



AMERICAN
SOKOL
WASHINGTON, DC

FEBRUARY 2022



We are off to another year filled with activities, events, Czech and Slovak school, and, of course, getting together with all of our members and friends at events throughout the D.C. region. In this issue, read about recent Sokol Washington, D.C. events such as the Winter Ski Camp in Hunter, NY, and other exciting activities. Plus, after a one-year hiatus, the Baca Cup Ski Race is back. We look forward to seeing you at upcoming events. Learn more inside this newsletter.

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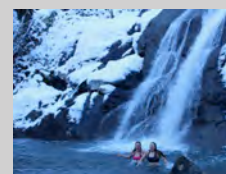
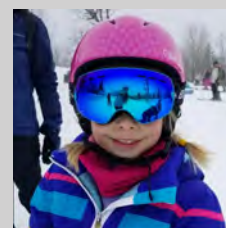
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Thank You

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 8:00 PM

Please join us at our Monthly Membership Meeting, share ideas, and participate in planning future events. It is your opportunity to play a part in shaping the future of our unit and meet our newly elected board.

We meet every 1st Wednesday of the month at 8 PM. You can participate via Zoom. If you are interested, please RSVP to sokol@sokolwashington.org and we will send you all the necessary information.

All members and non-members are welcome to join us.

LAST MONTH'S MEMBERSHIP MEETING VIA ZOOM



Due to the increase in Covid statistics and closures of libraries we held our first monthly meeting in 2022 via Zoom. We received a review of our Mikulašská Party held at the Czech Embassy in December and a report from our Winter Ski Camp at Hunter Mountain. We held a discussion about plans for the winter and spring seasons: Volleyball tournaments and weekly sessions, social events, hiking, and other outdoor activities. Stay tuned for more. We were also pleased to hear about the new Slovak class coming this semester that is already full and an additional Czech class that started in December. We hope we can get additional classrooms soon. Our youngest group - Mini-sokoliks - are now using a library in Virginia for their Sokol for Life classes.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Annual Bača Cup Ski Race

By Zuzana Steen

Get ready to race down the mountain at the Annual "BAČA CUP" international Invitational alpine ski race for all ages and nationalities! Our Sokol has been supporting this event for many years. The Baca Cup website provides more information for the ski race, registration, and group discount.

The Bača Cup, established for all ages and skill levels, is an international invitational alpine ski racing event dating back to 1979. Racers of all ages, nationalities, and skill levels are invited to participate as representatives from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Germany, and the United States take part in this annual event that highlights the relationship between all countries and their shared love of the Nordic experience. Truly, Bača's vision of cooperation, competition, and good fun is realized through all who choose to be involved.



A two-and-a-half-hour drive from DC, **BLUE KNOB** offers 100 skiable acres, with a vertical of 1,072 feet. You will find 34 trails ranging from the green circle for beginners to double black diamond for experts. They are serviced by five lifts, including two doubles, two triples, and one surface lift. They offer 42 acres of night skiing. Blue Knob has the highest skiable mountain in Pennsylvania.

"Ski Ya Soon!"

WHEN: Saturday, February 19, 2022 • Race time is 12:00 p.m.

WHERE: Blue Knob All Season Resort, 1424 Overland Pass • Claysburg, PA 16625.

<https://blueknob.com>

SAVE THE DATE **March 19th, 4:00-6:00 pm** **CABIN JOHN ICE RINK**



Masquerade Ball On ice! for Little and Tall

SAVE THE DATE

ED VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT
MARCH 19TH, 2022

Organized by Sokol Washington, DC

WHERE: Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Rd., Falls Church, VA 22042

CONTACT: Peter Knapp (events@sokolwashington.org)



Sokol Ski Camp

By Miro Honzák

Nine Sokol families with 20 children ushered in the new year on the slopes of Hunter Mountain, NY. Over seven days, children honed their skiing skills under the supervision of our expert ski instructors recruited from our ranks. Despite the mild weather, most of the runs on Hunter Mountain were open and groomed every night. The day for all young and old skiers started at exactly 8:30 am every morning under the resort flagpole with *rozcicka* (warm-up exercises). Our small circle of children stretching and counting in Czech attracted the attention of resort staff and other Czech and Slovak passers-by who took an interest in the familiar Sokol exercises and language. Our Sokol group met members from American Sokol New York and exchanged contacts through this serendipity.

After a week of hard work, our skiers faced the perfect Challenge: a slalom course set up by the NASTAR Program. Divided by skill levels into three categories, the skiers raced fearlessly down the black diamond slope. Nine young winners received Medals, and all participants received treats made in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The celebration continued with a roaring bonfire and Sokol musicians leading the adults and children in singing Czech and Slovak folk songs.

