Travel reimbursement to no more than 2 delegates. Bro. James Malik motions the change and is second by Sis. Kerri Sommer. The motion is passed.

Next section recommends what the annual salary of President to \$4,600, Vice President to \$1,125, National Fraternal Secretary to \$15,000, Recording Secretary to \$1500, Treasurer to \$1,700, Executive Trustee to \$1,700, Trustees to \$1,125, Fraternal Activities Director to \$1,125, Sports Fitness & Wellness Co-Directors to \$2,800 each, Sports Fitness & Wellness Assistant to \$300 each, Chief Judicial Officer to \$100, and per diem of \$100 for term of office. The only change to salary is to the National Fraternal Secretary. Bro. James Malik motions and Sis. Kerri Sommer seconds the motion. The motion was passed with five abstains.

Then the Election and Ballot Committee is brought up. The committee is advised by Bro. Scott Pracko and Sis. Nancy Shurina. The committee members include:

Sis. Debbie Kruger
Sis. Mary Ann Slaninka
Sis. Tammy Bendel
Bro. Matt Reynolds
Sis. Cathy Ozdary

Current officers will be nominated and can turn down the nomination. There will then nominations from the floor. Voting will be done through a clicker system. If a lodge would like to split a vote, then they will have to vote using a paper ballot.

Nominations (all nominations were done through the committee unless stated otherwise):

President: Bro. Joseph Bielecki

Bro. Ed Bohon moves to close nomination and Sis. Carolyn Coleman seconds

Vice President: Bro. Scott Pracko

Bro. Mike Cunningham moves to close nomination and Bro. Ed Bohon seconds



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Fraternal Secretary: John Kennedy

Sis. Kathy Naccarato moves to close nomination

Executive Financial Trustee: Bro. Jeff Richter, Bro. Mike Cunningham, Sis. Debbie Golden, Bro. Greg Bender (nominated by Bro. Todd Yatchyshyn and Sis. Kathy Naccarato seconds), Sis. Kerri Sommer (nominated by Bro. Mark Omasta and Bro. James Malik seconds), Bro. Jerry Pereira (nominated by Bro. Mike Cunningham and Bro. Jeff seconds)

Bro. John Kamenitsky declines nomination

Bro. Ed Bohon moves to close nomination and Sis. Kathy Naccarato seconds

Fraternal Activities Director: Sis. Nancy Shurina, Bro. Matthew Reynolds (nominated by Bro. Todd Yatchyshyn and Sis. Thalassa Millwood seconds)

Bro. Ed Bohon moves to close nomination and Bro. Greg Bender seconds

Treasurer: Bro. Arthur Burkhardt

Bro. Greg Bender moves to close nomination and Sis. Kathy Naccarato seconds

Recording Secretary: Sis. Kristen Greenberg

Bro. Mike Kennedy moves to close nomination and Sis. Thalassa Millwood seconds

Co-Directors of Sports, Fitness & Wellness: Charity Ruhl (nominated by the Sports, Fitness, & Wellness Committee and second by Sis. Kathy Naccarato), Todd Yatchyshyn

Sis. Chris Yatchyshyn declines nomination

Bro. Ed Bohon moves to close nomination and Sis. Carolyn Coleman seconds

Nominations are closed and will be conducted Saturday, August 6, 2022.

Sports, Fitness & Wellness committee is called to the floor. The Committee is advised by Bro. Todd Yatchyshyn and Chris Yatchyshyn and members include:

Bro. Bryan Pracko

Bro. Mark Omasta

Sis. Charity Ruhl

Sis. Norah Valentin

Sis. Christina Pegg

Bro. Timothy Brandt

The committee discussed how the by-law changes may affect the districts and lodges. They also discussed athletic memberships that are more affordable, virtual meetings, and a SokolFest in 2023. The SokolFest, however, will not be happening as of now due to hotel and vendor unavailability. Fit for Life video was discussed and the disappointment that nothing had come from it. Gymnastics Sports Safety was discussed and focused on youth safety and completing SafeSport training. Lastly discussed was the need for a form in all facilities on who to contact in case of incidents for parental concern. The committee recognized Sis. Chris Yatchyshyn and all that she has done for Sokol.



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Bro. Jeff Richter motions to move Good, Welfare, Petitions, & Grievances to after Item #j during Session #2 on Saturday, August 6, 2022. Sis. Ellen Kovac seconds the motion.

Bro. Jeff Richter motions for a recess. Bro. Matt Reynolds approves the motion and Bro. Greg Bender seconds the motions. Session #1 ends at 4:55 P.M.