

**Dancing into Sunset 2026 Season  
Celebrating Tenth Anniversary**

by Sue Halter

Established in May of 2017

Where: Pomona Park – Fruitport, at the Bandshell (93 S. 3rd Ave.)

Times: June and July 7:00 pm to Sunset of course 9:30 pm ish

August 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm ish

Dancing into Sunset is celebrating its Tenth Year! Can you believe it? I sure can't. Where did the time go?

I am simply amazed by the support and dedication of the entire community locally and outside of this community who come to dance and listen to the music (all for free) because of the generosity of the businesses who have stepped in to keep Dancing into Sunset going. So I appreciate the list below beyond words.

Ok, I have to reminisce a bit about the last ten years. Back in 2017 I went to the Village of Fruitport and asked if I could try to bring music and dancing all spring and summer long in Pomona Park if I volunteer my time to do so, and they said yes. Back in the beginning I had the guidance and support of Dennis Noreen (who is in Dance Heaven), Pat and Dick Deitz (Dick is also in Dance Heaven—what a great soul who will be missed by so many) and Bill and Carol Chaddock. I started on a Wednesday—May 16, 2017—with Impact Entertainment DJ Megan and Tom, who volunteered their time to help get me going. Yep, it was cold and even snowed in May. But still had about fifty people each week, and I was thrilled to see that many come out. Fast forward to moving to a Thursday (to not compete with Music on the Grand in Grand Haven but complement them) so dancers could attend both. This turned out to be the start of the success of Dancing into Sunset and having live bands. If you are a regular you know we have an average two to three hundred people attending. We added Military night with the help of The Fruitport Lions Club, who donates their flags each year so we can honor all the Military Veterans and active duty members and the local Boy Scouts and their leaders. As well as the United States Coast Guard we probably have a good five hundred in attendance that night! Then comes the last night with the Scottville Clown band who brings in even more while they entertain in their musically “clowny” way.



Over the ten years we have celebrated birthdays, anniversaries, and sadly said good-bye to loved ones and regulars who have graduated to heaven.

We have had challenges of losing power an hour before showtime thanks to Mr. Squirrel who didn't listen to mom not to climb on the electric wires. Ouch, rest in peace little squirrel. We have had threatening storms, some hitting and some not. Oh how Mother Nature can make it a tough day of decision making. Our friendly flying geese, oh my, wanting to join in but just don't get it they have to clean up after themselves, nope they leave that for me and my helper Bill. Thank you Bill! I have to do a better job training those

geese, ha ha!!

Through it all we have a community with a huge heart who come together every Thursday night for dancing or just sitting and listening to their favorite bands and being introduced to some new ones that are suggested by you. I have helpers who step in when they can to help set up and take down which I so appreciate. Those that have posted on Facebook, which started with Diane Campbell, who is greatly missed and in Dance Heaven—to Kate Holtrop, who is going to be a married woman before the end of the season, and has passed the torch to me. Yeks! But this year her sister Kim will be taking that over—whew I am so glad, thank you Kim! Kate and her sister Kim and brother Caleb have also taken photos and videos as well as Leo Valdez who has joined Dancing into Sunset a few years back. What a team we make! I can't thank all of you enough. We made it Ten Years!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



In order to make all this possible each year none of us would be in Pomona Park on a Thursday during the summer without the backing of the sponsors which I can't thank enough. When the season ends in August I already have most the band line up set for the next season. Then after the first of the year in February I started contacting and sending out sponsorship letters hoping all would return, and I approach a few new ones each year who I have heard want to be a part of Dancing into Sunset. Even though our community may be small they have a big heart to support Dancing into Sunset in order to keep it a free event. That is always my goal—to have a place where the community can come together and enjoy a free evening of dance, music, and friendship while watching the sun set in the background.

Please when you visit the following businesses or see their vehicles around town, make sure to say thank you for being a part of Dancing into Sunset Fruitport.

- Hazekamp's Premier Foods
- Norm's Ice Cream
- Sytsema Funeral Home
- Baldwin House – Spring Lake
- M & M Concrete
- Fruitport Charter Township
- Village of Fruitport
- State Farm Insurance Doug Heins
- Spring Lake
- State Farm Insurance Michael Heck
- Grand Haven
- Pincrest Bar and Lanes
- Ashley Robbins MI Insurance Services
- A-Team Construction Co.
- Waypoint Dock and Spirits
- Community Foundation for Muskegon County
- Melching Demolition
- Schap Speciality Machine, Inc
- Deitz House Moving Engineers, Inc.
- Excel Propane
- Overisel Lumber Co. (Formerly Sethco Lumber)
- The Storage Group
- Village Diner
- Shelby State Bank
- Prestige Storage
- LMCU (Lake Michigan Credit Union)
- Muskegon Outlaw's 100
- 46 Bar
- The Summit at Harvey Townhomes

- Sheet Metal Workers Local 7
- Odd Side Ales
- Johnson Auto Sales
- Orion Construction
- Source One Digital
- Orchard Market Fruitport
- Meijer
- Grand Haven Floral
- CSP Printers
- Leppinks Food Centers

Let's welcome to Dancing into Sunset **Tipsy Tomato** all season long, who will have their tent down at the bandshell area with pizza on the spot. Plus, you can order from the menu either at the table or call it in and have them deliver it to the tent.

Our favorite **Carlson Almonds** will be returning and **Happy Matt's Kettlecorn** will fill in when Carlson Almonds is away for a few Thursdays. We also will have the **Fruitport Lions** for one night with their baked goods. Returning is **Wesco Popcorn** night on August 20<sup>th</sup> 2026.



**Military Night July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2026: Smoke and Ashes** will join us once again road side – and on Tuesday August 25<sup>th</sup> **Dakidd Bar-B-Que** will be joining us when the Scottville Clown Band joins us. Now if you are reading this far (as long as the Fruitport Area News has allowed the space) you will know a surprise. One more night has been added to the schedule since Labor Day weekend is a whole week later. So we can get in one more night of music and dancing on Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup> with the Carl Webb Band. BUT a big surprise will also be that night and you will not want to miss it. I have worked so hard in this off season to raise enough funds to cover the regular season plus an added activity to say Thank you to all the community and the sponsors for supporting Dancing into Sunset. Almost threw in the towel a few times but I don't give up easy. As of this writing, the final details are still being worked out so stay tuned and watch for the schedules to come out!

Those that attend Dancing into Sunset know that a Memory Journal is passed around each Thursday night to have entries made of the night. Some like to share memories of the original Pavilion that was on the water. Some like to comment on their favorite band playing or that they are celebrating a birthday or anniversary etc. Bottom line: this Memory Journal and all your entries will be a part of Fruitport's history for the future generations to read. So please don't be shy and when you see the Memory Journal being passed around do be a part of history in the making. You can even bring a photo and paste it in the Journal, as well, of one of your nights at Dancing into Sunset to be preserved in the Journal.

Would like to also recognize all the help I receive throughout the season putting down and cleaning up the shredded rubber, etc. Gary, Bill & Carol, yet another Bill, and the extra help during Military Night, Ken, Rosalie, and Tami. Rex and Shirley, who provide the music during the band breaks if needed. Couldn't do this without their help. (continued on reverse)