

Crystal Lake Herald
Articles About
The Sokol Summer
Home/Camp

Crystal Lake Herald

July 16, 1942

Camp Lidice Is Located Near Lake—

The Sokol Helvick-Tyrs summer camp for boys and girls has been located in the subdivision about a half mile from the west end of the lake. Groups of about 40 boys and girls will spend regular periods there during the summer. The camp has been named Camp Lidice.

A large building has been constructed to provide a dining room and kitchen. There are also sleeping quarters in it for women members of the organization who volunteer for periods in working at the camp.

North of this building, there is a small executive building and another where girl campers sleep. Boys sleep in tents. After the war, it is planned to construct larger and more elaborate buildings. This organization has a large gymnasium in Chicago and features gymnastic training for health.

The land on which the camp is located was donated by Adolph Kacer, Crystal Gardens summer resident and president of the organization. "The freedom one enjoys in this land is wonderful," the camp director told The Herald.

"Lidice lives!"

That is the slogan adopted by the Light of Liberty committee, which now promises to expand into a nationwide and perhaps an international organization pledged to perpetuate the memory of the little Czechoslovak town wiped out by Hitler.

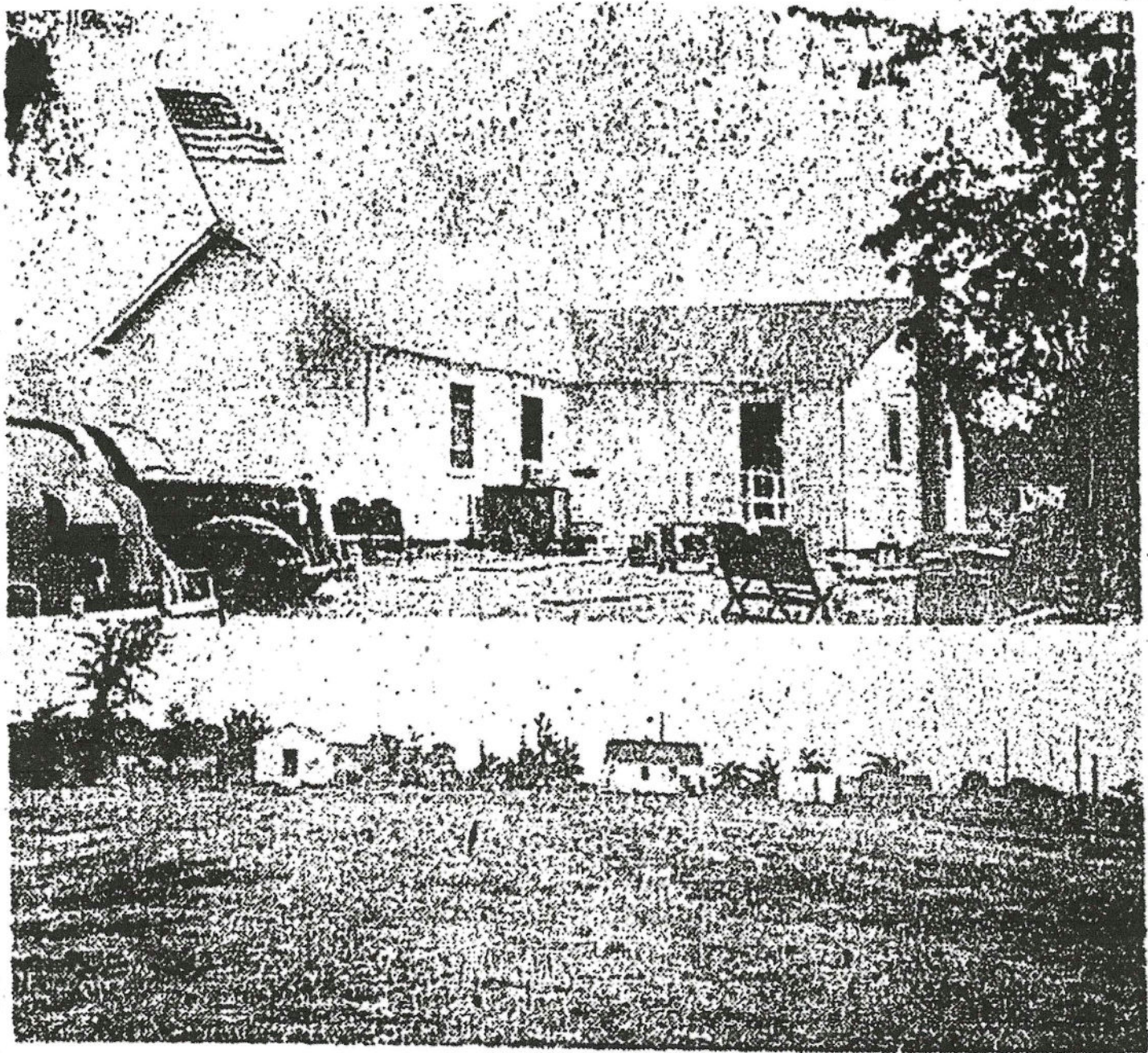
Every man in Lidice was killed by the Nazis; the women were sent to concentration camps, and the children to "educational" camps.

