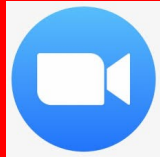


READING CIRCLE FORMAT

MEETINGS ON **ZOOM**
LAST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
(except December)

JOIN US AT 6:15 p.m. CST
PRESENTATION FROM 6:30 – 7:00 p.m.
DISCUSSION FROM 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.



TO GET YOUR ZOOM LINK

and learn more about our rich
CZECH HERITAGE

Email:

lois@loisrood.com

layne.pierce@yahoo.com

or

msaskova-pierce1@unl.edu



You do not need to have read the book to attend!

Contacts

Lois Shimerda Rood

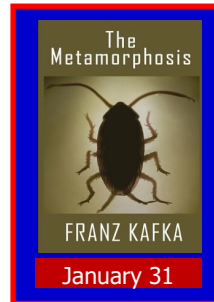
402-570-2333; lois@loisrood.com

Layne Pierce

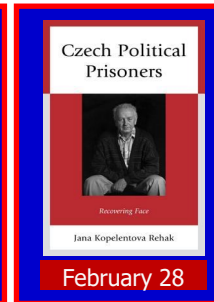
402-770-5029; layne.pierce@yahoo.com

Mila Saskova-Pierce

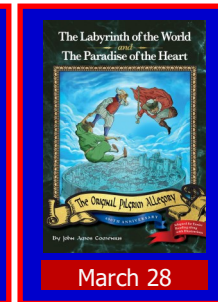
402-770-4624 msaskova-pierce1@unl.edu



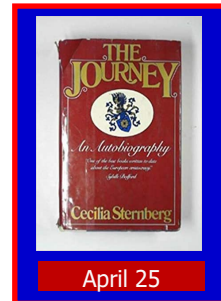
January 31



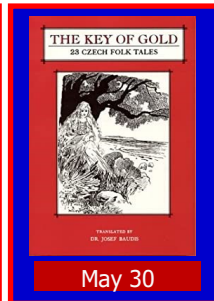
February 28



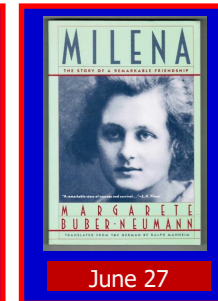
March 28



April 25



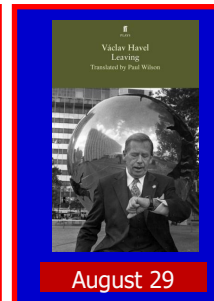
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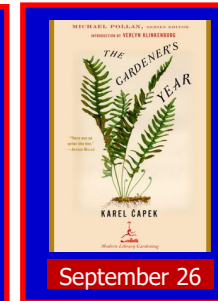
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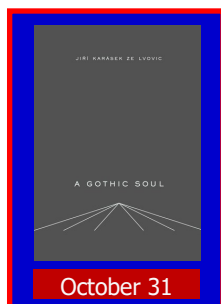
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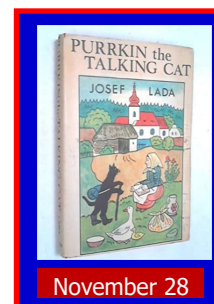
August 29



September 26



October 31



November 28



December 26



Nebraska Czechs of Lincoln 2023

The Czech/American Reading Circle

The snow did not fall this time, it simply spilled out of heaven like thousands of feather-beds being emptied." describing a winter snow fall on the Nebraska prairie from Willa Cather's book, *My Antonia*, 1918.

The Czech/American Reading Circle, formed over 100 years later, as such a snow again began to fall over the Nebraska prairie, January 11, 2019.

The Czech/American Reading Circle shares significant books about, by, for, and important to, people of Czech heritage.

Vítáme vás!

We Welcome You!



