

Sue Halter, Fruitport star, and “Dancing Into the Sunset”

What gives a person the ambition to volunteer their time to leave home in the middle of winter by 7:00 a.m. to dance practice before work through snow and ice storms? Add in a Friday after work a three hour group practice and a three hour weekend practice plus throw in a every night practice at home to remember all that you were taught so at the next practice your brain remembered all from the previous practice. What gives a person the courage to step out in front of 1600+ audience



members over four shows to perform new dance routines you learned with your dance partner you had just met a few months earlier?

Let me be the first to tell you why. For me it was the thought of a child not having a good meal on the table. The thought of knowing after the holidays the local food pantries are low on food supplies. The thought that just maybe I can make a difference to help put food on the table of those going through a difficult time.

Hence this is where the Women’s Division Chamber of Commerce (www.womensdivision.org) comes into play when I was asked to participate in this years Dancing With the Local Stars Fundraising event held in February which has been organized by the Women’s Division Chamber of Commerce Mary Kendall and a staff of many for the last nine years. I waited patiently for this moment to volunteer my time for the last three years. So when asked in September 2016 I was so excited but at the same time, afraid the timing was not good due to several factors going on in my life at the time. So many thoughts and more went through my mind

After a few weeks of back and forth and knowing I would regret passing up this opportunity, I made the decision to go for it. I was confident that I could make it all work, and I was sure glad I did.

Up until last years performances the Women’s Division Chamber of Commerce had raised in eight years of performances \$629,000.00. With this years total being \$126,000.00 that brings the total up to \$755,000.00 that this Dancing With the Local Stars has raised for the local food pantries.

This is how it all started for me. On Friday November 18th I walked into a room full of people I did not know and walked away a few months later with an entire group of amazing friends. To start the night off, we were put into two groups. The Pro



dancers on one end of the room, and Star dancers on the other. One by one we were paired up, with myself being the last one standing of the star dancers, which meant the last Pro dancer standing was

going to be my dance partner, David Armbricht of Grand Rapids. Our first conversation was to discuss the music and dance style, etc., all of which I already had an idea for, if and when I was asked to participate. So I ran it by David and he graciously agreed to my ideas, which I so appreciated. I was a dancer many, many years ago, but had not ever partner danced so this was going to be interesting. I found out early he had patience and precision when it came to his teaching. It was all business, not time to chit chat. We worked as a team all the way through, from deciding on which song to use (my choice), to the choreography (his creatively), to the first rough draft drawing of the props I wanted to build (that he agreed on). Oh, those props, two large brick looking window frames six feet tall and three feet wide on hinges with curtains, that moved in and out of my vehicle for every practice for the last six weeks! But, oh, so worth it because the choreography in those windows was my husband’s favorite part of our routine. You can view our routine at www.youtube.com then type in susiehalter and you will see 2 25 17 Susie Halter and David Armbricht’s Matinee Performance, or scroll down to Sue Halter 1 video. We performed a dance routine with two lifts to Lady Gaga’s Edge of Glory. We also had to learn a opening and closing dance routine. I am happy to say our Saturday matinee performance



won us the Critics Choice trophy award, which is the judges award. Nick Schultz was the judge for the matinee performance. Each performance had a different judge.

There were twelve couples that consisted of a “pro” who teaches the “stars” how to dance a dance style that would range from a waltz or belly dancing to the hustle or swing dancing. What I found so fascinating was that we were such a diverse group of people from all walks of life that came together as one big group and just had a good old time practicing and performing together. We joked, we laughed, we cried, some worked through personal injuries, some dealt with family illness and family loss, but through it all we were there for each other, an experience I will never forget, and all for the good of our community. We are a group that I hope will continue to stay connected with each other through the years. I highly recommend to all the readers to mark your calendar for the second and or third week of February next year, and purchase your tickets as soon as they go on sale in January.

then just like that, it is all over. Major dance withdrawals, as they call it. So I had to do something about that. I decided to keep dance going and Pay It Forward, and have a free community dance party



right here in Fruitport at the Bandshell in Pomona Park from 7:00pm to 9:30pm which is sponsored by the Fruitport Lions Club. Mark your calendars for Wednesday, May 10 and Wednesday, May 17th for the first two “Dancing into the Sunset” free community dance parties. We will hold off during, before, and right after Old Fashioned Days, then we pick up again Wednesday, June 7 and continue all summer long until the last Wednesday, August 30th. I am adding as many dance instructors that are available to join us each Wednesday to teach us a variety of dance styles. From instructor Steven Zaagman’s (grandrapidsoriginalswingsociety.com) of Grand Rapids’ Original Swing Society, to Diane Greenbauer Sherman country line dancing. We also will have Ed and Gail Wier (grandhavendancesons@gmail.com) on hand June 7 and August 23 to show us the Waltz, Cha-Cha and hustle moves. Watch Krista Carlson gracefully show us how a ballet step can lead into fun routine. Stay tuned for updates on more dance instructors and styles at the official Facebook page of Dancing into the Sunset Dance Party, Fruitport Pomona Park. If no dance instructor for the night, then the night will be fun “Free Style” dancing.

Oh, did I mention that we have Impact Entertainment DJ Services (meghandean@hotmail.com) providing music for 14 of the 15 Wednesdays, and the Silverado Band (www.silveradoband.net) providing live music on July 5th!?

Several ways to get to Pomona Park: Come by boat to Waypoint Dock and Deli (waypointdock-spirits.com) which is adjacent to the park. John, the owner is offering boaters the 2 ½ hours to dock your boat, come in and see his new store, then walk to the park to enjoy the dance party. Cruise on down by car, pedal or stroll by foot on the bike path. The success of “Dancing into the Sunset” free community dance party is up to all of us to support it. Let’s put Fruitport on the map once again as it was back in the 1940’s as the best dance community in the area.

Which reminds me, anyone reading this article who may have old photos of the old Pavilion dance party please scan them if possible and send to dancingintosunset@aol.com. Working on a display board for the park.

I encourage all who attend to take your own photos and videos and post and share at the Facebook page, “Dancing into the Sunset Fruitport Pomona Park.”

I am happy to say dance will be plentiful this summer, as for the Women’s Division Chamber of Commerce (womensdivision.org) will be holding four dance parties at the Farmers Market downtown Muskegon on Thursdays, June 22, July 20, August 10 and August 24, 2017.

Grand Rapids Original Swing Society will swing dance in Rosa Park Circle every Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m.

Looking forward to seeing all the community come together each Wednesday evening to dance the night away.

FREE! Join us for
“Dancing Into the Sunset”
 Wednesdays – May 10 & 17
 7:00-9:30pm
Fruitport’s Pomona Park Bandshell
...and every Wednesday night
June through August all summer!
 Contact Sue: dancingintosunset@aol.com

This is and has been the hottest ticket in town. All four performances sell out. This year all tickets were gone five weeks before the shows.

After all the weeks of practice after practice and