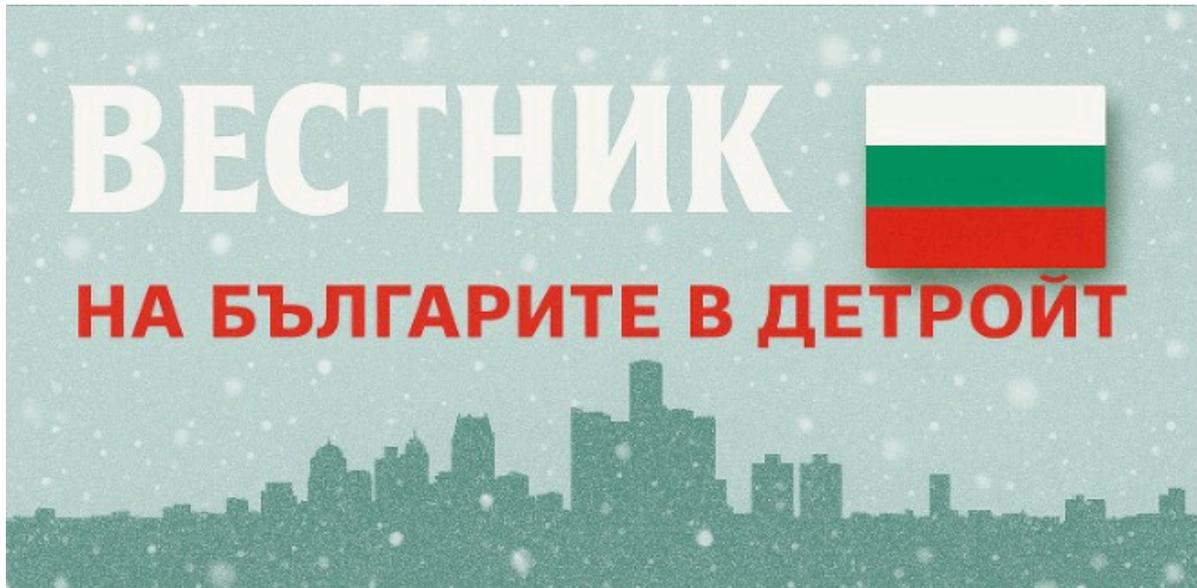




[View this email in your browser so you can use automatic translation to English](#)



February 2026

Editor's Note

Little Sechko reminded us that we live in Michigan. It may be cold, but nothing can stop us from coming together and learning new things:

- February 21 - screening of a film about Prof. Minko Balkanski, Balkan Center, Troy
- February 24 - lecture about Bulgaria in English by Maria Fogarasi, Berkley library
- March 1 - making martenitsa at the Troy library
- March 7 - Bulgarian folk music on Zoom with the Veselba trio
- March 13 - festival in Sterling Heights - objects from different countries, dances and food
- March 19 - festival at Scholcraft College. Become a volunteer at the Bulgarian table.
- March 24 - lecture about Bulgaria in English by Maria Fogarasi, Livonia library
- March 29 - Balkan Night Dance with live music in Ann Arbor

The campaign to raise funds for our Bulgarian home in Detroit continues. \$3,350 has already been raised. Read about the new rules for donations in 2026 and join the campaign.

Daniela Nacheva

Email: info@bulgariansindetroit.com

Facebook: [DanielaVesleslav](#)

Под снега се показва
мокра, рохкава пръст.

От студения въздух
освежен, изтрезнял,
понеделник се хлъзва
в мека весела кал.

Посивял и измачкан
заскрежен акварел.
Даже аз да съм мрачна –
февруари е смел.

Ето, дните порастват –
с по една капка чай.
И тъгите зарастват.
И студът има край.

Мария Донева



Film about Prof. Minko Balkanski

проф. Минко Балкански
Живот, посветен на науката и България

21 февруари
12:30 – 1:30 PM

Balkan American Center
1451 E. Big Beaver Rd, Troy 48031

Вход: \$10

От родното място в България до Париж и постиженията

Филмът е на български език
със субтитри на английски език

Сценарист и автор: Владина Цекова

Prof. Minko Balkanski is a world physicist with an exceptional contribution to science.

