

Šibřínky is filled with merriment & dancing to live old-time music, February 20



Jive a little, jive a lot! Shake a leg! Polka! Invite all your friends to whirl, twirl, and pirouette at our 2009 Šibřínky. Dance the night away to live old-time music in celebration of Šibřínky/ Mardi Gras, sponsored by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, on Friday, February 20, 7-11 p.m., at our historic C.S.P.S. Sokol Hall. Come in your finest ethnic costume, full masquerade or else disguise yourself only with a mask, or just plain come as yourself. Whatever your raiment, you will have a lively, delightful evening. There will be prizes for the finest ethnic attire, the best masquerade costume, and the most elaborate mask, according to co-chair Ed Hamernik. Czech and Slovak foods will be available for purchase starting at 6 p.m., plus a cash bar with plenty of beer, including good Czech beer, as well as pop and wine.

The six-piece Country Polkateers band, from Pierz in Stearns County, will play snappy old-time music, including polka, waltz, two-step, and country. For over 35 years, the band has entertained thousands with its accordion, sax, clarinet, trumpet, tuba, and drums. Plan to step lively to this popular band. Formed in 1972, the band was named 2008 Band of the Year by the Minnesota Ballroom Operators Association. In addition to dancing to the live music, there will be entertainment. Co-chair Louise Wessinger is in charge of the programming between dance sets. Taneční Mládež and Taneční Teens, the children's folk groups of Sokol Minnesota will perform during the dinner hour from 6-7 pm. During the band breaks, the adult St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folkdancers will present authentic dances in their ornate costumes.

continued on page 10

Upcoming Events

20 February, 7 pm
Šibřínky (Sokol Mardi Gras) Dance

BOD Meeting
12 February

Membership Meeting
27 February

Baking for Festival of Nations
7 & 8 March

Deadline for March Slovo
10 March

Flavors of Slovakia dinner
22 March, 12 pm

Spring Breakfast Craft & Bake Sale
5 March, 9-1 pm

Collecting Now for Garage Sale
April 16-17



Šibřínky

(Czech Mardi Gras)

Friday • February • 20th

\$10.00 Entry Fee

\$8.00 advance sales tickets are available by sending check payable to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota
CSPS Sokol Hall 383 Michigan Street - St. Paul, MN 55102 Attn: Louise
Checks must be postmarked by Friday the 13th of February to rec' the discount

Dance is hosted by
Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota
383 Michigan
at West 7th Street
St. Paul

Dance to live music by the Country Polkateers 7-11 pm

Ethnic food available starting at 6pm • Cash bar

Folkdance performance by Taneční mládež (children's group)

Adult St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folkdancers

and the Ethnic Dance Theatre

Info: Louise 651.452.6240 or Ed 763.571.6091 www.sokolmn.org

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**President Komentář/
President's Note**

By Joe Landsberger

*Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings brothers
and sisters*

I would like to let the theme of this issue tell its own tale: What is Sokol? What is a Slet? What is a Prostna? Perhaps as you read this issue you will get both a historical perspective of Slets, and what meaning they bring to Sokol Minnesota.

This year, June 23-28, Sokols from our unit will travel to Fort Worth, Texas for the 2009 American Sokol Slet. American Sokol and its units are joining up with the 2009 International Sport and Cultural Festival for a week of events that should be quite exciting. In the last issue, Norm Petrik invited us to join a group practicing a gymnastic routine under the direction of Doreen McKenney on the first and third Mondays of the month. Also in consideration is a group bus trip for participants or spectators. Call (651 290 0542) or email (publicrelations@sokolmn.org) us if you are interested in these.

You may also notice that we are adding features to the Slovo this month. A Publications Committee is forming and in the future we'll build new features. We are looking to add a Slovo editor position to receive, consolidate and edit via email all articles for layout. We welcome any help you can provide, especially from Czech or Slovak speakers/writers! This issue we're resurrecting the favorite recipe and adding movie reviews (thank you, Cinnamon Whaley!). We'll also try to



develop themes for each issue. For the March issue we'll document the sets and backdrops of our theater, oldest in the state. Finally I want to thank Jeanette Pafko for



Sokol emblem

her work this past year in organizing and updating our membership files. Thank you, Jeanette!