Czech/ American Reading Circle Pravda vítězí Truth prevails*

MONTH: January 31, 2023
TOPIC: *The Metamorphosis* (1915)
AUTHOR: Franz Kafka
LEADER: Rachel Taylor
SUMMARY:

The Metamorphosis is a novella by Franz Kafka, first published in 1915. It has been cited as one of the seminal works of fiction of the 20th century and is studied in colleges and universities across the Western world. The story begins with a traveling salesman, Gregor Samsa, waking to find himself transformed (metamorphosed) into a large, monstrous insect-like creature. The cause of Samsa's transformation is never revealed, and Kafka himself never gave an explanation. The rest of Kafka's novella deals with Gregor's attempts to adjust to his new condition as he deals with being burdensome to his parents and sister, who are repulsed by the horrible, verminous creature Gregor has become. (Source: Amazon.com)

MONTH: February 28, 2023
BOOK: *Czech Political Prisoners: Recovering Face* (2012)
AUTHOR: Dr. Jana Kopelent-Rehak
LEADER: Mila Saskova-Pierce, Ph.D.
SUMMARY:

Czech Political Prisoners: Recovering Face is about the legacy of political violence under socialism in the heart of Eastern Europe. In light of reconciliation in post-socialist Czech Republic, former political prisoners' various memories reveal how the notions of time, space, and law were altered under the long-term terror of a totalitarian regime. Claiming their lost social face, political prisoners reveal their redefined subjectivities and new forms of social relations—kinship and citizenship. *Czech Political Prisoners: Recovering Face* is the story of men and women who survived Czechoslovakian concentration camps under the Communist regime. Men and women disappeared, were arrested, imprisoned, interrogated, tortured, put on trial, convicted, and sentenced to forced labor camps. In 1948 in Czechoslovakia, political others became political prisoners. ... in the Czech Republic, as well as in other post-socialist countries, the desire to reconcile is not limited to survivors of camps, prisoners, and dissidents. People from the youngest generation are asking questions about crimes, punishment, and forgiveness related to the Communist regime in central and eastern Europe. The purpose of this story is to expose individual and communal experiences, subjectivity, and consciousness hidden in the ruins of memory of Socialism in Czechoslovakia.. (Source: Amazon.com)

MONTH: March 28, 2023
BOOK: *The Labyrinth of the World & The Paradise of the Heart* (Originally written 1631)
AUTHOR: John Amos Comenius
LEADER: Timothy Pierce (Published adapted versions 2021/2022)
SUMMARY:

If you loved *Pilgrim's Progress*, you need to discover what inspired it. *Labyrinth of the World* is the original pilgrim allegory. Penned 400 years ago, today it is virtually unknown in English. The author, John Amos Comenius, lived most of his life in exile. He also lost his entire family to the plague. Both in life and allegory, Comenius illustrates the teachings of the New Testament – being the kingdom of God amongst the kingdoms of men – which religious institutionalism has all but forgotten. This tale will inspire you to become a contrast to the growing unrest of the world we live in today. (Source: back book cover)

Our leader Timothy Pierce of Kearney, Nebraska has adapted this 400 year old classic for today's readers. In December 2021, Price finished and published this new edition in hardbound (in full color) along with an audiobook and ebook. In 2022 Price published a softbound edition of the book and is working on a critical thinking curriculum to go along with the book at the request of several academies. This edition features a 32-page appendix about Comenius, Czech history, and why Comenius is still important today as an inspiration to us all. (Source: Price's description)



*"Truth Prevails" (Czech: Pravda vítězí, Slovak: Pravda víťazí, Latin: Veritas vincit) – is the national motto of the Czech Republic.

