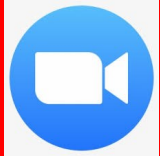


READING CIRCLE FORMAT

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:

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layne.pierce@yahoo.com

or

msaskova-pierce1@unl.edu

You do not need to have read the book to attend!
Participants are also asked to contribute



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Mila Saskova-Pierce

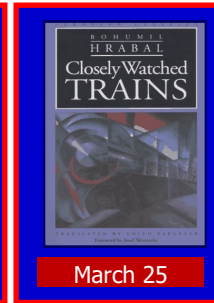
402-770-4624 msaskova-pierce1@unl.edu



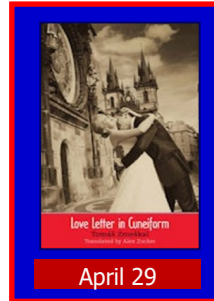
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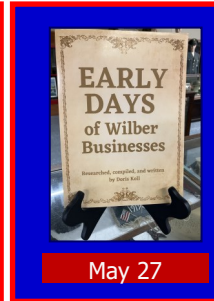
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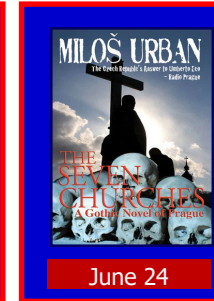
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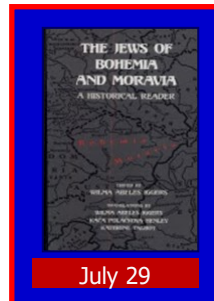
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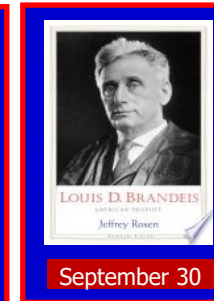
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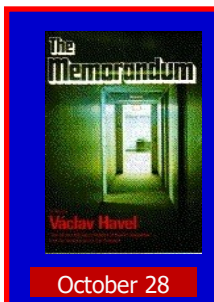
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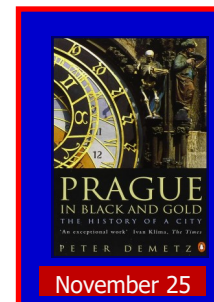
August 26



September 30



October 28



November 25



December 30



Nebraska Czechs of Lincoln 2025 Year 7 *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 Ántonia*, 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 28, 2025
BOOK: *Miracle Game* (1972)
AUTHOR: Josef Skvorecky
LEADER: Layne Pierce
SUMMARY:

Josef Skvorecky's *Miracle Game* was published in 1972 and translated into English in 1990 by Paul Wilson.

Moving between 1948, when our hero Danny Smiřický falls asleep in church while a miraculous event occurs, and 1968, when he observes the miracle of Prague Spring, *The Miracle Game* is a sharp look at the strange, sad, and silly things people do to survive.

MONTH: February 25, 2025
PLAY: *The Mother* (1938)
AUTHOR: Karel Čapek
LEADER: Míla Šašková-Pierce
SUMMARY:

"The Mother" is a 1938 anti-war drama written by the famous Czech novelist, Karel Čapek. Heavily influenced by the Spanish civil war, the play portrays the relationships between men going off to war, and their families and mothers who want them to stay. It explores fascism and freedom, and conveys the suffering that war brings with it. Karel Čapek (1890 - 1938) was an early twentieth century Czech writer who is most remembered for his significant influence on the genre of science fiction. Source: Amazon.com

MONTH: March 25, 2025
BOOK: *Closely Watched Trains* (1965)
AUTHOR: Bohumil Hrabal
LEADER: Andrea Voif
SUMMARY:

Bohumil Hrabal's post-war classic about a young man's coming of age in Nazi occupied Bohemia is among his most beloved and accessible works. *Closely Watched Trains* is the subtle and poetic portrait of Miloš Hrna, a timid young railroad apprentice who insulates himself with fantasy against a reality filled with cruelty and grief. Day after day as he watches trains fly by, he torments himself with the suspicion that he himself is being watched and with fears of impotency. Hrna finally affirms his manhood and, with a sense of peace and purpose he has never known before, heroically confronts a trainload of Nazis.

