



Sokol Ceska Sin Unit Newsletter April 2026

4314 CLARK AVE. CLEVELAND, OHIO 44109 (216) 281-7077 www.sokolceskasin.com

News from Sokol Ceska Sin!

From the editor:

There are so many exciting things happening at Sokol Ceska Sin even as the gymnastics year winds down. We have received grants from the American Sokol Foundation to help our popular Culinary & Craft program expand and to help repair the Hall windows that face Clark Avenue. There are many fun activities planned for spring and summer including the Out of this World Reverse Raffle, the District Slet which will be held in Cleveland, three Hall dinners, and a Kentucky Derby themed culinary class. Thanks to all who work so hard to contribute to the fun our unit enjoys! I hope to see you at an event soon!

Nazdar! Chris Jana (chrisjana@roadrunner.com)

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District Slet:

By Chris Jana

The District Slet is May 16th and 17th featuring all three gyms in our district including Sokol Detroit and Sokol Greater Cleveland. The exhibition is Saturday, May 16th and the competition is Sunday, May 17th. Our gym is also going to host a euchre tournament on Friday, May 15th. Please save these dates and look for detailed information via email soon.

Culinary & Craft Pysanky:

By Chris Jana

Sonja Kreps did an amazing job teaching a Culinary & Craft Pysanky Class. With help from Brenda Nakonecznyj, they very efficiently guided us through the complicated steps of decorating a traditional Ukrainian egg. It was eerily quiet in the hall while everyone concentrated on their masterpieces. After several hours almost everyone was able to take at least one lovely egg home in a special egg carrier. Great job Sonja and Brenda!



Sokol Detroit 150th Anniversary Celebration

By Chuck Shieff

Back in November 2025, Meg Novacek, President of Sokol Detroit, graciously invited Heather and myself to their Unit facility, located in Dearborn Heights, Michigan, for their 150th Anniversary Celebration. Upon entering, we immediately observed a lot of displayed history, including family trees, scrapbooks, and other memorabilia. It was great fun looking through some of the old scrapbooks full of photos from the “old days”, as well as other “artifacts”! In the hallway, near the dining area, there was a compilation video running. It was great to see some of Sokol Detroit’s familiar faces in their younger days! There was a nicely organized, catered dinner in the huge gym, which also housed a photo booth, which we, unfortunately, missed out on, due to being busy mingling. We were seated with Sokol Greater Cleveland’s President, Paul Burich, and his wife Fran, so we had some local Sokol conversation in the mix. After the main course, we proceeded to enjoy the dessert table, filled with all kinds of goodies, mostly home-made by the members/volunteers. There were cookies (as well as wine glass party favors!) featuring Sokol Detroit’s newly created logo, proudly displaying their 150 years.

Following the dinner, was an awards ceremony, recognizing achievements of their members and Officers, as well as heartfelt and sentimental speeches. One of the speeches that stood out to me, is that one of their newest members had a relative (second cousin, if my memory serves) that previously unbeknownst to her, was a long-time member of the same Unit, and she was really touched to be following his (again, if I’m recalling correctly!) footsteps! In attendance was Adam Wilt, American Sokol Organization’s President, as well as other members and Officers from the Northeast District. There were several photo opportunities, a few of which are included in this article! All-in-all, it was an honor and a privilege to be included in their momentous celebration! NaZdar, and here’s to another 150 years, Sokol Detroit!



Greater Cleveland President, Paul Burich; Detroit President Meg Novacek; American Sokol President Adam Wilt; and our own President, Chuck Shieff



Adult Fitness Class:

By: Chris Jana

Thanks to Deb Summers, who is taking on the challenge of launching an adult fitness class! She retired in January, after 25 years with the Berea schools, and 30 years as a nationally rated elite level gymnastics judge!

The fitness class will be working on calisthenics, marching, learning national anthems and participating in a fitness challenge in order to be ready for the Northeast District Slet in May. We will also work on stretching, conditioning and balance. Class takes place every other Monday on April 13th and 27th and May 11th from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Email Deb at tuskahara@aol.com if you're interested in joining or have any questions.



Deb is third from the right at her retirement party

Grant Update:



By: Chris Jana

We applied for and received two grants from the American Sokol Foundation for 2026!

- \$1,090 Unit Growth grant to purchase equipment to expand our Culinary & Craft Program
- \$2,610 Gateway to the Future grant to help repair/replace the windows on the south side of the hall

Thank you so much to the Foundation for their generosity!



Get Air Fundraiser:

By: Sonja Kreps

On February 18th, 12 jumpers braved the cold and came out to Get Air jump park to get some energy out on our last Wednesday before classes resumed. Look for some free jump passes at our next raffle!

50th Anniversary Celebration!

Save the Date

Sokol Ceska Sin

50th Anniversary Celebration



Join us for this family-friendly celebration
as Sokol Ceska Sin turns 50!

