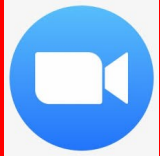


MEETINGS ON **ZOOM**
LAST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
(except December)
JOIN US AT 6:15 p.m. CST
PRESENTATION FROM 6:30 – 7:00 p.m.
DISCUSSION FROM 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.



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

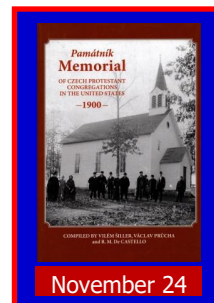
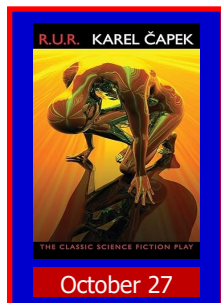
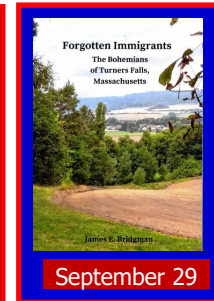
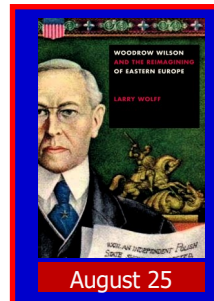
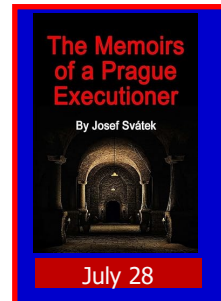
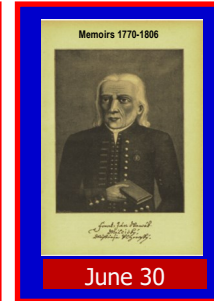
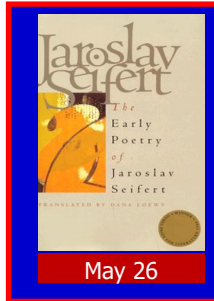
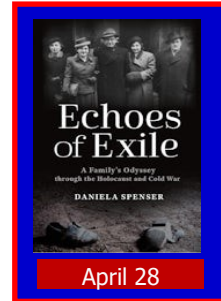
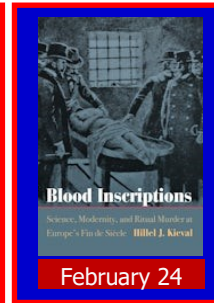
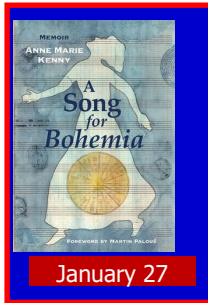
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**Nebraska Czechs of
Lincoln
2026
Year 8
*The Czech/American
Reading Circle***

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 27, 2026**
BOOK: ***A Song for Bohemia*** (2024)
AUTHOR: **Anne Marie Kenny**
LEADER: **Anne Marie Kenny**
SUMMARY:

Prague in the 1990s, an extraordinary place and time. The Cold War had ended. The Berlin Wall had fallen. Soviet-bloc countries like Czechoslovakia had just liberated themselves. The atmosphere was intoxicating, the future unmapped. And Anne Marie Kenny was there—a singer-turned-entrepreneur. Her true-life story reads like fascinating fiction—enduring family tragedy, singing at 21 on the Champs Elysées, enjoying an artistic career in Paris and Nice, and performing in Prague at the invitation of Václav Havel before moving there to start a business.

A Song for Bohemia is a love song and a tribute to the spirit of the Czech people, a story of a personal and collective journey to freedom. With the voice of an impassioned artist, this memoir does not merely speak, it sings.

MONTH: **February 24, 2026**
BOOK: ***Blood Inscriptions*** (2022)
AUTHOR: **Hillel J. Kieval**
LEADER: **Hillel J. Kieval**
SUMMARY:

Although the Enlightenment had seemed to bring an end to the widely held belief that Jews murdered Christian children for ritual purposes, charges of the so-called blood libel were surprisingly widespread in central and eastern Europe on either side of the turn to the twentieth century. Well over one hundred accusations were made against Jews in this period, and prosecutors and government officials in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia broke with long established precedent to bring six of these cases forward in sensational public trials. In *Blood Inscriptions* Hillel J. Kieval examines four cases—the prosecutions that took place at Tiszaeszlár in Hungary (1882-83), Xanten in Germany (1891-92), Poland in Austrian Bohemia (1899-1900), and Konitz, then Germany, now in Poland (1900-1902)—to consider the means by which discredited beliefs came to seem once again plausible.

