



Sokol Ceska Sin Unit Newsletter January 2025

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News from Sokol Ceska Sin!

From the editor:

Welcome to 2025! It's hard to believe another year has gone by and a new year is starting. I am taking over as newsletter editor from Chuck Shieff who did such a great job. Thank you Chuck! I loved his origin story in the last newsletter and invite you to send me your origin story. Here's mine: I was born into it!

Nazdar! Chris Jana, Education Director

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In Memoriam: Dale Kotlan:

By: Brenda Nakonecznyj

I am sad to inform you that our Sokol brother and friend, Dale Kotlan, passed away peacefully on August 5th, after a 3 1/2 year battle with prostate cancer. Dale was a founding member of Ceska Sin and a life-long Sokol. As a young man he was a competitive gymnast and helped with the boys' classes. Over the years Dale represented Ceska Sin at many Slets and competitions and won many awards.

He was a familiar face at Ceska Sin where he served as live-in custodian for several years in the early '90s. Later Dale continued to volunteer for maintenance and clean-up projects as well as dinner and fundraising events. He was generous with his time and money, and well known for his practical jokes and sense of humor. Dale had a talent for making people laugh! Who could forget the pig roasts, the many bonfires at the farm or the spaghetti dinner with no utensils that he master-minded?! Many fun memories were made at events he organized.

In addition to his Sokol ties, Dale was active at the Elyria Elks where he served as the Exalted Ruler for 2 years and the United Polish Club of Elyria where he made many good friends.

He is survived by family members, Don and Doris Kotlan, George Kotlan (MaryJane, SGC), Dorothy Steenson, Carol and Don Knight and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Thank you for the memories Dale, and Nazdar!

By: Chris Jana

A lovely celebration of Dale's life was held at Sokol Ceska Sin on September 8th. Many of his family and friends wore Browns gear as Dale was a life-long Cleveland sports fan even as he lamented the team's lack of championships. Many speakers shared funny Dale stories and spoke of trips they had taken together with him over many years.



Instructor School and Grant Update:

Instructor School was held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 2024 from July 12-20. Junior Girl Madison Moran traveled with several fellow students from Sokol Greater Cleveland to the school. Here's what she had to say about it:



Instructor School—Madison in blue shirt

It was really fun and less strict than last year's Instructor School. I learned how to spot, teach and many other things. I probably liked spotting and progressions the most because I got to actually help gymnasts on skills.

I eventually got to write a calisthenics number which was performed by the students and turned out great. I hope to go back another year as it was amazing!

2024 Grants

I'm happy to report that our 2024 grant projects have been completed. We received almost \$2,500 to help offset the costs to install a security system, pave the parking lot and learn about non-profit tax compliance. Thanks very much to the American Sokol Foundation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for their continued support of our unit. Thanks also to all of our members who helped with the 2024 projects!

The 2025 grant applications are due by March 1st, so please let Chris Jana know if you can think of any projects that could qualify for grant money.



Rick Smetana and Chuck Shieff installing cameras for the security system



Parking lot after repairs were completed

Summer Bits & Pieces...

Cesky Den

Thanks to all of our hardworking members who spent July 14th working at the 101st Cesky Den (Czech Day) at DTJ's lovely property in Auburn. Our members helped prepare food for the event the day before and worked on the food line, sold bakery, sold tickets at the entrance, sold basket raffle tickets, cleaned tables and tended bar. We profited \$2,400 for our efforts!

Golf Outing

By: Don Kotlan

On a beautiful day in July, 20 men and 1 woman competed in our annual golf outing. The French Family Team not only won the team event but cleaned up on all the individual awards. Great Grandpa Leo even won the men's longest drive while Julie Myers won the women's. It was a lot of fun but next year we need more women to participate!

Unit Picnic

The annual unit picnic on August 11th was unfortunately cancelled due to damage to the Walton Hills Lake Club from the severe storms and tornadoes that blew through the area on August 6th. During the storm a large group of our members and friends were at The Market in Rocky River celebrating another Tuesday afternoon at the time the worst of the storm hit. Sadly the power went out and almost all were unable to order food or beverages.

Gym cleanup

Thanks to everyone who participated in the gym cleanup on September 21st in anticipation of a new semester of classes starting. It takes a lot of work to make the gym and hall sparkle for our kids and we appreciate all those willing to do the dirty work to get the job done!

