

wttw11 | 98.7wfmt

April 3, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am sending this letter to inform you about the very positive relationship WTTW has had with Susan Marcinkus and Manifest Films. WTTW was proud to broadcast her outstanding documentary, **Pictures From the Old Country**, in 2006. Susan is an accomplished producer and I have confidence that her productions match the mission of public television. I look forward to working with her again on future endeavors.

Her newest endeavor, **Czechs in Chicago**, has tremendous potential. WTTW is very excited about being able to broadcast such an important story. Susan Marcinkus is the right producer to develop this program. Based on my experience with her, I would schedule **Czechs in Chicago** in a prominent place on WTTW. I look forward to working with her to try and make this production a reality.

If there is anything else I can do to convey my support of Manifest Films, please do not hesitate to contact me. It has been a genuine pleasure to work with Susan.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. Soles
Senior Vice President and Chief
Television Content Officer

Chicago FILMMAKERS

5243 N. Clark Chicago IL 60640 (773) 293.1447 Fax (773) 293.0575 info@chicagofilmakers.org

October 30, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

Chicago Filmmakers is the fiscal sponsor for *Czechs in Chicago*, a film produced and directed by Susan Marcinkus and co-produced by Larry Jacobs. Chicago Filmmakers is interested in supporting this film about the history of Czechs in Chicago, their immigrant experience and the story of their community today.

Chicago Filmmakers has also reviewed the film's budget and has found it appropriate and fiscally sound. We are a non-profit 501©3 agency and have been supporting independent filmmakers in Chicago since 1973. All donations to *Czechs in Chicago* that are not in exchange for goods and services are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. If you have any questions, please call Todd Lillethun at 773-293-1447.

Sincerely,



Todd Lillethun
Program Director



Consulate General of the Czech Republic

*Generální konzulát České republiky
Chicago*


December 16, 2009
Re: 3124/09-CHIC

To Whom it May Concern,

We are sending this letter to express our support and enthusiasm for the film project **Czechs in Chicago** by Susan Marcinkus, Laurence Jacobs and Manifest Films.

The documentary film has tremendous potential for becoming a permanent legacy for all Czech Americans who are keen on rediscovering their roots and gaining exposure to their rich heritage and making non-Czechs to understand this important part of Chicago's modern history.

Best regards,


Marek Skolil
Consul General

CZECHS IN CHICAGO *(working title)*

Treatment by Susan Marcinkus

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Chicago is a city indebted to its immigrant populations that have contributed greatly in making it a world - class metropolis. The city has drawn strength and spirit from wave after wave of immigrants. Since the mid-1800's, the Czechs or "Bohemians", as they are often called, were establishing their legacy of progressive spirit in the development of Chicago through their productivity, accomplishments, culture, and lifestyle. For most of the 20th century until today, Chicago has maintained its position as the heart of Czech America.

As the Chicago Tribune wrote in March, 1886, "There is probably no more interesting and progressive section of Chicago's foreign population than that inhabited by the Bohemians." They were among the most literate of the European immigrants to settle the city; 97% of Czechs who arrived to the U.S. could read and write. The majority came as free thinkers, refusing to affiliate with any church, largely because of the Habsburg Empire's harsh domination carried out by the Catholic church in their native land, and their freedom-loving Hussite legacy. They believed in human progress and expected reason to override belief in a supreme being. They advocated a liberal school system and maintained a deep commitment to education, to public service, political participation and to journalistic and publishing endeavors.

"Czechs in Chicago" will be a ninety-minute feature documentary that tells the story of these innovative, energetic people – how they helped build and shape Chicago, and how Chicago at the same time empowered them to play a major role in the creation of their homeland as a sovereign nation, Czechoslovakia. It will chronicle the history of the Czechs as a progressive ethnic group in Chicago. The settling of the Czech neighborhoods will serve as a narrative thread throughout the piece, beginning in the late 1840's when they first came as political refugees and squatters in today's Lincoln Park area, or the Sands, as it was then called. Gradually moving westward, they colonized Praha in the early 1860's, Pilsen in the 1870's, Czech California, a.k.a. Lawndale in the early 1900's, and even further west to Cicero and Berwyn in the early 1920's. At the same time, we'll feature the personal stories of recent as well as older immigrants and their families, spanning the generations, giving an intimate look at how individual lives were affected by public events in their Chicago neighborhoods.

