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SOKOL



TIMES

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Gymnasts gather for a photo at the American Sokol Spring Gymnastics Mini Meet that was hosted by Sokol USA Chicago Lodge 306. More photos on Page 5, 6 and 8.

Lodge 306 hosts American Sokol Central District Mini-Meet

On March 21, 2026, Sokol USA Chicago Lodge 306 was proudly the host site of the American Sokol Spring Gymnastics Mini Meet, welcoming athletes, coaches, and families from across the district for a day filled with energy, teamwork, and celebration of the sport.

The event featured an impressive turnout, with 24 male competitors and 70 female competitors participating throughout the day. Sokol USA Chicago was well represented with 17 of its own athletes competing – 2 boys and 15 girls – showcasing their hard work and dedication.

The meet was thoughtfully organized to maximize both space and efficiency. Gymnasts competed upstairs, while the

downstairs area served as a designated warm-up and bye space, allowing for smooth transitions and a well-paced event. Attendees also enjoyed food served on-site, adding to the welcoming and community-centered atmosphere.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all of the gymnasts, coaches, and families whose enthusiasm and support made the event so special. Events like these are only possible through the dedication of many individuals working behind the scenes.

Special recognition goes to Kim Schiro and Kristin Greenberg, who ensured the facility was fully prepared and developed a seamless plan for transitioning the gym between sessions.

Kimberly Elliot, Joseph Bajek and Dan Bajek played an essential role in running a smooth and organized meet, managing registration, tabulation and overall event coordination.

Lynda Filipello and Sally Bukovsky were instrumental in coordinating judges and ensuring both gymnast and volunteer registration ran efficiently. Judy Soulides and Hallie Soulides did an

(Continued on Page 8)

From the President's View

A long, frigid and dreary winter is coming to an end. Spring begins to make its appearance with sunny days, warmer weather and the melting away of the mountains of snow from January and February snowstorms.

It also brings a lot of interesting news. In the 2024 and 2025 board meetings of the World Sokol Federation, I raised the idea of creating a common event that all Sokols would be able to do worldwide on the same day and at the same time. The Federation tasked me with creating the event. After much thought and several discussions with Sister Nancy Shurina from our Sokol USA, I presented the idea of a 5K walking event to the Federation. It was accepted and it will be held over the weekend of May 30-31, 2026.

This particular time was chosen for several reasons. May 31 is the day the historic Pittsburgh Agreement was signed by Thomas Masaryk with representatives of the Slovak and Czech communities in exile. The Pittsburgh Agreement was the first and most important call for the establishment of an independent country comprised of Czechs and Slovaks following the end of World War One. Secondly, in October 1918, near the end of the First World War,



Joseph Bielecki

the Sokols seized the Habsburg military garrisons and ultimately drove the Austro-Hungarian army out of what later became Czechoslovakia following the end of World War I. This weekend will celebrate the Sokol movement and its heritage. It will be a great way to show Sokol unity and Sokol spirit worldwide and to mark the historic events of Ma 1918!

The 5K Fun Walk is something every Sokol can do whether on one's own or with a group of Sokol friends or with a lodge. It can be done by all Sokols worldwide. Members will be on the honor system for reporting that they have actually done the 5K walk and, later, statistics will be reported from all World

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SOKOL FARRELL ACCEPTING DONATIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Sokol Farrell is accepting donations to the Scholarship Fund. Well over \$40,000 has been awarded to our Sokol Farrell members. Donations may be sent to: Sister Dorothy Slezak, Chairwoman; 6850 Seneca Road; Sharpsville, PA 16150. Checks may be made to Sokol USA Farrell.

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



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23 - SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2027

SLET PERFORMANCE SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 2027

HOW TAKING A DIGITAL BREAK CAN RECHARGE YOUR BODY AND MIND

Digital devices are part of modern life, from work to entertainment to staying connected. But constant screen time can take a toll on posture, mood and sleep. That's where a screen-free Sunday (or any regular break) may offer a much-needed reset.