He was born in Bulgaria. He left Oryahovitsa, Stara Zagorje, for France at the age of 16 to fulfill his dream of becoming a world scientist.

Today he is 98 years old and continues to be in shape and help talented children fulfill their dreams in science.

He has achieved everything as recognition in his field and continues to think of Bulgaria with love.

Prof. Minko Balkanski has not been able to return to his homeland for 50 years, but he remains connected to Bulgaria. He was followed by the services in Bulgaria at the time with attempts to return him to his homeland.

From the moment the young Minko set foot in France, he received over 3,000 letters from his father, which he keeps to this day as his most precious memory.

In the year when the professor's return to his homeland became possible, he created a foundation with enthusiasm, will and love, with which he supports education and social activities in his homeland.

The Foundation is a springboard for increasing the professional competence of computer science teachers, as well as supporting gifted Bulgarian children who have decided to devote themselves to physics, mathematics and computer science.

In 2006, Prof. Balkanski also created a National Institute of Education in the village of Oryahovitsa, and then a summer violin academy, where prominent French teachers teach.

He also created an international plein air of the fine arts. Prof. Balkanski financially supports over 140 schools in Bulgaria and donates computers at a time when this is almost impossible for educational institutions in our

Advanced Advanced Studies" and organizes summer schools in Sozopol.

Every year, prominent world lecturers on current topics come to our country by personal invitation.

The scale of his educational activities in Bulgaria is so great that it is a good reason for him to be called "the greatest benefactor in the field of education in our country."

His Bulgarian students currently hold leadership positions in some of the most prestigious scientific institutes and universities in the world, and a large number of them are professors.

Prof. Minko Balkanski lives in France and has been a lecturer at some of the most prestigious French and American universities. He is the winner of the most prestigious international awards for achievements in science. He divides his daily life between Paris and his estate in Forges, Normandy and as he says he never has free time and is never bored.

This true enlightener, awakener, benefactor, donor, scientist and extraordinary man, when he talks about his homeland and the people here, his eyes shine.

"I am a happy person. I come to Bulgaria mostly because of the communication with the people here.

When I was little, I really wanted to climb the rocks. They were steep and I couldn't do it, but every day I told myself "I'll do it tomorrow!" I have always strived to do things to overcome. To overcome yourself! This is my life!"

"I believe in reason, the pursuit of knowledge and the meaning of doing something for others".

"The most important legacy left by my parents was to be a good person".

"Communicating with the people here is the most pleasant to me and that is why I will not stop returning to Bulgaria as long as I am alive"

"VOLUNTEERING! Volunteer. Be altruistic! Serve and love yourself!"

"Being a professor is a service, it is a job, a title. I would like everyone to call me Minko."

Shared by Prof. Minko Balkanski in the film



Presentations about Bulgaria

Registration link: <https://berkeleypubliclibrary.com/over-the-hill-00-to-11-1>



Berkley Public Library (MI) / LibCal / Berkley Public Library Events



Bulgaria and Balkan Wanderings In-Person



Event Organizer



Presented by Mariya Fogarasi. How can such a small country lay claim to having the oldest city in Europe? From supplying the world's perfume industry with 85% of its rose oil to honoring two monks, Cyril and Methodius, who invented the Cyrillic alphabet, Bulgaria might not top the list of European travel destinations, but it merits a visit at any time of year. Mariya Fogarasi will share her love of this Balkan country along with a few outings to surrounding points of interest. Sponsored by the Friends of the Berkley Public Library.

