



Leaders to Follow

TRAVEL-AND-LEARN BRINGS MORE CZECHS TO FLORIDA

The fall of 2004 was an exciting time in Florida. Four hurricanes (Charley, Frances, Ivan and Gene) traveled across the peninsula, bringing rain, winds, and destruction, especially to Florida's Gulf Coast.

Yet the First Coast (Jacksonville, Ponte Vedra and St. Augustine), received only minimal damage, making it possible for the Institute, based here on the First Coast, to welcome our *Fall 2004 Travel-and-Learn* program to a Florida filled with sunshine and good weather.



Florida's First Coast

A UNIQUE PROGRAM

This *Travel-and-Learn* program, the latest in a series begun in 2002, was unique in that the participants were not the high school classmates of ILI President Jarda Tusek, but were instead pupils of Jarda's classmate Bozena Somogyiova. Bozena has helped ILI organize all the Czech *Travel-and-Learn* programs for the class of '58, 13th J. S. S. in Vrsovice, Prague, programs, delivered in Florida.

Bozena suggested we host her English pupils as a kind of reward for them for being such loyal students of English. Eight years ago, Bozena's daughter began teaching the group, which meets every Sunday, to speak English and study the works of English authors. Bozena took the job over when her daughter's husband's job took them out of the Czech Republic.

A SPECIAL GROUP

The group consisted of 6 friends from Prague and its surroundings: Libuse Zaborcova, Martin Novak, Jiri Pasek, Klara Novakova, Roman Dub and Jan Puchmeltr. It was obvious that this group was special. They were tightly bonded with each

other, full of affectionate names and long-established "inside" jokes.

And they were also quite serious about learning English! In our 14 years of teaching English as a second language (through the *American English Language Immersion Programs in the United States*, the *Business Leadership Forum: USA*, and

various custom-tailored programs like the one centered on the Atlanta Summer Olympics in 1996), we have never had such an enthusiastic group, nor one so eager to actually speak English.

ENGLISH ONLY!

Jarda accompanied the group on all their activities, and enforced a cardinal rule: only English was to be spoken during group activities. This rule led to many amusing situations, with cultural and language gaps springing up between the group and their language teachers, Amanda Davis and Sara Tusek. Yet everyone's good attitude made it possible to eventually communicate correctly, and learn more about each other's ways of thinking in the process.

For the first week of their program, the group stayed in St. Augustine Beach, Florida at SeaWinds Condominium. SeaWinds is directly on the beach, giving the participants a chance to swim every morning in the Atlantic Ocean, while using the pool and Jacuzzi hot tub later in the day. Their condo was built for outdoor living, and the Czechs enjoyed their time in the sun. daily English lessons helped them improve their listening skills, pronunciation, vocabulary and common American idioms.



The International Leadership Institute

- WAS FOUNDED IN 1985 IN PRINCETON, NJ
- REMAINS DEDICATED TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- HAS RUN MORE THAN 50 EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE US, FOR EUROPEAN CLIENTS
- HAS PARTNERED WITH THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA, THE JACKSONVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND MORE THAN 700 OTHER BUSINESSES, UNIVERSITIES, RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, PRIVATE CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES



Jirina, Bozena and Jana, Class of '58 at Jekyll Island, GA

Providing Leadership Development Services and Programs in the US and Europe since 1985

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ON TO THE GULF COAST

The second week of the program was on the road. Jarda drove the group to the Gulf Coast, where they could see rebuilding efforts underway after the hurricanes. They visited three of our favorite towns before returning to Prague:

- Warm Springs, a famous thermal spa with healing qualities;
- Sarasota, where they were hosted for a beach party and boat rides by Institute friend Alan Tannenbaum of the law firm of Levin and Tannenbaum, and his associates;
- Naples, where they could sample and appreciate the beautiful Gulf Coast sunsets and enjoy sightseeing in the area, beloved by Europeans who own vacation homes there.

The Institute counts this Travel-and-Learn program as particularly successful, in that the participants were so cooperative and cheerful. Their English skills improved noticeably during the two-week program, and we believe we have made friends with these successful pupils. We thank Bozena for her assistance in bringing about this program, and look forward to more such groups visiting us in Florida in the future.

The Institute's New Leadership Role

We at the Institute are rethinking our relationship with the Czech Republic. We've been privileged to be part of an historic economic and political transition in the "Czech Lands," and believe that, since 1992, we've made a contribution (however modest) to the success of that transition through our *Business Leadership Forum: USA* and *American English Language Immersion* programs.

With the substantial growth and stability of the Czech economy, we see less need for us to help the Czechs in their business development. And at the same time, we are becoming ever more certain that the spiritual side of life is at least as important as the economic or political. As American President Woodrow Wilson (who was instrumental in the founding of Czechoslovakia after WWI) said: "Our civilization cannot survive materially unless it is redeemed spiritually."

Jarda is currently in training to be ordained as a Deacon (and, we hope, eventually a Presbyterian) through our church, Christ the Redeemer in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Our church is part of the Communion of Convergence Churches, an international body of Christian churches seeking to reunite the Christian community by emphasizing what unites Christians rather than what separates them. We hope to find a way to bring our knowledge of God to the Czechs, to give them a spiritual rebirth that will enhance their economic and political rebirth.