Liberation of Czechoslovakia, May 1945

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Young boy welcomes GIs to Domazlice

Story on page 8.

Soldiers sample real Pilsener.

For a personal history of these events with a Wisconsin connection attend ACCIDENTAL HERO on April 23. See Page 6.

Czechs re-enact liberation of Plžen.
Executive Board

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1st Vice President
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2nd Vice President
Jaroslav Novotny
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Ann Cramer
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Director of Women
Jennifer Romine
Director of Men
Gerald Novotny

To submit an item for the calendar or an article or letter for publication or to suggest a topic that you would like included in this newsletter please contact the editor:

Gerald Novotny
1409 Iowa Drive
Madison, WI 53704
Phone: (608) 241-9080
E-mail: novotny01@sbcglobal.net

General Membership Meetings

First Monday of the Month
7:00 to 9:00pm at the Norway House
NEXT MEETING APRIL 4

GYMNASTICS CLASS
Wednesdays Evenings
6:00 to 7:30 pm at the Norway House

FASHION SHOW CZECH & SLOVAK COSTUMES
APRIL 17, 2016
(See page 7)

ACCIDENTAL HERO
APRIL 23, 2016
Marcus Centers Wilson Theatre
(See page 5)

ACCIDENTAL HERO AT NORWAY HOUSE
Special session with Patrick Dewane - author and star of Accidental Hero
APRIL 24, 2016
(See page 5)

GYMNASTICS INTERCLASS MEET
APRIL 27, 2016
6:00 pm Norway House

CZECH-SLOVAK GENEALOGY GROUP MEETINGS
New Berlin Public Library
(See Page 5 for time and date.)

BAKING SCHEDULED DATES
Norway House
(See Page 5 for time and date.)

CHECK OUR WEB SITE FOR UPDATES
We are on the web at:
www.sokolmilwaukee.org
Nazdar, Brothers and Sisters of Sokol Milwaukee,

Happy Spring Everyone,

It’s hard to believe that winter is over and another Jaternice Dinner is in the books. It was great to have so many of you volunteer and help out with the Jaternice Dinner, whether baking, working the sales booth, bakery sales, Jaternice and Knedlicky sales, coffee pouring, checking guests in, seating guests, waitressing, serving food, plate scraping, table cleaning, etc.

A Special and Sincere thank you to Ann and Keith Cramer who ran the food and baking area of the Jaternice Dinner, and all their hard work and preparation. Also, a special thank you to Sonka and Mark Tostrud who help me a lot with all the reservations and organizing the seating’s and dishwashers.

This event takes a ton of work and without all of you it would not be so successful. Thanks Again!! Our next event is the Kroj Fashion Show on April 17th. Tickets will sell out fast, so please get your tickets soon from Ann Cramer. Last year was a big success and sold out fast.

We also have the Accidental Hero Event at the Norway House on April 24th. Please call Mary Anne Gross for more information and tickets.

Going forward we have a lot of fun things to look forward to. My email address is: sonia.riecan13@gmail.com if you wish to reach me. The next regular meeting will take place Monday April 4th. Have a Safe and Fun Spring and a Happy Easter to you all!!

Sonia Riecan,
President of Sokol Milwaukee

GYMNASTS COLORFUL SUCCESS

By Lisa Hoeck

Congratulations to Annalise Romine, age 5, and Juliana Hoeck, age 4, for competing in a Culver's National Coloring Contest and being selected as one of the National Winners. Annalise and Juliana entered into a contest at Culver's in the Fall of 2015 for a chance to be featured in the 2016 Culver's Calendar.....and won!!!

Their artwork is part of the Thank You Farmers Calendar sold at Culver's restaurants. More than 1,500 entries were received. Annalise's picture is featured in October and Juliana's in April. Contestants could choose from 12 different coloring pages that feature Scoopie, the Culver's Mascot, helping out around the farm. We are so proud of you girls - keep up the good coloring!

2nd Vice President Elected

On February 1, 2016 Jaroslav Novotny put his name forward and was elected 2nd Vice President. He turned 90 years old on February 4th this year.
Gymnastics Program

Sokol Milwaukee...
Lots to offer, more to celebrate!!!

