

## WILL DANCING INTO SUNSET DANCE PARTY – FRUITPORT GO ON THIS YEAR IS THE BIG QUESTION AS WITH SO MANY SUMMERTIME EVENTS?

By Sue Halter

The answer is unknown as of the deadline for the Fruitport Area News.

Who would have ever imagined when we turned the calendar to 2020, our lives would be what they are today due to our current situation?

Dancing into Sunset – Fruitport 2020 Season 4 WAS to get underway Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. As of the printing of this article due to the current information we have, the month of June will be cancelled. As for the remaining dates in July and August that are listed here, they are, of course, uncertain. So please watch the Facebook Page Dancing into Sunset Dance Party Fruitport closely, The Village of Fruitport pages, and marquee on Third Avenue, as well as MuskegonChannel.com regarding updates.

Several factors will play in the decision to look forward for a possible start on Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020. The safety of everyone who would attend is of the upmost importance. With new information and updates coming out, not only daily but hourly, the rush to cancel the entire season schedule is premature.

**NOTE:** To help ease your mind about social distancing, please go to the following link and listen to "Interview with a top doctor, Dolores Cahill PhD, Microbiologist and Immunologist," who will educate you regarding wearing a mask and social distancing. Please take the time to watch: <https://www.bitcute.com/video/LVcZgy6KJF4M/>

- 2017 First year 500
- 2018 Second year 1400+
- 2019 Third Year 1700+
- 2020 Fourth Year ???

What does the above mean? It means that Dancing into Sunset Dance Party – Fruitport held every Thursday night during the Spring and Summer in Pomona Park at the Bandshell, attendance numbers has continued to increase each year so far, with the support of the community telling me that this "FREE" community event is here to stay and all my hard work before, during and after the season is worth it! New to Dancing Into Sunset Fruitport is Muskegonchannel.com/radio and PositivelyMuskegon.com, Andy O'Riley's favorite ways to promote all of Muskegon County. Another new sponsor is Hazekamp Meats/Premier Foods. If your business is interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact Sue at dancingintosunset@aol.com or susie@muskegonchannel.com

The Storage Group has sponsored banners listing the season schedule located on the bandshell walls and in town at the corner of Pontaluna and Airline Rd. Ye Old Tavern sponsored the flyers you will see throughout town. Fruitport Orchard Market donated delicious desserts like the red, white and blue cupcakes on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July. We will salute and recognize all Military men and women as we have done in the first three seasons. Remember to bring a photo to place on the bandshell Wall of Military Fame. We will once again have a collection box in Orchard Market in Fruitport, as well as the night of July 2<sup>nd</sup>, to collect non-perishable items to send off to the active troops by way of The Blue Star Moms. The flowers that are passed out are supplied by LeFleur Shoppe every year which always puts a smile on those who receive them. Happy to welcome back the support of Community Foundation of Muskegon County and still appreciate their support. We are still making use of the shredded rubber that was donated by Ginman Tire Co. to put down each week with the help of volunteers to "soften" the feet and knees while your dance partner swirls you around in the large dance area. A thank you to Tractor Supply for donating items over the years including hula hoop supplies to help keep the kids busy while mom and/or dad show off fancy dance steps. Many of those who attend will see Leo Valdez, Jr., a professional photographer capturing many great moments and posting to his Facebook page as well as Dancing into Sunset Dance Party Fruitport page. He even takes the time to put together video of many of the photos. Many thanks to Leo for joining us several times throughout the season. Oh, the grassy hill that overlooks Spring Lake makes this location one of the best in the area for an outdoor evening of dancing music, meeting old friends and making new ones, or just tucked away by one of the trees to listen with en-

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joyment. As in years past I like to remind readers of the history of Pomona Park.

Did you know that Pomona Park was very popular back in the 40's and 50's for dancing and music? Here is a bit of history by Fox 17 Kevin Craig's West Michigan Stories interview with Brian Zwart.

Pomona Park sat vacant (except with the old burned out building on it) until about 1900 or so. It was the electric rail car known as the Interurban that came into existence and began to capitalize on the old boom. The Interurban rail service ran from Grand Rapids, to Coopersville, and rails veered off to Fruitport and Grand Haven. Since the Interurban Company had an electric power house and stop in Fruitport, they wanted to capitalize on it and draw more people in. So they built a huge wood pavilion over Spring Lake on the shore of Pomona Park in 1902. It was a major success!

The Interurban operated the Pavilion until 1928 when it was sold to band leader Frank Lockage. He began bringing in major, nationally known talent and acts like Glenn Miller, Lawrence Welk, and Buddy Holly just four months before he would die in a plane crash with the famous Big Bopper and Richie Valens. At first the Pavilion was a seasonal thing with open areas and unheated. It would later become a year round draw for people to dance and simply party into the wee hours of the night.

