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FEBRUARY 2012
www.sokolbaltimore.org

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UNIT MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2012

Meeting at 6:30 pm

St. Margaret's
Episcopal Church
1834 E. Joppa Road



UPCOMING DATES & EVENTS:

Saturday, February 4, 2012 – Šibřinky Dinner & Dance at 7:30 pm @ St. Luke's Orthodox Church. 6801 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA.
Presented by Sokol Washington. For info. Call (703) 759-1500 or go to <http://www.sokolwashington.org>.

Saturday, March 3, 2012 – Beseda Ball at 7:00 pm at the Grand Ballroom of the Bohemian National Hall. 321 East 73rd Street, New York, NY 10021. For information and to purchase tickets go to www.bohemianbenevolent.org.

March 16-17, 2012, Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) Salt Lake City Symposium. For more information visit the CGSI website www.cgsi.org.

Donations to Sokol Baltimore

Ann & Frank Huber

In memory of Ruth and Bohus 'Bo' Bata:

Eileen Head Mildred Vrzalik

Happy February Birthday!

February 1st – Bernadine Wittman
February 20th – Roberta Price
February 25th – David Cahlander
February 26th – Angela Bernstein
February 27th – Edward Foreman, Jr.
February 28th – Stephen Askew

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Please remember to pay your 2012 dues!!

Send your check payable to "Sokol Baltimore" to:
Sokol Baltimore
PO Box 448
Perry Hall, MD 21128

Notes on Stretching Scientifically: A Guide to Flexibility Training

By Thomas Kurz, Stadion Publishing, 2003

Article provided by Joseph Ehrenberger, Director of Education, Sokol Baltimore

PART 2 Dynamic Stretching

Dynamic flexibility is best developed by dynamic stretching. Static stretching improves dynamic flexibility only to a limited extent. Dynamic stretching is most effective if done daily, two or more times a day. Do dynamic stretching even on days you do not work out. Eight to ten weeks is sufficient to achieve improvement.

Perform stretches in sets of 5-15 repetitions, gradually increasing the amplitude in a set. Do only the number of repetitions you can do without diminishing your range of motion. Fatigue is a sign to stop. Continuing under fatigue will cause you to lose flexibility. After reaching your maximum range of motion in a joint, do not do many more repetitions, as this will set a muscle "memory" you will have to overcome.

Do not throw your limbs: lift them under control the entire range. Start movements slowly, gradually increase the range and speed with each set. When you have nearly reached full range of motion, the velocity for the last few inches can be increased (less controlled).

Breathe out when flexing the spine or compressing the rib cage, and breathe in when extending the spine or expanding the rib cage.

Arms (Shoulders)

Maximal range of motion reached w/ 5-10 swings in a given direction. Development: 30-40 reps/workout, broken into sets. Maintaining: 15-25 reps/workout.

- a. Swing arms backwards at varying angles-circles? Stand erect.
- b. Cross arms in front while touching the opposite shoulder blade, swing straight arm to rear and downward to touch your palms behind you. To increase the stretch, turn palms outward.

Legs

Beginners may have to start w/ 4-5 sets, 10-12 reps per set. Increase the height w/ each set. Don't forget to stop when fatigued. Switch legs after each set. Maximal range of motion reached w/ 5-10 leg raises in a given direction. Developing flexibility: 30-40 reps/workout, broken into sets. Maintaining: 15-25 reps/workout. Results show in a month or two.

- a. Leg raise to front, using hand as target. Kick your hand with your toe. Stand erect; keep the support leg straight, heel to ground.
- b. Leg raise across. Front leg raise while you bring your leg as far across your front as possible, using the opposite hand as the target.
- c. Leg raise to side, same as front, but with target hand is stretched sideways. Hip hurts when you do side kick? Then tilt pelvis forward while kicking; this keeps the neck of the femur from jamming into the cartilage collar at the upper edge of the hip socket.
- d. Leg raise to rear, using a support, such as a chair, at hip height. Leaning forward is OK. This stretches the quadriceps.

Trunk

Sitting is better than standing as it isolates vertebral column from leg joints. Maximal range of motion reached w/ 25-30 reps in a given direction; more needed than for arms or legs. Developing flexibility: 40-70 reps/workout, broken into sets. Maintaining: 30-40 reps/workout.