Bike & Train

Our Bike & Train outing on September 22nd was a beautiful day! Eleven explorers biked a new route 7 miles from Peninsula along the towpath trail to the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad's Botzum station. Then most of us boarded the train and returned to Peninsula, while several others rode their bikes back. Then we all had a great lunch on the patio at Fisher's Café.



The conductors on the train said that the erosion issues that have closed the track north of Peninsula should be fixed this year so hopefully we can travel our usual route from Brecksville.

Summer Bits & Pieces Continued...

2024 Hall Dinners

The September 25th and October 23rd Roast Chicken or Pork, Dumpling and Sauerkraut dinners were very successful, especially the October dinner. Many thanks to all who contributed their time and talent to cook and serve over 100 dinners, especially master chefs Gene Nakonecnyj and Don Kotlan. Stay tuned for more to come on 2025 dinners including a potential move from Wednesday to Sunday...



Hall Dinner Dumpling Gang



Bike Hike Starting Point

57th Annual Bike Hike

The Annual Bike Hike on August 10th turned out to be a beautiful day with nearly 20 participants and was great fun! Starting at the Lincoln Inn in Parma the group biked all the way (or some of the way) out to Kotlan's Farm in Hinckley which is over 10 miles away, where they enjoyed a cookout and bonfire. Along the way they made stops for libations, a pyramid and bowling, among other goofy things. It was great to see some old friends attend!



Bike Hike



Bike Hike –Women Only!

Sokol Development Conference

Five of our members attended a two-day development conference at Sokol Greater Cleveland on October 19 & 20. They received a lot of information about the upcoming Slet in Chicago and learned the calisthenics we will be performing there. More info and details about the Slet are on page 12.

Classes Resume:

Gymnastics classes resumed the second week of October with 12 tots, 22 little girls, 6 little boys, 3 junior girls, about 6 women and an unknown number of men.

All classes are working to learn new skills and to presenting an exciting and memorable exhibition.

All adults planning to go to Chicago Slet, should come to the gym during the second session on Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m. to learn the cal.

Many, many thanks to our instructors and assistants who are all volunteers and have been teaching for years or even decades. We truly appreciate all you do for the kids and the gym!

- Tots—Sonja Kreps who has been a head or assistant instructor for 32 years! She is assisted by daughter Anna Kreps, who is already in her second year of assisting at the age of 11. Also, assisting is Becky Wilkerson, who has been a head or assistant instructor for 13 years.
- Little Girls—Willow Lynch who has been a head or assistant coach for 24 years!
- Little Boys—Mike Kovacina who has been a head or assistant coach for 6 years
- Junior Girls—Sonja Kreps
- Women—Anne Knowles who has been a head instructor for 12 years
- Men—Don Kotlan who has been an instructor since our gym was founded 48 years ago in 1976!

After a break, classes for the second session resume the week of February 26th and will end before Memorial Day.

2025 Officers Sworn In:

Our slate of officers was sworn in at our annual pot luck dinner and meeting on January 5th. Congratulations and thank you to all officers. And thank you to Pat Young who has stepped down from the treasurer post after many years of service. We appreciate you all.

- President—Chuck Shieff
- Vice President—Tony Rospotynski
- Membership Chairperson and Financial Secretary—Brenda Nakonecznyj
- Treasurer—Rick Smetana
- Education Director—Chris Jana
- Women's Director—Willow Lynch
- Men's Director—Don Kotlan



2025 Officers looking especially happy

Gym Repair and Members:

Many thanks to Tony Rospotynski who spent countless hours fixing the floor at the gym entrance along with assistant Don Knight. The subfloor and supporting structures were rotted and had to be completely replaced.

During the project Tony noticed evidence of an unwanted resident in the gym. He trapped and released a cat. We were unable to determine how the cat got into the gym initially.



PITA the cat

Member Longevity:

Congratulations to all members new and old for supporting our unit since it was recognized by the American Sokol Organization on July 1, 1983!

Up to 5 Years:

Paula Beiter
Bill Kelly
Kathy Reinke

6-10 Years:

Jason Knight
Kathleen Kovacina
Mike Kovacina
Ben Saylor
Heather Shieff
Rick Smetana
Mackenzie Soneson

11-15 Years:

Amy Chatlos
Drew Kreps
Pat Lynch
Chuck Shieff
Dan Wilkerson
Donna Zmrazek
Jean Zmrazek

16-20 Years:

Jeff Chatlos
Chuck Tisdale
Leslie Tisdale
Becky Wilkerson

21-25 Years:

Barb Caskey
Jerry Crouse
Anne Knowles
Sonja Kreps
Barb Ruda
Breianne Saylor

26-30 Years:

Dahl Cutshaw
Carol Knight
Don Knight
Shane Leary
Willow Lynch
Erika Malgieri
Robin Moran
Pat Young

31-35 Years:

Nadia Leary
Leo Soneson

36-40 Years:

Brenda Nakonecznyj
Gene Nakonecznyj
Dorothy Steenson

40+ Years!