Dedication Sunday of the new Lidice, in Lockport township near Joliet, and of a granite shaft as a memorial to the martyrs of Lidice inaugurated the "Lidice Lives" movement.

All the world realizes that the attempt to destroy Lidice was in vain; that while it might be physically obliterated from the face of the earth, it is immortal in the hearts and minds of every lover of peace, justice and humanity.

The dedication was carried by the NBC and British radio systems. Wendell L. Willkie was a speaker.

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Camp Lidice has been opened in the subdivision west of the lake by the Sokol organization of Chicago. Upper photo is the new dining room and kitchen. Lower is a view of the administration building, sleeping quarters for the girls and tents for the boys. Groups of 40 boys and girls spend two weeks vacation there. After the war, more and larger building will be done. Lidice is named after a town in Europe where the Germans killed every man and placed all the women in concentration camps. New Lidice is the name of a village just established near Joliet.

Crystal Lake Herald
July 22, 1943

Camp Lidice, near the west end of the lake, is now open for the season. The camp is named for Lidice in Europe, a town completely destroyed by the Nazis.

300 Children to Present Program

Public Invited to View Outdoor Activities on
Aug. 11

The public has been extended a cordial invitation to visit Sokol Camp Lidice near the west end of the lake on Sunday, Aug. 11 at 3 o'clock when about 300 children will give an exhibition of athletic training received.

The camp is named after Lidice in Bohemia, a village made historic by the mass murders and burning of homes and other buildings when villagers encountered the frenzied fury of Adolph Hitler. The camp, situated in Crystal Vista subdivision, is reached by turning right just beyond the Crystal Ballroom where signs direct to the camp.

The Sokol organization has headquarters in Chicago and opened the summer camp here several years ago. Children of members from Chicago spend certain periods there and calisthenics and gymnastic training is featured in the gymnasium in Chicago and at the camp here.

For the Aug. 11 event, about 300 children from 6 years on through the teen age will give an excellent program. The camp is equipped with a large dining room with barracks for sleeping quarters for youngsters in camp. There are also several other buildings for various uses.

J. Stransky is physical education instructor.

Mrs. Marie Kacer is in charge of the camp. Mr. Kacer being president of the Sokol organization.

Camp Lidice Features Extraordinary Physical Education Show



Pyramid formation was one of the athletic skills displayed by young men of the Sokol Assn. when these veterans of World War II, young women, and boys and girls as young as six years showed to a crowd of 600 delighted spectators, on Aug. 11, what they have learned at the Sokol gymnasium in Chicago and at Camp Lidice in Crystal Vista. Performing when this picture was taken were Bob Kerbec (at the bottom), Sid Kacer, Ray Krapec, and Tony Faikus, top man of the graceful foursome.

Sokol Camp Lidice, in Crystal Vista, held its first physical education exhibition on Sunday, Aug. 11, for the purpose of showing the neighbors at Crystal Lake the result of months of diligent practice. There is a similar exhibition held every first Sunday in April at the gymnasium on Lawndale ave. and 26th st. in Chicago. J. Stransky is physical education instructor. Mrs. Marie Kacer is in charge of the camp.

