



*Providing fitness and community
for individuals and families
through physical, educational,
cultural, and social programs*

UPCOMING EVENTS

**September Slovo
articles** due August 1

Kolo Sokol Bike Club
May - October
sokolmn.org/bike

**96th Sokol Camp
Booya Picnic**
Sunday, August 9
See page 12

Volunteer Opportunities
See page 12

**Language Classes
Adult and Children**
See page 12

Sokol Singers
Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-noon
September 1 and 15

C.S.P.S. HALL LEGACY FUND

We ask for your
support
for maintenance and
renovation to C.S.P.S.
Hall as we celebrate
the Hall's 139th year.

Contact
Joyce Tesarek
to discuss your tax-
deductible donation at
finance@sokolmn.org

Thank you!

Write **Legacy Fund** in
the check's memo line.

Mail to **C.S.P.S. Hall
Legacy Fund.**

Attn: Treasurer

Or donate online:
www.sokolmn.org

Fall Class! Czech for Children at Sokol MN



**Ages 10 - 14 for those
with little or no prior exposure to the
Czech language. Teacher: Luboš Mareš**



**Saturdays, 9:45 - 10:45
at the C.S.P.S. Hall**

**Fall trimester: September
through December**

**Registration will open by mid-August
Visit sokolmn.org for details**



**Questions? Comments? Receive notifications?
Email: education@sokolmn.org**

Czech and Slovak Language Classes for Adults

**Fall trimester registration
opens late August.
Classes begin the week
of September 28 and
end in early December.**



**Visit the website for the schedule and
registration form for online and in-person
options: www.sokolmn.org**

Email questions to: education@sokolmn.org

37th annual CZECH & SLOVAK FESTIVAL

**Hosted by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota
C.S.P.S. Hall, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**Sunday
September 27 2026
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**Ethnic Food • Czech-style Beer • Music • Sokol Gift Shop
Street Vendors • Silent Auction • Special Guests
Dance and Gymnastic Performances
Children's Games • Exhibits
FREE Admission • Public Welcome • Accessible Facility**



Become a Volunteer at the Festival!

- Sokol needs a person to set up and supervise the Sweet Shoppe.
- Volunteers needed in all booths, also needed for set-up and take-down.

To volunteer, email
festival@sokolmn.org

Starting in September, volunteers
can sign-up at sokolmn.org



Prezidentův komentář/President's Notes by Bob Kotek

Is everyone enjoying their summer? Sokol Minnesota has had a busy spring and early summer, and I'd like to share some of the highlights.

The Sokol Western District was host to the 2026 American Sokol convention held in the Twin Cities with Sokol Minnesota being the host Sokol unit. It was Sokol Minnesota's pleasure to host a welcome reception for all Sokol delegates and officers on Friday, June 12 at the C.S.P.S. Hall. Mary Cahill and Joan Sedlacek were the primary planners for food, entertainment, and transportation. Joe Landsberger provided history tours of the neighborhood, Sally Lieberman guided visitors through the Hall's third floor, the St. Paul Bohemian Bagpipe Ensemble played for the visitors' enjoyment, Luboš Mareš provided training and practice for the Czech card game *mariáš*, and Doreen McKenney did a brisk business in Sokol's gift shop! Thanks to all volunteers, a great evening was had by all!

Also, during the week of June 15, the 28th annual Children's Cultural Day Camp was held at the C.S.P.S. Hall. It was led by co-chairs Doreen McKenney and Louise Wessinger. Every year the camp has new activities to challenge the campers and keep them interested. The culture camp continues to grow and it is highly anticipated by attendees and volunteers alike!

The new restaurant tenant to take over the space at the C.S.P.S. Hall is working towards an August opening! Pho Hay To owners, Mike Nguyen and Lan Do, have been busy cleaning and preparing the space to make it their own. This is a family-owned business and they have been in the restaurant business for 21 years. I am excited for the new restaurant; let's all support

their new endeavor! Their success will go a long way in ensuring Sokol's continued success as well!

If you have visited the Hall this summer, you will have noticed we have many flowers adding color to the building exterior. Thanks to donations from Euro Garden Design (flower boxes, large pot) and Hidden Hollow Greenhouse (bedding flowers), we have a beautiful display of color in front of the C.S.P.S. Hall.

Volunteers are the key to our thriving Sokol community! I would like to welcome two recent additions to key positions within Sokol. Paula Cihla-Sexton has joined the finance team as BOD Treasurer. Roger Wencil is working with the BPTC team to manage chair repairs. Welcome to you both, and many thanks for your contributions!

Nazdar!



Bob Kotek



Czech Republic Awards Grant to Sokol Minnesota



Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Czech Republic has again awarded Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota a generous grant for 2026 through its program of Financial Grants for Czech Compatriots Associations, within the consular district of the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago.

This year Sokol Minnesota received \$9,515.52 (200,000 CZK) to help fund the installation of a 71' by 6' ethnic-designed vinyl screen to shield the parking lot from the alley, to support Sokol's annual Czech & Slovak Festival, and to replace twelve blouses and six shirts for the children's dance group. We are very grateful for MFA's continued support of our programming and activities of our Sokol unit.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota provides fitness and community for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural, and social programs for children, teens, and adults.

Information on our programs, calendar of events, membership, C.S.P.S. Hall rentals, and gift shop, plus e-addresses for our board, program directors, volunteer staff, and the Czech Honorary Consul, as well as *Slovo* past issues, are available at
www.sokolmn.org or www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota



Use this
QR code
to go to
sokolmn.org

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Telephone: 651-290-0542

Past issues of *Slovo* and
Hall Calendar of Events:
www.sokolmn.org

XXIII National American Sokol Convention, June 12-14, 2026 by Mary Cahill

Western District was the host district for the XXIII American Sokol Convention, and this convention was advertised as being held in Saint Paul, Minnesota; in reality the convention itself took place at the DoubleTree Hotel at the airport in Bloomington, Minnesota. Sokol Minnesota did, however, have an outsized role in the convention.

On Friday evening, June 12, Sokol Minnesota hosted a social for the convention delegates and guests that included a dinner and entertainment by Sokol members Luboš Mareš who taught the Czech card game *mariaš*; Frank Trnka, Jason Brozovich, Maria Neuzil, and Dawn Bulera, all members of the South Bohemian Bagpipe Band who played and educated audience members about their instruments; Sally Lieberman who set up the displays of our stage backdrops and fielded questions about them; former Sokol Minnesota president Joe Landsberger who offered a historical tour of the Hall's neighborhood; and Doreen McKenney who had Sokol's gift shop open. The evening was emceed by Sokol Minnesota President Bob Kotek. Attendees had a great time and we were very proud to show off our beautiful C.S.P.S. Hall. Sokol Minnesota members Joan Sedlacek and Mary Cahill assisted in the planning and arrangements to host the conference locally.