Kieval explores how educated elites took up the accusations of Jewish ritual murder and considers the roles played by government bureaucracies, the journalistic establishment, forensic medicine, and advanced legal practices in structuring the investigations and trials. The prosecutors, judges, forensic scientists, criminologists, and academic scholars of Judaism and other expert witnesses all worked hard to establish their epistemological authority as rationalists, Kieval contends. Far from being a throwback to the Middle Ages, these ritual murder trials were in all respects a product of post-Enlightenment politics and culture. Harnessed to and disciplined by the rhetoric of modernity, they were able to proceed precisely because they were framed by the idioms of scientific discourse and rationality. Source: PennPress.org

MONTH: **March 31, 2026**
FILM: ***Velký vlastenecký výlet —The Great Patriot Trip*** (2025)
AUTHOR: **Martina Kilcperová**
LEADER: **Martina Kilcperová**
SUMMARY:

The Great Patriotic Trip (Czech: *Velký vlastenecký výlet*) is a 2025 Czech documentary road movie by director Robin Kvapil, following three pro-Russian Czech citizens on a trip to Ukraine to confront their beliefs about the war, with the film exploring their skepticism towards mainstream media and exposing them to the reality of the conflict. It's a provocative film showcasing a journey of ideological challenge, revealing the stark contrast between pro-Russian narratives and the situation on the ground in Ukraine.

MONTH: **April 28, 2026**
BOOK: ***Echoes of Exile*** (2025)
AUTHOR: **Daniela Spenser**
LEADER: **Hana Walserová, Ph.D.**
SUMMARY:

Echoes of Exile reveals the seismic disruptions of twentieth-century European history through the intimate lens of one family's struggle to survive. Setting out to record the life of her mother, Ruth, Daniela Spenser unearthed personal facts and stories that additionally illuminate the shared traumas and experiences of millions of Czech, Polish, and German Jews who died in the Holocaust, as well as the stories of those who survived and lived under Communism and the Cold War. Her resulting work is a fascinating hybrid that combines family letters and interviews with deeply researched political history spanning from the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

MONTH: **May 26, 2026**
POETRY: ***Selected Poems by Jaroslav Seifert*** (1921)
POET: **Jaroslav Seifert**
LEADER: **Layne Pierce**
SUMMARY:

Layne Pierce will present three poems by the 1984 winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Jaroslav Seifert. He received the Nobel Prize "for his poetry which endowed with freshness, sensuality and rich inventiveness provides a liberating image of the indomitable spirit and versatility of man." Seifert became a major voice in 20th century Czech literature, known for his lyricism and reflections of life, love and Prague.

The poems are:

1. *Year of 1934*
 2. *The Place of Pilgrimage*
 3. *Struggle with the Angel*
- The poems are available at: *Jaroslav Seifert - Poems by the Famous Poet - All Poetry*. They will be sent out to all registered participants in advance.

MONTH: **June 30, 2026**
BOOK: ***The Memoirs of František Vavák, Farmer and Magistrate in Mlýčice***
PUBLISHER: **Cyrtlo-Methodická Knihovna** (published in Prague 1907)
TRANSLATION: **Layne Pierce and Dr. Míla Šašková-Pierce**
LEADER: **Míla Šašková-Pierce**
SUMMARY:

The Memoirs constitute a work by a self-educated farmer, village administrator (rychtář) and scribe, and folk philosopher, who conveyed his life experiences for his descendants. František Vavák (1746 – 1816) lived through wars, religious patents and economic reforms, abolishment of serfdom or corvée under the Austrian Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790), and corvée partial reinstatement under Leopold II (1790-1792). He describes his feelings of receiving freedom, and his disappointments when the fate took away from the peasants once again a part of their human dignity. Vavák describes famines, floods, and good times followed by bad harvests as they happened in his region of the Poděbrady imperial estate. Not only nature, but happenings of international reach had grave economic impacts on the lives of the local farmers who had to pay taxes, quarter armies, etc. Side by side with descriptions of weather and harvests, we read about births and deaths in the villages and among the aristocrats.

Chapter 1782 will be sent out to all registered participants in advance.