General assembly came promptly at 3 o'clock in the afternoon with a very large audience (about 600 people) applauding all classes, boys and



Three of the young ladies who participated in the physical education exhibition held at Sokol camp Lidice, in Crystal Vista, on Aug. 11 were (left to right in the picture) Zdenka Neskodny, Ann Pospisil, and Sylvia Zencik.

girls ranging from 6 to 14 years of age, junior girls and junior boys from 14 to 18 years of age and women and men.

After the anthems were played, the Sokol Assn. president, Mr. Kacer, welcomed the audience and stressed the fact that every bit of work at camp is done by members purely voluntarily and gratis.

Another welcoming speech was given by the president of the Board of Directors, Mr. Simaner, who emphasized the fact that the main aim of the Organization is to be able to give the children and young people a place to meet and drill to keep faithful to the motto "Sound mind in a sound body."

The classes marched off and the program began with calisthenics, by a mixed group of children that are staying at camp, the sort of exercise they do every morning before breakfast. Next were calisthenics by two classes of young girls, which were followed by games played by girls and boys staying at camp. Similar

games were played at Camp every evening. A beautiful number followed, fancy calisthenics, by the women, men, junior girls and junior boys combined.

The audience thrilled to the performance of the next number, the pride of the "Sokols" young men, all recently returned veterans ranking from captain to private. Gasps and applause met the ears as they went through their number, hand balancing, a beautiful exhibition of coordination.

The next number, on parallel bars and horizontal bars was by the junior boys and men. They certainly "flew through the air, with the greatest of ease."

The last number was a volleyball game between the women and men. Even though the men's team had many restrictions meted out they won 18 to 2.

So the very first Physical Education exhibition held at Crystal Lake ended with a firm conviction that it will be a yearly occurrence.

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August 7, 1947 - page 4



Large crowds of spectators gathered at Camp Sokol near the west end of the lake on Sunday, July 27, when the children's gymnastic exhibition was held. Members of the men's and women's classes of Sokol Havlicek-Tyrs, Chicago, are shown doing support numbers for the success of the program. The camp is operated by this organization for educational and cultural purposes.—Lu-Al Laboratory Photo.



Local Camp Asks Reversal Zoning Board Appeals

A petition for a writ of certiorari asking for a review and reversal of a decision of the McHenry county Zoning Board of Appeals has been filed in circuit court on behalf of Sokol Harlicek-Tyrs. This is the first action of its kind taken against the local board since its formation over a year ago.

The bill asserts that the enforcing officer, George Jedlicka, Crystal Lake, refused the petitioner a permit to erect certain buildings in Crystal Vista subdivision for a summer vacation school. The appeal to the board of appeals was denied.

Under the provision of the McHenry zoning ordinance, the bill asserts the district upon which the property is located is zoned as class "E," estates; "R-1," residents district and "R-2," residence districts. The bill continues that the petitioner erected buildings on the premises for vacation camp purposes in 1939 and that it was used for such with the exception of 1943, 1944 and 1945 when operation was suspended because of war regulations.

The petitioner contends that the enforcing officer erred in denying the permit when he held that the petitioner was not a non-profit organization in that he maintained a vacation school serving meals and drinks to the general public for a profit.

Members of the board of review concerned in the proceeding are Frank Nagel, Fox River Grove; Edward Deneen, Harvard; Ray Dusenberry, Marengo; Roy Kent, McHenry, and Harold Bacon, Crystal Lake.

The camp is located near the west end of the lake and has been growing rapidly. At one time it was called Camp Lidice in honor of Lidice destroyed by Hitler. Athletics are featured by the organization. As the camp was growing, so was the residential area with about 15 new houses being constructed nearby this year.

Nearby Residents Object Operation of Camp Sokol

"The large tract of land at the west and northwest end of the lake is known as the Crystal Vista Subdivision and is a steadily growing community. Recently eight homes were erected on LaMelado Ave. and are now occupied. There are plans to erect many more new homes in the section which now has about 50 permanent residents," writes Clarence T. Bouterse of that area.