Why a Digital Break Can Help

Hours spent looking at phones, tablets or computers may lead to hunched shoulders, tight neck muscles and tired eyes. Mentally, it can feel harder to focus or wind down after so much stimulation. Setting aside one day – or even part of a day – without screens gives your body and brain time to shift gears. It's not about cutting out tech completely, but about creating space to reconnect with your surroundings (or even just to notice how often you reach for your phone).

What to Do Instead

Filling the time with low-tech activities can help your nervous system relax. Try going for a walk, cooking something from scratch, reading a physical book or spending time in nature. If you have kids, screen-free time can be a chance to play a board game or get outside together. You might be surprised how quickly your posture improves when you're not leaning toward a screen for hours.

Make It Work for You

The idea isn't to go cold turkey every week – just to create moments that feel a little slower, quieter and more intentional. Even a half-day break can make a noticeable difference. Try turning off notifications, setting your phone aside, and choosing activities that help you recharge rather than scroll. Looking for simple ways to support your posture and well-being? A short screen break could be a great place to start.

A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR TRAVEL

Long car rides and cramped airplane seats can leave your spine feeling stiff and achy.

When you're stuck in one position for hours, spinal joints lose mobility and surrounding muscles grow fatigued trying to support you.

This combination often leads to that uncomfortable "locked up" feeling when you finally stand.

Before you hit the road, try these travel-friendly habits:

-Roll a small towel and place it behind your lower back for lumbar support.

-Stop every 90 minutes to walk and stretch for just 5 minutes.

-Adjust your seat so your knees are slightly lower than your hips.

-Pack a tennis ball to roll along your mid-back while resting.

Worldwide Sokol Walk 2026

As President Bielecki discussed in his article, the weekend of May 30th and 31st will be the initial global fraternal event of a 5k Fun Walk under the official patronage of the World Sokol Federation. This walk was based on the Sokol USA Walk held during our Sokolfest, starting with the XXVII in 2016 in Pittsburgh, Pa. The walk will happen across all countries with Sokol organizations during this weekend. As the developers of this event, Sokol USA will serve as the host group. In the future, hosting will rotate through World Sokol Federation member countries.

How To Participate

The walk is open to all Sokol members, their families, friends and supporters. It can be done as a group walk organized by your lodge/district or as an individual/family walk. There are no fees or competitive timing. To take part, please do the following:

1. Complete your walk on May 30th or 31st, 2026. (At anytime that weekend, local time)
2. Take a photo of the group or yourself during the walk. (If you have Sokol gear like a T-shirt or hat, it would be great if you wear it during the walk.)
3. After the walk, send the photo along with the following information in an email:
 - Sokol USA Lodge or District
 - Approximate number of participants and name of the group's leader
 - Name of the photo provider
 - Send information to worldsokolf@gmail.com and fna240@verizon.net

Just as a legal note, by providing photos you give your consent for them to be published by both Sokol USA and the World Sokol Federation. They will only be used for non-commercial, promotional purposes of the Sokol movement. The provider retains copyright and will always be credited as the sender.

General Guidelines for the Walk

1. Choose a safe route (park, public path, school track, etc.) and always obey the local traffic and safety regulations in that area.
2. Wear comfortable clothing and footwear. (Nobody wants blisters!)
3. Make sure to hydrate regularly.
4. As always, this is a family friendly event and all ages are welcome.
5. Parents are responsible for children under 18.
6. No political, commercial or religious attire or banners are permitted during the official walk.
7. You may share your own photos on social media using the official hashtag #Worldwide Sokol Walk 2026 and tag @World Sokol Federation.
8. Finally, all information must be received by June 30, 2026. The World Sokol Federation will compile all the information provided and will send out a summary report to every national organization in July.

In conclusion, I've asked our Fraternal Secretary John Kennedy to send an announcement out to our Lodges/Districts concerning this first of its kind event. I strongly encourage our members to join with all our Sokol brothers and sisters across the world in this walk. A strong showing demonstrates Sokol USA's commitment to our values and the Sokol movement. If there are any questions, feel free to contact me before the event.

NAZDAR

Sister Nancy Shurina
Chair of Fraternal Activities
Fna240@verizon.net
(724) 261-6377

Danbury Paddys



Sokol USA Lodge 30 in Brookfield, Conn., hosted their annual St. Patrick's Day party on March 14, 2026.