As we organize these annual ski camps, we proudly build on the legacy of Josef Rössler-Ořovský, who introduced skiing in Czechia on Prague's Wenceslas Square on January 5, 1887 (*see History Window below to learn more about this extraordinary sportsman*).



[The 2021 Hunter Mountain Ski Camp](#)



Believe it or not, the history of Czech skiing started in Prague, right in the center of the city 135 years ago

The first man who gained recognition as the pioneer skier of the Czech lands was Josef Rössler-Ořovský. On January 5, 1887 (135 years ago), together with his brother Karel, he skied down Prague's Wenceslas Square. At that time, it is said that winters were considerably tougher and snowfall more abundant, making the feat possible even in the center of Prague. One might imagine that this busy square, with its friendly incline, could have been an excellent place to popularize the sport in Bohemia.



Source:
PRAGUE MORNING
JANUARY 5, 2022



Mr. Rössler-Ořovský, born in Prague on June 29, 1869, was a versatile Czech athlete and capable sports organizer. On November 21, 1887, he founded the Czech Ski Club - the first ski club in Europe outside of Scandinavia. He also founded several other sports clubs, including the Czech Yacht Club and the Czech Lawn Tennis Club. Besides practicing skiing, rowing and tennis, he also played soccer and became the first Czech soccer referee.

Beyond his extraordinary athletic leadership, he was also a renowned diplomat, speaking several languages, and was involved in the efforts to establish the Czech Olympic Committee (Český olympijský výbor) along with Dr. Jiří Guth-Jarkovský. This led to a group of Czech athletes' participation in the Summer Olympics of 1912 in Stockholm as an independent Czech team in spite of the fact that Bohemia was still part of Austria-Hungary at the time.

Polar Bear Plunge Challenge

We did it! What about you?

By Dagmar Merkova

One cold Saturday in January, we went with friends for a short hike on the Virginia side of Great Falls. I was surprised I did not hear any complaints about instructions (time and place plus swimsuit and towel).

The hike was great, the views spectacular. It was sunny and cold. We found a little sandy beach by Difficult Run on the way back. Nothing more to add; I think photos tell it all. After a quick dip, we changed back to our dry clothes and snuggled in warm jackets.

Five happy polar bears!

It is not for everybody, so if you want to try something more manageable, do this: next time there is fresh snow, take a walk or run around your house or in the garden barefoot. You can try for a few seconds or several minutes, depending on your spirit and the temperature. Make sure to warm up before you take your shoes off. Short-run/walk or jumping jacks will do. If you want to take it to the next level, wear a swimsuit and make snow angels.

Please share your pictures with us!



Masopust

By Mirka Mimrova

Carnival, known as **Masopust** (literal translation: “meat fast”) in the Czech Republic, is a festive season from Three Kings’ Day to Ash Wednesday.

It refers to this time of parties, masquerade balls, and feasting on meat dishes (especially pork) and other foods and to the season peak’s celebrations (also called fašank, končiny, voračky, or masopust) starting on Fat Thursday and ending on Mardi Gras.

American Sokol, Washington, DC holds annual masquerade balls, called Šibřinky. The first Šibřinky ball was organized in 1835 by Sokol’s co-founder, Jindřich Fügner, in Prague. Our Sokol unit has held [Šibřinky](#) since 1960, usually in February, and every time with a different theme.

Masopust celebrations culminate in a masquerade parade, traditionally held on Mardi Gras. Its ritual celebrates the end of winter and a welcome to the fertility of spring, which probably has its roots in pagan times. The parade follows quite strict local rules as to the costumes of the parade’s main characters, and their performance. Each of the main characters has a specific role and tasks and is usually played by the local members of the community. Traditionally, the Masopust parade begins at the home of the community’s mayor, who has to give their oral consent to the festivity. The parade, accompanied



by a band formed of local musicians, goes from house to house and performs traditional dances and rites usually meant to ensure fertility, protection, and prosperity in the upcoming period. The parade members also play a lot of jokes on everybody present, and the atmosphere is fun and magical. At each house, their performance is rewarded by traditional Masopust treats, including many meat delicacies, heavenly home-made donuts with poppy seed or prune butter filling, and a lot of alcohol, all of which are usually generously offered to onlookers as well. After visiting all the houses in the community, the parade goes to a local pub and performs a final rite of symbolically slaughtering one of the animal characters, usually the mare, due to all her sins. When the mare is killed, everybody mourns the symbolic death as the band plays funeral songs. After a while, one of the main Masopust characters symbolically resurrects the mare with a sip of alcohol and as she stands up, everybody starts to dance and be joyful again, and the party goes on. It has to end at midnight as Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent.