Saturday, October 17, Doors Open 5pm

Ceska Sin Sokol Hall
4314 Clark Ave.
Cleveland, OH

RSVP



By Chris Jana:

In anticipation of a fun walk down memory lane, I'd like to gather your memories from the last 50 years of Sokol Ceska Sin's existence. Please send or give me pictures, videos, uniforms, T-shirts or any other memorabilia you have. I will scan or copy and return everything to you.

By Chris Jana

Congratulations to Kenny Howard on earning his 54,000 mile hiking patch from the Cleveland Hiking Club! There have only been a handful of people in the club's over 100 year history to reach this milestone.

It also means that he has basically walked around the earth twice, or across America 19 times, or a quarter of the way to the moon with over 108 million steps!



Kenny is on the right

- Get well soon wishes to both Doris and Don Kotlan. Doris had shoulder surgery recently while Don had a heart procedure.
- Happy BIG birthday to both Rick Smetana and Ron Cherek! Most members didn't know that Rick and Ron have known each other for about 65 years and went to kindergarten and grade school together as well as performing in band and orchestra together.
- Ron and Chuck Shieff also share a birthday on March 29th!
- Good luck to Dawn and Scott Soneson who are starting a new chapter in their lives by moving from the Denver area to the Philadelphia area. May you have an endless supply of delicious cheesesteaks!

Culinary & Craft Lunar New Year Celebration

By Leslie Tisdale

Bibimbap and Mahjong: Getting ready for the New Year, Asian Style

Twelve lucky souls braved the cold on Saturday, February 7, to celebrate Asian cuisine and culture in preparation for the Lunar New Year on February 17. Led by Sokol member Brenda Nakonecznyj and featuring Eleanor Detke, we first learned all about bibimbap.

“Bibim” means “mixed” and “bap” means “rice,” but that simple translation doesn’t begin to describe the delectable taste sensation provided by this traditional Korean meal. Eleanor told us that bibimbap is so versatile that it is easy to adapt to anyone’s tastes and preferences. The main elements are rice, proteins, and vegetables, but practically anything will do as a tasty addition, such as mushrooms, sesame seeds, and even seaweed.

Eleanor explained that since making bibimbap the traditional way can be labor and time intensive, today’s cooks have discovered that roasting in sheet pans can streamline the process without compromising on flavors and textures. She showed us a rainbow of foods that she and Brenda had prepared after visiting markets in Asiatown, just east of downtown Cleveland: Red onion, baby bok choy, spaghetti squash, oyster mushrooms, tofu, and rice, tossed with sesame oil and garlic and ready to be roasted.

While Eleanor busied herself with the roasting of the ingredients, Brenda introduced us to Taiwanese Mahjong, a game of strategy using tiles of various suits and values.

Mahjong is popular all over the world, but its origins are found in China during the mid 19th century. The word “mahjong” is derived from the Chinese word for “sparrow,” which refers to the clicking, chirp-like sounds produced as players mix the tiles on the table top at the start of each round. The American versions include one which began at Wright Air Force Field in Ohio and was popular among military families, and another which was popular with women of Jewish families and clubs. This second version became the National Mah Jongg League in 1937, and it is still widely played today.

The rules of Taiwanese Mahjong are similar to gin rummy or Rummikub. Four players compete to be the first to form matching and/or sequential sets by drawing and discarding tiles from the “wall.”

Once we learned the basics, including recognizing the three suits (Bamboo, Characters, and Circles) the four winds (North, East, South, and West) the three Dragons (Red, Green, and White) and the eight Flowers and Seasons, we were ready to chirp like sparrows, build walls, break walls, and form our collections of tiles using a little strategy and a lot of luck.



Culinary & Craft Lunar New Year Celebration

After a few fun rounds, Eleanor announced it was time to eat. We headed back to the kitchen where we artistically (?) filled our bowls with the crispy, aromatic ingredients. Just before going to the table, our bowls were topped with a fried egg to complete the dish. After sitting down, we found various condiments to choose from in order to add even more depths of flavor and texture to our meals. Pickled yellow radishes, kimchi, bean sprouts and a spicy-sweet gochujang sauce rounded out our choices.

Once we had used our soup spoons to break the eggs and mix the ingredients, everyone grabbed their chopsticks (or fork, if the chopsticks proved too elusive - as it did for this writer) and had a thoroughly delicious lunch.

Participants were also treated to shots of soju, which is a popular clear spirit served in Korea. It is similar to vodka, but usually has a lower alcohol content. We enjoyed plain distilled as well as plum and mango flavored. Along with fortune cookies, as a finishing touch we were all given red envelopes filled with chocolate "coins" to symbolize "hongbao," which are exchanged during Chinese New Year celebrations to bring energy, blessings, and good luck.

Eleanor concluded our meal by reminding us that we were not allowed to clean on February 17: It is considered bad luck, as we would be sweeping away our blessings and washing out our prosperity. So, we sat back, relaxed, and enjoyed ourselves on the first day of the Year of the Horse!