Conventions occur every four years. Delegates to the convention are determined by procedures outlined in the American Sokol bylaws. Sokol Minnesota was eligible for three delegates. Attending on behalf of Sokol Minnesota were Jason Brozovich, Steve Ernest, and Markéta Pálková. Sokol Minnesota member Marit Kucera represented Western District Men's Physical Director. Sokol Minnesota member Joan Sedlacek attended as a Western District delegate as the District's Education Director.



Members of the Western District stood with the Western District flag.

Row 1: Brad Hess (Cedar Rapids), Janet Raddish (Crete), Michelle Edgecombe (Wilber)

Row 2: Vojmar (Buddy) Benak, Jr., (South Omaha), Joan Sedlacek (Minnesota), Markéta Pálková (Minnesota), Steve Ernest (Minnesota), Brandon Odom (Omaha), Jason Brozovich (Minnesota),

Row 3: Allison Gerber (Cedar Rapids), Marit Kucera (Minnesota), Mary Cahill (Minnesota)

Minnesota member Mary Cahill attended as a Western District delegate as the District's Women's Physical Director and Bylaws Committee representative. Convention business included revisions to the bylaws, approving a budget, election of the new American Sokol Executive Board, establishing the location of the 2030 Convention (Cleveland), and seeking the location of the next American Sokol *Slet* in 2029. There was also a workshop on empowerment and reports by various committees.

Biking to the American Sokol Convention

By Steve Ernest

Three members of American Sokol made a six-day bike journey from their homes in Chicago to Saint Paul for the 2026 American Sokol Organization Convention.

Braving long days of unforeseen route conditions, the final day of the ride on June 11 was rainy for most of the day.

Two members of Sokol Minnesota's *Kolo* group biked to Hastings to meet the Chicago Sokol's for lunch and accompany them on the final



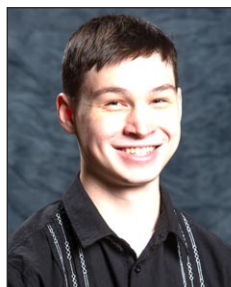
30 miles of their travels. The group arrived at the convention hotel soaking wet, but received a warm welcome from the delegates who had already arrived.

Congratulations to Matt, Bob, and Dave on your accomplishment!

Bikers in Hastings (primary Sokol unit noted) left to right: Dave Kakareka (Spirit), Kevin Lundeen (Minnesota), Bob Barcal (Spirit), Steve Ernest (Minnesota), and in front Matt Carlozzi (United).

American Sokol Merit Award Recipient

Congratulations to graduating high school senior Jas Gillman on his receipt of a \$1,000 2026 Merit Award from American Sokol.



Jas Gillman

Jas has been an active participant in our Sokol Minnesota gymnastics classes since he was four years old, and he has been an instructor and coach with our gymnastics program for the past three years.

The Merit Award is available to youth/adult members who are graduating seniors or who have already graduated and are preparing to go to college or trade school. The award can be applied for an unlimited number of times, but can only be received once. Jas will be attending the University of Minnesota Duluth.

European Heritage Groups Come Together in European Friendship Ride By Steve Ernest

Historical Note: On May 5, 1949, western European nations recovering from the horrors of World War II signed the Treaty of London to declare their unity in the common values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. On May 9 the following year, France, West Germany, and Italy signed the Schuman Declaration to establish their commitment to a common market in coal and steel. These agreements mark the beginnings of the Council of Europe and the European Union. Eventually, after the totalitarian governments of central and eastern Europe were overthrown, the Czech and Slovak nations joined these trans-European institutions. In commemoration of the founding of these organizations and in celebration of the peace and unity that the nations of Europe share today, May 5 and May 9 are recognized as Europe Day across the continent.

On Europe Day, May 9, 2026, members from several local European heritage groups joined together to enjoy a beautiful day of biking scenic trails between Saint Paul and Minneapolis, with stops at three co-host locations. The ride began at Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's C.S.P.S. Hall in Saint Paul and headed up the Mississippi River, crossing to the trail on the other side of the river to overlook its confluence with the Minnesota River, pass by historic Fort Snelling, and then pause to admire Minnehaha Falls. The group continued up the river through Minneapolis and then headed further west to the first stop,



At Sokol hall after the ride.



Riders in front of Germanic American Institute.

the Alliance Française of Minneapolis/Saint Paul. Having biked approximately 20 of the roughly 32-mile route, the group enjoyed refreshments and time to get to know one another before hitting the road for the return trip.

Avenue to its next stop, the Germanic-American Institute. This second chance to rest and talk featured German-themed refreshments, including the traditional drink of German cyclists: radler beer. Radler beer is a 50:50 combination of beer and a lemon or grapefruit soft drink mixed together to quench cyclists' thirst with a refreshing, low-alcohol drink.

After that, the group headed down the hill and along a portion of the Little Bohemia Trail, back to Sokol's C.S.P.S. Hall. At the Hall, the group enjoyed Czech and Slovak refreshments, including European meats, cheeses, and sliced fresh vegetables, with homemade breads and *koláče* in a variety of flavors donated by The Czech Baker, Míša Kotek. And, of course, there was Czech Pilsner beer.

The group was made up of 26 riders, including members of the Alliance Française, the American Swedish Institute, the Amigos de España, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, the Germanic-American Institute, the Minnesota Hungarians, the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota, and Norway House.

Anyone who would like to help plan a route for a 2027 European Friendship Ride should contact Steve.Ernest@SokolMN.org

The route back crossed over the historic Stone Arch Bridge in Minneapolis and passed through the University of Minnesota campus, then followed the trail south along the east side of the river. Once back in Saint Paul, the group headed up Summit

Vintage *Kroj* Mending By Sally Lieberman

Mending this amazing vintage Moravian *kroj* donated by Dorothy Kucera was an intriguing project and a chance for me to learn some new things, even after more than 60 years of sewing, mending, and embroidering!

The blouse was mostly in okay condition except for a large area on one sleeve that had suffered moisture damage, resulting in stains, holes, and dry rot. I used an old hand-mending technique called a hemmed patch to replace a huge rectangle of damaged fabric with matching new fabric from Louise Wessinger's mending stash. Since the damaged area included quite a bit of embroidery, Doreen McKenney meticulously redrew the embroidery pattern for me with a wash-out pen. I knew most of the embroidery stitches, but there was one unfamiliar one! A bit of research identified it as the Hungarian braid stitch. I found online instructions for this stitch and was able to reproduce it. It's a very pretty stitch that looks like braided trim, and I hope to use it again someday for my own projects.



1) Vest before repair. 2) Deteriorated fabric and bead mending. 3) Completed *kroj*.