"A childrens summer camp operated by the Sokol Havlicek Tyrs of Chicago has conducted a camp on the property for the past several years and the residents of the community are generally in favor of the removal of the camp. Last summer they attempted to erect additional dormitories and were denied a permit as the ground was deeded for one family residences and the Appeal Board of McHenry County after a long hearing in which residents and Camp members and Adolph Kacer the land owner were considered, the Board held that the buildings should not go up. Now the Camp has appealed to the Circuit Court and Master in Chancery Parker heard both sides Wednesday in the Court House in Woodstock. The Camp claims to be a school and teaches their people various educational subjects. However, the residents appearing state that with beer cases piled up outside the dining room on Sundays and outside toilets and busses full of Chicago people with picnic baskets coming up in Willett busses four to eight strong on Sundays with several dozen additional cars can hardly construe this to be any more than a playground enterprise.

"The persons objecting have Atty. Vernon J. Knox at attorney and hope to restrain the camp from enlarging their activities."

Camp Sokol Nears End of Another Very Busy Summer

Camp Sokol, in Crystal Vista subdivision near the west end of the lake, has been the gathering place for more than 200 youngsters this summer, all of whom are most

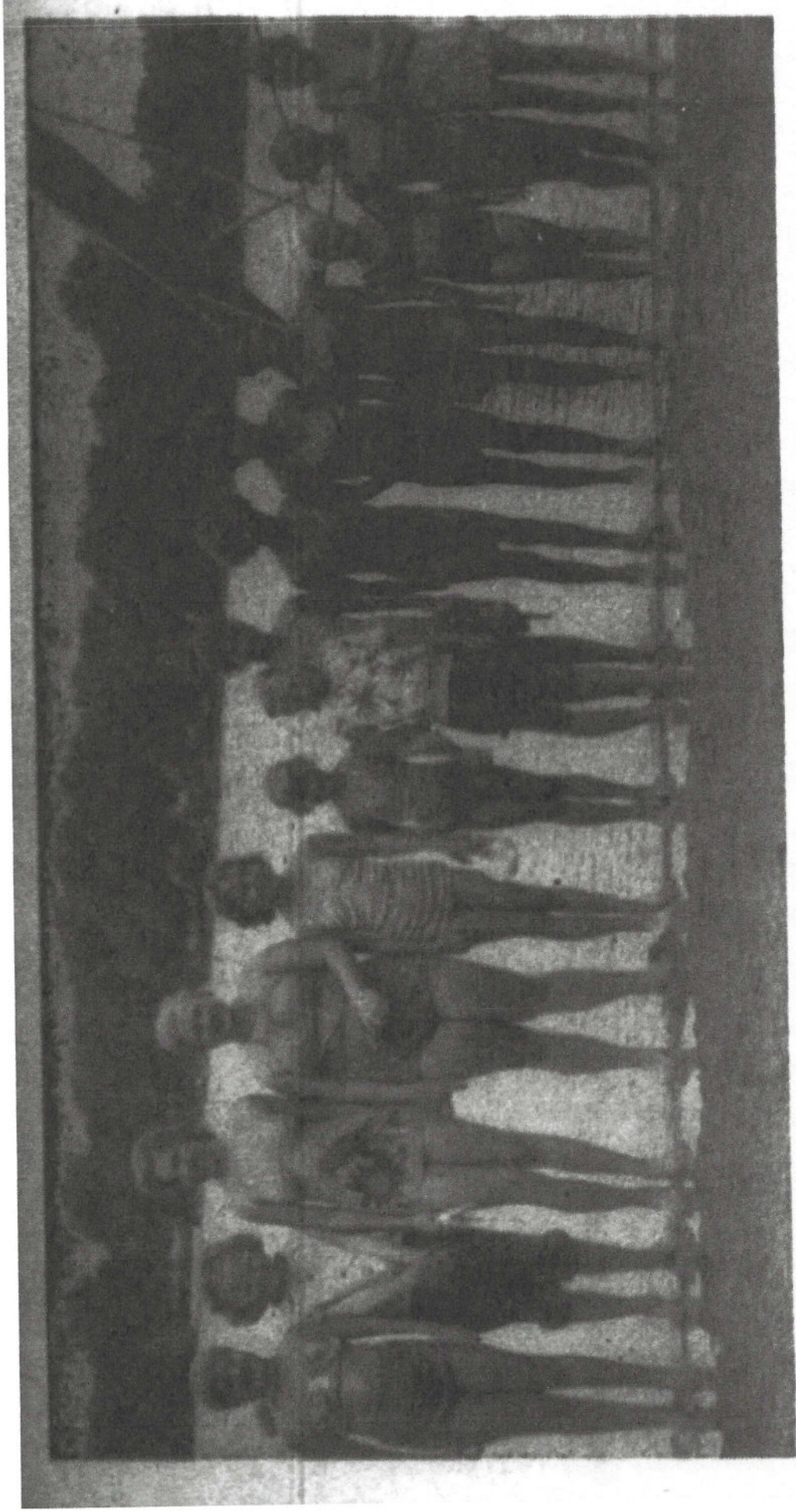
enthusiastic about coming here for a week's stay at camp.