MONTH: April 25, 2023
BOOK: *The Journey* (1977)
AUTHOR: Cecelia Sternberg
LEADER: Hana Walsserová, Ph.D.
SUMMARY:

This thrilling memoir focuses on the life of Czech nobles from the Sternberg family told from the perspective of Cecilia. It retells the pre-war family life, as well as their aristocratic and well-connected life prior and under Nazi occupation, and when Nazis confiscated their family home Castolovica. The story also tells how Count and Countess Sternberg with their daughter Diana fled Czechoslovakia as the Communists came to power in 1948 with the help of the American ambassador in Prague, Laurence Steinhardt. It is an important and well-written account of one important European noble families related to the Bismarks, who also witness complex diplomacies or divided loyalty among nobles prior the occupation of Sudetenland and during the Austrian Anschluss. It can be read as an alternative European history. The book also narrates with good humor how the family of these Czech refugees settled in New York, and how they faced their setbacks in the US. Eventually, they settled in St. Petersburg, Florida in 1952, where the countess sold homemade jewelry on the waterfront while the count sat in his underwear on the porch drinking wine and reading the Constitution of the United States before moving on to Jamaica.

MONTH: May 30, 2023
BOOK: *Czech Folk Tales* (1917)
AUTHOR: Josef Baudis
LEADERS: Mila Saskova-Pierce, Ph.D.
SUMMARY:

The selection has been made from all sorts of folk tales, artistic and primitive alike; and yet two things are common to all of them: the moral tendency and a sense of humour. By this I do not mean morality in the vulgar sense of retribution for evil, or of filial devotion, or the sentimental insistence upon "every one living happily ever afterwards," and above all upon Jack marrying his Molly. Available: Hathitrust Digital Library Full View U.S. Only (Source: Bookshop.org)

MONTH: June 27, 2023
BOOK: *Milena* (1988)
AUTHOR: Margarete Buber-Neumann
LEADER: Lorraine Duggin, Ph.D.
SUMMARY:

"A firsthand reminiscence of the friendship between Melena Jesenská and Franz Kafka with a documented and insightful reconstruction of Jesenska's life." (NY Times Book Review). "A remarkable story of courage and survival" (L.A. Times)
"Franz Kafka's great love, Milena Jesenská, to whom he wrote his most passionate letters (Letters to Milena), was a beautiful, politically committed, enormously talented journalist. She took an early stand against the rise of Hitler, and as the head of an opposition newspaper, was arrested in 1939 and sent to the Nazi Concentration camp in Ravensbruck. There she met Margarete Buber-Neumann, a fellow political prisoner, also a writer and a victim of Nazism. A rare friendship developed between the two women. They made a pact: if both survived, they would write a book together; if only one made it, she would tell their story. Thus, it fell to Buber-Neumann to tell Milena's tragic but haunting story, interweaving images of Ravensbruck with episodes from Milena's life." (Source: Book covers)

MONTH: July 25, 2023
BOOK: *Krvavý román* (1924 novel) (1993 film)
AUTHOR: Josef Váchal
LEADER: Stephen Lahey, Ph.D. (English translation in progress)
SUMMARY:

Krvavý román (a satirical thriller) is a successful Czech movie. Below is a brief description of this 1993 film. "The film is based on the book of the same title (A Sanguinary Novel) by the very individual Czech painter, typographer, author and philosopher Josef Váchal, who squeezed adventure, love, horror and other parallel episodes into, what is called, decadent reading for maids. It takes you through the history of the cinema, from silent films, to the beginning of sound and up to the very present." Jan Lipsansky "(Source: IMDb.com) The book is now being translated by Dr. Stephen Lahey from the University of Nebraska who is the presenter. He is anxious to get a feedback on his translation.