MONTH: **July 28, 2026**
BOOK: ***The Memoirs of a Prague Executioner*** (1817d)(2004-08)
AUTHOR: **Josef Svátek**
LEADER: **Lorraine Duggin, Ph.D.**
SUMMARY:

A young man from a privileged family, Jan Mydlář, is about to graduate from medical school when a sudden shift of fate changes his life forever. He becomes stuck in the most detested profession for the rest of his life—an executioner. Master Jan Mydlář finds himself in the middle of historical events of Bohemia. The religious and political turmoil in the Habsburg empire reaches its climax in the beginning of the 17th century. When Protestant leaders throw imperial Catholic governors out of the window of their offices at the Prague Castle, a civil war between Protestants and Catholics in Bohemia breaks out. The civil war explodes into a European conflict that lasts thirty years and leaves much of Europe in ruins. In the 1621 White Mountain Battle at Prague, Protestant rebels are defeated by Catholic forces and Master Jan is to execute 27 rebel leaders, most of whom are his fellow Protestants and countrymen. In "The Memoirs of a Prague Executioner," Jan Mydlář describes how he went from a medical graduate to an executioner, gives an account of medieval crime and punishment, and explains the manners and values of late 16th and early 17th century society. The book deals with documented crimes of the time in a similar way as the work of François Gayot de Pitaval. The book contains graphic descriptions of medieval torture. Source: Google Books

MONTH: **August 25, 2026**
BOOK: ***Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe*** (2020)
AUTHOR: **Larry Wolff**
LEADER: **Petr Just, Ph.D.**

SUMMARY:

The presentation will focus on selected aspects of the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 and, in particular, on the role played in this process by selected American politicians and diplomats. Emphasis will be placed not only on the well-known figures (such as the U. S. President Woodrow Wilson or Businessman and Ambassador Charles Crane), but also on those who have remained somewhat unjustly in the shadows and whose role is not so often the subject of scientific or popular texts.

MONTH: **September 29, 2026**
BOOK: ***Forgotten Immigrants The Bohemians of Turners Falls, MA*** (2024)
AUTHOR: **James Bridgman**
LEADER: **James Bridgman**
SUMMARY:

The Bohemians of Turners Falls, Massachusetts, began life as serfs on the estates of wealthy nobles in the heart of Europe. Fleeing their homeland to escape poverty and mandatory military service, they crossed the ocean in the bowels of immigrant ships, chasing the dream of a better life in America.

But conditions in a small factory village in rural New England were almost as harsh as they had been in Bohemia. Life in the tenements was crowded. Work in the dust-laden air of the local cutlery led to grinder's consumption and an early grave. Children fell prey to the grim reaper at an alarming rate. The immigrants soon learned that the streets of America were not paved with gold.

This book uncovers the lost story of the courageous pioneers from Bohemia who gave up everything they knew to start life again in a small New England village.

MONTH: **October 27, 2026**
PLAY: ***R.U.R.*** (1921) (2021)
AUTHOR: **Karel Čapek**
LEADER: **Brenda Davis**

"R.U.R." (Čapek: Rossumovi univerzální roboti) is a science fiction play originally written in the Czech language. It premiered in 1921 and is noted for introducing the term "robot" to the English language. The play begins in a factory that makes artificial people called "robots." Unlike the modern usage of the term, these creatures are closer to the modern idea of androids or even clones, as they can be mistaken for humans and can think for themselves. They seem happy to work for humans, although that changes and a hostile robot rebellion leads to the extinction of the human race. After finishing the manuscript, The author realized that he had created a modern version of the Jewish Golem legend. He later took a different approach to the same theme in War with the Newts, in which non-humans become a servant class in human society. R.U.R. is dark but not without hope and was successful in its day in both Europe and the United States. Translation by David Wylie. Source: Amazon.com

MONTH: **November 24, 2026**
BOOK: ***Memorial of Czech Protestant Congregations In the U.S.*** (1900) (2012)

AUTHORS: **Vilém Šiller, Václav Průcha, R. M. de Castello**
LEADER: **Jason Cadek**
SUMMARY:

Originally published in the Czech language in 1900 in Chicago, Illinois, this book documents and describes the early Czech and Slovak Protestant U.S. congregations. Reverend Jan Dus and his wife, Anna, from Polička in the Czech Republic, translated the book into English. An editing committee organized by Dave Pavelka made up of Tom Kajer, Mary Jane Scherdin, Dottie Speidel, and Ed Vavra assured the preservation of the original meaning yet made sure the text is understandable to modern readers.

The hard cover volume of 294 pages has 137 black and white illustrations. It provides descriptions and histories of the congregations, lay leaders, and clergy of the included denominations which are: Presbyterian, Independent, Reformed, Congregational, (also some Slovak Congregational and Polish Congregational), Methodist, and Baptist. Source: CGSI.org/store



Český čtenářský kroužek