Ron Chernek
Bob Egger
John Frys
Ken Howard
Chris Jana
Jim Jana
Don Kotlan
Doris Kotlan
Tony Rospotynski
Carol Siekaniec
Dawn Soneson
Scott Soneson

Crockpot Cook-off:

The Sokol Ceska Sin Crockpot Cook-off Competition and Fundraiser on October 12th was lots of fun! There was also some stress involved as it coincidentally happened on the same day the Cleveland Guardians clinched the ALDS and game time changed twice! Fortunately the game ended just in time for our event to start. The game may have reduced the number of attendees but we had a great time! There were 15 crockpots in the competition and included a wide variety of food from appetizers to desserts and curry to cobbler. It was a close competition, but the winners of a Giant Eagle gift card, wine, a fancy key ring and bragging rights were: 1st – Barb Caskey with her Pumpkin Bread Pudding with whipped cream, 2nd – Kate Russell with her Chicken & Dumplings, and 3rd – Brenda Nakonecznyj with her German Potato Salad. All the crockpots were delicious!

The fundraiser consisted of 11 items to be raffled off including tickets to iconic Cleveland institutions and businesses. The most popular items were Ohio Lottery tickets, Music Box Supper Club tickets and Nestlé USA coupons. Congratulations to all the raffle winners, especially Tony Rospotynski who won 3 baskets! We know the fix wasn't in because Tony wasn't in attendance, but still...

Thanks so much to everyone who worked hard to make this event happen, especially Jan Russell of the CSA group for co-hosting. There were many volunteers including Don, Doris, Joey, Rick, Willow, Pat, Jason, Carol, Anne, Paula and Kenny. They printed materials, set up, worked the door, bar and raffle, DJ'd and cleaned up after. Thank you for everything you do for our organization!!



Winners Barb, Brenda and Kate

Christmas at the Gym:

By: Brenda Nakonecznyj

The Women's Class held their first cookie exchange last month to usher in the holiday season. It was a small but festive affair with a half dozen participants and several dozen delicious and varied cookies to share. Recipes were exchanged, techniques discussed and the coming holidays toasted with beverages accompanied by tasty appetizers. It was a great way to begin the holidays treats, Christmas music and decorations in the company of Sokol friends.

And best of all, everyone went home with a sampler of all the different cookies! A tradition worth continuing!



Actual cookie bakers



Interlopers somehow managed to sneak in

By: Willow Lynch

Another successful adult holiday party was held on December 20th. Brenda led a few games of pickleball. The white elephant gifts were terrible as always. We didn't have any newbies to start off our sing-along this year but that didn't stop us from singing the night away. Holiday cheer was had by all who attended.





LEARN TO MAKE

Pierogi with Brenda

Thursday, January 23

6:30 - 8:00 pm

Sokol Ceska Sin Hall

4314 Clark Avenue, Cleveland



Class Includes:

- Recipes
- Hands-on Participation
- Samples

Small supply fee due night of class

BYO Apron

RSVP to brendanakonecznyj@gmail.com by January 20
Class Limit 12



Sokol Ceska Sin

Under the Sea Reverse Raffle

April 12, 2025

Join us for a great evening of fun
and the chance to win the top prize of **\$1,000!**
Only 75 tickets will be sold for the grand prize

6:30 Doors open; **7:00** Dinner; **8:00** Raffle;
9:00 Dancing and Costume Contest

Tickets are **\$50.00** each and include an entry into the Reverse Raffle drawing, dinner and dessert, and beer, wine and soda
Dinner only tickets are **\$25.00**

There will also be side boards to increase your odds of winning

Wear a costume for a chance to win prizes.

Contact Anne Knowles at SokolReverseRaffle@gmail.com for tickets or questions
4314 Clark Ave; Cleveland, OH 44109



Culinary and Crafting Workshops Coming to Sokol Ceska Sin:

Attention food enthusiasts and craft lovers! We are happy to introduce an exciting new series of cooking and crafting classes brought to you by Ceska Sin! This debut series, presented by skilled home cooks and crafters, is especially designed for members and friends of Ceska Sin. Join us for a fun journey through culinary delights and creative crafting.