Volleyball Fridays



Pick-up volleyball has been a favorite weekly adult sports activity for our members and friends of both genders, varied ages, and skill levels for many years

WHEN:

Fridays from 8-10 pm

WHERE:

[Jackson Middle School](#) Main Gym (Room 304) [3020 Gallows Road Falls Church, VA 22042](#)

CONTACT:

Radovan Kohlmayer

sports@sokolwashington.org

Sokol for Life

*"The world doesn't end outside the door;
we learn from animals to run, jump, climb, and more"*

By Veronika & Dasa

We continue our program for children 3-6 years old in the library meeting room in McLean. In our first gathering this year with the children and our mascot, Pepik, this year, we had fun making T-shirts. We continue improving our motor skills by throwing balls, running, Working on obstacle courses. We finally had time to use our program booklets to track our progress. We were excited to have a few snow days and make it even more stimulating by a new challenge to run barefoot in the snow. No shoes, no socks, just feeling that cold fresh snow. What fun! Some kids tried that and were proud of themselves.

WHEN:

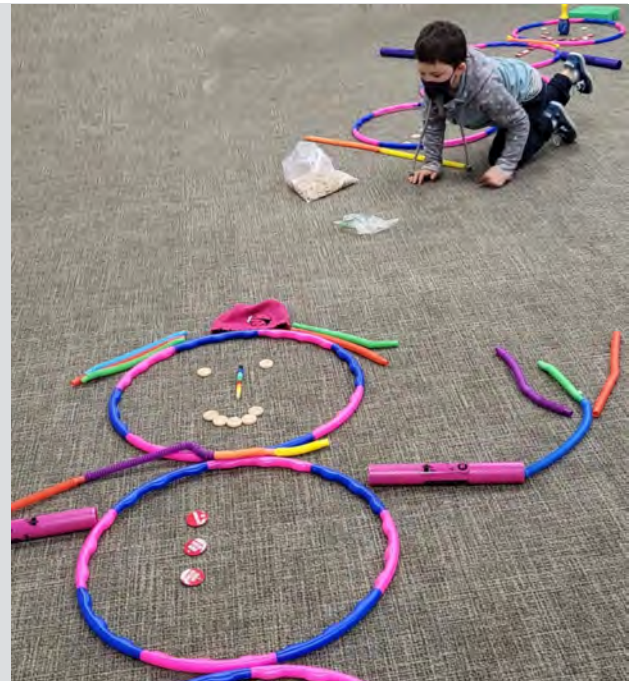
Tuesdays 6-7:30 pm

WHERE:

Dolley Madison Library, VA

CONTACT:

Veronika Clewner se.sokolem@sokolwashington.org





Slovak Class

By Veronika Harvey

I am so pleased that we could open our Slovak class at school after a few cancellations due to the winter weather. What a great feeling to welcome children and meet their parents on Friday, January 21st. We had a great start, played some introductory games to get to know each other, talked about our families back in Slovakia, and searched for their location on the map.

I introduced children to the Slovak alphabet with some games and rhymes. We had so much fun!

I am looking forward to taking the children on a journey to explore the Slovak language, culture, and customs.

I am bringing five years of experience teaching Slovak children at a community center in Cambridge (UK), along with lots of new ideas and enthusiasm from raising my own two bilingual children.





By Monica Rokus

Bryndzové Halušky

Slovak potato dumplings with sheep cheese

The national dish of Slovakia.

Ingredients

Halušky:

500 grams (18 oz) potatoes about five medium

200 grams (about 2 cups) all-purpose flour

1 egg

1 tsp salt

200 grams (7oz) bacon

250 grams (9oz) bryndza more or less to taste

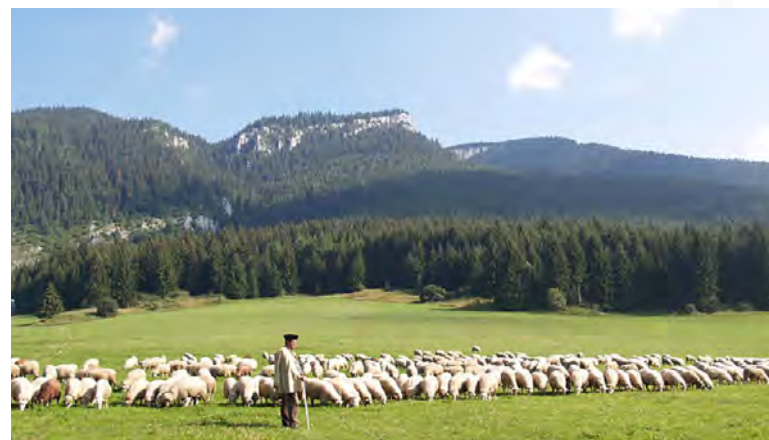
chopped chives or spring onion greens optional