March 24th in the Livonia Public Library at 7pm



Livonia Public Library / LibCal / Calendar of Events



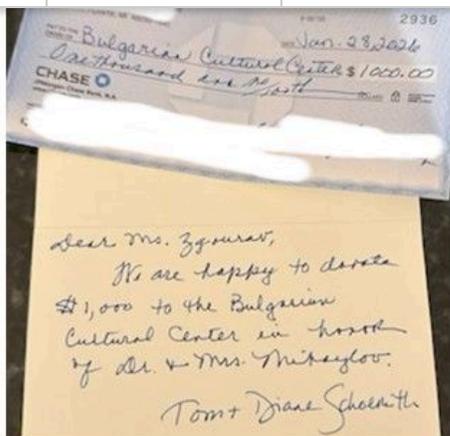
Bulgaria and Balkan Wanderings



How can such a small country lay claim to having the oldest city in Europe? To supplying the world's perfume industry with 85% of its rose oil, one of the most important ingredients? To honoring two monks, Cyril and Methodius, who were born in the First Bulgarian Empire and who invented the Cyrillic alphabet in the 10th century? Bulgaria might not top the list of European travel destinations but it merits a visit at any time of year. Mariya Fogarasi shares her love of this Balkan country along with a few outings to surrounding points of interest.

Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2026
Time: 7:00pm - 8:00pm
Location: Auditorium
Branch: Bennett Civic Center Library

Home for the Bulgarian community in
Detroit



получени от Радослав Евгениев, Здравка Стъл,
д-р Тихомир Михайлов и Велеслав Начев.
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Благодарим Ви от сърце за Вашата подкрепа и щедрост!

New rules for donations in 2026

New tax rules that took effect this year may influence how you choose to give to the Bulgarian Cultural Center and other nonprofits. Here's what you need to know:

- **What's the biggest change this year?**

- You can deduct up to \$1,000 (single filers) or \$2,000 (married couples) in cash charitable donations *even if you don't itemize*. So even smaller donations can benefit you while making an impact at the Bulgarian Center.

- **So I can claim this on top of the standard deduction?**

- Yes! For 2026, that deduction is \$16,100 for single filers and \$32,200 for married couples filing jointly. If you are 65 or older, you may claim a standard deduction that's even higher: \$2,050 if you are a single filer and head of a household, \$1,650 per qualifying individual if you are married filing jointly or separately, or a qualifying widow(er).

married and both spouses qualify. Note that this deduction phases out for taxpayers with higher incomes, so discuss this with your tax professional or accountant.

- Based on all these benefits, how should I give this year?

- Even if you don't itemize, you may still benefit if you give appreciated stock or real estate by eliminating capital gains tax on the growth. If you are 70½ or older, you can make a gift directly from your IRA to the Foundation. You pay no tax on the distribution, and if you are required to take minimum distributions, it can satisfy all or part of that obligation.

- What if I do choose to itemize?

- Keep these portions of the new tax law in mind:

1. Deduction limit for cash gifts

You can still deduct cash gifts of up to 60% of your adjusted gross income (AGI). Consider combining your cash and non-cash assets, often called blended giving, to maximize your tax benefits and impact.

2. New floor for itemizers

You will need to give at least 0.5% of your AGI to claim a charitable deduction.

3. New limit for top earners

Top earners (those in the 37% tax bracket) now get only a 35-cent tax benefit for every \$1 deducted.

Start Your Legacy NOW!

Making martenitsa in a library

For the first time, the Troy library is organizing an event for Baba Marta. Visitors will see a presentation about Bulgaria, learn more about the traditions of the holiday, make martenitchki and try banitsa. Register at this link: <https://live-troypl.pantheonsite.io/event/tpl-global-culture-series-baba-marta-spring-celebration-100182>



BABA MARTA
Spring Celebration

ADULT

In Person **Sunday, March 1**
2-3:30 pm | Ages 18+

TPL troy public library **Sponsored by FRIENDS**

Welcome Spring with the Bulgarian celebration of Baba Marta, or Granny March! Bulgarians celebrate the end of winter by making Martenitsi (bracelets made of red and white yarn) to give to others. Come make your own martenitsa and enjoy traditional Bulgarian refreshments and music.