Milan Kundera called the novel "an incredible union of earthly humor and baroque imagination." After receiving acclaim as a novel, *Closely Watched Trains* was made into an internationally successful film that won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film of 1967. This edition includes a foreword by Josef Skvorecky.

MONTH: April 29, 2025
BOOK: *Love Letter in Cuneiform*
The Margellos World Republic of Letters (2016)
AUTHOR: Tomáš Zmeškal
LEADER: Hana Walsserova, Ph.D.
SUMMARY:

Love Letter in Cuneiform (The Margellos World Republic of Letters). Translated by Alex Zucker, currently the most prominent translator of the Czech literature, will also join us for the book presentation.

Set in Czechoslovakia between the 1940s and the 1990s, Tomáš Zmeškal's stimulating novel focuses on one family's tragic story of love and the unspoken. Josef meets his wife, Květa, before the Second World War at a public lecture on Hitlité culture. Květa chooses to marry Josef over their mutual friend Hynek, but when her husband is later arrested and imprisoned for an unnamed crime, Květa gives herself to Hynek in return for help and advice. The author explores the complexities of what is not spoken, what cannot be said, the repercussions of silence after an ordeal, the absurdity of forgotten pain, and what it is to be an outsider.

MONTH: May 27, 2025
BOOK: *Early Days of Wilber Businesses* (2023)
AUTHOR: Doris Koll
LEADER: Doris Koll
SUMMARY:

C. D. Wilber platted the town of Wilber, Nebraska in 1872, and the town was named in honor of its founder. In January of that year, the first train arrived in town, coinciding with the construction of the town's inaugural boarding house. C. D. Wilber himself constructed a dwelling house and a frame hotel, dubbed the Wilber House, and the town was up and running.

Within three years, the population of the precinct had exploded to 800 people. This book describes the challenges of establishing a town, including many fires and the struggles to contain them, the grasshopper plagues and dust storms, and the ambitions of the people to overcome these hardships. Included in the book are over 150 pictures and 450 surnames from the businesses over the years.

MONTH: June 24, 2025
BOOK: *The Seven Churches* (1999)
AUTHOR: Miloš Urban
LEADER: Linda Taborek
SUMMARY:

A bloody, atmospheric modern classic of crime literature and one of the most haunting and terrifying thrillers to come out of Europe in recent years

Written in the spirit of the sensational murder story and combined with a rich Gothic atmosphere, this tale, now translated into 11 languages, traces the steps of a killer through the seven cathedrals of modern day Prague. The narrator, a policeman known simply as K, witnesses a bizarre accident followed by a series of mysterious murders. This event triggers a series of meetings with Gothic characters who appear to be trying to reconstruct the medieval "golden age" of Prague in the reign of Charles IV under the noses of its modern-day inhabitants. The book's bloody and nightmarish plot will dazzle readers of thrillers, but ultimately the novel is much more—it's a brilliant postmodern interpretation of the historical topography of late-medieval Prague and a vision of a civilization in decline. (Source: Amazon.com)

MONTH: July 29, 2025
BOOK: *The Jews of Bohemia & Moravia* (1992)
AUTHOR: Wilma Iggers
LEADER: Lorraine Dugglin, Ph.D.
SUMMARY:

While much has been written about East European and German Jewry, relatively little attention has been given to the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia, although they played an important role in the industrial, economic, and cultural life of central Europe. This book examines the social and cultural history of the Jewish community in Czechoslovakia from the Age of Enlightenment to the middle of the twentieth century.