Camp Sokol is open during July and August and is operated by persons of Czech origin who place much stress upon gymnastics as a means of children becoming strong and healthy. Numerous gymnasiums are at various points in Chicago and during the summer months, children and guests from the various gymnasiums come to Camp Sokol for a week's stay. The largest group this season was one week in July when there were 80. Experienced camp counsellors are in charge.

There is a dormitory for girls and another for boys with a central dining room. In addition to the activities at camp, swimming is done at the nearby Grafton Park Beach. Numerous local residents have been invited to dinner at the camp and the Bohemian food served is so delicious they long remember it.

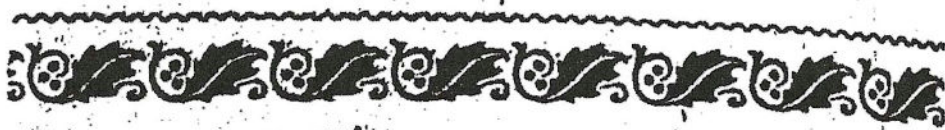
Camp Sokol is the only camp in the vicinity of the lake. In times past when houses were few near the lake, many groups came here to camp during the summer.

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August 28, 1952 - page 14



These youngsters are typical of those from Chicago who get a week's stay at Camp Sokol near the west end of the lake. In this view, they pause from swimming at Grafton Park beach, swimming proving the most popular of camp activities.

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December 31, 1953 - page 2



SOKOL SUMMER HOME
CRYSTAL VISTA



Crystal Lake Herald

July 22, 1954 - page 7

Representatives of Sokol camp, at the west end of the lake, stated that they were operating a summer camp for underprivileged children and that they owned 26 lots in Grafton twp. They thought they should be allowed two tickets of admission to the park for each lot. The concessionaire had countered with an offer to admit the group at 40 per cent of regular admission for non-resident users. Attorney Cowlin explained that taxpaying on unimproved property is not by itself a criterion of residency. The contract between the Board and the Concessionaire specified free admittance only to residents of the township, although the board could, if they so desired, grant special permission to the group. Commissioner Hugo Enstrom moved to uphold the lease and back Mr. Tabor on his stand. The Sokol camp has unimproved beach property fronting on the lake beside the Crystal Ballroom, which they have in the past leased to Florence Campbell, operator of the dance hall.

Cutting Ribbon Sun. Opening Newly Paved Crystal Vista Road

Next Sunday, at 1 p.m., at the south entrance to Crystal Vista subdivision, North ave. and Granada, there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony formally opening the newly paved road, to which everyone is invited. This will be followed by a picnic at the Sokol Summer Home grounds where there will be fun for young and old alike.

Crystal Vista has struggled with their roads for years, but now, at last, a four block black-topping job has been completed on Granada, which is the main street coming into the area from the south. Work is also under way preparatory to black-topping the road leading into the subdivision from Briarwood drive and West Granada.