The beaded vest was the other challenge for me, as I have never done beadwork on fabric before. Much of the beadwork on the vest was loose, and many beads were missing. I had to find and sew on replacement beads, as well as reinforce most of the existing beadwork, trying my best to use the same type of stitching as the original. Other parts of the costume were in good-to-great condition and only needed gentle cleaning and a stitch here and there. I hope the repair will give this *kroj* many more years of use for special occasions.

Western District Gymnastics Competition 2026 By Jason Brozovich

On May 2, 2026, Sokol Cedar Rapids hosted the yearly Western District *Slet* (gathering) and Gymnastics Competition in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Sokol Minnesota sent 10 gymnasts, three boys and seven girls, to the competition, the most in as many years. Rounding out the competitors were gymnasts from Sokol Cedar Rapids and Sokol South Omaha. It was a weekend full of flips, fun, friends, and firsts!

Saturday morning started early with the bronze-level girls and junior girls competition at 8 a.m. The four-and-a-half-hour drive the night before did not deter the gymnasts from Minnesota! They helped kick off the competition with their energetic routines, positive attitude, and determination while parents, family members, and teammates cheered them on.

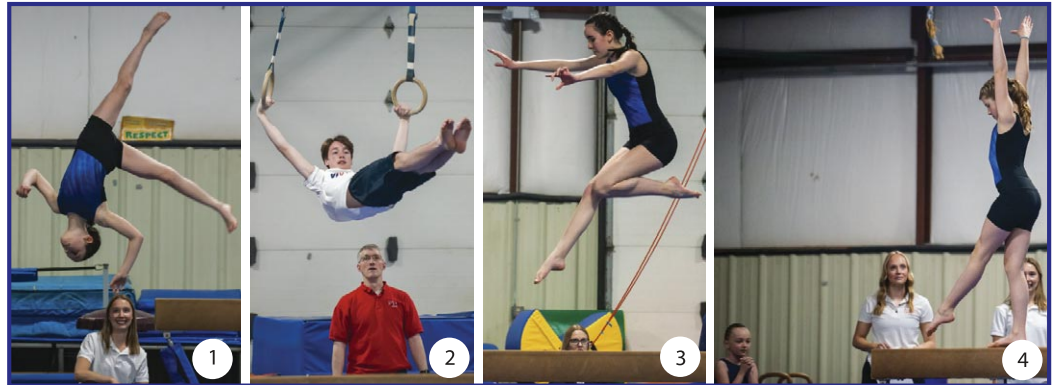
The second session showcased the boys and the six events that they compete in. From floor exercise to high bar, the gymnasts were focused and were able to put forth some great routines, some for the very first time in a competitive setting. The competition concluded with girls and junior girls levels silver, gold, and platinum, the largest of the three groups. The crowd was rewarded with spirited performances from newcomers to seasoned veterans alike. It was clear that the gymnasts in all three sessions put in a lot of time, effort, and hard work in the months preceding the competition, and the crowd thanked them!

Throughout the competition, coaches from the different programs worked closely to adjust equipment settings, help keep event warmups on time, and ensure that the meet was an overall success. After the awards presentation, gymnasts and coaches were gifted a fleece blanket from Sokol

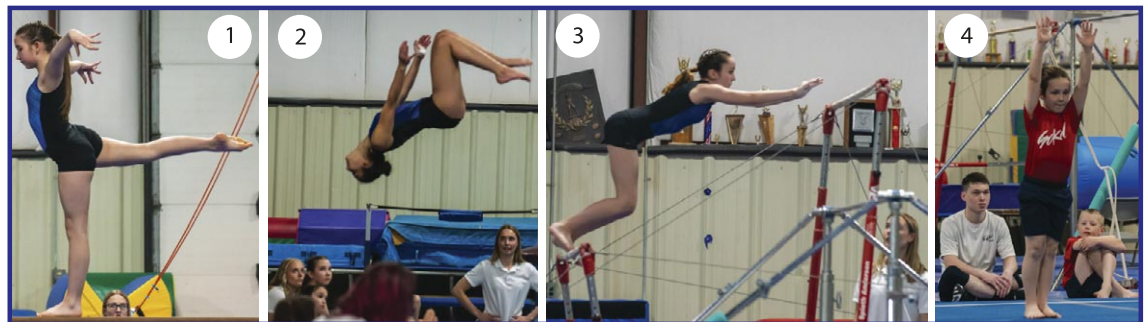
Cedar Rapids, and a sportsmanship trophy (new this year and voted-on by the gymnasts) was awarded to Sokol Cedar Rapids.

While some of the Sokol Minnesota coaches stayed to attend the Western District annual meeting after the competition, most of the gymnasts and families returned to the hotel for swimming in the pool, good conversation, and taking time to get to know each other a little better before departing the following morning. The coaches eventually caught up with families at the hotel, bringing pizza for everyone to enjoy, and joining in on the conversations and overall comradery.

It was a fun and successful *Slet* and weekend!



1) Balance beam dismount by Phoenix. 2) Owen swings high on rings as coach Jason looks on. 3) Sylvie "sticks" a wolf jump. 4.) Laura on beam as Birdie, coach Claire, and coach Siri watch closely.



1) Maeve performs on balance beam. 2) Amari performs a back flip for her beam dismount. 3) Shea transitions from the low bar to the high bar. 4) Landyn starts his floor routine with coach Jas and Curt looking on.

Starting in September Sokol Minnesota Gymnastics Classes at the C.S.P.S. Hall

Open to everyone ages 4-18 on Monday,
Tuesday, and Thursday evenings.
For more details go to
fitness@sokolmn.org



Children and Teen Folk Dancing

Starting Saturdays in September

Practice is held through the school year at the
C.S.P.S. Hall, Saturday mornings, 9:45 a.m. - noon

Contact: Louise 651-271-3601
folkdance@sokolmn.org



American Sokol Awards Sister Carol Crosson Grants to Four Sokol Minnesota Youth By Mary Cahill

Four Sokol Minnesota youth who were enrolled in Sokol Minnesota's gymnastics program are the recipients of funds from the Sister Carol Crosson Endowment Foundation, a grant program established by Carol Crosson in 2023 to support American Sokol youth members in their participation in Sokol activities, particularly the National Instructor's School and *Slets*. The endowment helps to pay transportation costs, housing, and entrance fees to Sokol activities. Our four Sokol Minnesota recipients attended the National

Instructor's School, June 27-July 5, 2026, at Sokol Monessen, Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania. This year's Sister Crosson Awards were very generous and covered most of the travel and tuition costs of our four students: Maeve and Shea, who attended the Beginning Instructor Course; Sylvie and Owen, who attended the Intermediate Instructor Course. Sokol Minnesota is grateful to the Sister Crosson Endowment Foundation for the funds, which offset approximately \$1,150 in expenses for each student.