Nazdar
Bro. Joe



Above Photos: 1932 Prague Slet: Sokol flag and field of participants
*Dorostenky nastoupily k hromadnému cvičení prostných o IX sletě všesokolském r.
1932 (Units gathering in mass physical exercise at the ninth Sokol Slet in 1932)*

The SLOVO is published 10 times yearly by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, a non-profit organization, 383 Michigan Street, St. Paul, MN 55102. We welcome your contributions, text and pictures!

The Slovo Publications Committee welcomes submissions. Send your suggestions/submissions digitally to publicrelations@sokolmn.org, or call 651 290 0542! The deadline for the March issue is February 10.

Slovo gift subscriptions and non-membership renewals: \$12
Sokol MN SLOVO, 5604 Morgan Ave So., Mpls, MN 55419

Visit us at:
www.sokolmn.org

Sokol Minnesota Thanks Generous Donors

Sokol Minnesota wishes to deeply acknowledge all donations as they are received. They are listed in two categories, Building Fund and General Operating Fund, though programs within each are not listed. Amounts are now grouped in five categories: under \$100, \$100-499, \$500 - 999, \$1,000-4,999, and \$5,000+.

Building Fund (matching our grant requirements):

\$1,000 – 4,999: Czech and Slovak Culture Center

\$500 – 999: Thomas Tesarek

\$100 - 499: Geraldine Dooley;

In memory of his parents: Wally Schovanec;

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To \$100: Hana Matousek, Miro & Shirley Verner,

In honor of Dr. Norm Sladek: Cody Hanzel Family



Membership Update by Jeanette Pafko

2008 was a great year for our unit. As of December 31st we have reached a new high in membership at 351 members. We have 153 men and 198 women enrolled. Interesting facts are:

- We have 10 honor members (individuals who have been in our unit over 50 years);
- 5 honorary members (individuals who have been recognized as exemplary members – Dr. Norman Sladek, Robert Vanyo, Georgiana Dolejsi, Miroslav Verner and in December Joan Sedlacek)
- 90 of our members are senior citizens. Florence Haselbauer has been a member for 77 years followed by Georgiana Dolejsi and Helen Lander at 74 years. What an accomplishment!

Membership is the key to a great organization and without you we could not accomplish all we have done in the past nor what we will accomplish in the future.

REMINDER - 2009 Membership Dues

Our membership dues run from January 1st thru December 31st of each year.

Your continued membership in our organization is very important to us.

However, since we also have obligations of dues to the American Sokol it is important that you promptly pay your 2009 dues at this time.

Also - a reminder to all. If you wish to continue to receive all notices of events and the Slovo which is sent by mail, you must be sure to either contact Sharon Wyberg (Editor of the Slovo) or Jan Knudtson (Membership Financial Secretary) of your change of address, telephone or e-mail. This can be done by simply contacting us at our website www.sokolmn.org, by telephone 651 290 0542. **Your 2009 membership is now due.**

D→O→N→A→T→E

to Czech & Slovak Sokol MN



April 16 - 17

Th: noon - 7· Fri: 10 - 5

Drop Off: April 15, 10 - 5

Collectibles, treasures,
antiques, clothes, jewelery,
linens, books, toys, utensils,
yard & garden, misc.

No electronics, bicycles, large
furniture, mattresses

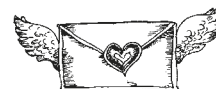
Early drop off in boxes
with lids (no bags) or

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Kolačky Recipe

Florence Haselbauer

Editor's note: Florence Haselbauer gave this typewritten recipe to Angeline Polumbo Elly who lived on the Levy or Little Italy in the 1940's or 1950's. Angeline passed the recipe onto her daughter, Joanna Craighead who in turn donated it to Sokol MN in January 2009.

2 cups milk	3 large eggs	1/4 tsp mace
2/3 cup sugar	2 pkgs dry yeast (2 tbsp)	6 1/2 to 7 cups of flour
2/3 cup margarine	2 tsp salt	(1/2 tsp nutmeg and 1 tsp Vanilla optional)

Put milk, sugar, and margarine in saucepan and heat to lukewarm (margarine should be melted). Put in large bowl and cool to lukewarm. Add mace. Beat eggs well and add to mixture. Add about two cups of flour and mix. Add yeast that has been diluted in 1/2 cup warm water and raised slightly. Add the rest of the flour and 2 tsp salt and beat well. Cover and let rise in a warm place about 1 1/2 hours.