WHERE

Troy Public Library Meeting Room

REGISTER

**Call 248.524.3538 or
visit troypl.org/calendar**



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Let's meet Brandon



On Saturday, during classes at the Bulgarian school in Troy, Brandon, an American, came and amazed us all with his knowledge of the Bulgarian language. Here's what else we learned:

- Who is Branden Prather?

- I was born and raised in Michigan. I am from a small rural town in Lenawee County. The closest city anyone might remotely recognize is Adrian. At university, I became obsessed with languages, both foreign languages and the mechanics of language generally. I studied foreign languages and literature. I mostly focused on German, but I had some Spanish and some Russian, too. I was a teacher for a while, and now, I am an attorney.

- When did you visit Bulgaria and what did you do there?

- I had always dreamed of spreading my love and passion for foreign languages, so I sought to live abroad and teach languages. The opportunity to live and work in Bulgaria presented itself in 2015, and I seized it. I lived and worked in Sofia until 2018.

- What did you bring from Bulgaria?

- The best memories I have from Bulgaria are playing music with students, exchanging language and linguistic insights with students and others, using Bulgarian to navigate my surroundings and to connect with people, hiking in Vitosha, and enjoying delicious food (eg banitsa).

- Why is Bulgaria unknown to many Americans?

- The typical American can probably name only 10 or so countries in the entire world, and those countries either have a large geographic footprint, large GDP, and/or large geopolitical presence. Although Bulgaria is very rich in other ways, it does not have those attributes, so it unfortunately goes unnoticed. More banitsa for me.

- How did you learn to speak Bulgarian language?

- I cheated when I arrived in Bulgaria because I had already done the heavy lifting: I had

which makes learning it easy. I took some lessons for a bit, but I largely learned by going out into the wild and engaging in conversation. I was also able to make my way by just using intuition. Many language structures are common across at least Indo-European languages, so even though I had not formally learned something in Bulgarian, I was often able to guess and work my way through a sentence with some success.

- What is your message to the Bulgarians in Detroit?

- My message to the Bulgarians in Detroit is thank you for welcoming me and for allowing me to connect with the community. It was very nice and nostalgic for me to connect with the group. I was able to reminisce on my time there and share common experiences with the community. My other message is where have you guys been? I had no idea that Michigan is home to so many Bulgarians. I think it is wonderful.

Increase your customers now!

Български Жълти Страници в Детройт

The Bulgarian Yellow Pages Directory in Metro Detroit

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Bulgarian Yellow Pages Metro Detroit



When: March 7, 7:30 - 8:45 pm

What: Veselba to play virtual Bulgarian set with a short presentation about Bulgaria at the beginning
Veselba is Nan Nelson (tambura), Chris Rietz (kaval) and Bruce Sagan (gadulka). They will be playing a set of Bulgarian dance music on Zoom. Come and dance, play along, or just listen! We ask that you stay muted while the tunes are being played.

Contact: Bruce Sagan, bsagan@msu.edu

Zoom: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/5476724571>

Meeting ID: 547 672 4571

Passcode: MthMus

Invitation to a festival on March 13

28th Annual Sterling Heights

Cultural Exchange

March 13, 2026 | 6 - 9:30 p.m. | Sterling Heights Community Center

A much-anticipated event celebrating the City of Sterling Heights' many cultures will take place **March 13, 2026**. The City of Sterling Heights and its Ethnic Community Committee will hold its 2026 Cultural Exchange from 6-9:30 pm at the Sterling Heights Community Center, 40250 Dodge Park Road. The public is encouraged to attend this celebrated event.

The 2026 Cultural Exchange will feature a wide array of ethnic music and dance, educational cultural displays from area groups and organizations, and a variety of desserts, breads and dips. Cultures represented will include

requested.

If you would like to help at the Bulgarian table, contact Daniela Nacheva at 586-202-4605.



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Invitation to a festival on March 19th



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21st Annual

MULTICULTURAL Fair

AN INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATION

Thursday, March 19, 2026

10 AM – 3 PM

DiPonio Room • Vistatech Center

FREE!

