

## PROGRAM

June 8, 2019 (Saturday)

**10:00 – Memorial Service at the New Lexington Cemetery**

*Venue: 440 Swigart St, New Lexington, OH 43764*

**10:45 – Floral Tribute at MacGahan's statue**

*Venue: Corner of Main and Brown Streets*

*(No official functions at this venue)*

**11:00 – Official unveiling ceremony on newly proclaimed  
Januarius A. MacGahan Ave.**

*Venue: Corner of Main St. and Januarius A. MacGahan Ave.  
(former Town Hall Ave.)*

**12:00 – Bulgarian-American Luncheon & Convocation**

*Venue: St. Rose Catholic Church (at the social hall)*

*309 N Main St, New Lexington, OH 43764*

Convocation Program includes:

- Tribute to Carma Jean Rausch (1942 – 2019) – founder and 40 years' main organizer of MacGahan's Festival;
- Book presentation: "A Forgotten Hero: American Journalist Januarius MacGahan and His Crusade for Bulgarian Freedom, 1876 – 1878", by Kamelia Popova (author);
- Bulgarian folk-dances performed by Bulgarian folklore ensemble "Hayde" from Columbus, OH

**3:00 p.m. – Program concluded**

**The 2019 MacGahan Festival**

is organized by

Consulate General of the Republic of Bulgaria in Chicago, IL

The MacGahan American-Bulgarian Foundation (New Lexington, OH)

Bulgarian Community in the State of Ohio

## *The MacGahan Festival*

*141<sup>st</sup> anniversary of MacGahan's death*

*41<sup>st</sup> annual MacGahan Festival*

*June 8, 2019*

*New Lexington, OH*



## The MacGahan American- Bulgarian Foundation of New Lexington

On a cold winter day in 1978 two somewhat elderly men from Cleveland, George Petrov and Assen Nicoloff, went from door to door on Main Street and eventually to the Perry County Tribune office. Speaking to Barbara James they explained that they had come to solicit the help of some local people to help organize a centennial celebration of the death of Januarius Aloysius MacGahan, New Lexington native son and Liberator of Bulgaria. This was the beginning of what was to be an annual weekend festival from 1978 until today. Organizers of the festival have come and gone but the weekend event continues.

MacGahan was born in 1844 at Pigeon Roost near New Lexington and died in 1878 at the age of 33 in Constantinople. He is credited with the liberation of Bulgaria from Turkish domination because of the vivid and graphic dispatches he wrote for the London Daily News. It was due to his writings that England and Russia came to believe that the persecution of Bulgarians was a reality and rose to put an end to it.

The original mission statement of the foundation reads as follows: "The MacGahan American-Bulgarian Foundation is composed of Americans and those of Bulgarian heritage from many countries. The overriding aim of the foundation is the preservation of the memory of Januarius MacGahan. Incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1978, the foundation proposes to keep the memory of MacGahan alive in the following ways:

- Hold an annual festival in New Lexington, Ohio
- Raise funds to establish a permanent memorial in tribute to MacGahan in the Perry County District Library
- Sponsor contests in Perry County Schools
- Raise funds to sponsor college scholarships for graduating seniors

All of these have been accomplished over the years. The festival continues in June on the weekend closest to the birthday and date of death of MacGahan. When the new Perry County Library was built, a donation was given for The MacGahan Genealogy and Local History room and for display cases to preserve festival and Bulgarian artifacts. In the early years the foundation sponsored an annual essay contest, but it was discontinued once the scholarship program was established. The New Lexington High School Scholarship competition began in 1988 and the competition for the other county schools and private schools began in 1990. Names and schools of the annual winners are listed on plaques on display at the Perry County District Library in New Lexington.

In 2009, guests of the festival were honored with a visit from the vice-president of Bulgaria, Angel Marin, and a delegation of eleven from Bulgaria who presented to the Perry County Library a vial of soil from the churchyard in Batak, Bulgaria, where a majority of the atrocities occurred. A symbol of MacGahan's triumphs, the soil is one of many prized possessions held in the display cases at the library.

One year, quite by accident, the festival was filmed for national television. Charles Kuralt was "on the road" and arrived in New Lexington to follow up information he had on the subject of Januarius MacGahan. Coincidentally he and his film crew arrived the weekend of the festival. Kuralt returned to New York, but left the crew to cover the festival. To this day the segment from "On the Road with Charles Kuralt" is our best and most concise introduction to MacGahan and his role in local and international history.

The most ambitious project of the foundation was to introduce every student in Perry County to the exploits and accomplishments of MacGahan. The project was funded mostly by donations in addition to grants of \$1000 from the Ohio Humanities Council, \$1000 from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation \$1000 from the Ohio Joint Council of the Arts and Humanities and a \$1000 donation from La Pizzeria in Akron, Ohio. Rick Sowash was commissioned to write, produce, and perform the life of Januarius MacGahan. He prepared and delivered two versions, one suitable for elementary students and the other suitable for high school students. He performed his one- man play during March through May of 1995 for all students in every school building in Perry County. That year only the absentees from school that day missed the impressive and captivating production of the life of MacGahan. Both the Rick Sowash play and the Charles Kuralt production are available on DVD along with a copy of a black and white "home movie" filmed by Fay Newlon in the early 1900's and the dedication of the statue created by the late Lubomir Daltchev in 1984.

Most of our Bulgarian-American founders are deceased or too elderly to travel. Our latest contact was a few years ago with Panyot Panayotov in his nineties from Victoria B.C. Since then our financial base has been significantly reduced. We subsist now on what remains of a donation from the estate of Stewart Steiner, an American foundation member from Cleveland, who was active in the foundation until his death and private donations mainly from festival guests each June. Our major goal today is to reach younger adults, both American and Bulgarian, to insure that the efforts of the foundation continue.

The festival consists of a memorial service at the New Lexington Cemetery, floral tribute at the MacGahan statue at Main and Brown Streets, followed by a luncheon and program held either at the Knights of Columbus Hall or the Perry County District Library. The event is open to the public and free of charge making it affordable for everyone interested to come to learn about and perpetuate the memory of Januarius MacGahan, a Perry Countian who changed the course of world history.

Authored in 2018 by:

Carma Jean Rausch (1942 - 2019)

Founder and 40 years organizer of The MacGahan Festival