By Jennifer Romine

Sokol Milwaukee Gymnasts are lighting up the American Sokol organization with some recent awards and activities nationwide. The Sokol organization provides many opportunities for our youth to stay involved in many activities. Besides the gymnastic classes we offer, children can also compete in district and national competitions. What’s amazing about this is that it can all be done locally, we send our results in, and awards come through the mail. Programs like this help us understand and appreciate the program and all its components.

All of our gymnasts participated in the Central District Track and Field competition and the results are in. We certainly shined. The Sokol Milwaukee members competed in high jump, basketball throw, standing long jump, 40 yd. Dash, running long jump. We held the competition right in our Milwaukee gym and got to cheer each other on. The results were sent to our Central District office to be compared to others from our Midwest area. Overall, we did amazing. Congratulations to Annika, Xelena, Lucas, Noah, Juliana, Annalise, Riana, and Mya for their all around first place award in their age groups. It was a wonderful competition and we are proud of all our gymnasts.

American Sokol offers special monthly awards for their children and youth members. All members should receive this information in the mail quarterly. The gymnasts have the option to participate in several different mini competitions like designing an ornament using puzzle pieces, making a pyramid out of their stuffed animals, creating slogans for pictures, and the like. Children are encouraged to participate in these events and then send it in via email...just take a picture and upload it. Judges vote on these and send awards to the children via mail. It’s a great (and easy) way to get our Milwaukee group involved. Thank you to Riana, Juliana, Carissa, Noah, Annika, Annalise for participating, winning, and keeping Milwaukee in the Sokol News.

Recently the gymnasts as well as the coaches have participated in the American Sokol National Fitness Challenge. They each competed in several fitness challenges: plank hold, hand release pushups for a minute, jump rope, standing long jump, and shuttle run. Results are sent in at the end of this month and their scores are compared nationwide to other Sokol members their age. We will anxiously wait the results.

Our Sokol Milwaukee gymnasts are working hard in gym class every Wednesday night. They are learning their compulsory routines for each level and continuing to develop new skills. All gymnasts will be participating in an intra class competition on April 27, 2016. You are all invited to come and watch our gymnasts go head over heels in great, friendly competition. We are also preparing a selection of gymnasts to represent Milwaukee at the Central District Gymnastic Competition where boys will compete on May 14, 2016 and girls will compete on May 21, 2016. Wish them luck as they show off our Milwaukee pride.

Coach Gerald, Jennifer, Lisa wish to extend a happy Easter to each one of you. We are very proud of the program we run and hope to continue training our Sokols to not only be physically fit in body, but mentally strong in their attitudes, and filled with love for the people around them. We are always happy to accept new members into our program...spread the word!!!!!
THE ACCIDENTAL HERO
The Accidental Hero with Patrick Dewane, is the true story about a Czech speaking U.S. Army officer from Stangelville, Wisconsin, Matt Konop, Sokol Milwaukee is a sponsor of this event. See page 6 for more information. 

For more information contact:

ACCIDENTAL HERO AT THE NORWAY HOUSE
Sunday, April 24, at 1 p.m., at Norway House, we will have a special one-on-one program with Patrick Dewane who will tell us how Accidental Hero came to be and share his grandfather’s biography, his photos, and his movies from that time period. We will have coffee and Czech desserts after the program. No charge. Guests are welcome.

For more information contact:

BAKERS WANTED FOR CZECH FASHION SHOW
Help will be needed to bake before the Czech and Slovak Folk Costume Fashion Show.

A baking session will be held on April 15th from 8:30 am to 2 pm at the Norway House.

For more information contact:
Ann Cramer at 920-236-9101.

CZECH-SLOVAK FOLK COSTUME FASHION SHOW
April 17th at the Norway House
See page 7 for details,

INTRACLASS GYMNASTICS MEET
Our Milwaukee Sokol gymnastics competition will be held on Wednesday April 17, 2016 at the Norway House. Come and see how well our young gymnasts have progressed.

For information call:
Gerald Novotny 608 770-2153.

SOKOL CENTRAL DISTRICT GYMNASTICS COMPETITION
We hope to have more than a few boys and girls competing at the Central District meets. The Boys meet will be held on Saturday May 14, 2016. The Girls will compete on the following Saturday, May 21, 2016.

For information call:
Gerald Novotny 608 770-2153.