Sprinkle bread board with flour. Spoon dough out on floured board, one heaping teaspoon for each Kolache. Pat each round slightly, pat each with melted butter and put in filing. Pull four corners over filling and seal. Place on greased cookie sheet that has one inch sides, just so they touch. Pat with melted butter between each Kolache and each row. Let rise in a warm place about 3/4 hour then bake at 350 about 15 to 20 minutes, until nicely browned. Makes 5 1/2 to 6 dozen depending on the size you want.

Prune Filling

1 lb prunes

Boil fruit until tender. Remove seeds and put the prunes through grinder. Add 1/2 cup brown sugar and 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon rind. Mix well.

Apricot Filling

1 lb Apricot

Boil fruit until tender. Drain. Mash with fork or grind. Add about 1/2 cup brown or white sugar. Mix well.

Poppy Seed Filling

I use the canned Solo brand, a prepared filing.

Cottage Cheese Filling

1 small package dry cottage cheese
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 egg yolk
1/4 cup white raisins
Grated lemon rind.

Mix well. Add a little cream so it isn't too dry.

Topping

3/4 cup sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
2 tbsp flour
2 tbsp butter

Mix until crumbly and sprinkle on top of Kolačky before baking

Kolačky – A Beginners Story

by Cinnamon Whaley

I admit that I've never had Kolačky and I'm not a baker, but I like to try new things. When I found out there would be a recipe in each Slovo this year I decided to spend a monthly evening trying the recipe myself and watching a Czech movie. I want to follow the recipe as closely as I can to try reproducing the dishes people are so fond of. For Kolačky, I could not find a few items in Florence's recipe including poppy seed filling and dry cottage cheese. I substituted canned blueberry filling and small curd cottage cheese.

My mother Rosemary and I started the evening with the question of if we should use two packages or two tbsp of yeast as the packets I had were under a tbsp each. We ended up using two packages, slightly less than two tbsp. The recipe calls for 6.5 to 7 cups of flour and when the dough thickened up quite a bit between 6 and 6.5 cups we stopped adding flour. I still didn't know what a proper kolache looked like, but I did use Google to look at a few recipes and read that the proper size to pat out was two by two inches. We patted our spoonfuls of dough and added our fillings. I was unsure what shape I should truly be making and I found myself with pierogi shapes before the dough rose. After filling about a dozen kolache we realized that we certainly were not going to make six dozen. In the end we had a total of 30 and we knew we had made them much too big.

When we uncovered them after 45 minutes, they were the size of small crescents and in to the oven they went. As I was cleaning the kitchen I could hear the fillings cooking. The house began to smell like baking bread. Due to the oversized kolache, it was half an hour later I took them out.

Stuffed buns! I ended up with stuffed buns. The dough is delicious; the blueberry bun tastes similar to a jelly doughnut. They are golden in color and the dough is moist and fluffy - fluffy, not flaky. They are quite nice with a little bit of butter but obviously not as intended. The buns with cottage cheese have less of an apparent taste outside the dough, the filling seems to get lost.

After we finished I Googled what they should look like, and also found that dry cottage cheese is just strained cottage cheese. While mom and I had a good evening together, I look forward to a time I can be at the CSPS hall kitchen when experienced cooks are making this favorite. I'd sure like to have one as they were intended to be made!



photo by Cinnamon Whaley

What is a Slet? By Joan Sedlacek

While there are numerous American-Czech and American-Slovak organizations, there is only one Czech-American organization – Sokol. Many groups have ethnic classes, gym classes, dinners, dances, genealogy or insurance. Sokol units and lodges have everything the others offer. The one thing we have that is uniquely Sokol is the Slet. Sokol means falcon; a Slet is a flocking together or gathering of the birds.



2000 Prague Slet

What is a Slet? It is the culmination of many years' work. A Slet can be described and explained and watched, but to really understand, it must be experienced from the field. It seems typical that when people become proficient at an activity, they want to show off or compete to prove their prowess. The early Sokol men were no different. After perfecting their calisthenics exercises, they wanted Prague to see what a benefit Sokol was to their well-being. They started getting together to put on displays.