- a. Twist side to side – arms raised in side arm, while sitting in straddle position on floor. Keep legs and hip still.
- b. Side bends – in same straddle, w/ bent side arm & hands behind head: lean from side to side.
- c. Forward bends - in same straddle, w/ bent side arm & hands behind head: lean forward while rounding your back. Do not keep a straight back as it will stretch the hamstrings.
- d. Backwards bends – Lie on stomach, legs apart, hands flat on floor near shoulders: raise your trunk into arched position using arms and legs, keeping hips on floor.

NEXT: Part 3 – Static Active Stretching

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During 2012, the Sokol organization is celebrating 150 years since its establishment in Prague. Sokol Baltimore is celebrating 140 years of existence since a group of men met in a cigar factory in Baltimore, naming itself Sokolska Jednota Blesk. The following article appeared in the rotogravure section of the Baltimore Sunday Sun on June 14, 1959 and was written by Sokol Baltimore member James J. Primus.

SIXTY-FOUR YEARS OF SOKOL ACTIVITY

One of the Nazis' first acts on invading Czechoslovakia was to ban Sokol associations, the traditional heart of Czech gymnastic and social activity. "Hangman" Richard Heydrich said its principles were "hostile" to the Third Reich.

His action is proof of how basic and important Sokol is to the Czech people not only to those in the Mother Country but to those in other parts of the world.

Sokol was founded in Prague in 1862 and brought to America by our fathers who emigrated in the last century. My father, Anthony Primus, was one of these and while he was not a founder of the Bohemian Gymnastic Association in Baltimore, he was active in it and fostered an interest in it among his five children.

The Baltimore group was founded on June [sic July] 7, 1872. Its first headquarters was on South Frederick Street near the heart of the City's first Czech community, Fells Point. A few years later, following the lead of Col. V.J Shimek, the community shifted to the North Broadway area and our hall was then located at Broadway and Barnes Street. It was known as Shimek's Hall.

It was at our next location, Ashland Avenue and Dallas street, that my own association with the group began. I was nine at the time and I took right away to the gymnastic activity and the singing and dancing.

Gym sessions were on Tuesday and Friday evenings and Sunday mornings – two hours each time. Some of our practice was done in the hall, while other events such as shot put and hurdles were practiced at our Oak Hill training grounds near the Bohemian National Cemetery. The ladies had their own schedule somewhat less rigorous than ours. Their group, the Sokolice, was founded in 1890.

A most admirable gentleman was our physical instructor in those days, Frank Stetka. The organization sent him to Chicago in 1899 to take a special course in physical development, and he came back to be our physical director for 45 years.

He had a knack for getting boys' confidence and for getting the best out of them, and he was responsible for developing many champions in the competitions held with Sokol units in other cities. Our present physical director is Edward Stetka, his son.

Many happy times come to mind as I recall the early years of the century – the picnics we held at Darley Park, trips to our camp on Horners Lane, given to us by Frank Novak, the builder. He, incidentally, was one of five Novak boys who were active in the organization including Doctors Ed and August Novak. They had the honor of representing Baltimore at one of the international festivals held in Prague.

Another of our favorite activities was a yearly pilgrimage to Bohemia Manor in Cecil County to pay tribute to Augustine Herman. He was born in Prague and was the “lord” of Bohemia Manor early in the State’s history. These pilgrimages, by hundreds of us, were made on sailing vessels and were immensely enjoyable.

Exhibitions of our gymnastic skill were another of the activities we looked forward to. The photo on this page was taken at one of them. It shows our group at the 1902 exhibition at Fair Grove on Back River. I was 18 then, and I am in the picture – marked with an arrow.

These were all day affairs, starting with a streetcar ride to the park early in the morning. We had guest speakers and sometimes even the mayor and governor came to talk to us. The mornings were spent mostly visiting and picnicking. Gymnastic demonstrations began at 2 in the afternoon and lasted about an hour and a half. They included broad jumping, pole vaulting, shot put and discus throwing as well as routine calisthenics. Hundreds of people usually came to watch.

The objective of the gymnastic program was to build all-around athletic ability, and to develop poise, grace, and self-confidence.

The picture shows the kind of uniforms we wore at these exhibitions. Girls were clad in blue bloomers and middie blouses and the men wore blue trousers and red trimmed white shirts. The bars the girls are holding are bar bells, with which they performed intricate maneuvers.

We also held exhibitions of our dancing group, which were expert in performing the dances of Czechoslovakia, including the beautiful national dance, the beseda. The dancers’ costumes were elaborate and vividly colored.

There was one other activity of our group which, in my mind, stands side by side with the gymnastic exhibitions for sheer enjoyment, and that was our annual masked ball, or Sibřinky. This is still going on; in February we held our eighty-seventh.