Invite All to Picnic

At the picnic, to which everyone is invited, there will be races for the kiddies, as well as various games for adults. For those who do not bring a picnic lunch, there will be barbecued beef, hot dogs, coffee, pop, and other refreshments.

The Crystal Vista Improvement Assn. wishes to express gratitude to everyone who has had a part in helping them this far in their long range road building program. They are grateful, especially, to the Sokol Summer Home which presented them with the deed to a lot on Briarwood Drive, which is used as a road and is now in process of being black-topped. They are also grateful to the merchants who have donated articles and purchased tickets to their various fund raising projects, and to the Crystal Lake Herald, who have always cooperated and been so generous about printing their news items.



Alvin Nelson, president of Crystal Vista Improvement association, cut the ribbon and formally opened the subdivision's newly-paved road at North avenue and Granada. Aiding in the ceremony on Sept. 6 were Howard Emery, Clark Hager and Mel Ackman.

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09/17/1959
page 15

After the ribbon cutting ceremony, everyone went to the Sokol Summer Home where a picnic was in full swing. Races and games for children and adults were lots of fun, both to the participants and the spectators. A wonderful time was certainly enjoyed by all who attended, and the general feeling was for another picnic next year.

Subdivision residents are grateful to members of Sokol Summer Home for donating their beautiful grounds for this picnic and cooperating in so many other ways to make the event successful.

Ceska Beseda Pres. Instrumental in Sokol Stamp Issue

When the Postmaster General of the United States announced approval for the "issuance in 1965 of a commemorative stamp for physical fitness on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Sokol Movement in America," his words had special meaning for Mrs. John J. Skudrna of Fox River Grove.

As president of the Ceska Beseda Bohemian club in Fox River Grove, Mrs. Skudrna had worked diligently to secure signatures to a petition requesting such a commemoration. Signed by her fellow club-members, the petition was forwarded to Washington where Congressman Robert McClory presented it to the postmaster general with his request that the petition be given earnest consideration.

On Sept. 16, Postmaster General Gronouski notified McClory that the purpose of the petition had been achieved and that the stamp would be issued, and Congressman McClory immediately transmitted the notice of approval to Mrs. Skudrna. Last week the postmaster general sent a note of invitation to the congressman to attend the "unveiling of the Physical Fitness - Sokol commemorative U. S. postage stamp design, at 1 o'clock, Oct. 27, postmaster general's reception

room."

Congressman McClory passed on the good news to Mrs. Skudrna, president of the Ceska Beseda, Fox River Grove and noted that member of his staff would be present in his behalf as representative of the 12th District, adding:

"My heartiest congratulations to you and your fellow club-members and petitioners for having the forethought to seek such recognition for the splendid contribution the Sokol movement has made to the American way of life."

Michele Young New President Junior Wonder Maids 4-H

The Junior Wonder Maids 4-H club met at the home of Mrs. Robert J. Hooker on Oct. 17, with Catherine Grandt presiding. Kim Beninger lead the pledges.

Committees were formed to work at the invitational meeting on Nov.

ELGIN
SPORTSMAN
\$24.95



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July 27, 1967, page 2

The Sokol Summer Camp near the west end of the lake was the gathering place for an unusually large number Sunday, most of them being from Chicago. The organization has a main building with dining room and smaller buildings, shelter in case of inclement weather. The attendances at the lake parks were reduced because of the threatening clouds during the morning and attendance at Veteran Acres park was also smaller than usual.

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July 17, 1969 - page 7

Sunday, for the first Sabbath Day in five weeks, was fair and pleasant and the local parks were jammed for the first weekend this season. The Sokol Summer Camp, Mulberry and Clover dr., was the gathering place for many members and guests.

Crystal Lake Herald

May 16, 1968 - page 16

Police investigated a break-in
May 9 at the Sokol Camp on Liano
Vista. One building there had been
damaged.

Crystal Lake Herald
August 14, 1969

A large crowd enjoyed the day at the Sokol Summer Home headquarters near the west end of the lake.