Story highlights of the Czechs' history in Chicago include:

- Squatters and shanties – the first Czech settlement in Chicago in the late 1840's; a continued westerly movement of the lively Czech neighborhoods followed over time
- The vitality of the Czech Freethinkers movement and its leaders. Its impact on the life of the immigrants from 1870 onward. Includes founding of the Bohemian National Cemetery
- The role of Czech Socialist Labor Party workers in the great Chicago labor struggles of the late 1800's
- The impact of the dynamic Sokol movement in virtually all of the Czech communities and the other social and cultural institutions that contributed greatly to the creative "spirit" of the city
- The Eastland disaster of 1915, Chicago's worst tragedy, drowning 844 victims in the Chicago River. Over a third of the casualties were Czech workers from Western Electric. In some cases, entire Czech American families were wiped out.
- Their ongoing activism in establishing autonomy and aid for the homeland. The Chicago Czech-American Council (along with influential, wealthy individuals) was instrumental in creating a free Czechoslovak nation-state in 1918 and continued working on its behalf during times like WW II, communism under Soviet domination, the Cold War, and post-communist transition.

- Antonin Cermak's political ascendance in Chicago, with the Czech Lawndale neighborhood as his home and political power base. Born penniless outside Prague to a coal mining family, Cermak was Chicago's first foreign born mayor. In 1931 became founding father of the legendary Chicago Democratic Machine. His shrewd machine game plan would remain unchanged for over fifty years. Cermak was tragically gunned down in Miami in 1933, while traveling with F.D.R.
- Cicero's former poet-in-residence, Norbert Blei's telling of Bohemian ethnic anecdotes from his colorful book, "Neighborhood"

From the Czech communities we see the emergence of American superstars and other notable Chicagoans. The boy who narrowly escaped the Eastland Disaster, George Halas, bought the Decatur Staleys football team in 1922, and renamed them the Chicago Bears. Coaching the team from 1922-1967, he led them to eight NFL championships. Kim Novak, born into the Chicago Czech community in 1933, soared to fame in Hollywood and starred opposite leading men like Frank Sinatra and Paul Newman. Character actor Karl Malden, crime writer Gera-Lind Kolarik, sportscaster Chet Coppock, former assistant public defender Mary Jane Placek (a.k.a. "Empress of the Bohemians"), former Chicago Blackhawk center Stan Mikita, and former Illinois state treasurer, Judy Baar Topinka are just some of the Chicago Czech Americans who have left an imprint on the community.

Many Czech Chicagoans today have migrated across a wider radius of home turf. By the 1970's their hard work, business acumen, and drive for excellence had given them a successful reputation. They've settled in suburbs and towns like La Grange, Oakbrook, Brookfield, Riverside and Stickney. In Portage Park an authentic Central European nightclub experience is offered by Club Euro. In Montclare, Café Prague is a lively site for Czech culture. It is difficult now, though, to call any one specific place definitively Czech. Yet the many events and get-togethers of the community are still held by organizations like the Moravian Cultural Society, American Sokol, and the Czech and Slovak American Genealogical Society of Illinois. The Czechoslovak Society of America (CSA Fraternal Life), along with its museum and archives, celebrated its 150th year of service in 2004 in Oak Brook. In CSA's neighborhood, you'll also find McDonald's corporate headquarters. Were it not for the influence of Oak Park - born Ray Kroc of Czech descent, McDonald's might still be like any other local burger-and-fry joint.

