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SOKOL



TIMES

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Joseph Bielecki

From the President's View

As I write this article, the long Memorial Day weekend approaches. It is a harbinger of summer. Many will gather for picnics and barbecues, and other fun outdoor activities. The true meaning of Memorial Day is to take a moment to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in their service to our nation. Their sacrifices maintain the freedoms that we cherish, and can't take for granted.

In May and June, I encourage our members to recognize their parents, whether they are living or deceased, during Mother's Day and Father's Day. It is thanks to our parents, who raised us, encouraged us, nurtured us, and imparted their values to us, that we have become the people we are today. Their unwavering love and support have been the foundation upon which

(Continued on Page 8)



Winners' Circle

Above at left are the Sokol USA Chicago (SASK) Silver competitors and coaches. Above at right are the Sokol USA Chicago (SASK) Bronze competitors and coaches. At left, thank you to the Central District Boys' judges Mike Michalek and Thalassa Millwood who volunteered their time at the boys' competition.

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 USA

A Division of **GBU** FINANCIAL LIFE



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CHICAGO
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JUNE 29TH-JULY 7TH



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2025 ASO SLET**

Levels: Beginner, Intermediate,
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SLET BULLETIN

VOLUME 1 | MARCH 2025

CHICAGO

2025 XXV AMERICAN SOKOL SLET

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2025 Slet Hotels

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Crowne Plaza: Chicago SW - Burr Ridge - Near Capacity!
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 Reservations: 877-2-CROWNE (877-227-6963) or [visit their site](#)
 Room Rate: \$134/night +tax with code SOK

Nearby Hotels

SpringHill Suites: Chicago SW at Burr Ridge/Hinsdale
 90 North Frontage Road Burr Ridge, Illinois, USA, 60527
 Room Rate: \$164/night +tax
Hampton Inn: Chicago-Burr Ridge
 100 Harvester Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527
 Room Rate: \$169/night +tax

Important Addresses

Hinsdale South High School
 7401 Clarendon Hills Rd, Darien, IL 60516

TPS Sports + Fitness
 78300 Wolf Rd, Willow Springs, IL 60480

Compass Arena
 625 Joliet Rd, Willowbrook, IL 60527

Wintrust Sports Complex
 5499 W 65th St, Bedford Park, IL 60638

Sokol Spirit
 3909 Prairie Ave, Brookfield, IL 60513

CALISTHENICS

Find Info on Slet Calisthenics on our [Cal Google Drive](#) OR at [americansokol.org/cal-hub](#) OR on our [YouTube channel!](#)

Things To Do In The City

Chicago Architecture Boat Tour
 Millennium Park
 Chicago Museum Campus
 Skydeck Chicago or 360 Chicago
 Chicago Riverwalk

Things To Do Nearby

Route 66 Playground at Harvester Park
 Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve
 Burr Ridge Village Center
 Brookfield Zoo
 Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center

FIT FOR LIFE

by Ellen Kovac

How are YOU doing?

I've come across an old newspaper editorial page column. The heading reads "*Elmo asked how everyone's doing and, um, they're not great.*" The editorial went on to say that half of U.S. adults reported being lonely, and some people see the mental health of those around them deteriorating. I'm hoping that this gloomy reporting simply reflected how people felt during the pandemic and that everyone's mental health has rebounded since then.

Still, the final sentence of the piece remains timely: Elmo concluded: "It's important to ask a friend how they are doing."

Let's all take time now and then to ask our friends how they are doing. Not in the superficial way that we ask "What's up?" but in a thoughtful way that let's them know you are genuinely interested.

Eat well – Sleep well

There's an interesting article titled "*What to Eat for Better Sleep*" in the June 2015 issue of On Health, a publication of Consumer Reports magazine. The article says that three factors are important for having a good night's sleep: having a regular sleeping schedule, exercising regularly, and eating well.

I shouldn't have to explain to our Sokol membership what "exercising regularly" means: Just remember to do it!

"Eating well," the article explains, means limiting processed foods such as processed meats, refined carbohydrates (for example, white bread), saturated fats, and added sugars. These kinds of foods have an inflammatory effect on the digestive system and can cause a risk of sleeping six hours or less per night.

Further, the article states, your gut and your brain are closely connected and communicate directly with each other. As a result, what and when we eat over time influences the circadian rhythms that regulate our sleep-wake patterns. Diets that have been shown to improve sleep all have one thing in common: lots of fruits, vegetables, legumes (beans), and whole grains. The Mediterranean diet was cited as an example of a plant-centered diet that was linked to significantly less incidence of insomnia in the journal Sleep Medicine Reviews. Particularly, foods like tomatoes, walnuts, cherries, legumes (beans), and leafy greens are rich in melatonin or in tryptophan, the precursor to melatonin. Filling up on such high-fiber foods also improves the health and regularity of your gut microbiome.