Crystal Lake Herald
June 15, 1972 - page 11

★Police Calls

A police officer on patrol June 11 heard the sound of glass breaking inside a building in the Sokol Camp in Crystal Vista. There he found two girls, ages 8 and 9, breaking everything they could find. The girls were

turned over to their parents.

Crystal Lake Herald
December 11, 1974 - page 4

Letter to the editor

West End beach, park possibilities

Dear editor,

I would like to thank the Planning Commission for interceding on behalf of the people in the West Lake community in trying to determine the best use for the land surrounding West School.

Most of those who attended the impromptu meeting at the City Council Chambers on Saturday, Dec. 9 felt as I, that the involved area's best use would be as park land.

The possibility of a park in conjunction with the school is most desirable and it seems that the Crystal Lake Park Dist. has been amiss in its duties by not realizing the possibilities.

A second question on the program, and one that is actually more important than the first, was should there be further access to the lake on the West end.

It occurs to me every time I turn the

corner from North Ave. onto Edgewater Dr. that the best way to obtain more access to the lake would be by expanding the West Beach to include the area around the Lakewood City Hall and to also include the old Sokol Beach, which just happens to be for sale.

This is such a natural that I can not imagine that the Park Dist. has not considered it.

The most important resource to the people of Crystal Lake and the surrounding area is the lake itself. The way this city is growing, it is imperative that the Park Dist. secure additional land with access to the lake.

The first step to be taken in providing the West Lake community with additional park facilities is by expanding the West Beach as described above.

Daniel G. Linklater
1305 Ivy Ln.
Crystal Lake

Residents voice opinions on West End park site

The Park Dist. role in providing appropriate open and play space was discussed at length at a recent hearing held by the Crystal Lake Plan Commission.

Commission members laid the ground work for the discussion by outlining the history and statutes which authorized the planning commission and the scope of its authority and influence.

The hearing dealt specifically with possible future action on a planned unit development proposed for 26 acres adjacent to and north of West School called Briarwood West.

At issue was the question of whether to annex it to the city as proposed, or to seek to acquire the site as a park area as some local residents were urging.

Following the Plan Commission presentation, the meeting was open to discussion from the audience. The following points were made or questions raised.

Dan Linklater asked why the Park Dist. had not purchased the Sokol property several years ago when it was available for under \$30,000.

Boncosky said the price was over \$45,000 and that was considered excessive 6 years ago when it was offered.

Linklater noted that it was still better than \$200,000 for the 26 acres of the Briarwood West site, and it would have included another access to the lake front.

Boncosky told the Plan Commission that the park board expected that more land in the Westlake area would come from developers as they were annexed to the city.

Gaul said the city would consider this if they could find somebody to accept title to such land. He said the city has not been pursuing open land because of this.

He has felt that in the past, the Park Dist. is not interested in more land because of money problems, Gaul said.

Boncosky said he wanted it understood that the Park Board has never turned down any land except some that was offered near the sewage plant for some rather obvious reasons.

Gaul reminded the Park Dist. and the schools that the Plan Commission is a voluntary board and if some effort is not made to implement the uses indicated on the official map, he would offer an amendment to the comprehensive planning ordinance to "take all the green spaces off the map."

Larry Lane, park commissioner, explained that many of the offerings by developers to the Park Dist. are postage stamp size lots containing poor land that the developer doesn't want.

The issue boils down to what are the people willing to pay for, he said.

John McGrath of Forest Hills asked what areas in the city needed parks the worst.

O'Neill indicated that in planning they found that the Downtown district was in the greatest need for neighborhood parks which would probably require expensive acquisition and demolition to acquire.

Leona Nelson, West End resident, presented a petition containing over 100 signatures requesting acquisition of the Briarwood West site.

She reminded the Park Dist. that when the former Grafton Park area was annexed to the larger park district 6 years previously, there was a balance of over \$2,000 in the treasury turned over to the Crystal Lake Dist.

What happened to that? And they had also turned over the West Beach park and the land for the tot lot park on Della.

O'Neill said it had cost over \$4,000 so far to develop the small park and that they expected to spend over \$12,000 in materials alone before they were through.