The Chicago Czech community's connection with its native Czech homeland continues to be profound. After Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution of 1989, Chicago has hosted numerous visits by Czech leaders, including Presidents Vaclav Havel and Vaclav Klaus. The Chicago-Prague Sister Cities program, established in 1990, cemented the already strong relationship between Czech Chicagoans and the Czech lands. Their bond was celebrated with the city's Prague Chicago Days in the summer of 2007. Chicago has an active Czech Consular Office that also offers regular cultural exchange events in the arts, film, literature, and political life. We'll interview Marek Skolil, Consul General, who has a stunning knowledge of Chicago's Czech history, as well as Malynne Sternstein, professor of Slavic Studies at the University of Chicago, an expert of all things Czech in the Windy City. Milos Stehlik, Czech-born director of Facets Multimedia on Fullerton Avenue will also be featured in our doc. Facets offers classic and contemporary Czech and international film programs and has been an internationally recognized center for cinema since the 1970's. Many annual festivals, picnics and ethnic celebrations are held throughout the year by the Bohemian and Moravian societies. We will capture them on film, as well, enabling viewers to enjoy images of some of the world's most beautiful folk art, costumes, dance, music, art glass, paintings, and sculpture.

"Czechs in Chicago" promises to be a lively and compelling portrait of Bohemian life, past and present, in the city. We'll see just how the Czech desire to embrace the American way in all aspects goes hand-in-hand with a deep pride in its native heritage, and a lasting affinity with its roots in the Old World.

Susan Marcinkus

Manifest Films Tel: 708-660-9320 manifestfilms@aol.com

FILMMAKER'S BIO

SUSAN MARCINKUS, PRODUCER / DIRECTOR is a Producer at Manifest Films, in Chicago and Los Angeles. Over the last twenty years she's worked as director, producer and editor on award winning film and TV projects. Her numerous credits include serving as segment producer on the popular CBS reality show *Rescue 911* and on *Safe Streets*, a syndicated reality TV series. She was associate producer/editor of the feminist feature documentary, *Right Out of History-The Making of the Dinner Party*, chronicling the process of Judy Chicago's acclaimed mixed media installation. Marcinkus directed & produced the dramatic short, *Second Thoughts*, winner of the CINE Golden Eagle award, that aired on A&E and PBS. She worked as editor on the **OSCAR AWARD** winning dramatic film *Board and Care*, and on Francis Ford Coppola and Godfrey Reggio's groundbreaking feature documentary, *Koyaanisquatsi, Life Out of Balance*. She was also co-producer on *Late Curtain*, a dramatic short & Chicago International Film Festival award winner. As producer for the Jewish Television Network, she was responsible for the urban affairs series, *Critical Issues Facing L.A.* and other weekly news magazine shows. Her personal documentary film, *Pictures from the Old Country*, has had numerous airings on PBS TV and has played at festivals, conferences and universities across the U.S. and central Europe.

Ms. Marcinkus is currently in pre-production on a feature length documentary about the Czech immigrant experience in Chicago for wttw11, the Chicago PBS station. She also lectures on Czech and Slovak Cinema. She is a consultant at ArtMill International School of Creativity for Youth near Susice, Czech Republic, where she has taught summer classes in filmmaking. Marcinkus holds a BFA from the University of Wisconsin and an MFA in Film/TV Directing from the American Film Institute, Los Angeles.



Laurence Jacobs

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FILMMAKER'S BIO

LAURENCE JACOBS, CO-PRODUCER / EDITOR is a Producer at Manifest Films. He has been a member of the filmmaking communities in Hollywood and Chicago for over twenty years. His extensive background as an Editor and Producer spans the areas of television, documentary film, and trailers. He is the winner of an *Emmy Award* as editor on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Jacobs was honored at the *Chicago International Film Festival* with the *Silver Hugo Award* for producing and directing best short film "*Late Curtain*". He served the panel of judges for the Annual 'Key Art Awards', presented by the '*Hollywood Reporter*', and was interviewed as an expert in his field for a feature article in '*Premier Magazine*' about the making of trailers. He owned *Promotion Pictures* a media production company providing feature trailers and TV spots to the Hollywood motion picture industry. Among his numerous credits, Jacobs has edited shows for the *Biography* series on *A&E Network*, the *Modern Marvels* series on *Discovery Channel* and the *Final Report* series on *National Geographic Channel*. He was co-producer of the documentary film, *Pictures from the Old Country*. He is a member of the Motion Picture Editors Guild-Los Angeles, and holds a BA from Washington University in St. Louis. *To see his profile on IMDb go to : imdb.com/name/nm0414507/*