Additionally, choose anti-inflammatory fats such as olive oil and limit your intake of saturated fats found in foods like red meats and butter.

Adhering to a Mediterranean or other healthy, plant-based diet including poultry and fish will give you all the nutrients you need for a good night's sleep.

The article concludes with the observation that if you eat well, you probably won't need to take any dietary supplements.

My advice

Vegetables should not be an unappetizing also-ran at mealtime. If you haven't already, find a variety of ways to prepare vegetables so they will be appealing to your taste buds! One suggestion to get you started: add chopped or sliced onions or scallions to a vegetable. Another time, saute' a vegetable in oil. Use fresh vegetables when you can – they're tastier than frozen and, of course, far superior to canned vegetables.

Good Appetite! Dobru Chut! Salud!

Movement as Medicine

Here are simple yet effective exercises that can enhance and promote overall wellness.

Morning Stretches to Start Your Day Right

Begin your day with gentle spinal stretches to wake up your nervous system. Try a cat-cow stretch on your hands and knees, gently arching and rounding your back. This simple movement helps lubricate the joints between your vertebrae and increases mobility.

Another beneficial morning practice is the supported backbend. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, place your hands on your lower back, and gently lean backward while looking

up. This counteracts the forward-leaning posture many of us adopt at desks and while using devices.

Desk-Friendly Movements for Workplace Wellness

If your job involves sitting, set a timer to remind yourself to move every 30 minutes. Try shoulder rolls, neck stretches and seated spinal twists throughout your workday. These micro-movements prevent stiffness and promote circulation. The shoulder blade squeeze is one of the best exercises for office workers. Simply sit or stand tall and pull your shoulder blades together for a few seconds, repeating 10-15 times. This strengthens the muscles that support good posture.

Evening Recovery Routines

After a long day, give your spine some TLC with gentle stretches that decompress your vertebrae. The child's pose from yoga is excellent for relieving tension in your lower back and shoulders. For those with chronic back issues, try lying on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Gently rock your knees from side to side to mobilize your lower back.

Consistency is Key

Remember that consistent, gentle movement is more beneficial than occasional intense exercise. Even five minutes of targeted stretching each day is beneficial.

Farrell Lodge competes in mini slet



Sokol USA Farrell Lodge 103 was invited to Sokol Greater Cleveland for a mini slet on May 18th. They had 10 gymnastics competitors. Congratulations to all of the Sokol USA competitors of Sokol Farrell. We are all so proud of your hard work and dedication.

SOKOLS AT THE WORLD'S FAIR

Do any fellow Sokols have pictures or memories from "Sokol Day" at the 1964-65 World's Fair in Queens, N.Y.? If so, the New York Hall of Science in Corona, N.Y., would love to have them! Sokol USA's own Sister Ellen Kovac was there and performed. The Hall of Science has a picture of her, would love to have more and, in general, learn more about our organization's participation.

If you like, you can send Brandi Kovac your written memories, anecdotes, or pictures at: BKKovac@aol.com and she will forward them to the museum. Or, if you'd like to communicate with them directly, here's their request:

Did you attend the 1964-65 World's Fair - or know someone who did? If so, we'd love to hear from you! We are eager to share photos, videos, and other memories from the fair so that we can look back and dream forward together! If you have something to share, send a note to info@nysci.org with the subject line "World's Fair Memories." Thank you in advance!

QUESTIONS?

Do you have any official Sokol business and/or questions? Please reach out to Brother John Kennedy at info@sokolusa.org.

DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED

To the Milan Getting Scholarship Fund	
From Sokol USA, Lodge 164, Detroit, Mich. <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$212.50
From Sokol USA, Lodge 258, Campbell, Ohio <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$63.75
To the Sport, Fitness and Wellness Fund	
From Sokol USA, District NITRA <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$8.50
From Sokol USA, District Pavel Mudron <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$85.00
From Sokol USA, Lodge 164, Detroit, Mich. <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$212.50
From Sokol USA, Lodge 258, Campbell, Ohio <i>In Memory of Deceased Members</i>	\$63.75

A Busy Start to 2025

Since the beginning of April, our Sokol USA members have been in constant motion thanks to a variety of events and activities going on in the organization.