Our first class in this series will feature a step-by-step guide on how to make pierogies—those delectable dumplings cherished by many different cultures. We will focus on Ukrainian style pierogies. This interactive session, scheduled for Thursday, January 23rd at 6:30 p.m., will include detailed recipes, expert techniques, tasty samples, and hands-on participation. You can reserve a spot in the class by signing up on the list in the club room at the gym or by contacting Brenda Nakonecznyj at brendanakonecznyj@gmail.com.

All classes will take place in the Sokol hall. Please reserve by January 20th at the latest to allow time for supplies and preparations. All Sokol members and parents of children in gym classes are invited to join us. A small fee to cover the cost of ingredients may be assessed the night of the class.

Stay tuned for more details and future classes. Check out our tentative schedule of upcoming workshops and mark your calendars:

- January 23 at 6:30 p.m.—Pierogi making led by Brenda Nakonecznyj
- February 27—Post Valentine's Day: Cocktails and Appetizers, Anyone? Led by Pat Lynch
- March 13—St. Patrick's Day craft led by Willow Lynch and Anne Knowles
- April 17—Easter Nut Horn Cookies led by Chris Jana
- May 3—Cinco de Mayo Chicken Enchiladas led by Rick Smetana

Get ready to roll up your sleeves for a memorable experience that blends learning with fun. We look forward to sharing this culinary, crafting adventure with you!

If you have a recipe or skill to share we would love to consider adding it to our series. Contact Brenda Nakonecznyj for more information.

2025 Hall Dinners:

Enjoy authentic Bohemian roast pork or chicken dinners served with sauerkraut and real bread dumplings, rye bread, dessert and coffee. All for just \$16, eat-in or carry-out. One of the best ethnic dinners in the country and offered only five times a year!

Wednesdays, 5:00—7:00 p.m.

- April 23, 2025
- May 28, 2025
- June 18, 2025 (note this is the 3rd Wednesday of the month)
- September 24, 2025
- October 22, 2025

Call Don Kotlan (216) 228-0027 or Don Knight (440) 937-5414 to reserve tickets.

Join us for a Chicago-style celebration of fitness, friendship, and Czech heritage!

XXV AMERICAN SOKOL SLET CHICAGO 2025

WHERE TRADITION MEETS
EXCELLENCE
JUNE 25-29, 2025



CHICAGO

2 0 2 5

XXV AMERICAN SOKOL SLET



American Sokol logo with a stylized 'S' in a circle.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 5K Fun Run/Walk
 - Volleyball Tournament
 - Gymnastics Competition
 - Pickleball Tournament
 - Fitness Challenge
 - Slet Performance
 - Youth Day at Wintrust Sports Complex
 - Slet Banquet
 - Local Brewery Tour
 - Chicago-Style Social
 - Celebration Dance
- ...and more!

Scan QR code or visit
AmericanSokol.org/XXV-American-Sokol-Slet
for registration, schedule & lodging details

Follow our journey: @AmericanSokol
on Facebook & Instagram

Upcoming Events:

- **Starting January 23, 2025:** Culinary and Crafting Workshops. See information on page 11.
- **March 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.** Unit Meeting. **ALL** members are encouraged to attend!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8955656707?pwd=RzN5YXdjZ3cvNnlENzIUcEc2dIZ2Zz09&omn=81291022831>

Meeting ID: 895 565 6707

Passcode: CeskaSin

- **April 12, 2025:** *Under the Sea Reverse Raffle!* See flyer on page 11
- **Starting April 23, 2025:** Hall Dinners. See information on page 12
- **June 25-29, 2025** XXV American Sokol Slet in Chicago. See flyer on page 13

Fundraising:



PayPal Giving Fund:

<https://www.paypal.com/US/fundraiser/charity/1645392>

Donate to PayPal Giving Fund
Sokol Ceska Sin

Children & Youth Sports & Recreation

Cleveland, OH
 EIN: 34-1705514




\$25	\$50	\$75
\$100	Other	

Share my name and email with this charity.

Donate Now

Please consider donating to us through the PayPal Giving Fund. We appreciate your generosity!



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<https://www.facebook.com/SokolCeskaSin>

To submit an article or event for a future newsletter:

Please email Chris Jana at chrisjana@roadrunner.com with the information and any photos.