28th Annual Czech and Slovak Children's Cultural Day Camp

By Co-chairs Doreen McKenney and Louise Wessinger

Let us start by saying camp could not have happened without all of the dedicated volunteers, from teen Junior Leaders, adults who were once campers themselves, current and retired educators, to adults who took time off work June 14–19 during cultural camp week. We are so grateful to have had 21 full and part-time volunteers throughout the week assisting 24 campers.

Visit Sokol's Instagram page @sokolminnesota to see more photos and video clips from the week.

Junior Leader volunteers: Everette, Lucien, Lucas, Claire, Isis, and Sophia helped each day greeting campers, walking them through four morning activities of cooking, crafts, gymnastics, and language. In the afternoon, they helped with games, a treasure hunt, and bingo. For three of the camp days, they helped with choice groups of either Legos, treasures, and surprises, where they made fried cheese, had a sewing project, or joined Stamping Through the Woods making cards.



Cooking class

1) Monday's cooking class made *cermini* (mushroom soup). 2) On Tuesday, Megan Eberhart explains the science of yeast while making artisanal wheat bread. Adult leaders Megan, Katie Schilla, and Colleen Kluzak were always readily available to teach cooking and wash dishes. 3) On Wednesday, Co-Director Doreen McKenney led *koláče* class. 4) On Thursday cabbage and bacon were cooked from a Slovak recipe, *halušky a kapusta*. 5) On Friday, dumplings were made to complete the *halušky a kapusta* dish, then topped with sheep cheese. 6) The all-camp feast was served up by Junior Leaders, including bread, *koláče*, *halušky a kapusta*, and watermelon donated from the American Sokol convention. Teen Yasmine Gerges joined us on Friday as a kitchen assistant, with Dawn Bulera, who was behind the scenes all week keeping the kitchen in order, making sure that snacks were ready and that recycling went in the correct containers.



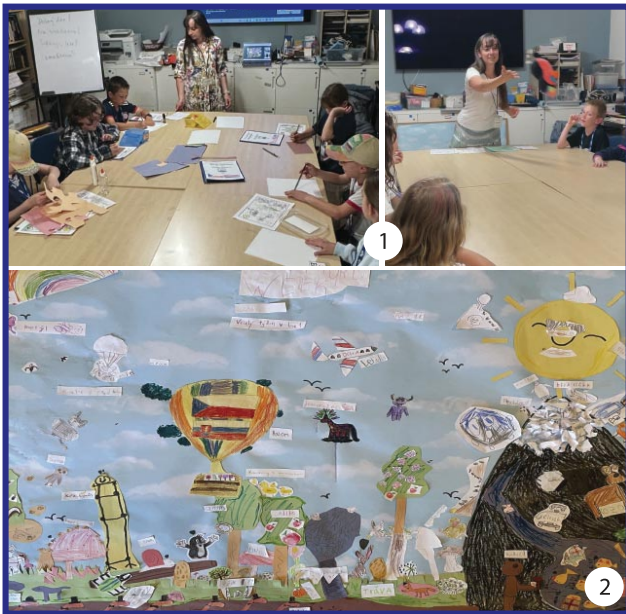
Crafts by Doreen, assisted by Jean Draheim, Judy Metcalf, and Kate Weeks.

1) Blue group (*modra skupina*) making handmade paper for bookmarks. 2) Junior leader Sofia with the green group (*zelena skupina*) after decorating ball caps. 3) Drilling a hole into walking sticks for a leather wristband after sticks were sanded, led by Dave Stepan. 4) Basket weaving.

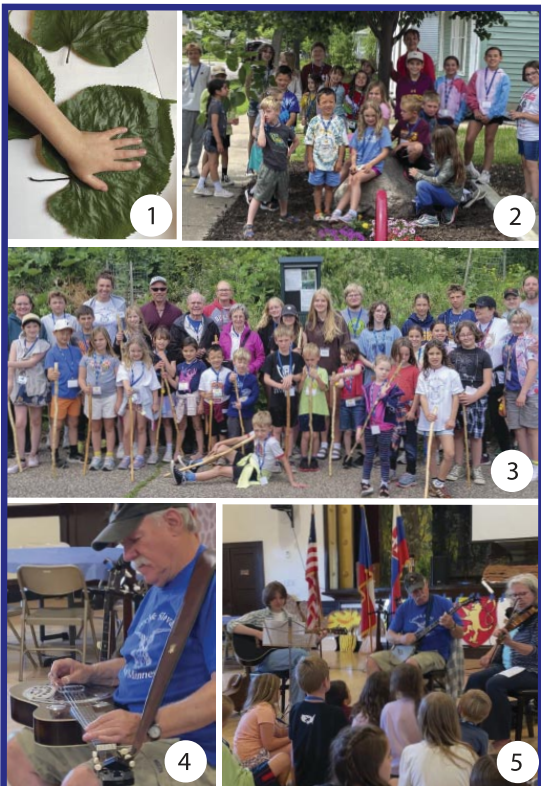


Gymnastics instruction was led by trained certified Sokol gymnastic coaches, Norah and Sylvie. Sokol's gym coaches used a variety of techniques practiced during regular gym classes, held at the Hall during the school season. 1) Yellow group (*žlutá skupina*) with coaches Sylvie and Norah. 2) The red group (*červená skupina*) this year toggled between being campers and Junior Leaders, so we gave them the title "Junior Leaders in Training (LIT)." They were given more independence and duties, while still being able to participate in the same activities as the other groups. The LIT group on stage encouraged and cheered each camper during the yellow group's gymnastics rotation.

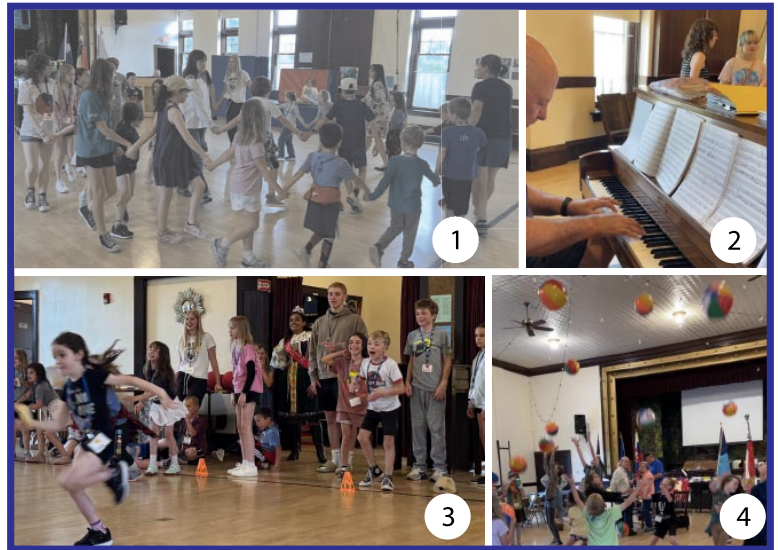
Children's Camp continued



1) The Czech language class was taught by Kristýna Horáčková, a native Czech speaker who recently finished her fourth year teaching at the TG Masaryk Czech School in Cicero, Illinois. This was also Kristýna's fourth year teaching for us during Sokol's children's camp. We will miss Kristýna's engaging, adaptable, and fun learning techniques, as her term is over and she will return back home to the Czech Republic. Camper parent, and recent student through language classes offered by Sokol, Ben Dworshak joined Kristýna for a second year assisting the morning language classes. 2) Happy Forest Week collage designed by all.