garnish

Instructions

1. Bring a pot of salted water to boil.
2. Meanwhile, grate raw potatoes on the fine holes. Add flour, egg, and salt and mix well.
3. Use a halušky maker, or spaetzle maker, to drop the dough into the boiling water.
4. If you don't have either, you can put the dough on a cutting board and use a knife to cut off small chunks into the water. Do in batches, so there aren't too many dumplings in the water.
5. When floating to the top, use a slotted spoon to take out the halušky.
6. Chop bacon and fry.
7. If making a bryndza alternative, blend ingredients until smooth. What proportions? You can make it as strong or mild to suit your taste – more feta will make it stronger, sour cream will make it milder, cream cheese will be thicker, sour cream thinner. To start with, try half a cup of each feta and sour cream and 1½ tbsp butter.
8. Heap up dumplings, put bryndza on top (it melts as it warms up), sprinkle generously with bacon and optional chopped chives or greens parts of spring onion.

(Bryndza alternative: combine feta cheese, cream cheese, or sour cream, piece of butter)



Bryndza is a sheep's milk cheese famous in several mountainous countries of Eastern Europe, especially in Slovakia and Poland. The cheese was produced continuously for many years. The production dates back to the 1900s. Bryndza is a spreadable white cheese made from mature sheep cheese or sheep and cow cheeses. The percentage of sheep cheese must be higher than 50%.

Bryndza has a delicate aroma and flavor, signified by a pleasant acidity typical of sheep cheese, a slightly spicy and salty taste, and a granulate texture.

Bryndza is the main ingredient in **Bryndzové halušky**, the national favorite of Slovakia.

Student seeking help with Czech and Slovak Translation

Are you willing to volunteer your time and expertise to help translate several documents into Czech and Slovak languages?

A doctoral student at the School of International Service at American University is writing her dissertation on social movements in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

The student has an institutional affiliation with the Comenius and Masaryk universities. She is seeking help from Slovak and Czech-speaking volunteers to help her with translations of some questionnaires, guides, and other documents into Slovak and Czech languages.

Please get in touch with her if you are available and are willing to help: ap4758b@student.american.edu

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Please give us your consideration when you are deciding on your donations.

All your contributions to the American Sokol Washington, D.C., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, are charitable tax-deductible contributions.



We are on Social Media

Sokol Washington, D.C. offers additional ways for members to communicate and stay informed about additional events we may not include in our monthly newsletters.



Please check out American Sokol, Washington D.C. on Facebook and Instagram

If you have a cultural, folk, educational or sporting/athletic event you would like to share with our members, please **CONTACT:** media@sokolwashington.org

Join Us and Become a Member

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of Sokol Washington.

Benefits to our Unit

Your membership dues enable our Unit to continue our many programs – sports, outdoor, social, cultural and educational.

Benefit to You

Membership in our Unit has a number of benefits – discounts at all our social events; free participation in gymnastics for youth; and for adults, and free participation in pick-up volleyball.

SOKOL WASHINGTON MEMBERSHIP DUES

Individual Membership (adult/voting) \$40.00

Two Adults Membership (both voting) \$75.00

Family Membership I. (one adult voting / all children up to 26 years & one non-voting adult) \$50.00

Family Membership II. (two adults voting / all children up to 26 years) \$80.00

New Member/Reinstated One-time Administrative Fee waived

CONTACT: membership@sokolwashington.org



We would not be able to flourish as an organization without the constant help of our many volunteers. American Sokol. That's why it's important that all members and friends, at least from time to time, offer their contribution to help our Sokol Unit thrive. Our Unit can be only as good as our members' participation in its activities.



KEEP IN TOUCH

We value you as our audience! Stay engaged and informed about our oncoming educational, cultural, folk, or sporting events, and do not miss our MailChimp campaigns. Please make sure that our e-mail sokol@sokolwashington.org is included in your Contacts/Mailing list and does not end up in your Spam or a Trash box

Washington, D.C. Chapter, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all of its officers are volunteers.

Newsletter Publication and Information

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Please send news, articles, and pictures before the 15th of the prior month.

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American Sokol Washington, DC

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