From family histories, newspaper and magazine articles, wills, and letters, Wilma Iggers has culled descriptions of life, customs, and local color; portrayals of important individuals and families; stories of individuals depicting the transition of a culture and a people from the Middle Ages to modern times; an examination of complaints about the deterioration of the religious communities and of religious instruction; and the history of anti-Semitism. Practically all reports reflect the difficult struggle for survival as Jews. The texts also address special legislation regarding the Jews, industrialization and urbanization, changes in religious and familial structures, growing involvement in the culture and politics of the worldly communities, cultural assimilation, changes in stereotypes about the Jews, and the effects of political forces from outside. (Source: Google Books)

MONTH: August 26, 2025
MOVIE: *Peříšky (Cosy Dens)* (1999)
AUTHOR: Petr Šabach, Petr Jarchovský
LEADER: Petr Just, Ph.D.

SUMMARY:

Annotation: Bittersweet film comedy taking place in Prague in the years 1967-1968 characterized by short-lived attempt to reform the Communist system. The story revolves around two families living in one house and led by fathers with diametrically opposing political views. On the eve of Soviet intervention to Czechoslovakia in August 1968 the families are united by a marriage, but after the intervention the lives of both families dramatically change. The presentation will set the movie to the context of political and social development in late 1960s. (From Petr Just, Ph.D.)

MONTH: September 30, 2025
BOOK: *Louis D Brandeis: American Prophet* (2016)
AUTHOR: Jeffrey Rosen
LEADER: Lois Shimerda Rood
SUMMARY:

According to Jeffrey Rosen, Louis D. Brandeis was "the Jewish Jefferson," the greatest critic of what he called "the curse of bigness," in business and government, since the author of the Declaration of Independence. Published to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of his Supreme Court confirmation on June 1, 1916, *Louis D. Brandeis: American Prophet* argues that Brandeis was the most farsighted constitutional philosopher of the twentieth century. In addition to writing the most famous article on the right to privacy, he also wrote the most important Supreme Court opinions about free speech, freedom from government surveillance, and freedom of thought and opinion. And as the leader of the American Zionist movement, he convinced Woodrow Wilson and the British government to recognize a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Combining narrative biography with a passionate argument for why Brandeis matters today, Rosen explores what Brandeis, the Jeffersonian prophet, can teach us about historic and contemporary questions involving the Constitution, monopoly, corporate and federal power, technology, privacy, free speech, and Zionism. (Source: World of Books Summary)

MONTH: October 28, 2025
PLAY: *The Memorandum* (1965)
AUTHOR: Václav Havel
LEADER: Brenda Davis

The play is a black comedy that parodies bureaucracy and conformity. Havel wrote it prior to the Prague Spring of 1968 as an ironic satire dissenting against communist rule. Despite its veiled themes, the play was approved by government censors and published. *The Memorandum* centers on the introduction of a new language, "Ptydepe", that is meant to make work more efficient despite having the opposite effect. (Source: Wikipedia)

MONTH: November 25, 2025
BOOK: *Prague in Black & Gold* (1997)
AUTHOR: Peter Demetz
LEADERS: Maurice & Beverly Vonasek
SUMMARY:

The author, Peter Demetz, does an excellent job of telling the somewhat obscure history of Prague. It may appear to be a bit like a history book on the surface, but it is not, as it provides for more of a deep explanation of what made Prague. The book provides an intellectual, artistic, and literary history of the city and tells the story of the three major communities: Czech, German, Jewish with some Italian influence. The collaborations and conflicts of these communities are exposed to the reader to better understand the large number of languages and their dialects being problematic...as is with any melting pot society. In the early years we are reminded there was no true "Czech" language. The author stated, "Prague has always been a dual or triple city, and its topography has changed with the language that was spoken and the religion that was espoused." The effects of Jan Hus and the Hussite revolution and the impact of the Thirty Years War are covered as well as the various rulers such as Ottokar II, Charles IV, Rudolf II and the roles they played in the Holy Roman Empire and the role of the Habsburgs. Prague (Praha) is a most unique, beautiful and loving city to experience firsthand. Reading this book will make you want to go back for another visit...join us as we explore the true background of this fascinating city. (by Maurice & Beverly Vonasek)

No Reading Circle in December



Český čtenářský kroužek