(Left) Afternoon guests brought exciting and interactive learning to all. On Monday, Honorary Czech Consul M. L. Kucera started by having campers shake like a leaf. 1) Kucera brought large basswood/American linden leaf samples from her neighborhood, explaining the significance of the linden//*lipa* being the national tree of both the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic. 2) The campers headed outdoors to take a group photo in front of one of Sokol's linden trees before heading to the Czech Consul's office for a tour (see page 11). 3) On Tuesday, Dave Stepan led a walk through what was once known as the old Bohemian neighborhood to the Little Bohemian Trail, where everyone walked one of the three sections on the trail, identifying trees along the pollinator section. Also on Tuesday, Sokol Minnesota Singers joined in during the morning singing and a few members joined the afternoon walk. On Wednesday, Anne Jans and Gianna Olsen (dressed in *kroj*) talked about the Czech and Slovak Minnesota Queen pageant. 4) Thursday's guest speaker Rich Smith on the *dobo*. 5) Hayley Nelson on guitar, Rich on the clawhammer banjo, and Holle Brian on the fiddle. The trio's storytelling and American Appalachian music performance got campers on their feet to dance and at times just listened quietly. Rich spoke about the connection between American Appalachian music and Czechia and Slovakia from WWII to present. **See you next year June 14–18, 2027!**



After morning rotations, flag ceremony, and seven ethnic songs sung with Louise Wessinger, Megan, and Kristýna. 1) Campers dancing with Anna Hester, Megan, and Kristýna to one of the three folk dances Louise also teaches during the school year at the C.S.P.S. Hall to campers. Louise also taught two calisthenic drills with American flags. 2) Sokol's pianist, Don Haselbauer. 3) Relay races and the all-time requested favorite game of "Czechs and Slovaks" was played after lunch. 4) Movement break with beachballs, donated by American Sokol, as a youth membership gift.



1) All-camp play *In the Woods* with *Babi* narrators. 2) Colleen and Megan give the thumbs up as they go over the script. The play was directed by adult leaders: Ben, Colleen, Kate, Katie, Megan, and also Michael Topic. 3) Campers who wished to have a prop in the play painted their own with adults Ben, Anna, Debra Keller, Doreen, Kate, and Katie. 4) Dress rehearsal with actors and props.

Celebrating 100 Years of Heritage and Community: Libuše Rybníček Imbrone By Diane Bell

On June 9, Libuše “Libby” Rybníček Imbrone, one of Sokol Minnesota’s dedicated members, celebrated her 100th birthday. Libby’s lifelong devotion to preserving and sharing Czech culture has left an indelible mark on the community.

Born in 1926 to Czech immigrants in Mandan, North Dakota, Libby was given her name by her father, who insisted she learn the language and carry forward her heritage. According to Czech legend, Princess Libuše was a visionary ruler who looked out over the Vltava River and prophesied, “I see a great city whose glory will touch the stars,” foretelling the founding of Prague. In her own way, Libby possessed a special power of her own: a singular talent for promoting and uplifting her beloved Czech ancestry.

Libby married Albert Imbrone and moved to Saint Paul, where they raised five children. Libby enjoyed a successful career as a legal secretary for the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office. Following her retirement, she became deeply involved in Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota.

Bringing a cheerful, gregarious personality, sharp organizational skills, and fluency in the Czech language, Libby quickly became a valuable member of the organization. As the outreach chair, she organized receptions for visiting foreign dignitaries, designed exhibitions for the Festival of Nations, and warmly welcomed newcomers, especially international students, and hosted an array of memorable events featuring artists, musicians, and filmmakers. She was a founding member of the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center, which hosted the landmark Civil Society



Symposium featuring Czech President Václav Havel as the honored speaker. Over the years, she brought unique cultural experiences to Minnesota, including performances by Vít Hořejš and his antique marionettes, a visit from filmmaker Jiří Menzel, an exhibition of children’s drawings from the Terezín concentration camp, and visits from prominent diplomats like Ambassador Martin Palouš and former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

In recognition of her outstanding service and significant contributions to Czech-American relations, Libby was awarded the prestigious Černín Palace Bronze Medal by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, an honor she deeply cherished.

Beyond her formal roles, Libby and Al were long-time members of the Sokol Singers. Libby also frequently volunteered at the Children’s Culture Day Camp, where she taught children huck toweling embroidery and how to make *koláče*. Reflecting on her years in Sokol, Libby remains deeply grateful for the loyal and amazing Sokol membership and recalls memories of their shared time together with laughter, playful teasing, and song.

Today, Libby resides in assisted living at Lexington Landing in Saint Paul. She continues to stay connected to her Czech community, attending events at the C.S.P.S. Hall. Most recently, she delighted in watching the children’s performance at the conclusion of the Children’s Culture Day Camp on June 19.

Sokol Minnesota extends its warmest wishes and deepest gratitude to Libby for a century of life, laughter, and cultural leadership.

The Czech-Slovak-American Community Gathers for Annual Sokol Camp Association Getaway Again By Jan Košťál and Markéta Pálková

Once again, members of the Czech-Slovak-American community made their way to Sokol Camp in Pine City for a Memorial Day weekend retreat, this year between May 22 and 24.

The camp greeted its guests in great shape; the main building was clean and ready and the front meadow had been freshly mowed, a testament to the dedication of the camp’s keepers, who deserve a warm thank-you for their efforts.

Friday’s arrival came with a meteorological challenge. Rain moved in during the late afternoon and at times poured down heavily enough that the prospect of the traditional evening campfire seemed doubtful.

Luckily, the rain eventually eased enough for a fire to be started and *buřty* (Czech sausage) to be roasted for dinner. After a few hours of warmth and good company, the rain did have the last word on that night and sent everyone inside. Campers who slept in tents (most of us!) were in for a wet and stormy night, but, the next morning, weather improved significantly and stayed dry for the remainder of the weekend. The campfire and roasted *buřty* repeated on Saturday night, this time in dry weather, arguably with more fun, even with the singing of campfire songs.

8 August 2026 Slovo



Both mornings once again belonged to the “hero volunteers” who prepared hearty communal breakfasts, and lunch brought the much-loved homemade *guláš*. Saturday morning also brought a spirited bonus for the whole community: the Czechia versus Slovakia ice hockey match at the

World Championship in Switzerland. For a group rooted in the shared heritage of both nations, watching the two sides face off made for a lively viewing.