SOKOL CESKA SIN

OUT OF THIS WORLD

REVERSE RAFFLE & COSTUME CONTEST

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2026

6:00PM DOORS OPEN

6:30PM DINNER

7:00PM RAFFLE

8:00PM COSTUME CONTEST & DANCING

**\$1,000
GRAND PRIZE**

**SIDEBOARDS
AVAILABLE!**

**PRIZES FOR
BEST COSTUME**

**\$50 PER PERSON INCLUDES
REVERSE RAFFLE TICKET
DINNER
DRINKS (BEER/WINE/SODA)**

\$25 DINNER ONLY

ONLY 75 TICKETS SOLD FOR THE GRAND PRIZE!

**SCAN TO CHOOSE A
RAFFLE NUMBER**



**QUESTIONS?
EMAIL ANNE KNOWLES
SOKOLREVERSERAFFLE
@GMAIL.COM**

SCAN TO PAY





Czech

DINNERS

**Authentic Bohemian Pork or
Chicken Dinners
(with sauerkraut, dumplings,
rye bread, dessert & coffee)**

\$18

Eat-in or Carry-out

***Accordion polka music, old-time ethnic
vibes in an historic landmark building
included for free!**

**Wednesdays
5 - 7 pm
April 22
May 27
June 24
September 23
October 28**

**Sokol Ceska
Sin Hall
4314 Clark Ave.
Cleveland, OH
44109**

Reserve Tickets:

Call Don Kotlan (216) 228-0027

or

Don Knight (440) 937-5414

Open Seating. Park behind the Hall

*Sokol Ceska Sin
Culinary and Crafts Workshops
for Sokol members and their guests



Talk Derby to Me

Make and take mini Derby Pies while
enjoying a traditional southern mint julep.

Wear your best Derby duds for our
Hat Contest

*Saturday, May 2
12-2pm*

*Ceska Sin Hall
4314 Clark Ave.
Cleveland, OH*

RSVP to Brenda
brendanakonecznyj@gmail.com

\$10 members, \$15 non-member guests

Vcelky Theatre Group

Vcelky, Sokol Greater Cleveland's theatre group, is preparing for our next production, to be held on Saturday, October 24, and Sunday, October 25, 2026, times to be determined.

The working title of the show is "Vcelky Shorts." The performance will consist of short plays written, directed, and performed by Vcelky members, along with one or two short "black light theatre" pieces. Black light theatre is performed in a darkened theater space, and utilizes ultraviolet lights, dance, movement, and music to tell the story. Black light theatre is popular in Prague.

We are asking interested Sokol Greater Cleveland or Sokol Ceska Sin members or their families to submit for consideration their original family-friendly short plays, no longer than 10 minutes, and with no more than two to three characters. In keeping with our theme, we would like the plays to use a pair of shorts (yes, the shorts you wear) as a theme or even just a prop in the play. (Get it? Short plays, shorts you wear....) For example, maybe one of the characters could be hanging shorts on a line to dry, or pulling a pair of shorts from a laundry basket to fold, or just wear the shorts. Use your imagination! This is also in keeping with Sokol's historical focus on exercise and fitness. The deadline for play submissions is July 31, 2026. Please email plays to Kelli Perk at kellikayperk@gmail.com. Rehearsals will begin in September.

In addition to performers, our productions need people to create the sets, costumes, props, sound, and lights. All levels of experience and all ages are welcome.

If you are interested in being part of Vcelky as an actor or as part of the offstage creative team, please contact Kelli Perk at 440-668-9553 or kellikayperk@gmail.com.

Thank you.

Kelli Perk

Upcoming Events & Fundraising:

- **Saturday, April 11, 6:00 p.m.** Out of this World Reverse Raffle. See the flyer on page 8.
- **Wednesday, April 22, 5:00-7:00 p.m.** Roast Chicken or Pork Dinner. See the flyer on page 9.
- **Tuesday, April 28 at 6:30 p.m.** Unit Meeting via Zoom. **ALL** members are encouraged to attend. Jason Knight will send an email with the link to the meeting.
- **Saturday, May 2, 12:00-2:00 p.m.** Culinary & Craft Program—Talk Derby To Me class. See the flyer on page 10.
- **Saturday & Sunday, May 16-17** District Slet at DTJ. More info to come via email.
- **Wednesday, May 27, 5:00-7:00 p.m.** Roast Chicken or Pork Dinner. See the flyer on page 9.
- **Wednesday, June 24, 5:00-7:00 p.m.** Roast Chicken or Pork Dinner. See the flyer on page 9.



PayPal Giving Fund:

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

Donate to PayPal Giving Fund

Sokol Ceska Sin

Children & Youth

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Cleveland, OH
EIN: 34-1705514



\$25

\$50

\$75

\$100

Other

Share my name and email with this charity.

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To submit an article or event for a future newsletter:

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