The balls have changed somewhat since the old days, for then they were 24 hour affairs starting at 7 p.m. one day and going through until about the same time next day. Dancing of all kinds would get things started, and for many years we had to keep two bands going in separate halls to accommodate everybody. Prizes were awarded for the best masks and costumes, and one year I won first prize as a Spanish cavalier. The dancing would usually end about 7 a.m. and the rest of the day would be devoted to visiting among friends.

As I recall those early years, many names come to mind. Mrs. Rose Legro, one of the charter members, now in her 80’s, is still active. One of the charter members was Barbara Klečka, whose father set up Klečka Hall and did a lot of organization work in the early days. Colonel Shimek is remembered and admired by many of us today, not only for his founding efforts but for his devotion to the task of teaching the Czech language to several generations of children born in this country. Jaroslav Cihlar is remembered as the expert make-up man in our dramatic society, while Vojta Martinek’s marvelous tenor voice still lingers in the memory of all who ever heard him sing. The singing group, by the way, is still in existence.

Jerry Mares, the radio announcer, and his family are very active in our modern group, which consists of about 150 men and half as many women.

I am happy to see the interest that is continuing in the group.

Some Notes: *Sokol Baltimore can still claim close connection to its founding 140 years ago. There are many current members whose ancestors were among the founders and early members. The Hall mentioned at Ashland Avenue and Dallas Street was Josef Klečka’s Český Hostinec which sported the first bowling alley in Baltimore. Josef Klečka was the great-grandfather of current Sokol Baltimore members Michael and Georgeanna Rokos. That space proved to be too small and soon a new impressive Sokolovna was built at Gay and Preston Streets. The Barbara Klečka mentioned in the article was the oldest daughter of Josef Klečka and she went to the third Slet in Prague in 1895 representing Sokol Baltimore. In the picture can be spotted Barbara’s younger sisters Bessie Klečka Říha, great-aunt of Bro. Rokos as well as Mamie Klečka Rokos, Bro. Rokos’ grandmother. I wonder if others reading this article can spot relatives or friends of current members?*



IN MEMORIAM

Donald A. Otenasek, son of Albert and Blanche Otenasek, died on August 11, 2009 at the age of 78. Born in Baltimore, Maryland and raised on Ashland Avenue in the old Czech part of northeast Baltimore, Donald was a well-known figure in Baltimore's Czech-American and financial communities.

Donald was for twenty-five years a reporter and the financial editor of the old News American which at one time was Baltimore's oldest newspaper. He was a graduate of Baltimore City College (actually a high school), he attended Loyola College in Baltimore and later graduated from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Donald served as a Board Member of Slavic Federal Savings Bank which was started in 1900 by Josef Klečka and his three sons all of whom were members of Sokol in Baltimore. The bank still continues to operate and is the oldest Czech-American Bank in Baltimore.

For ten terms, Bro. Donald served as the President of Sokol Baltimore which was founded in 1872 and is one of the oldest units in the US. Donald also served as President of the Eastern District of American Sokol, and was responsible for a highly successful Slet at Towson University outside of Baltimore in the late 1970's.

Bro. Donald was an active member of Sokol Baltimore and American Sokol for over fifty years. Not long before his death he was honored by the Unit and given his 50 Year Pin.



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DATED MATERIAL

Sokol, the historic Bohemian National Cemetery of Baltimore (Český Národní Hřbitov) (where Donald, his parents and many other Sokols are buried), the Czech and Slovak Heritage Association of Maryland were among organizations that meant a great deal to Bro. Donald.

In his will and Trust, Donald remembered these organizations among others. Sokol Baltimore received a bequest from Bro. Donald in the amount of \$ 50,000. American Sokol received \$ 10,000. As there was money left over after the original bequests were made, the remainder of the money was divided according to Bro. Donald's wishes. An additional \$128,680 was given to Sokol Baltimore and the same amount was sent to American Sokol in Chicago.

Bro. Donald Otenasek typifies what is outstanding in Czech and Sokol character. He remembered to provide for the people and groups that meant a great deal to him, and in so doing sets the bar high for those of us who share Donald's priorities to do

the same. Hopefully Bro. Donald's example will help us to provide for the future of Sokol by making similar provisions in our estates.

Brother Donald Otenasek: Nazdar! Well done, good and faithful servant! Nazdar!

Michael G. Rokos, President, Sokol Baltimore

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