As membership grew and more units were formed, the competitions also grew. The Slets grew from modest displays of calisthenics to huge international exhibitions which now include athletic competitions as well. Because there were many more Sokols than could be accommodated on the field, competitions were held. Only the best of the best stood on the Slet markers. Even today you may be asked to leave the field if you do not know the proper moves.

Inspired thinking and an appreciation of music are needed to produce the calisthenics drills. Each beat of music is counted and a movement assigned to a beat; physical movements must flow and work with the music. The movements of hands, arms, heads, bodies, legs, and feet are written down in Sokol terminology. People work as individuals, in pairs, in threes, fours, eights or more, coming together and separating to make formations on the field. The music may be marches, polkas, waltzes, modern, jazz, or children's songs-- depending on the age of the performers and the taste of the choreographer. After the calisthenics is approved by the Board of Instructors it is sent to the units where the teachers learn it and begin the months of practice to perfect the performance.

In the early beginnings there was no music--the rhythm was beat out by a wooden wand thumping on the floor. Today we have video to help with the moves, and tapes or CDs to use. Before this technology was available, the gym classes used records. In Czechoslovakia the classes would meet at predetermined times set by the COS. The calisthenics music was broadcast over the national radio. In every one of the 3,000 units, in great cities and tiny villages the Sokols gathered to practice at the same time. How incredible to imagine so many people in so many places doing the same thing at the same time.

The photographs of the old Slets are unbelievable. In 1938, 32,000 men were on the field. Everyone learned the calisthenics at home, practiced together once or twice and preformed. How did all these thousands of people from around the world come together and mesh to perform the beautiful calisthenics? How did they know where to line-up and find their marker on a field of 32,000 markers? Commitment, cooperation, and dedication are part of the answer.

The Slets were not just mass exhibitions. They were also competitions in a large number of venues including, gymnastics, track and field, swimming, diving, rowing, archery, and equestrian events for men women and children. The winter Slets had many of the same events of the Winter Olympics today, and not only were the competitors from countries around the world--each and every one belonged to Sokol.

The first president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, said upon leaving his homeland to garner support for a new government, "First of all, I am counting on the Sokols. I understand them and depend on them." After the war, Sokol was his bodyguard and his honor guard. Masaryk also said that while the name "Czech" was not well known, Sokol was. "I underestimated the international activities of the Sokols until I lived in foreign lands during the war, when I found that in many cases the only thing known about us was that we had the "Sokols" who conducted the magnificent "Slets."

The best place to be is on the Slet field. The scariest place to be is on the Slet field before the music starts. The place of greatest personal satisfaction is on the Slet field when the music ends. The hardest place to be is sitting in the stands, watching, remembering past Slets, and wishing with all your heart you were standing on the Slet field.

A Slet is work. It is commitment. It is fun and good exercise. It is wonderful and glorious. It is a tie to the past. I have stood in my father's footprints and those of his father. Too often we remember and return to the sites of battles and sadness. With Sokol we return to the sites of our greatest triumphs – the Slet fields. With little prompting, the memories give unending pleasure.

And that is a Slet.



1908 First women's gym class on the second floor in the CSPS Hall before the third level addition in 1917. The early stage and its backdrop in the southwest corner is visible at left, pictures in our archive collection, the door to the original meeting room, and at far right the door to the original stair. Photograph by Rud. Smutný



1931 Sokol Camp course, Pine City, July 5 – 12. Photo donation of Ann Neubauer



1950's Sokol Minnesota Girls gymnasts



1930 Girls' competition at Palace Playground in the West End. Photograph by George, 818 Marshall Avenue.



Pin from 1938 International Slet in Prague



1908 St. Paul Sokol boys class on the second floor in the CSPS Hall before the third level addition in 1917. Instructor was Karel Kolarik

**KEEP
in
TRIM**

1930 Detail of 1930 Keep in Trim Poster



Pin from the first American Sokol Slet, 1921 in Chicago



1936 Sokol Instructors from St. Paul, Minneapolis, Hopkins, and Pine City Minnesota; Caddott and Haugen Wisconsin. Second floor, CSPS Hall.