On April 5th, the city of Perth Amboy, N.J., recognized their Slovak community with an event that included the mayor presenting Lodge 12 members of Sokol USA Greg Bender and Ellen Kovac with a proclamation. This involved raising the flag of Slovakia in the City Hall Park followed by the singing of the Slovak national anthem. The following weekend, the National Board held its Spring meeting from Friday through Sunday in Booton, N.J. After Easter, District MCT closed out the month on Sunday, April 27th with their annual meeting.

In May, I traveled with President Joseph Bielecki to Genva on the Lake, Ohio, to participate in GBU's fraternal conference, which was held from Thursday, May 15th to Sunday, May 18th. CEO William Hunt gave a State of GBU talk and Senior Vice President Lesley Mann gave an update on current and upcoming marketing, product, and fraternal plans in the works as well as those slated for the near future. Afterwards, the attendees engaged in different roundtable discussions that involved switching tables every twenty to thirty minutes. There was a great sharing of information among all the groups. The afternoon session featured two speakers, the first being from the American Fraternal Alliance and the second a noted professor of anthropology who focused on how to foster communication between different generations. Most importantly, the professor addressed the significance of finding ways to engage younger generations in the fraternal societies so they can continue to grow and thrive.

Later this month, both the Danbury and Leechburg lodges will have hosted events for veterans to honor their service on Memorial Day. Additionally, Danbury is kicking off their monthly "Heroes on the Water" event, which will be held the second Sunday of the month, weather permitting. This event features fishing, swimming and kayaking for veterans and their families to enjoy.

June marks the end of our gym and bowling league sessions until the fall, but it's also the start of the ASO (Continued on Page 6)

Sokol Day



Above, toddlers perform the American Sokol Tots Calisthenics written by Sister Kimberly Elliot at the Central District Sokol Day festivities. At left, a Sokol USA Chicago (SASK) gymnast showing off her poses during the American Sokol All Sokol number workshop at Central District Sokol Day festivities.

Slovak Flag Raising



On April 5th, SOKOL USA was represented by Lodge 12 members Ellen Kovac and Greg Bender at the Perth Amboy, N.J., recognition event for Slovaks who have long been part of the historic city. The mayor presented the group with a proclamation and led the raising of the Slovakia flag at City Hall Park, followed by the singing of the Slovak national anthem, Nad Tatrou sa blýska.



A Busy Start to 2025

(Continued from Page 5)

Slet, the 16th Annual Farrell Golf Outing and golf leagues in action at both Leechburg and Danbury. Our Bethlehem lodge is hosting a unique event on June 25th-27th: a voice-over convention called “Get Out of your Booth.” This event provides education, networking, and social interaction to all interested attendees. Brother Mike Cunningham is the driving force behind the singular fraternal project.

As we prepare to swing into summer, a couple safety reminders are in order. As the singer Mariah Carey said, “Always wear your sunblock, darlings.” Skin cancer is widespread and can be deadly without the proper precautions, so make sure you have block on if you’re planning to be outside for an extended period of time. Also, leave the handling of fireworks to the professionals. Too many deaths and visits to the emergency room over the mishandling of them happens every summer, so don’t push your luck. Lastly, anyone who doesn’t know how to swim must have a lifejacket on while hanging out at the water, be it a lake, an ocean or the local swimming pool. Be safe and have a great summer.

NAZDAR
Sister Nancy Shurina
Chair of Fraternal Activities

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO LODGES

At the latest National Board Meeting in October, it was decided to establish a fund dedicated to providing collateral loans for lodges in need. If your lodge requires financial assistance for special projects, renovations, or similar needs, please submit a formal request via email to info@sokolusa.org. This request will be presented to the National Board for review.



June 25-29

2025

CHICAGO

2025

XXV AMERICAN SOKOL SLET

We can't wait to see you at our first ASO Slet in 8 years!

Stay tuned for more details.



