

AMERICAN CZECH-SLOVAK CULTURAL CLUB

An Organizational History

Updated February 18, 2009

The American Czechoslovaks Social Club was founded in 1949. The name was changed to the American Czech-Slovak Cultural Club in 1998.

Twenty Czechs and Slovaks met at the home of Edward Berounsky of Miami Springs which resulted in the permanent organization of the Club with headquarters at the Slavic Inn. Membership increased so that their meeting place was not large enough. Therefore it was decided to buy a place for their own use.

A plot of 3.3 acres was found on historic Arch Creek Road that was part of the original Military Trail which connected Fort Lauderdale with Fort Dallas (Miami). This road was constructed in 1858 under the supervision of Abner Doubleday of baseball notoriety.

The property contained a large building serving as a one family house and a smaller one that served as a garage and an apartment. The property was rezoned and funds were raised by a first mortgage. The balance of the money was obtained by selling bonds to members.

Food was prepared at members' homes and brought to the club. Soon a large kitchen was added. The dining room was enlarged to seat up to 300 people. After nine years the debt was paid off and the mortgage was burned.

Many people have told the story alleging that Al Capone once owned the property. The illegal liquor was off-loaded in Biscayne Bay to small boats which would go upstream on Arch Creek. The liquor was stored in the building then taken to the nearby railroad station for shipment to other parts of the United States. Although the authenticity of this story is still being researched, it appears at this time, that there is some truth to the matter.

In the 1950s Dr. Alice Masaryková, the daughter of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, lived in the Miami area and enjoyed visiting the club on various occasions.

In 1999 the 50th anniversary of the Club was celebrated by co-sponsoring a weekend symposium with the Czechoslovak Genealogy Society International (CGSI). It was at that meeting that the Club started to invite nationally prominent Czechs and Slovaks from around the country. These included:

Alexandr Vondra - Czech Ambassador 1999, 2000
Dr. Miroslav Musil - Cultural Counselor, Slovak Embassy 1999
Mark Bigouette - Founder and Past President of CGSI 1999, 2004
David Pavelka - President of CSGI 1999
Daniel Baldwin - President/CEO the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library 1999, 2001
John Fiala - Founder and President of National Miss Czech-Slovak USA Pageant 1999

Since 1999 the following groups and personalities have visited our Club:

Martin Bútora - Slovak Ambassador to the U.S. 2000, 2002, 2003
Colonel Ivan Bella - Slovak cosmonaut 2000
Waldemar Matuška - Czech singer 2000, 2005
Ivan Dubovický - Cultural Attaché from Czech Embassy 2000
Miroslav Donutil - Czech comedian 2000, 2006
Sisa Sklovská - Slovak singer 2000, 2001, 2006
Marcella Molnárová - Slovak singer 2000, 2002
Milan Markovič - Slovak comedian and satirist 2000
Dr. Jan Cimický - Czech author & TV personality 2000
Eubomír Kocka - Slovak Film Director 2001
Martin Palouš - Czech Ambassador to U.S. 2002

Jozef & Dodo Ivaška - Slovak singers 2002, 2003, 2004
Jaromír Nohavica - Czech contemporary folk singer 2003
Petr Novotný - Czech psychiatrist, comedian & TV personality 2003
Jan Novotný - Czech pianist 2004
Gideon String Trio - Czech Republic 2005
Zdeněk Izer - Czech impressionist and comedian 2005
The Backwards - award-winning Beatles interpretative band from Slovakia 2005
Pavol Hrušovský - Speaker of the Slovak Parliament 2005
Rastislav Káčer - Slovak Ambassador to the U.S. 2006
Petr Kolař - Czech Ambassadors to U.S. 2006
Vladislav Bláha - Czech classical guitarist 2006, 2007, 2008
Ivan Mládek - Czech country and western singer and band leader 2006
Josef "Pepa" Nos - Czech Folk Singer 2006
Čechomor - Czech folk-rock band 2006
Stanislav "Wabi" Daněk - Czech Country Music Singer 2006
Druhá Tráva - Czech bluegrass band 2007
Lenka Dusilová - Czech Singer 2007
Olympic - legendary Czech rock band 2007
Graffe String Quartet - 2007
David Koller - Czech Singer 2007
Petr Kotvald - Czech Singer 2007
Daniel Landa - Czech Singer 2007
Jiří Ellinger - First Secretary, Political Section, Czech Embassy 2007
Andrej Droba - Chargé d'affaires, Slovak Embassy 2007
Jiří Čunek - Deputy Prime Minister, Czech Republic 2008
Plastic People of the Universe - Czech Rock Band 2008
Peter Burian - Slovak Ambassador to the U.S. 2009

Americans and Canadians:

Professor Barbara Weitz - Florida International University 2000, 2001, 2008
Donald Martin - President of Board of Trustees from Albin Polasek Museum 2000
Helene Cincebeaux - Editor of Slovakia & Morava Krasna; tour leader to CZ & SK 2001, 2005, 2007
Dr. Joseph Patrouch - Professor of History, Florida International University 2001, 2002
Joan Mohr - U. of Pittsburgh spoke on Czechoslovak Legion in Siberia 2002
Vít Hořejš - Czechoslovak-American Marionette Theater 2002
Yuri Dojc - Slovak-Canadian photographic artist 2002
Larry Morava - Co-founder of the Czechoslovak country & western band K.T.O. 2002, 2006
Thomas Hasler - Son of Czech composer Karel Hašler 2003
Richard Moulton - Author 2003
Dr. Miloslav Rechcigl - President of Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences 2005, 2007
Dr. Thomas Gral - Retired Professor of Medicine, University of Cal., Irvine 2007, 2008
Dr. Jiří Lamberk - Author 2007
Dr. Chantalle Francesca Verna - Assistant Professor, Florida International University 2007
Gail Naughton - President/CEO of Czech & Slovak Museum in Iowa 2008
Dr. M. Mark Stolarik - Professor of History, University of Ottawa 2008, 2009
Dr. Eric Dluhosch - Professor Emeritus, M.I.T. 2008, 2009