Cultural Displays

Performances

Language Demonstrations

International Foods

Take a Trip Around the World!

Students, Faculty, Staff & Community Welcome

For More Information Contact:

Helen Ditouras | hditoura@schoolcraft.edu

Laura LaVoie Leshok | llavoie@schoolcraft.edu

Anna Maheshwari | amaheshw@schoolcraft.edu

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Balkan Music Night on March 29

live music and dancing are always accompanied by food, although not typically Mexican. . . but with six hours of dancing, we will need refueling and Mexican food works! Food from the in-house restaurant COSA SABROSA. **PROGRAM** The dance music program will feature tunes from Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, N. Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and Roma traditions. Doors open at 5pm. Live music starts at 5:30 pm. After the last band's performance, all musicians who are still standing will return to play and sing a few numbers together for the final dances. Everyone is welcome to sing along. Get there early to reserve your table. Many of the dances are done in a line and are easy to learn. Not a dancer? Not a problem; the Zal Gaz Grotto has plenty of room to sit, watch and listen. Grab a table with friends and enjoy the evening. **DANCE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY!** There will be plenty of dances you can easily follow without knowing them beforehand, but if you'd like to dig a little deeper, go to <https://aactmad.org/> **THE PERFORMERS AJDE AMAN** 5:30-6:30 MEMBERS OF **VESELBA** (MK) 6:30 to 7pm **AJDE AMAN JOINED BY ERIC SCHWEIZER ON CLARINET, DALIA KROPF AND VENNIE NEYKOV ON VOCALS** 7-8:30 MEMBERS OF VESELBA (BG) 8:30 to 9pm **MENSUR HATIC** (monster accordionist from St. Louis), TONI RISTOVSKI (VOCAL), DONNY CINDRIC (KEYBOARDS). 9ish to 10:45 pm, 10:45 All musicians play a couple together **CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS** If you'd like to exchange a couple of hours of "work" for free admission, we have a number of volunteer work-exchange positions, such as setup, tear-down, box office, and more. Please text Douglas Allen at 734.260.0857 if you are interested. **JOIN US!** Join us in celebrating Eastern European traditions of live music, dancing, and food. This is one of Ann Arbor's most exciting music and dance events and, for Balkan music and dance aficionados, THE event of the year — and it doesn't happen every year! Your buying tickets in advance really helps us plan. Hope to see you there! **TICKETS**

NOTE: ADVANCED PRICE TICKET SALES VIA VENMO WILL CLOSE THE DAY OF BUT SOME TICKETS WILL STILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR.

ALL PROCEEDS & TIPS GO TO THE MUSICIANS!

Adult - \$25 advance, \$35 at the door

Students over 12 - \$15 advance, \$20 at the door

Children 6-12 - \$15

Children under 6 - Free

line to reserve your tickets. Please show confirmation from Venmo at the door for entry. Advanced tickets not sold the day of! See discount for students and kids. There are also opportunities for helping in exchange for a ticket. Text 734.260.0857 if you need anything. Hope to see you there. Thanks for spreading the word!

PARKING

Parking is behind the building! If the lot is full, additional parking can be found across the street in the arbor farms

AJDES OF MARCH

ANN ARBOR'S SECOND ANNUAL

BALKAN MUSIC & DANCE NIGHT

LIVE MUSIC BY AJDE AMAN

MEMBERS OF VESELBA

& SPECIAL GUESTS MENSUR HATIC

FEATURING TONI RISTOVSKI (VOCALS) &

DONNY CINDRIC (KEYBOARDS)

Sunday, March 29th

5 pm-11 pm

at The Zal Gaz Grotto

2070 W Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor, MI

CASH BAR & FOOD ALL NIGHT!

\$25 in Advance/\$35 at the Door

Reserve Tickets via Venmo [@douglaslaneallen](https://www.venmo.com/douglaslaneallen)
(write your name(s) or group name in the memo line)

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This issue was written by: Daniela Nacheva, Nelly Apostolova and collaborators.

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