CZECH-SLOVAK GENEALOGY GROUP
The Czech-Slovak Genealogy Interest Group meets at the New Berlin Public Library, 15105 Library Lane, New Berlin, WI 53151 (Just south of 151st Street and National Avenue.)

Next meeting date is April 30, 2016, 9:00 am to 5 pm.

For more information contact:
Susan Chapman at 414-213-4643.

148th ANNUAL MILWAUKEE SOKOL EXHIBITION
Join us on Wednesday May 18th for our 148th Annual Gymnastics Exhibition and Awards program. See how our gymnasts have progressed and celebrate their success. Six o’clock at Norway House.

For information call:
Gerald Novotny 608 770-2153.
ACCIDENTAL HERO

By Mary Anne Gross

Milwaukee Sokol Sokolice is co-sponsoring an exciting multimedia event at the Marcus Center’s Wilson Theater at Vogel Hall, State Street at the Milwaukee River, on Saturday, April 23, at 7:30.

It is “Accidental Hero,” the story of a WWII American officer from Stangelville, Wisconsin, who led the US troops into Czechoslovakia in 1945 and miraculously freed the Czech villages of his grandparents. Because Stangelville is a Czech town, he knew the language and greeted the locals in their own language, which made him a hero twice over to them.

While the Allies made plans to divide the freed countries among them, the US troops stayed in the Domažlice area and befriended the Czech populace. And Lt. Col. Matt Konop led the friend-making overtures. When he returned after the war, he was disheartened by the Communist presence. He did not talk about his experience with his children. So after he died, when his children found his writings and photos and films from his experience, it was news to them.

His grandson, Patrick Dewane, who grew up in Manitowoc, was intrigued by his writings and developed a one-man show, “Accidental Hero,” based on his grandfather’s experiences. He will bring it to the Marcus Center and the next day come to Norway House, on Sunday, April 24, at 1 p.m., to tell us more.

We will host him with a post-performance kava a susenky (coffee and treats) and enjoys a time to meet and greet. (NO CHARGE for the Sunday event; tickets for the Saturday performance are at a group rate, available for $25 from Mary Anne Gross.)

Patrick says he has not had a chance to do this performance before a Czechoslovak audience except in the Czech Republic, where he has done it every year to celebrate the anniversary of the American liberation. He has developed a friendship with many of the locals and has pictures and stories of their current feelings about the US and their country’s progress as a democracy. The locals dress as Americans of the 1945 era in vintage clothing and have parades and celebrations each June. This last year US troops came to the area and participated in the parade!

Sokol’s sponsorship of this “Accidental Hero” performance and the reception, show, and discussion the following day are a great way to raise our profile in the community. Invite your friends. If you want to contribute your favorite baked goods, feel free! Patrick is looking forward to tasting our best! His “Accidental Hero” has been hailed as an interesting and intriguing show.

Discounted tickets for ACCIDENTAL HERO will be available to Sokol members until April 1st.

Contact Mary Anne Gross 414-964-2007.
Fashion Show of Czech and Slovak Costumes
Prehlídka českých a slovenských krojí

April 17, 2016
11:30
Norway House
76th and Oklahoma

Milwaukee Sokol/Sokolice invites you to a luncheon and style show featuring many authentic Czech and Slovak costumes.

A light lunch of Czech chlebičky, bakery and beverages included

Members $10
Non-members $15

Tickets available for purchase at the Czech Dinner or from Ann Cramer at (920) 236 - 9101
U.S. 3rd Army Liberates Western Czechoslovakia
By Gerald Novotny

In April 1945 it was clear that the end of the war in Europe was near. On April 23rd the Americans and Soviets would meet at the Elbe River in Germany. In Czechoslovakia the Soviets were advancing through Slovakia and Moravia as the Americans were approached from the west. On April 18th the 90th Infantry Division reached the 1937 border of Czechoslovakia. Rather than pushing on across the border Patton’s 3rd Army was ordered to move southeast to prevent a rumored “last stand” by the Nazis in a region of the Alps. Patton repeatedly requested permission to move eastward but his requests were denied. As April came to a close it was clear the “last stand” was propaganda. On April 30th Eisenhower proposed to the Soviets that the US advance to a line running south-easterly from Karlovy Vary through Plzen to Ceska Budejovice. Meanwhile the German 7th Army facing the Americans was deteriorating. It was running short of men and supplies as reinforcements were sent east to fight the Soviets. A planned counter-attack on the US forces was abandoned because of a lack of fuel. When the 11th Panzer Division was ordered to the east (and likely death either in combat or as prisoners of the Soviets) General von Weitersheim, negotiated the surrender of the division. This left a huge gap in the German lines opening the road to Prague.