From the President's View

(Continued from Page 1)
Sokol Federation countries. Sister Shurina has a longer article in this issue of the Sokol Times setting forth the details of the 5K Fun Walk event for our members. It is a great event to mark the warm weather of spring and to celebrate our common Sokol heritage!

In late May and early June, Brother Damian Malecki, President of the World Sokol Federation as well as President of Sokol Poland, will visit the USA and Canada. One of his stops will be in Pittsburgh where he will visit the Sokol sports displays at the Pittsburgh Regional History center and meet with Sokols from both Sokol USA and from the Polish Falcons. Sokol USA looks forward to hosting him during his time in Pittsburgh.

With the arrival of spring, I encourage our members to walk off the pounds that may have accumulated over the winter. It is a great time for our members to meet at their lodges, engage in sporting and community activities and to reflect on our shared Sokol values. The Sokol spirit promotes a sound mind in a sound body as well as fraternalism and community involvement.

Spring is a great time to be more active and involved.

Additionally, spring is also the season of high school graduations and acceptances to post-high school educational programs. I encourage our eligible members to apply for Sokol USA's Milan Getting Scholarship as well as for GBU scholarships. If an applicant is selected, these scholarships are

useful for defraying the cost of post-secondary education expenses.

In conclusion, I encourage our members to meet, to engage in physical activity and to embark on sports and fraternal activities through their local Sokol USA lodges.

Nazdar!
Brother Joseph Bielecki
President

DONATIONS GRATEFULLY APPRECIATED

To the Milan Getting Scholarship Fund

From Sokol USA Lodge 15, Yonkers, N.Y.	\$100.00
<i>In memory of deceased members</i>	
From Sokol USA Lodge 12, Newark, N.J.	\$50.00
<i>In memory of deceased members</i>	
From Sokol USA Lodge 130, New Kensington, Pa.	50.00
<i>In memory of deceased members</i>	

To the Sports, Fitness and Wellness Department

From Milly, Eileen and Lillian Hsko	\$30.00
<i>In memory of Mary Lisko Mintas</i>	
From Sokol USA Lodge 15, Yonkers, N.Y.	\$100.00
<i>In memory of deceased members</i>	
From Sokol USA Lodge 12, Newark, N.J.	\$50.00
<i>In memory of deceased members</i>	
From Sokol USA Lodge 130, New Kensington, Pa.	\$50.00
<i>In memory of deceased members</i>	



Farrell Hosts Inspiring Day of Learning and Collaboration

Sokol USA Farrell proudly hosted a dynamic and engaging day of learning on February 21, 2026, bringing together coaches, athletes and leaders for a truly meaningful experience.

The day began at 9 a.m. in the Farrell gym, where instructors Todd Yatchyshyn, Heidi

Yatchyshyn, Megan Pech and Sydney Bowden led an open and collaborative discussion. Rather than following a pre-set agenda, they took time to connect with attendees and learn what skills and topics were most important to them. From there, they thoughtfully designed a plan to ensure the day was tailored to meet those needs – creating a personalized and impactful learning environment.

At 10:30 a.m., gymnasts joined the session, giving coaches the opportunity to immediately apply new spotting techniques and progressions in a hands-on setting. This real-time practice allowed for meaningful feedback, skill refinement and increased confidence for both coaches and athletes.

At noon, the group paused to enjoy a lunch generously provided by the host gym. The break offered time to recharge, connect and reflect on the morning's learning.

The afternoon continued with additional work on spotting techniques and skill progressions, building on the foundation established earlier in the day. The energy, collaboration and shared commitment to growth were evident throughout the entire event.

Sokol USA Farrell extends sincere gratitude to Todd, Heidi, Megan and Sydney for their expertise, flexibility and dedication to supporting the development of both coaches and gymnasts. Their ability to adapt instruction to meet the needs of participants made the day especially valuable.