The children were the beating heart of the weekend as always. Beyond the usual running and general cheerful chaos, this year they had the pleasure of playing the *bojovka*, an outdoor adventure game involving tasks, clues and teamwork, which kept them thoroughly engaged and was a highlight of the day. And as in years past, a brave contingent of adults and children alike found their way into the waters of Cross Lake, undeterred by the less-than-tropical temperatures.

As the weekend drew to a close on Sunday, campers packed up with the warm feeling of a tradition well kept. The organizers thank all attendees again and look forward to welcoming a yet bigger crowd next year!

Highlights of the April and May Sokol Minnesota Board Meetings By Aaron Mislivec, Recording Secretary

The April 16, 2026 Board of Directors' online meeting was called to order by President Bob Kotek. BOD members: Jean Draheim, Dave Stepan, Steve Shimer, Sally Lieberman, Linda Maxey, Denise Stibal, Marketa Palkova, Tereza Treanor, Steve Ernest, Joyce Tesarek, Fred Simon, Jason Brozovich, and guest Marit Kucera. March BOD meeting minutes approved with corrections.

Education Director: Sally Lieberman reminded us that the UMN Theater production of *Bohemian Flats* is Sunday, April 26 at 2 p.m., free tickets are available on the Sokol events page.

Board of Instructors Report: Jason Brozovich reported that the gymnasts were preparing for the May 2 tournament in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and the May 5 end-of-program show for gymnast parents. He also thanked volunteers who helped at IFest-MN in April.

Building Property Trustees Committee: Dave Stepan reported that the final invoice from the boiler contract was received. Work to be done on upstairs handler, working with Corval Group. The security system needs to be addressed. Harris Company accepted the proposal to pair the boiler and the hydraulic rooftop air handling unit. Tried tracking down previous plans for storm drain improvement to avoid \$15,000 to have a civil engineer draft new plans. No previous bids had been returned. Motion approved to have a civil engineer draft a plan not to exceed \$15,000. Tenant space is being cleared with a cleanout date of Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to noon. Installed a new convection oven. Looking to replace the stove. Met with Timberland Hardwood regarding refinishing floors on second floor and tenant space. Back fence area padlock installed. First floor bathroom flooring to be replaced in next few weeks.

Finance Committee: Joyce Tesarek presented the March financial statements. Knight Grant proposal was written for \$200,000 for kitchen and bar remodel. Submitted grant request to J.A. Wedum Foundation. Contact an architect for an estimate of the bar and kitchen.

Gaming Committee: Steve Shimer reported that March Gaming was slow. Business picking up in April. BOD motion approved proposed March budget. Motion approved March gaming expenditures.

Membership Director: Steve Ernest moved to approve three new members: Linda Maxey, Cottage Grove, Charley Klima, and Deb Ringwelski, Afton. Motion approved. Membership is currently at 324 including three new members (and one renewal). Last membership committee meeting on April 10. Discussed Cinnamon setting up online Sokol t-shirt sales, having more thank-you events for volunteers, and expanding on Friendly Friday programming. Potluck membership meeting scheduled July 10. European Friendship ride, Saturday, May 9 at 10 a.m.; refreshments will be provided to participants.

Rental Committee: Marketa Palkova postponing March meeting. Will meet in

April. Prepping for Saturday's event *Blast from the Past Gala*.

Activities Director: Jean Draheim sent out proposed event dates through December 2027 requesting to be reviewed before posting on Sokol's online calendar.

Publicity: Tereza Treanor proposed the website post slideshow photos of Sokol events to help promote and recruit volunteers.

Corresponding Secretary: Denise Stibal: New contributions to Legacy fund is \$400.

Sunshine Committee Report: Denise Stibal sent sympathy card to family of Olga Wiegel who passed away. Get well card to Tereza Treanor. Congratulations to Tereza Treanor on the birth of a baby boy on April 3; Target gift card approval by Joyce, finance committee.

Miscellaneous: Marit Kucera reported Sokol Minnesota, which donated \$500 to the International Film Festival, was listed in the MSPIFF printed program and our logo was shown before each screening.

Fred Simon promoted May Day Celebration to be held Sunday, May 3 from noon to 5 p.m. in Montgomery with Czech Area Concertina Club and the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers.

May BOD Highlights

The Board of Directors' online meeting was called to order by President Bob Kotek. BOD members present: BOD members present: Jason Brozovitz, Jean Draheim, Steve Ernest, Linda Maxey, Marketa Palkova, Steve Shimer, Dave Stepan, Denise Stibal, Joyce Tesarek, and guest Marit Kucera.

April minutes were approved.

Board of Instructors Report: Jason Brozovich reported that the gymnastics competition went well in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Sokol members Bob Kotek, Misa Kotek, Marit Kucera, and Joan Sedlacek were in attendance. Western District meeting voted to pay for three Instructor's School tuition. Sokol coaches to debrief in June how the past year went. The end-of-year gymnastics celebration was fun, well attended, medals and certificates handed out. Two graduating seniors, Amari Conway and Jas Gillman, were acknowledged. Four students plan to attend Instructors School in Pennsylvania in June; working now on arrangements for travel and grant money for travel. Continuation of arrangement on stage and in closet(s) for equipment storage to accommodate all the Hall usages.

Building Property Trustees Committee: Dave Stepan: BPTC Committee met on May 12. Storm Water Diversion Project contract signed with Loucks for the design, estimated cost \$17,100. Design completed. Kitchen remodel design approved by Boelter Design, will wait for grant money before starting the project. Basement work on the tenant side continues to be cleaned out, working on lighting design. C.S.P.S. Hall grounds continue to make the property attractive, fresh striping in parking lot, planing and

mulch. Recent fire outside of C.S.P.S. Hall, if you see suspicious activity call the police if needed. Stage air return remodel working with Corval for a bid. Close shades when leaving the hall during heated months.

Finance Committee: Joyce Tesarek: April financial statements presented. Working with restaurant broker and potential tenant Pho Hay To Vietnamese restaurant, hoping to sign a new contract next week. The broker's fee is two months rent. Sokol will start receiving rent in August. New tenants asked to work in the space at the beginning of June. Discussed improvements for donations reported in Slovo.

Gaming Committee: Steve Shimer reported revenue of \$24,000, up from \$16,000 in April. Motion approved \$19,410 budget for June. April expenditures motion also approved. Motion approved to transfer \$15,000 to Sokol general fund in June.

Membership Director: Steve Ernest: Three new member applications approved for Sue and Dave Martin, Eagan, and Maria Robbins, Stillwater. Currently 328 members. European Friendship Bike Ride organizer Steve reported 26 participants, great ride, great weather, great refreshments and *koláče* from the Czech Baker.