On May 4th Eisenhower agreed to allow Patton to advance into Czechoslovakia and on May 5th Patton attacked liberating the towns of Horsovesky Tyn, Domazlice and Kdyne. As the Americans approached, the citizens of Klatovy rose up against the Germans. Late in the afternoon, as the Americans arrived, the German garrison surrendered.

Citizens in Plzen too rose up against the Germans. However the Czechs were not strong enough to overpower the Germans and the Germans refused to surrender to the Czechs. The garrison commander Lt. Gen. George von Majewski, decided to hold out until the Americans arrived and surrender to them. He ordered his troops not to resist the Americans when they came. The stand-off with the Czechs continued through the night. On May 6th Plzen was liberated.

An uprising in Prague enjoyed success until the Germans sent in two SS Divisions to crush the rebellion. Receiving reports of the situation in Prague, Patton requested permission to liberate the city. On May 5th the General Antonov of the Soviet high command requested that Eisenhower not advance beyond the line he previously suggested. Eisenhower refused permission to advance further. This was a frustrating to some American soldiers as units of the American Army had advanced to within 11 miles of the capitol.

On May 8, 1945 Germany officially surrendered. The German Units in Prague however refused to quick and the fighting continued until May 13th.

The American initially entered Czechoslovakia in the so-called Sudetenland, populated mostly by Germans. "When we crossed into Czechoslovakia, we were not in friendly territory," recalled Private Harold Yeglin of the 97th Infantry Division. However things changed dramatically as the crossed into the Czech regions. Capt. Burton Smead, Jr. of the 12th Field Artillery Battalion wrote. "If you stop your vehicle, it is only with difficulty you can get away because the people swarm over it, laughing, shaking hands, talking a blue streak, pressing food and wine and flowers and flags on you."

After 1948 the communists tried to erase the memory of the role played by America in freeing the Czechs. However since 1989 Czechs commemorate these events with receptions, concerts, and parades including World War II vehicles manned by Czech re-enactors.
CZECH EGG DECORATION

Again this year we were fortune to have Czech-born and Madison-based artist, Jaroslava Sobiskova, visit with us and teach us the art of egg decoration and braiding of willow whips for the Easter Monday custom of whipping the Village girls.

(Just to be very clear we did not practice this ancient folk custom.)

About 22 egg decorators attended the March 7th event which took the place of our regular membership meeting. And except for a few broken eggs a good time was had by all.

Jaternice Dinner

Our annual Czech Jaternice dinner on March 6th has to be judged a success this year based on the number of positive comments we received from both old and new customers. A total of about 400 people were served in the three seatings. Thanks to all the volunteers that make this event possible. I’m sorry to have no photos this year as I forgot to bring a camera.

Jaternice Dinner Well-Wishers

Jarka Axtell
Vera Frazier
Mary Anne Gross
Joseph S. Macek
Kim Nehoda
Gerald Novotny
Alan Roeber
Donna Roeber
Tammie Roeber
Milly Skowera
Carrie & Fred Stanek
Jean Swendrowski

Thank you to all our well-wishers - we wish you well as well!

Memorials

The following members have made gifts to Milwaukee Sokol as memorials to loved ones. We gratefully acknowledge them and their contributions to Sokol.

In memory of:

Ladislav & Bessie Tonar
$100 from Betty J. Kramer

Grace Fils
$100 from Vera Ludwigsen

Edward Stanek
$100 from Lorraine Stanek

Metodie & Frantisek Matusinec
$25 from Frank Matusinec
REMINDER
Membership dues were due on March 15, 2016.

If you have paid your dues—thank you!

If not please contact Ann Cramer
(920) 668-8609 today.

Děkuji
[Thank You!]

Czech re-enactors “liberate” Pilsen, 2015.