Český čtenářský kroužek

MONTH: August 29, 2023
PLAY: *Leaving* (Havel Collection) (2007)
AUTHOR: Václav Havel
LEADER: Petr Just, Ph.D.
SUMMARY:

Václav Havel, (born October 5, 1936, Prague, Czechoslovakia [now in Czech Republic]—died December 18, 2011, Hrádeček, Czech Republic), Czech playwright, poet, and political dissident who, after the fall of communism, was president of Czechoslovakia (1989–92) and of the Czech Republic (1993–2003). ... Havel's first new play in more than 20 years—*Odházení* (*Leaving*), a tragicomedy that draws on his experiences as president and presents a chancellor leaving his post while grappling with a political enemy—premiered in 2008. Havel subsequently directed its film adaptation)2011. (Source: Britannica.com)

MONTH: September 26, 2023
BOOK: *The Gardener's Year* (1929)
AUTHOR: Karel Čapek
LEADER: Carter Hulinsky, Library Science Graduate Student University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
SUMMARY:

From the internationally acclaimed Czech writer Karel Čapek comes this beautifully written and marvelously apt account of the trials and tribulations of the gardener's life. First published in Prague in 1929, *The Gardener's Year* combines a richly comic portrait of life in the garden, narrated month by month, with a series of delightful illustrations by the author's older brother and collaborator, Josef. Čapek's gardeners—all too human, despite their lofty aspirations—often look the fool, whether they be found sopping wet, victims of the cobralike water hose, or hunched over, hands immersed in the soil, "presenting their rumps to the splendid azure sky." In their repeated folly, Čapek gives us not only cause for laughter but also, in the end, "testimony of the imperishable and miraculous optimism of the human race." (Source: Amazon.com)

MONTH: October 31, 2023
BOOK: *A Gothic Soul* (1900/2015)
AUTHOR: Jiří Karásek ze Lvovic
LEADER: Layne Pierce, M.A., MLS
SUMMARY:

A Gothic Soul is the most acclaimed work of Czech Decadent prose. Expressing concerns that are unique to the Czech movement while alluding creatively and ironically to Joris-Karl Huysman's *Against Nature*, the novella is set in Prague, which is portrayed as a dead city, a city peopled by shades, who, like the protagonist – a nihilist and the "last scion of a noble line" – are only a dim reflection of the city's medieval splendor. The man lives in a dreamworld, the labyrinth of his soul giving rise to visions. In his quest for meaning, he walks the city, often hallucinating, while pondering questions of religious fervor and loss of faith, the vanity of life, his own sense of social alienation, human identity and its relationship to a "nation," the miserable situation of the Czechs under Habsburg rule, and Prague's loss of its soul on the cusp of modernity as old sections, such as much of the squalid Jewish Quarter, are demolished to make way for grand new buildings and streets. With a history of madness running in the family and afraid the same fate awaits him, he ultimately retreats into seclusion, preferring the monastic way of life as the epitome of unity and wholeness and a tonic to present-day fragmentation. Yet Karásek eschews the mawkish, opting instead for darker tones that play with the tropes and motifs of Decadence while conflating the same-sex desires of his protagonist, the fatalism and futility of such an existence within the social construct of the day, with concerns for the dual fates of his nation and city. (Source: Amazon.com)

MONTH: November 28, 2023
BOOK: *Purkin the Talking Cat* (1935 Czech; 1966 English)
AUTHOR: Josef Lada
LEADERS: Tom Zumpfe, P.D. & Cathleen Osziy, B.A.
SUMMARY:

In this children's book, Peter, a village boy, teaches his cat, Purkin, to talk and Purkin then teaches the pig and the goat. They have many splendid adventures. Sadly, the cat's name was reassigned from Mikeš to Purkin in the translation. Lada wrote and illustrated several books on the adventures of Mikeš, a little black cat who could talk. This one is translated into English

Josef Lada (1887-1957) was an artist, illustrator and writer. The leaders will introduce you to Josef Lada, the man, and his incredible contributions to Czech culture. In his career he illustrated over 200 books, some fairytale anthologies for children, others like Švejk, intended for grown ups. Lada is credited with over 15,000 illustrations. He worked as a cartoonist for several newspapers and became famous for his landscapes and village paintings which ended up in private collections. (Source: Leader's Description)

No Reading Circle in December



Veselé svátky a šťastný Nový rok!!!