Rental Committee: Marketa Palkova: Finishing job description for Rental Coordinator. Discussion about historical items usage in the Hall. Should new throne chairs be purchased to preserve historical chairs. Suggestion: use what we have, since no available space to store additional chairs; damp basement could damage wood. Motion approved to use two historical Bishop chairs on the third floor for rentals.

Activities Director: Jean Draheim: Sent proposed event dates via email for review.

Corresponding Secretary: Denise Stibal: Donations: General Fund under \$99: Theresa Koehler, Wayne Zbtovsky; \$100-\$499: Jana Castillon-Charities Aid Foundation of America; \$500-\$999: Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers. Total: \$840 Legacy Fund, \$1,000-\$9,999 Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers (new ovens) Total: \$1,000.

Miscellaneous: Membership Meeting Potluck, July 10 at 6:30 p.m., all members invited, volunteers encouraged to come also. Linda Maxey thanked all who participated in the Gala on April 18. Organizers are motivated to have a Gala again in April 2027.

continued on page 10



The Accidental Hero: A Journey of Discovery, Liberation and Legacy by Patrick Dewane. 126 pages, 2024. Available at libraries and bookstores.

Many years after Wisconsinite Matt Konop died in 1983, his memoir about World War II was discovered by Patrick Dewane's sister in their aunt's basement. Dewane became fascinated with his grandfather's war stories and created a 90-minute one-man play that he has performed more than 350 times across America and Europe. As an arts administrator, Dewane never expected to be performing onstage, but finds immense fulfillment in telling the tale of his remarkable grandfather with wit and love.

In *The Accidental Hero*, Dewane shares details of his grandfather's actions in Czechoslovakia in 1945, by happenstance visiting towns his ancestors emigrated from. The book is rich with alternating passages from Konop's memoir and Dewane's narrative.

A humble man living in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, Konop "had entered World War II on Omaha Beach, survived the slog across Europe and in the final days of the war came face-to-face with his familial identity," as Dewane wrote.

A Lieutenant Colonel, Konop was encamped with the 2nd Infantry Division just outside Leipzig, Germany, on April 29, 1945. In Konop's memoirs, he wrote that an emergency meeting was called and one of the officers said,

"General, I believe Colonel Konop is a Czech and speaks it."

The General turned to me and asked, "Konop, do you speak Czech?"



I beamed [sic] with interest and said, "Yes," thinking I would enjoy the comforts of being an interpreter and far from any unexpected exposure to injury or death. I added, "I can read it, too."

Robertson replied, "Well, no problem here. The advance party leaves tomorrow. Konop will be the advance party commander."

Konop was the right person in the right place in May 1945. He would command 500 men pushing into Czechoslovakia two days ahead of the rest of the 15,000-man division. "I was about to be the first of the descendants of my Czech settlers of Stangelville [Wisconsin] to see and walk the areas of my forefathers," Konop wrote.

Konop and his men were hailed as liberators. People lined the streets, waved homemade Czech flags, and held banners saying, "One of our own liberated us." The embarrassed Konop was put on

the shoulders of a group who carried him through the streets, while people took pictures and movies.

The liberation by U.S. troops was ultimately halted at a line along Karlovy Vary, Pilsen, and České Budějovice that was agreed to by General Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Russians were allowed to continue into Czechoslovakia as liberators.

Gwen is coordinator of the Czech and Slovak Literary Ventures book discussion group. Literary Ventures is cosponsored by the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, and the Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic/Minneapolis. Find information and updates at cs-center.org or contact gwen@cs-center.org

Literary Ventures will start meeting again in September.

Highlights of the Sokol Minnesota June 2026 Board Meeting

By Linda Maxey, Sergeant at Arms

The Board of Directors' online meeting was called to order by President Bob Kotek. BOD members: Paula Cihla-Sexton, Steve Ernest, Sally Lieberman, Linda Maxey, Fred Simon, Dave Stepan, Steve Shimer, Joyce Tesarek, and guest Marit Kucera.

Education Director: Sally Lieberman: Sally discussed continued Czech and Slovak teachers and a new remote online teacher. BOD approved. 2025-2026 saw a surplus income for adult classes, but a deficit for children's classes. Four members won scholarships to attend summer Czech language schools in Czechia.

Building Property Trustees Committee: Dave Stepan: New tenants are getting their restaurant in order. Discussion on garbage vendor contract; architect hired to design a plan for basement water removal; Loucks contract update on storm system on Michigan was given; broken chairs; solicitation for painting with a Sokol member offering cooperation with the painting; two bids received for the kitchen remodel; finishing work on boiler expected in the fall.

Finance Committee: Joyce Tesarek announced that Paula Cihla-Sexton has accepted the BOD position as treasurer, motion approved. Joyce briefed Paula on finances and the conditions of the new tenant, Pho Hay To. Approval by BOD of Gaming manager's salary from \$25 to \$30 and Gaming Assistant salary increase of \$2/hour (includes mileage), starting July 1.

Grant update on savings report, money can be utilized on other needs; Czech government awarded Sokol 200,000 CZK (approximately 9,516 USD). Motion approved to split \$5,000 cost of the new floor drain with tenants Pho Hay To.

Gaming Committee: Steve Shimer: BOD

briefed on budget changes. Motion approved for total budget requested for July, 2026 with additional \$700 for licensing. May Gaming expenditures \$21,300 was approved. Steve will cooperate with Paula Cihla-Sexton to provide her with necessary gaming documents and information.

Miscellaneous: Marit Kucera reported that our Upper Midwest region received more Czech grants than other regions; summarized the American Sokol convention, thanked Sokol for providing excellent food and programing, next American Sokol convention will be held in Cleveland in 2030, Sokol received a \$500 donation from American Sokol.

Briefed the board on a very pleasant meeting with Czech farmers on June 13 which Markéta Pálková also attended.

Other business: Joyce Tesarek announced a Czech & Slovak Festival meeting will be held in person at the Hall on Tuesday, June 23.

St. Stan's Fall Festival By Sally Lieberman

Sokol Minnesota is invited to *St. Stans Fall Festival!*

**Festivities take place outside
St. Stanislaus Catholic Church**

398 Superior Street (right behind the C.S.P.S. Hall)

Saturday, September 12 at the church:

4 p.m. Mass celebrating West 7th immigration

4-9 p.m. Food trucks and live music

Sunday, September 13 at the church:

11 a.m.-5 p.m. Annual turkey dinner at the church

11 a.m.-4 p.m. Neighborhood tours and children's activities

1-5 p.m. Sokol membership and information table

1 p.m. Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers

Sunday, September 13 at C.S.P.S. Hall:

1 and 3 p.m. Joe Landsberger to give two

45-minute tours of the C.S.P.S. Hall

(register at the Tours Table by the church)

1-5 p.m. Sokol gift shop is open at the C.S.P.S. Hall

Czech Honorary Consul News

August 2026

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's Children's Czech and Slovak Culture Camp is exciting for both the campers and those of us invited to share information about our heritage. This year, as Honorary Czech Consul, I talked about the linden (*lipa*) tree, which became known as the Tree of Liberty at the end of World War I, just as the new nation of Czechoslovakia was born. Thousands upon thousands of *lipa*, with their heart-shaped leaves, were planted to celebrate liberty and



democracy. Now more than a century later, the *lipa* continues to honor the perseverance by Czechs and Slovaks to build freedom not only in their homelands, but also worldwide. The American linden, more commonly called basswood, is well known in the United States as a stately, beautiful boulevard tree.