The fun, excitement, and draw went on until January 3, 1963. In the early morning hours of January 4, the Pavilion would burn to the ground. Never before seen home movies were taken of the fire, and are part of the video in our West Michigan Story. Unfortunately, it was never rebuilt and the property sits only as a park today. That said, the original pylons that held the Pavilion up over the water are still visible today. The slab of concrete that led into the Pavilion still intact...even with pieces of the original floor tile still attached!

The history of Pomona Park is amazing and incredible to say the least. A special thanks to Brian Zwart of the Fruitport Historical Society. Unlike many historical experts in the area, Brian is a much younger man who has researched Fruitport and Pomona Park extensively. His enthusiasm and insight into Fruitport's past is addictive, enlightening, and entertaining. (Search Brian Zwart Fruitport history to view entire video).

So c'mon everyone and let's make history of our own for our kids to talk about 50 years from now. Perhaps this article will give us something to look forward to. With that said, IF we can salvage any part of the season, this is what the remainder of the line up looks like.

**When: "Tentative start:"** Thursdays beginning July 2, 2020

**Where:** Pomona Park – Fruitport at the Bandshell (Park and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.) – NOTE: Inclement weather tentative location is Edgewood Elementary Cafeteria, 3255 E. Pontaluna, Fruitport, MI 49415

**Time:** 7:00 p.m. to Sunset, of course, 9:30-ish!

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• **Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020** – Once again we will welcome Cheryl, Tom and Woody of **THE SILVERADO BAND** who will help us pay tribute to our Military men and women. Please join us on the grassy hill in Pomona Park. Military attire welcomed, hats, uniforms, etc. so we may thank you for your service. Bring a photo to place on bandshell wall. Once again collecting non-perishable items all week long at Orchard Market – Fruitport to send to our troops. Follow us on Facebook for the latest updates.

• **Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020** – We welcome back all the way from Lansing, the ever so popular **The Sea Cruisers** who will take us back in time with 50's, 60's and 70's good old fashioned rock n roll.

• **Thursday, July 16, 2020** – One of the crowd's suggestions I was able to book in the line up this season, **The Adam's Family Band** – Folk, doo-wop through classic rock hits!

• **Thursday July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020** Another highly suggested band, **The Carl Webb Band**, who brings the sounds of eclectic blend of rock, blues & country.



• **Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020** – Up again will be **Sam's Swing Band** with guest swing dance instructor, **Florencia Colella**

• **Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020** – **Sweet Justice** will deliver the sounds of oldies, to classic, to new country. Another new band added to this season of Dancing Into Sunset Fruitport

• **Thursday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020** – **Guest DJ for the evening** once again we bring back **Woody** from the Silverado Band at the control board to play your favorite dance tunes, but this time guest line dance instructor will be Amy Christian.

• **Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020** – To close out Season 4 of Dancing Into the Sunset, **The Silverado Band**. We welcome back Woody, Tom and Cheryl so we



can dance to their favorite country tunes. <https://silveradoband.net/> and on Facebook. (follow them on Facebook)- Wesco Popcorn night

If we do start on Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, Dancing Into Sunset Dance Party Fruitport will welcome our new food vendor for the remaining of the Season, **Parkside Pizza owned by Troy and Cathy**, which is directly across the street from Pomona Park.

Again, I ask all to be understanding during these uncertain times and watch the Facebook pages mentioned above to see if Dancing Into Sunset Dance Party Fruitport can indeed start in July. Many I have spoken with feel many of us will need some dance and music outdoors in our lives AS LONG AS we can all social distance, providing that will still be required at the time. If I have to mark that all familiar X or \_\_\_\_\_ on the grassy hillside for the 6' distance so you can dance in place or at least sit and listen to the music, I will do so. As we all know, music is the universal language and will uplift us all in these trying times that may still lay ahead.

Stay safe and think positive, this too shall pass!  
(Watch: <https://www.bitcute.com/video/LVcZgy6KJF4M/>)



Dennis Noren and dance partner

## Grand Haven Waterfront Dances

Submitted by Debbie Spetoskey

The Grand Haven Wednesday night Waterfront Dances is celebrating it's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year.

The schedule is listed below. It is contingent, of course, on State and City COVID-19 restrictions.

The \$3 admission fee is being waived in favor of donations only. Please join us Wednesday evenings from 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

June 10 – Spring Lake High School Dance Band

June 17 – "Livin' The Dream

June 24 – Silverado

July 1 – Carl Webb

July 8 – Sea Cruisers

July 15 – Lakeshore Big Band

July 22 – 6-Pak

August 5 – Great Scott

August 12 – Frank Eimer

August 19 – Hark Up

August 26 – Entourage

Any questions, please check "Dancing on the Grand" Facebook page or Radio WGHN.