EVENT SCHEDULE				
CHICAGOLAND, ILLINOIS, USA JUNE 25 - 29, 2025				
25 WED	26 THU	27 FRI	28 SAT	29 SUN
KICK-OFF PARTY HSHS STADIUM Join us for opening remarks, a fun run, inflatables, games, DJ, food trucks, and more! \$15 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM	VOLEYBALL TPS SPORTS & FITNESS Bar and restaurant on site Team: \$265 Spectators: \$5/16: Individual/Family of 4+ 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM ACCIDENTAL HERO HSHS AUDITORIUM A multi-media one-man show about a WWII American officer who miraculously liberates the Czech villages of his grandparents. \$20 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM YOUTH ACTIVITY WINTRUST SPORTS COMPLEX Join us for an afternoon of arcade games, laser tag, open gym activities, pizza, soda, and more! Additional food/drinks can be purchased. Youth: \$35 food & activities Chaperone (if eating): \$10 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM BANQUET CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL Join us for a night of dinner, entertainment, auction, and more! Dinner: \$100 Post Dinner Ticket: \$20 (9PM) 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM	GYMNASTICS HSHS MAIN GYM Individuals: \$95 Teams (Tag Team Allowed): \$55 Includes competition, Slet participation fee, T-shirt for one Cal, Ticket to Celebration Party Spectators: \$5/16: Individual/Family of 4+ 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT HSHS FIELD HOUSE Team: \$30 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM FITNESS CHALLENGE HSHS FIELD HOUSE Drop-in and complete at any point during the session \$20 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM BREWERY TOUR Bus transportation to three breweries. Ticket includes one drink at each stop. \$50 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM CHICAGO STYLE SOCIAL SOKOL SPIRIT DJ, silent disco, photo booth! Food/drinks available for purchase \$15 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM	SLET HSHS STADIUM REHEARSAL 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM YOUTH ACTIVITIES 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM PERFORMANCE Performer: \$15 (includes T-shirt for 1 call) Adult Spectator: \$20 Kid Spectator (Ages 5 - 12): \$10 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM CELEBRATION COMPASS ARENA Celebrate the end of Slet with a DJ, food, and cash bar! \$45 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM SLET MUSEUM ASO HEADQUARTERS Join AS Education Team and check out our museum. FRIDAY! (But that column is full!) 1/2 mile from Sokol Spirit, at American Sokol Office! 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM	GOLF 9 holes and lunch Location, times, & price TBD

PRICING		
Physical Events	Pricing	Additional Info
Fun Run/Walk	\$15	Includes: Run/Walk, T-shirt & entrance to Kick-Off Party
Volleyball (Team)	\$265	
Gymnastics (Individual)	\$95	Includes: Competition, Slet Participation Fee, T-shirt for one Cal, Ticket to Celebration Party
Gymnastics (Team)	\$55	
Fitness Challenge	\$20	
Pickleball (Doubles)	\$30	
Slet Participation	\$15	Includes: T-shirt for one Cal
Slet Spectators	\$20/\$10	Adult/Teen Price (13+) includes Program Book / Child(Age 5-12)
VB Spectators	\$5/\$16	Individual/Family of 4+
Gymnastics Spectators	\$5/\$16	Individual/Family of 4+, Access to Pickleball & Fitness Challenge
Golf	TBD	9 holes and lunch
Social Events		
Kick Off Party	\$15	
The Accidental Hero	\$20	
Youth Social	\$35	Optional \$10 chaperone pizza/drink ticket
Banquet	\$100	\$20 option for post dinner entry (9PM)
Brewery Tour	\$50	Includes: transport, 1 drink per stop, souvenir
Chicago Style Social	\$15	Cash bar, food available
Celebration Party	\$45/\$35/\$10	13+ / 5-12 / 2-4
Social Pass	\$100	Includes Kick-Off, The Accidental Hero, Chicago Style Social, Slet Performance, Celebration Party - \$115 value. Does not include Banquet and Brewery Tour.
QUESTIONS? CONTACT US AT SLET@AMERICANSOKOL.ORG		
ONLINE REGISTRATION COMING SOON!		



2025 ASO Slet Program Booklet

Thank you for supporting the 2025 American Sokol Slet, held in Chicago area. By taking out an souvenir ad, you are getting the opportunity to promote your business or organization to larger network. Everyone placing an ad \$60.00 and above will receive a copy of the finished book. We thank you for your continued support to the American Sokol Organization.

Program Book size - 8.5" x 11"

Full Page ad - 8 x 10	150.00	Business Card 2 x 5	40.00
1/2 Page ad - 8 x 5	100.00	Well Wisher*	15.00
1/4 Page ad - 4 x 5	60.00	*Well Wisher consist of max 2 lines of type at 18Pt Times New Roman - Bold	

All ads are printed in Black and White, Full color ads are additional \$15.00.
The program book committee has full editorial rights.

All payment and artwork are due by April 15, 2025.
Send art/ads to sletadbook@americansokol.org

PLEASE PRINT	
Name/ Business / Unit _____	
Contact: _____	Phone: _____
Address: _____	
Email: _____	
Ad Size:	
☐ Full Page 150.00 ☐ 1/2 Page 100.00 ☐ 1/4 Page 60.00 ☐ Business Card 40.00 ☐ Well Wisher/Booster	
Ad Emailed: ____/____/____	☐ Full Color +\$15.00
Please send all Checks to American Sokol C/O 2025 Slet Ad Book 9126 Ogden Ave. Brookfield, IL 60513	
Submit Form Digital	
Total \$ _____	
Check # _____ Checks payable to : American Sokol Cash \$ _____	

Questions regarding the Slet ad book, Please contact Heather 314-497-3447

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Email: info@gbu.org

SOKOL FARRELL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Sokol Farrell is accepting donations to the Scholarship Fund. Well over \$40,000 has been awarded to Sokol Farrell members.