Circa 1920 Tél. Jed. Sokol St. Paul men in formal Sokol uniform



1989 Omaha Slet parade

Editor's note: Cinnamon Whaley often downloads Czech and Slovak films through Netflix (www.netflix.com/). Netflix Internet film rental service features home delivery and unlimited access to a film library that includes over 100,000 movie titles. Cinnamon will review films as a regular feature in our Slovo. Welcome Cinnamon!

Up and Down (2005) Rated R

We see strangers in our everyday lives and wonder what they might be feeling or experiencing. This movie gives us a glimpse into the lives of three sets of people. We see their desires, we see their guilts, and ultimately, how their lives influence each other.

The movie begins by introducing us to two con men who, while dabbling in transporting illegal immigrants, wind up with a baby for sale. We are brought to the pawn shop where they buy and sell stolen merchandise as they wonder what to do with the baby. Next we meet Mila, who is anxious for a child, and her boyfriend Franka, a footballer in a particularly Aryan club. Mila and Franka cannot conceive and Franka's jail record keeps them from adopting. Out of her desperation for a child, Mila buys "Franka Jr." from the con men without considering the consequences of buying a baby on the black market. When Franka finds that Mila has purchased an Indian infant he must confront his own preconceptions and face his friends--as well as hide the knowledge that they have obtained this child illegally.

While Mila's story line touches on desperation bordering on mental illness, our second story line is likely more common in Prague today. We see a family with an older father, younger mother, and teenage daughter. The father, Otto, soon has a heart attack and we watch as the daughter finds out that her father is still married to another woman--and that she has an older brother. Upon receiving a second lease on life, Otto wants to divorce his estranged wife and reintroduce his son in to the family. The five come together for a post-communist revelation of family secrets and long held resentment.

We see how the lives of the cast tie into each other's, and while there are some victories in the end, there is no satisfying closure -- only the knowledge that life moves forward even if things don't turn out the way we hope. This movie reminds me that I'm not the only person who makes mistakes, and that is something we should all be reminded of every now and then.

Sokol Definitions

The Sokol movement (from the Czech word for falcon) is a Czech and Slavic youth movement and gymnastics organization founded in Prague in 1862 by Miroslav Tyrš and Jindřich Fügner. Primarily a fitness (gymnastic) training center, the Sokol, also through lectures, discussions, and group outings provided what Tyrš viewed as physical, moral, and intellectual training for the nation. This training extended to members of all classes, and eventually to women and to Slavs in Slovakia, Poland (Sokoł), Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Ukraine (Sokil), Macedonia and Russia. In many of these nations, the organization also served as an early precursor to the Scouting movements. Though officially an institution "above politics", the Sokol played an important part in the development of Czech nationalism, providing a forum for the spread of mass-based nationalist ideologies. The articles published in the Sokol journal, lectures held in the Sokol libraries, and theatrical performances at the massive gymnastic festivals called Slets (Czech plural: Slety) helped to craft and disseminate the Czech nationalist mythology and version of history. The first Sokol worked to develop new Czech terminology for the training exercises, which centered on marching drills, fencing, and weightlifting. They designed a uniform that was a mélange of Slavic and

revolutionary influences: brown Russian pants, a Polish revolutionary jacket, a Montenegrin cap, and a red Garibaldi shirt. A Sokol flag, red with a white falcon, was designed by the writer Karolína Světlá. The Prague Sokol initially drew its leaders from the ranks of politicians and its members from the petite bourgeoisie and the working classes. The first president was Jindřich Fügner, an ethnic German who was a member of the Czech cause.

Source: Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sokol>

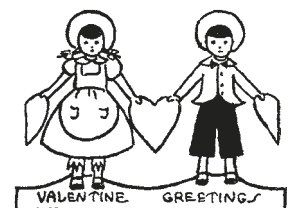
More Definitions

By Denis Novak

"Prostná" is a synonym for "cvičení" generally means exercise in the sense of a drill. When used in reference to gymnastics it means calisthenics.

The word "slet" is derived from slétati means to "fly down" and when combined with the word "se" means to fly together. Slet also refers to "a congress of Sokols." By extension of meaning we have "a gathering of falcons" or gathering of Sokol members for organized exercise.