Mrs. Nelson said the Crystal Lake Park Dist. had doubled in assessed valuation with the annexation of part of the old Grafton Park Dist.

Janet Nacker urged the group to get back to the issue at hand, this Briarwood West land.

Mrs. Synda Becker agreed, "Let's acquire this," and she asked, "Are funds available to the community?"

Park Dist. officials explained that there are 2 sources for funds, through conservation legislation and Bureau of Outdoor Recreation funds, and also through HUD.

But, unfortunately, such funds were distributed through NIPC, and Crystal Lake was 40th on the list, giving them a very low priority.

This, O'Neill explained, was because Crystal Lake has the highest rate of open space land per person in Illinois.

Dahl asked if the school would be interested in the land and how much.

Schneider said the school board felt the facilities at West School were adequate.

Mrs. Pat Gilman, when finally asked to comment, asked how pertinent the need really was in view of the low rate of participation at Saturday's meeting by residents in the area, about 23 out of 1700.

Crystal Lake Herald

December 27, 1974 - page 2

CL Park Commission agrees on need for West End park

Park Commission President Art Boncosky told the other members of Crystal Lake's Park Board Dec. 12 that the city Plan Commission was not happy with the Park Dist. taking money in lieu of land.

Boncosky explained that the city's planners were anxious to see some sort of park area in the West End portion of the community, most notably in or near West School and the proposed Briarwood West development.

After more than a half hour of discussion, the Park Commissioners agreed that, indeed, it was advisable to solicit some acreage in the West End and that the way to procure the land was through a one-time referendum for various acreage and facilities.

Park Commissioner Del Cryer reminded the other commissioners that they couldn't "drop everything" and buy land just because it shows on the city's official map or the remaining programs would be in trouble.

President Boncosky noted that the city's official map required as much as 25 acres of park area in the West End; but he thought it would be more beneficial, and financially feasible, to acquire a lesser amount of land instead of the entire acreage at once.

Commissioner Ken Fetzner suggested the Park Dist. look into purchasing the Briarwood West acreage or the former Sokol camp land. If that didn't pan out, Fetzner said, a

committee could be formed to look all over the area for suitable park acreage.

Park Dist. Director Danny O'Neill said there was a lack of communication between the district and the city in regard to master plans and official maps.

He pointed out that designation of lands on the official map is variable in that portions determined to be of a particular zoning classification as well as open lands could be moved around within a particular neighborhood officially set up in the map.

At the suggestion of Commissioner Fetzner, the district will officially commend Dan Lester in appreciation for his efforts in helping the district construct the recently opened Skate Shack.

Director O'Neill said the Northeastern Illinois Regional Planning Commission (NIPC) had placed the district's request for federal and state funds to purchase acreage in the Crystal Lake Watershed 18th of 22 applicants.

O'Neill said, even with a change in the application procedures, "I don't know if we're closer or further away."

The director also showed the commissioners slides of his summer trip to Boulder, Colo., in which he was expressly impressed by certain of their facilities.

Commissioner Cryer brought to light the apparent confusion about annexation to the Park Dist. He asked

Park Dist. Attorney John Cowlin to outline the procedure publicly once more.

Cowlin explained that basically there were 3 things necessary for annexation:

1) Action must be initiated by those wishing to annex to the district;

2) The area to be annexed must be contiguous to the district;

3) And a referendum vote through the courts, the legal process, had been changed by the state recently so that a simple majority of electors, which he explained were property owners or renters, was needed rather than the former 100 per cent.

Recreation Director Joe Herrity reported that the district will again offer a program this summer for children in the SEDOM program. He said the park district and Elementary School Dist. 47 were attempting to find funds for the program.

Herrity also pointed out that people can call the Park Dist. to offer positive comments as to what they want from the district at any time the office is open. The number is 459-0680.

Jim Kruse, an official from the Crystal Lake Anglers Club, asked the commission for permission to plant some 340 Northern in the lake again this year.

The commissioners agreed enthusiastically that the program was a good deal for everybody concerned and wholeheartedly gave their support.