Donations may be sent to: Sister Dorothy Slezak, Chairman, 6850 Seneca Road, Sharpsville, PA 16150. Checks may be made to "Sokol USA Farrell."

Please refer to the Sokol Farrell website for scholarship applications and instructions. We are located at <http://www.sokolfarrell.org/>.

SPONSOR A GYMNAST

Are you interested in sponsoring a gymnast and getting updates on how the sponsored gymnast is progressing?

Reach out to Kristin Greenberg at kgreenberg.sokolusa@gmail.com to find out how you can become a part of this new sponsorship program.

SHARE YOUR FAMILY EVENTS WITH YOUR "SOKOL FAMILY"

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

Complete one of the attached forms and mail the information and a photograph of clear quality to Sokol USA, 408 Main Street, P.O. Box 677, Boonton, NJ 07005-0677 or info@SokolUSA.org.

ENGAGEMENTS, WEDDINGS & ANNIVERSARIES



NAMES: _____

PHONE #: _____

HOMETOWN: _____

SOKOL LODGE: _____

YEARS MARRIED (IF APPLICABLE): _____

BIRTHDAYS



NAME: _____

BIRTH DATE: _____

AGE: _____

PHONE #: _____

HOMETOWN: _____

SOKOL LODGE: _____

PROMOTIONS, HONOR ROLLS & OTHER EVENTS



NAME: _____

PHONE #: _____

HOMETOWN: _____

SOKOL LODGE: _____

EVENT: _____

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



CELEBRATING MEMORIAL DAY – Memorial Day photos from the parade and ceremony in Brookfield Center on May 25th. Brother John Kennedy gave remarks honoring all veterans, especially for those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Lodge 30 joined the VFW in their military vehicle this year.



From the President's View

(Continued from Page 1) we have built our lives. They have been our first teachers, our role models, and our biggest cheerleaders. As we celebrate these special days, let us take a moment to express our gratitude and appreciation for all they have done for us. Let us honor their legacy by living our lives with the same kindness, strength, and integrity that they have shown us. May we always cherish the memories we have with them and strive to make them proud in everything we do. Happy Mother's Day and Father's Day to all the wonderful parents out there!

As the summer begins, I encourage our members to

enjoy the nice weather and engage in physical fitness activities, like walking and biking, as well as traditional Sokol sports activities. Our members can take advantage of the fine weather to promote physical wellness. Walking allows members to experience light aerobic exercise, as well as maintain cardiovascular health and enjoying the summer weather. Outdoor stretching sessions, yoga, walking, swimming, and biking all provide great exercise, as well as moments of relaxation, leading to good health.

Summer is also a good time for picnics, fraternal gatherings, and community service projects. These

activities foster fellowship, encourage lodge members to get to know each other, and strengthen community engagement and traditional Sokol values of volunteerism and community service. Community involvement is a great way to make an impact. It can be individually volunteering with organizations or participating in charity walks. Lodge members can also come together to do a community service project. All of these are great ways for our lodges to build activity and do community service. They are also great ways to embrace camaraderie, personal growth, and strengthen fraternal bonds in lodges.

I encourage our membership to consider supporting the American Sokol Organization's upcoming Slet in Chicago by attending it, if possible. Our Sokol USA Slet is far along in the planning stages, and it is my hope that two years hence, our members will participate in and support our own Sokol USA Slet, too!

I will be attending the Sokol Poland Slet in mid-June. Sokol Poland will be having their first Slet in many years, since it reconstituted itself in the wake of the fall of communism after 1989. Many Sokols from around the world will be traveling to Brodnica, Poland, to participate in sports activities, cultural exchange, and enjoy Sokol unity and

fellowship.

Additionally, Sister Nancy Shurina, Sokol USA Fraternal Activities Director, and I participated in the biannual GBU District Forum. Large numbers of GBU District officers came together for a weekend of roundtables, talks, and exploration regarding fraternalism and fraternal projects. It was a great opportunity to share ideas.

Finally, I wish everyone a great beginning to summer. It is my hope that our members will enjoy good weather, engage in sport activities, embark on community service projects, and promote the values of fraternalism.

NAZDAR!
Joe Bielecki
Sokol USA President