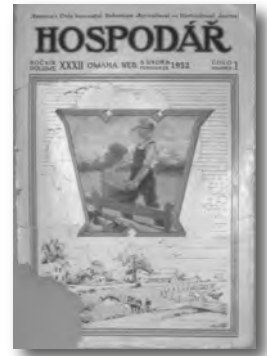
Source: Čermák, Alois, English-Czech, Czech-English Dictionary, published by Saprograph Co, New York, 1963.



Pioneer Stories: “Come to Minnesota- a Promising Future for Czech Americans”

By Ginger Simek, President, Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International

Come to Minnesota was the message of advertisements placed in the *Hospodář*, “America’s Only Successful Bohemian Agricultural and Horticultural Journal”, published in Omaha, Nebraska in the Czech language and widely read in Czech communities. The ads were placed by Bohemian representatives of the Duluth & Iron Range Railroad Company to attract Czech farmers. The railroad offered several thousand acres of land for sale on easy terms, stating that “the best and most successful farmers in America are Czech” and proclaiming the success of dairy and poultry farming, growing grain, alfalfa hay, sugar beets, vegetables, and fruit.



Czech farmers settled the communities of Meadowlands and Masaryk, located northwest of Duluth. In the ad appearing in the February 1923 issue, Meadowlands was celebrating its seventh anniversary. The ad boasted that the “potato crop yielded 200 bushels an acre, and sugar beets on the average of 15 tons an acre.” Another ad in the February 1924 issue indicated that a “flock of chickens brought a Meadowlands settler an average of \$12 a day this winter after paying for the feed.” A 1927 ad stated that potatoes were “currently \$1 a bushel”. It also mentioned community life: schools, churches, and Czech organizations to make settlement in the area attractive.

I have not been able to find Masaryk on a current map but did locate Meadowlands, located between Duluth and Grand Rapids. I wonder how many families living there are descended from those original Czech farmers who went there to make a better life for themselves.

This information was taken from the book, Pioneer Stories, of and by Minnesota Czech Residents 1906-1930, abstracted by Margie Sobota and translated by Karleen Shepard. It is part of the CGSI library resources. www.cgsi.org

Song of the Month

Submitted by Georgiana Dolejsi



Translation

Never to Return

There are beautiful times in a person’s life which sometimes come back

Such as the sun in spring, coming to kiss the first blossoms.

But youth never returns, young love does not come back again

And those who did not recognize the beauty of it, have lost it forever.

The tale of youth, never to return, of all tales, it is the most beautiful.

It will never return; calling it back is in vain once it has left.

Why does fate give us so little love, why does everything remain only as a memory?

It will never return, the tale of youth, which life gives us only once.



NIKDY SE NEVRÁTÍ POHÁDKA MLÁDÍ

ludba a text K. Vacek

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(Print © 1933 E. Kowalski, Praha)

1. V životě jsou chvíle mámivé, které časem přijdou zpět, tak
2. Ve vzpomínkách najde útěchy ten, kdo mívál někdy rád. Toť

jako z jara slunko zářivé přijde zřítat první květ. Jen
jediné jsou štěstí úsměvy, které život může dát. Kdo

mládý nevrátí se nikdy víc, již nepřijde nám svoji láskou vsítit a
vzpomínku na první lásku má, to - mu se žít navždy krásným zdát a

ten, kdo nepoznal po-hád - ky té, musí se jí navždy zřít. R. Nikdy se ne-
ztracenému mládí navzdory naposledy zazpí - vá.

vrá - tí - po - hád - ka mlá - dí, ze všech po -
há - dek ta nei - hez - ěf. Nikdy se ne -
vrá - tí - mar - né vo - lá - ní, jed - nou se
s ná mi - přec roz - lou - ěf. Proč o - sud
dá - vá - tak má - lo lás - ky nám, - proč vše - chno
zů - sta - ne - jen vzpo - mín - kám? Nikdy se ne -
vrá - tí - po - hád - ka mlá - dí, kte - rá je
v ži - tí - ien ie - den - krát.

Šibřinky continued from page 1.

These three folk dancing groups are directed by Louise. In addition The Ethnic Dance Theater from Minneapolis will perform special numbers from its upcoming 35th anniversary show in late March, The Kaiser's Jubilee, featuring the folk cultures of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

\$10 admission, \$8 in advance. Your place on the dance floor can be reserved by sending a check payable to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota. Include your name and number of tickets to CSPS Sokol Hall, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul 55102.