Those in attendance included coaches Christina Pegg, Bobbie Haines, Ashley Settle, Kelly Knight, Amanda Polite, Denise Synder and Krista Totin. Participating gymnasts included Selena Totin, Joanna Totin, Kinsley Polite, Abby Synder, Lilli Young, Kendall Settle, Alana Yatchyshyn and Jaelyn Mathieson.

Overall, the event was a tremendous success.



Sokol USA Farrell hosted a special day in February that was filled with learning, collaboration and a shared passion for the continued growth of Sokol gymnastics.





Sokol USA Chicago holds in-house mini meet

Sokol USA Chicago recently hosted an in-house mini meet to help prepare gymnasts for the upcoming District Mini-Meet – and it was a wonderful success! A total of 26 athletes participated, including two boys and 24 girls. The boys competed on high bar, rings and parallel bars, while the girls showcased their skills on uneven bars and balance beam.

The energy in the gym was incredible, with athletes encouraging one another to take risks, try new skills and do their very best. We are so proud of all who participated and grateful to the families and coaches who came out to support them.

On the same day, our tots class held their Spring Tots Skills Assessment, adding even more excitement to the day! A special thank you to Judge Bubbe and Judge Eugene for volunteering their time and providing thoughtful, encouraging feedback to all of our gymnasts.



MINI MEET – Gymnasts on the medal stand at the Chicago Mini Meet. More photos on Pages 1, 5 and 8.

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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 ABOUT SOKOL USA?

Have any official Sokol business and/or questions? Reach out to Brother John Kennedy at info@sokolusa.org.

Sokol USA Cal Writer's Lock In Held at Sokol Greater Cleveland

The Sokol USA Cal Writer's Lock In was held March 20-22, 2026, at Sokol Greater Cleveland. The weekend brought together 10 participants dedicated to developing new calisthenics routines that will be performed at Sokolfest in Novi, Michigan, in June 2027.

Of the 10 participants, seven were from Sokol Greater Cleveland, two traveled from eastern Pennsylvania and one traveled from the Indianapolis area. Sokol Greater Cleveland graciously provided the use of their facilities for the group to work and stay for the entire weekend, making the event both productive and enjoyable.

Participants from Cleveland included Michelle and Daniel Jirousek, Maria Zack, Sydney Bowden, Megan Pech, Jacob Jirousek and Ray Wodarczyk. Traveling from Pennsylvania were Heidi and Todd Yatchyshyn, and Matt Reynolds attended from the Indianapolis area.

During the weekend, the 10 participants divided themselves into three groups: two groups of four and one group of two. Each group was responsible for creating one calisthenics routine. By the end of the weekend, the groups successfully created three calisthenic numbers: a Children's Calisthenics, a Junior/Senior Calisthenics and a Senior II Calisthenics.

The weekend was highly productive. The creation of each calisthenics required each group to select music, create the

each group to select music, create the movements and formations and, by the end of the weekend, they were able to record performances of the calisthenics for future training videos. The writing of the official text to accompany each routine is underway and, for some groups, nearly complete.

The Cal Writer's Lock In continues to be an important part of preparing for Sokolfest, allowing writers and leaders to collaborate, share ideas and develop quality calisthenics for Sokol members across the country. The success of this year's Lock In was made possible in large part due to the hospitality and generosity of Sokol Greater Cleveland in hosting the event and allowing access to their valuable resources, including archived texts and music (some texts dating over 100 years old)!

The three calisthenic numbers created during the weekend will be performed by Sokol members at Sokolfest in Novi, Michigan, in June 2027. Look for updates on our social media platforms.

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SokolUSAHqs
www.facebook.com/SokolUSASFW

TikTok:

www.tiktok.com/@sokolusasfw

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/sokolusasfw



Mini Meet in Chicago

(Continued from Page 1)
outstanding job organizing awards and distributing them promptly to participants, helping to keep the event running on schedule.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to the many coaches and staff members who stayed after the event to assist with cleanup, put away chairs and restore the gym in preparation for classes on Monday evening.

Sokol USA Chicago is incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be the host unit for such a fun and successful event and to welcome fellow Sokol members from across the district into our facility. It was truly a day that reflected the spirit of Sokol: community, dedication and a shared love of gymnastics.

**More photos on
Pages 1, 5 and 6.**

