

F.O.C.A. Clubs of the St. Louis Region

The Madison, Illinois Senior “R” Club was organized in 1954 as an affiliated member of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs (FROC). The Very Reverend Father Prokopy Powers and Mrs. Agnes P. Fryntzko were the driving force behind the birth of this organization in Madison. In December of 1954, Mr. Michael Bezbachenko, the National President of the FROC, visited Madison and gave them the details on how to get the organization started.



Saint Michael’s “R” Club was organized in 1962 driven by Hugo and Mary Preis and under the guidance of Very Reverend John Tertichny. The club became not only the social outlet for the Church, but a driving force in raising funds for projects needed by the Church and as a vehicle to encourage fellowship amongst Orthodox Christians in the St. Louis region. Both clubs worked together in joint installations and Saint Andrews Day celebrations.

The motto of the organization is: Pray, Study, Toil and Be Temperate. The founding members worked together diligently, always keeping the four aspects of the organization in mind. They sponsored numerous fund-raising efforts and disseminated these profits to benefit the parishes in Madison and St. Louis to aid the needs of many fellow Orthodox throughout the country. Contributions were sent to Alaskan mission parishes, orphanages, Saint Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary, Saint Tikhon’s Orthodox Seminary, the United Fund of the FROC and to purchase books on Orthodoxy, which were donated to local libraries.

The “R” Club members were not only active in their local chapter, but also participated in the district functions and conventions as well as national conventions. In 1971 and 1986, Saint Michaels sponsored the National FROC convention in St. Louis and



Madison hosted two National Sports Tournaments in 1972 and 1976. Many of the members served as officers and on committees on both the District and National level with Hugo Preis serving as National Treasurer. Both

“R” Clubs members participated in and supported the 9th All-American Council in St. Louis in 1989.

While attending these district and national conventions, they saw how other parishes had involved their youth in the Junior chapters of the FROC. Under the guidance of Reverend Hiermonk Theodosius (Lazor) and George Butchko, Jr., the Junior “R” Club was organized as an affiliate of the Senior organization in 1964. The first president of the Madison Junior “R” Club was Robert Butchko.



Not to be out done by the Seniors, the Junior “R” Clubs worked very hard in their fund raising efforts. They sponsored bake sales, candy sales, and Christmas card sales. The most successful event for the Madison Jr. “R” Club was an annual golf tournament that was attended by people from as far away as Chicago. The monies earned at these fund-raisers were used not only to benefit the parish, but the juniors also contributed to the National Junior Project-Orthodox Aid to Alaska and other worthy causes. Both Junior “R” Clubs organized bowling teams and attended District Bowling Tournaments, proudly bringing home many trophies. Many of their members also served as various officers on the district level over the years. The Madison Junior “R” Club was one of the charter chapters of the Midwest Junior District.

The Junior “R” Clubs also enjoyed activities with the Senior clubs. The annual installation of officers, Thanksgiving Service to St. Andrew (Patron Saint of the FOCA), Halloween parties and bowling outings were always a great success.



In the late 1970’s, the FROC became the official youth organization of the Orthodox Church in America. Realizing that the members of the FROC were no longer solely of Russian descent and being an arm of the Orthodox Church in America, the organization decided to give its chapters the option to change their name from “R” (Russian) to “O” (Orthodox). The chapters in Madison and St. Louis took the lead of the national organization and changed their names changing the “R” to “O”.

In the 1980's, membership in the junior chapters throughout the Midwest began to decline. In an effort to have one strong chapter in the area, the St. Louis Junior "O" Club combined with the Madison Junior "O" Club to become the Metropolitan St. Louis Junior "O" Club, utilizing the Madison Junior "O" Club charter. Distance between the members made it difficult to keep the chapter active, but they still managed to do activities that strengthened the bond among them. In the early 1990's, the charter was once again changed and returned to that of the Madison Junior "O" Club.

At the National FROC Convention in 1999, the body of delegates voted to change the name of the organization to Federated Orthodox Clubs of America (FOCA), a goal that both the Madison and St. Louis Senior and Junior "O" Clubs had strongly advocated for years.



Today, the Madison O Club is still active, along with several members from the former St. Michael's O Club.