Attn: Louise. Advance ticket requests must be postmarked by February 13. Your tickets will be waiting for you at the door.

Šibřinky (shib-shink-ee) began in 1865 as a masquerade ball, sponsored by the Sokol gymnast society in Prague, Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic). The name Šibřinky derived from a word that had evolved to mean practical joking and clowning around; its origins were a word that was an imitation of a sparrow's song. Try saying "shib-shink-ee" rapidly and you will sound like a sparrow yourself. Sokol Minnesota's 2009 Šibřinky is a night of merriment with fun, food, song, and dance for all ages. Bring your friends and dance the night away. Šibřinky!!

Gymnastics continued from page 12

Sokol MN gymnastics offers a safe, welcoming program. Another strength of our program is the niche we fill - we are more than a parks and recreation class, but we are not an elite club. Kids can "try" gymnastics and participate in other sports as well. For those who want a more competitive program, we offer the opportunity to compete annually in a Western District Slet. Our philosophy is that everyone in the gym supports everyone else in their efforts and accomplishments. Gymnasts make friends with everyone in the gym. For those gymnasts older than 14 years of age and who show leadership qualities, maturity and commitment to the Sokol ideals, we may invite them to be trained at American Sokol Instructor School and hire them to teach in the gymnastics program. In recent years we have been fortunate to have wonderful involved and supportive parents, and another key to the success of any educational program is parental support and involvement.

The gymnastics program faces some challenges, but some of those we can parlay into our strengths. The sport has evolved over the years, requiring more dedicated space than the building can accommodate. For example, a 42ft x42ft spring floor is no longer a "luxury" or for elite gymnasts, it is a basic piece of equipment in the gym. We have no space in the CSPS Hall to set up a spring floor that can remain set up. Rental income is needed the gym program equipment cannot remain set up from class to class. Taking down, storing and setting up equipment is hard on staff and the equipment. Because of space and gym access, in recent years we have offered only girls classes for ages 6 and over. We have seen a steady growth and gymnast retention with those who have participated in the classes, and we now find ourselves with the pleasant "challenge" of needing to consider additional class times to accommodate the increasing numbers. Women's Director Lisa Hollibush has created opportunities for gymnasts to experience gymnastics in other programs during their community times. We are excited that some of our challenges are the result of our success, and we are working to find new ways to offer programming.



Flavors of Slovakia



Sunday, March 22

12:30 p.m. limited seating

\$15 Adult * \$7 Child under 9

Traditional Slovakian Dinner with cabbage roll, green beans, pickled beets, prune pirohy, dumplings and cabbage, and more.

Cash bar.



Mail prepaid reservations by March 12 to Sokol MN attn: Slovak Dinner
Send phone number or e-address for confirmation.

*** Public Welcome ***

*** Take-out available ***

**Historic CSPS Sokol Hall
383 Michigan Street (at West 7th)
Saint Paul 55102 651-290-0542
www.sokolmn.org**



Contestants Wanted

**of Czech, Slovak or Moravian Descent Ages 16-26 for the
20th Annual Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Pageant**

April 4, 2009, American Legion Club, Montgomery, Minnesota

For information/application: Lorraine David, 507-364-5384 davidsdiner@hotmail.com or Ashely Vlasak, 952-201-4107

Deadline for entering is March 1, 2009



On the importance of “and”

By Josef A. Mestenhauer

The theme of this issue of Slovo is on physical fitness; having a theme allows Slovo to develop certain topics in greater depth and find space and time for more background information and for clarification of the context in which these developments take place.

Reflecting on the theme for this issue means reflecting on the very nature of the SOKOL credo that was articulated long ago by Fuegner, even before Tyrš published his first important work in 1910, *Our Task, Direction and Goal* (*Nas ukol, smer a cil*). Accordingly individual Sokol members should develop through a unique “Sokol” fitness programs the following qualities: solid convictions, ability to change words into action, self-regulation, self-discipline, persistence and sustaining determination, systems thinking, reliability, precision, responsibility and moderation. By developing individuals one also develops the nation.