In 2018, a *lipa* was planted and dedicated during the Czechoslovak centennial celebration at C.S.P.S/Sokol Hall. There is a brass plate commemorating this *lipa* and its significance to Czechs and Slovaks. See page 7 for a photo of the campers viewing our *lipa* with me. After visiting the *lipa* tree, campers and their junior leaders made the annual visit to the office of the Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic for a group photo.



In early June, a group of over 30 farmers, primarily from Czechia, but also Slovakia, Poland, and France, were on a 10-day tour of the upper Midwest to learn about new agricultural methods used by American farmers.

They made a short stop in New Prague, Minnesota, well-known as a community with deep Czech roots and its beautiful Saint Wenceslaus Catholic Church. Czech Heritage Club invited its members and friends to meet these visitors on June 13 for a short meet-and-greet. Czech-born Markéta Pálková (right) accompanied me to New Prague. The Czechs, especially, were pleased to meet a compatriot who could tell them about life in Minnesota.



Robert (Bob) Vanasek, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic/Minneapolis emeritus (2008-2013), was one of the readers of the Declaration of Independence at 5 p.m. on July 8 at the Minnesota State Capitol in Saint Paul. America 250 hosted the event, in partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society. Americans in all 50 States, five Territories, the District of Columbia, and Minor Outlying Islands of the United States, across ten time zones, all read the Declaration of Independence at the same time, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the date of its first public reading by Colonel John Nixon to a crowd in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776. As Vanasek pointed out, "This reading celebrates our shared principles and reflects on the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that continues to define the American spirit today."



Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic/
Minneapolis
for Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and
South Dakota

Marit Lee Kucera, Honorary Consul
651-238-0447
minneapolis@honorary.mzv.gov.cz



SLOVO PUBLICATION INFORMATION

The *Slovo* is published ten times per year by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, a non-profit organization, 383 West Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102. Phone: 651-290-0542.

Sokol Minnesota members receive the *Slovo* with their membership.

To receive your *Slovo* in color via email instead of the black-and-white mail version, contact slovo@sokolmn.org

Non-member *Slovo* subscription: \$25 annually. Please include name, address, phone number, and email address with a \$25 check payable to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota; mail to *Slovo* at the above address.

The *Slovo* staff welcomes submissions.

Copy deadline for each issue is the first day of the prior month. Send news, articles, and pictures (uncropped) digitally to slovo@sokolmn.org

Advertising: For information on due dates and rates, please email slovo@sokolmn.org

Moving or temporarily away: Please notify us via email or USPS mail of your change of address to make sure you continue to receive the *Slovo*.

The *Slovo* is bulk mailed; non-deliverable copies are not forwarded or held by the post office. Non-delivered copies are returned to Sokol Minnesota and billed to us at the first-class mail rate. For this reason, we will not send issues until we have a current, correct mailing address on record for you.

Member volunteer *Slovo* staff:

***Slovo* management team:** Mary Cahill, Doreen McKenney, Kelly Rynda, and Joyce Tesarek.
Mailing: Mary Cahill and Joan Sedlacek.

Mailing/Email lists: Penny and Tom Tesarek.

Minnesota ad designer: Doreen McKenney.

Production layout: Mary Kucera.

Issue contributors: Diane Bell, Jason Brozovitz, Mary Cahill, Steve Ernest, Jan Košťál, Bob Kotek, M. L. Kucera, Sally Lieberman, Doreen McKenney, Linda Maxey, Aaron Mislovitz, Markéta Pálková, Jitka Sebek, Denise Stiebel, Louise Wessinger, and Gwen Willems.

Issue photographs, ads, or illustrations: Diane Bell, Steve Ernest, Elisha Jacobsen, M. L. Kucera, Doreen McKenney, and Markéta Pálková.

For more information: www.sokolmn.org



383 Michigan Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102
651-290-0542

37th Annual Czech & Slovak Festival Silent Auction Donations Request

Last years' Silent Auction at the Czech & Slovak Festival was a huge success raising nearly \$3,500.

Please start thinking about fun and meaningful donations for this years' auction.

Popular items are: gift certificates to local restaurants and small businesses, Czech and Slovak themed items, Fall themed decor, special "treat" baskets for people and pets, or simply said: "think of something that you would appreciate as a gift".

The minimum requested value is \$25.

More information coming in September *Slovo* such as when auction donations can be dropped off at the C.S.P.S. Hall.

Your continued generosity is greatly appreciated!
Auction chair, Denise Stibal.



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For events scheduled for the C.S.P.S. Hall, check our calendar at
sokolmn.org/at-our-hall/hall-calendar/

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* August 2026

Join the **SLOVO** Team

Volunteer position opening for Sokol's *Slovo* newsletter publication as managing editor.

Contact: slovo@sokolmn.org

Wanted: Czech Language Teacher
Online Beginning Czech Class for Adults

September 2026 - May 2027

In Person or Online

Commitment: One 90-minute evening class per week.

This is a paid position with Sokol Minnesota!

For more info, email education@sokolmn.org



Welcome to the Neighborhood

Pho Tây Hồ Restaurant

Street level in our historic C.S.P.S. Hall Building
605 7th St. W., St. Paul

**35th CZECH
HERITAGE FESTIVAL**

Sunday, Aug. 9 • Bechyn, MN

FREE Admission
Held rain or shine

www.BechynCzechFest.org

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[BechynMinnesotaWorld](https://Facebook.com/BechynMinnesotaWorld)

Barefoot Becky & the Ivanhoe Dutchman • Eddie Shimota Band
Sleepy Eye Area Concertina Club • St. Paul Czech & Slovak Folk Dancers
Polka Mass 10 a.m. • Czech dinner 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Festival ends around 4 p.m.

Beer Garden • Dancing • Kid's Games & Activities • Bingo • Raffle • Czech Vendors
Polish Sausage, Kolache, Jiternice Sausage, Dumplings, Sauerkraut

**96 SOKOL CAMP
BOOYA
PICNIC**

19201 Woodland Acres South, Pine City, Minnesota

Sunday, August 9, 2026 • Noon - 4 p.m.

Food, live music, folk dancers, children's games, and great fun!

To volunteer in tent setup, food preparation, or food and

beverage serving, contact: Sokol Camp Association

Picnic Co-Chairs, Kari or Scott at 763-226-0313 or 612-387-0274