

Dancing into Sunset Fruitport 2022 Season Recap

(Dancing into Sunset – Pomona Park Fruitport on Facebook)

By Sue Halter



Dancing with The Carl Webb Band

Fruitport, Spring Lake, and the surrounding communities—you rock! Stand up and applaud yourselves for coming out and enjoying, and supporting, the 6th season of Dancing into Sunset at Fruitport down at Pomona Park, overlooking beautiful Spring Lake.

Our attendance once again increased ten-fold. I am told we are now the place to be on a Thursday night during the summer months in Fruitport. You have embraced an idea I had to bring music and dance back to historical Pomona Park back in 2017 with no budget and a DJ, Impact Entertainment who volunteered their time with only maybe 50 people attending. Where we now, we have an average of 250 coming from all over the area each Thursday night. Military Night was close to 400 people in attendance. And to close out the season, The Scottville Clown Band pushed over 1000 fans for a season total of 4000 plus who came to listen and dance to the live bands.

When I went back to add up all the views from this season, we have had over 85,000 views on posts.

Kicking off this season was much different for me as many know who attended. I lost my soulmate, my life partner, and my best friend of 47 years just a few weeks before the start of the season. My heart hurt every night and will continue to hurt for many years to come.....Little did I realize having Dancing into Sunset Fruitport to keep my mind busy is just what the “doctor” ordered. I have had an entire community to help keep my spirits up and I thank each and every one of you for your kind words, your smiles, and your hugs. It has meant more than you know.

Now to continue..... I had the schedule set. But right before I went to print it and the banners, I had to play musical chairs with the first three dates due to unforeseen scheduling conflicts of the bands. But all worked out, and we started the season with a fill-in band named Static Line.

The Grand Little Big Band had to pull out at the last minute, and Gordon, who is the director of the young band, jumped in to entertain all for the evening. Gordon and his brother, Tom, did a great job. Then The Bourne Bros filled in the second spot on the schedule. Third up was The Silverado Band with Tom Bourne, Woody, and for the first time, MacKenzie, who was introduced to the Dancing into Sunset Fruitport crowd after Cheryl retired last year. From what I understand MacKenzie enjoys our beautiful Pomona Park and the bandshell.

Sonny Boone and the Valk Street Band, who had to cancel last season due to health reasons within the band, had asked if I would save him a spot for the 2022 season, which I did. Many of their followers that came enjoyed their music and wrote nice comments in the Memory Journal.

So far, Mother Nature had been so good to us, but gave me a scare on one of the biggest nights of the season—Military Night on July 7th this year. The forecast was calling for 70% rain two days before, so I had to work on plan B. Even though Dancing into Sunset Fruitport has the Fruitport High School Cafeteria as a rain location, for Military Night too much is going on to move

indoors. So, I was working on rescheduling for the following week. I was so busy calling the Village to see which day the bandshell would be available, contacting the Silverado Band and Woody, checking with others to make sure the reschedule date was open, contacting the new addition to Military night the singing group Voices of Freedom and all their members, and contacting the food vendors. Then, while getting ready to get the word out to all of you, lo and behold.... WHEW! Mother Nature relaxed down to only 4% chance of rain Thursday evening. Boy! I was one happy lady. Now to call all back and say we are on.....(what goes on behind the scenes, most never know.) What a wonderful evening it was indeed for all who

attended. Decorations of red, white and blue. 125 mini flags passed out by the younger generation along with a toy soldier. For those that may of not have had a chance to read the poem in the basket with the soldiers, here it is:

Please take a soldier home and place it somewhere that will remind you to Pray for our men and women serving our country

Your donations given at that time went directly to The Blue Star Mom's to help with the postage to send the items that were collected all week and during the show to the troops. A nice thank you card was received from The Blue Star Mom's, which I read to all during my announcements. We had a Flag Ceremony with the Coast Guard joining us once again by water. William Button, Fernando



The Blue Star Moms at Military Night

Rivero and Blake Fessler joined us on stage to carry their Coast Guard Flag along with the Fruitport Cub and Boy Scout Troop #4023. The Coast Guard members also gave tours of their vessel. I was so proud to see so many veterans walk up this year and stand proudly behind their branch flags as The Voices of Freedom sang their songs. The cupcakes from Orchard Markets and carnations from Spring Lake Floral were a nice added touch that the Cub and Boys Scouts helped to pass out.