Here is where I have a problem with the focus on fitness because it leaves out the “AND” to include mental fitness. Separating physical from mental fitness might suggest they are two different qualities; that was not intended by Tyrš. He was thinking holistically, that physical and mental fitness were not separable. Both were essential to the development of democracy that was absent then. Developing democratic citizens with their rights AND responsibilities (here is another AND) thus became the common denominator. He studied carefully the Czech national character and what happened to it under the monarchy and saw large gap between his ideas and the reality. Consequently he became critical of everything “bad” especially the smallness (*maličkost*), subservience, self-aggrandizement, and others. His often severe criticism was a positive force because he believed that through massive education these “errors of Czech character” can be corrected individually AND collectively so that the entire nation could stand proud in comparison



1912 stadium: Společná postná cvičení 5600 žen na VI. Sletě roku 1912. Celkový pohled na sletišť z vodárenské věže na Letné v Praze (5,600 men in a mass drill at the sixth Slet in 1912. Panorama of the Slet from the water tower in summer in Prague) The Great Strahov Stadium was the largest in the world seating 220,000 and is now second after the Indianapolis Speedway.

with the rest of Europe. Physical fitness thus became the method of achieving these larger goals –AND simultaneously brought out the natural “beauty” of the exercises, thus adding an aesthetic and moral dimension to everything.

These holistic qualities remain a testimony to the soundness of these ideas including the stress on action. Even the best ideas are not sufficient unless action accompanies the thought. Is there a message for us today? Times have changed dramatically, especially in the past quarter century. While physical fitness is an increasingly popular dimension of our lives that is being promoted every day, the idea of a mental fitness lags behind. As I tried to point out in the January issue, an important work of John Kegan, *In Over Our Heads*, suggests that we live in times of extreme complexity when most people’s prior education and experiences have not provided them sufficient mental resources to deal with these complexities. The interesting thing is that the components of “cognitive and moral development” are very similar to those of Tyrš and Masaryk, only they are called differently. So the message for today is to seek balance between physical and mental fitness and strengthen the cognitive resources needed to face the complexities of life.



Peter Burian

New Slovak Ambassador to U.S.

The Slovak Embassy in Washington, D.C. has announced a new ambassador, Peter Burian as of November, 2008. Ambassador Burian was most recently head of the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations. In that position he also served two years as the permanent representative of Eastern Europe on the Security Council. Previous posts include Brussels, Prague and Beirut. In the 1990’s he was in the Czechoslovak Embassy. After the division of that country in 1993, he became the charge d’affaires in the new Slovak Embassy and later on deputy to Ambassador Branislav Lichardus.

Sokol MN Gymnastics: Successes and Challenges Over the Years

by Assistant Women's Director Mary Cahill

If you're from Minnesota you've heard the term "rink rats". I wasn't a rink rat, I grew up a Sokol "gym rat", in the heyday of large boys and girls gymnastics classes, when it was affordable to rent a Greyhound bus or two and travel as families to Sokol Slets in Omaha and Chicago to compete, perform the various prostnas (calisthenics) at Soldiers Field, or participate as an awed spectator. While Sokol gym class numbers have diminished somewhat since those days, our current classes still offer what makes Sokol the unique gymnastics program it has always been - solid gymnastics based on the Tyrš methods of instruction, a belief that a strong mind and a sound body are equally important and that we are united as "brothers and sisters" in a worldwide organization that cherishes physical activity, and preservation of Czech and Slovak educational and cultural heritage.


One of the key successes of our gymnastics program, operational in some aspect since the incorporation of Sokol MN nearly 125 years ago, is the lifelong involvement of Sokols before me, and its continued success will depend on those Sokols who are now coming up through the ranks. Sokol's philosophy is to promote physical fitness from preschool throughout one's life. We have classes tailored to all ages, but not necessarily all ability levels. Over the years our seniors class has promoted marching, dancing and volleyball. Our senior class "leader", now almost 91 years of age, is attending Monday evening classes to learn the prostna for Fort Worth! It is these seniors who have made certain that the gymnastics program has survived leaner years by supporting it. We make sure the Unit subsidizes the ever increasing insurance fees, pays for gymnasts to attend Sokol National Instructor Schools, reimburses Sokol instructors and representatives to attend district and national meetings where the gymnastics program is discussed and refined.

continued on page 10



2000 Sokol Minnesota participants at the 20 Sokol Slet in Prague

Czech
Slovak
Sokol Minnesota



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