

AMERICAN CZECH-SLOVAK CULTURAL CLUB
An Organizational History
Updated April, 2011

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:

Czech Ambassador Alexandr Vondra
Cultural Counselor from the Slovak Embassy (no ambassador then)
Founder and Past President of CGSI – Mark Bigouette
President of CSGI – Dave Pavelka
President/CEO the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, Dan Baldwin
Founder and President of National Miss Czech-Slovak USA Pageant, John Fiala

Since 1999 the following groups and personalities have visited:

Martin Bútorá, Rastislav Káčer, and Peter Burian
Slovak Ambassadors to the U.S.
Martin Palouš & Petr Kolař – Czech Ambassadors to U.S.
Pavol Hrušovský – Speaker of the Slovak Parliament
Ivan Dubovický – Cultural Attaché from Czech Embassy
Colonel Ivan Bela – Slovak cosmonaut
Waldemar Matuška – Czech singer
Sisa Sklovská – Slovak singer
Marcella Molnárová– Slovak singer
Milan Markovič – Slovak comedian and satirist
Jozef & Dodo Ivaška – Slovak singers
Gideon String Trio – Czech Republic
Miroslav Donutil – Czech comedian
Jan Novotný – Czech pianist
Jaromír Nohavica – Czech contemporary folk singer
Petr Novotný – Czech psychiatrist, comedian & TV personality
Lubomír Kocka – Slovak film director
Dr. Jan Cimický – Czech author & TV personality
Zdenek Izer – Czech impressionist and comedian
The Backwards Band – award-winning Beatles interpretative band from Slovakia
Olympic – legendary Czech rock band
Vladislav Bláha – Czech classical guitarist
Milan Drobny – Czech folk singer
Druha Trava – Czech bluegrass band
Čechomor – Czech folk-rock band
Ivan Mládek – Czech country and western singer and band leader
Petr Janda - bandleader of Olympic
MIG 21 - Czech pop band
Chinaski - Czech pop-rock band

Americans and Canadians:

Dr. Mila Rechcigl – President of Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences
Thomas Hasler – son of Czech composer Karel Hašler
Joan Moore – from U. of Pittsburgh spoke on Czechoslovak Legion in Siberia
Don Martin – President of Board of Trustees from Albin Polasek Museum
Gail Naughton – President/CEO of Czech & Slovak Museum in Iowa
Larry Morava – co-founder of the Czechoslovak country & western band K.T.O.
Vít Hořejš – The Czechoslovak-American Marionette Theatre
Helene Cincebeaux – editor of Slovakia and Morava Krasna; tour leader to CZ and SK
Dr. M. Mark Stolarik – Professor of History, University of Ottawa

The Club co-sponsored the Brno Chamber Orchestra with the University of Miami School of Music.