Thank you to Pack leader George Kotkowicz for organizing the group, Connor VanDyke, Chris Dyke, Janelle Alldaffer, Elliana Yound, Jordan Lemoine, Lucielle Kelly, Amber Marvin, Samuel Martin, Charlie Martin, Andy Peck, Jude Peck, Liz Anthony, Melissa Anthony, John Anthony, Elijah Bolema,



Voices of Freedom on Military Night

M a t t h e w W i l l i a m s , Windi Sievers. Very special night for all. Can't thank our veterans enough for your service to our country. Without all your strength and courage, I would not have the “freedom”

to put on Dancing into Sunset Fruitport or even be writing this article for all and so much more. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

July 14th brought back The Adams Family Band for Folk/Doo Wop/Classic sounds for the evening. Plus, we had free ice cream and giveaways from Sponsor Doug Heins of State Farm Insurance Spring Lake office.

July 21, YES! No rain! It seems like every year so far when The 6 Pak Band was scheduled, we had rain issues. And once again, this year, the skies got cloudy, the wind kicked up, and big drops started. Oh no! Not again! Only a few headed for their vehicles, because most people could see the storm was just a small front of clouds, which were mostly behind the bandshell, waving hello and saying good-bye with a beautiful rainbow. Thank you, Mother Nature.

Next up on July 28th, The Carl Webb Band came with a great following. The dancers love dancing to all his music. When the crowd asked for an encore, they gladly played another great dancing tune to close the night out. Another nice evening in the park. Mother Nature was on our side this time all night long.

Next, we welcomed the month of August with cloudy skies in the morning but clearing and no threat of rain by afternoon. We came to hear The Sea Cruisers, who returned to play at Dancing into Sunset for the 4th time in six years. They battled traffic and construction traveling from Lansing, which gave us a short delay due to their Bass guitar player really getting caught up in it. But that gave me a little more time to read my announcements, slowly this time. As for those that attend each week, know I was trying to shorten my announcements and read faster so the music can start. Please know how important it is to Dancing into Sunset Fruitport that I make sure each week to thank the sponsors, because without them none of us would be enjoying this free event each summer. Before I leave August 4th, I want to add that Dancing into Sunset was informed that one of the regular attendees was all set to come with friends for another evening of listening to the music, when he was called to the heavens just a few hours before the dance started. My heart went out to his wife and close friends, since I know all too well what his wife was experiencing. Never take anyone's life for granted. And don't shy away from those you have coupled up with, because that person who is now single needs your friendship now more ever.



Coast Guard boat on Spring Lake on Military Night

August 11th brought in a new band, Bucket O' Maybe's (BOM), who has been waiting patiently for a spot to open up to play for the community. I like to keep two to three “transit Thursdays”, as I call them, to give an opportunity for those who come up and give me band suggestions for those spots to hear their band play at Dancing into Sunset. It is because of so many of your suggestions that I have the great line up each summer. So, as long as all the returning bands



The Silverado Band

want to come back and play, I will work during the off season to get them scheduled and booked for the following year. Then I'll work on obtaining those sponsors to come back as well. Bucket O' Maybe's (BOM) seem to be a good fit from all the good comments. Just need remind them to turn down one of the speakers for those sitting close to dance area. I already mentioned it to Jim for next season, since they were requested to fill in one of those transit spots.

On August 18th, we saw the return of Butch Grenell and the Unbreakable Pride Band. The was sun setting sooner and sooner, at 8: 42 that night! Yeks! Dark by 9:15. With that said, I did a Facebook poll and a hand raise poll for next season 2023 to see if I should start the August bands at 6:30 p.m. and end at 9:00 p.m. It was unanimous that, yes, I should do so. Which again, when all of you speak, I do my best to listen, and will plan the schedule with the bands at that time slot for the 2023 season for August only.

Feeling so fortunate about the good weather we have had, I mentioned how lucky we have been to have no actual rained out nights. Well, I spoke too soon, because Thursday August 25th, which was our Wesco Popcorn Night, the skies just would not relent all day and let the sun come out. It rained and rained. It just stopped a bit, but was so humid, and the grass at Pomona Park was soaked as well as the concrete dance area and entertainment set up area. So, the call was made at 3:00 pm, after being on pins and needles all day, to move inside at the new Fruitport High School, which is listed