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Membership Form - CLICK HERE OR ABOVE!

FLOATING CROWBAR IN IRELAND
L to R: Don Thomsen, Rick Rubin, Morgan Andersen, and James Hunter
(They have won prizes there!)

Floating Crowbar Virtual Concert
Our next SFS Zoom Event: Saturday March 13, 7PM

Authentic Irish tunes! The best of traditional Irish songs!

What better way to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day than with Spokane’s very own Irish wizards!

The perineal Irish band - playing jugs reels and songs from the many counties of Ireland.

So dress in green. Get ready to tap your toes or even jump up and dance!

In the meantime, Floating Crowbar has a very nice website. They have snippets of their music, bios of the guys, information about their Irish instruments, and more. And, for your long Covid-19 hours at home needing something to do, they have a great blog about their many adventures in Ireland. Floatingcrowbar.com. And, here’s one more gem—St. Patrick’s Day 2020 at Don’s!

See you all Saturday the 13th!
**Support Folklore Society Business Members**

Business memberships not only provide valuable support to SFS, but the businesses receive extra benefits. New business members are listed monthly in the newsletter and have links on our website: www.spokanefolklore.org.

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**About Footnotes**

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Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Articles from the membership are welcome and appreciated! Copy may be edited for space or clarity.

**SFS BOARD MEMBERS**

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Acting Secretary: Sylvia Gobel  
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**SFS Valentines Concert Review**

*By Sylvia Gobel*

Thanks to the 40 people who attended the SFS Valentines Zoom Concert on Feb 13. Because of Zoom we were happy to see participants zooming in from Sandpoint and Wallace, Idaho and from Arizona.

Jenny Edgren entertained us with fun songs and sing a longs about love and chocolate.

Many people danced to beautiful waltzes played by Arvid Lundin, Carla Carnegie and Tom Carnegie.

The program concluded with delightful Brazilian Choro music presented by Dan Gore and Kent Riggs.

Chat time was scheduled before and after the concert.

We encourage you to invite friends and family to these events and if you would like to perform at a future event, let us know!

And remember, our event on March 13 will feature Floating Crowbar.

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**Fall Folk Festival 2020 and 2021**

Please enjoy the 35 performances that are on the Fall Folk Festival website celebrating our 2020 Festival. We are happy to report that people are still enjoying these wonderful performances. Views have increased on an average of 22 percent over the past 2 months. Let’s keep those statistics going up.

Go to www.spokanefolkfestival.org to re-watch some of your favorites or to enjoy some performances you may have missed.

We have reserved the 2nd weekend of November at Spokane Community College for our 2021 Festival, contingent of course upon State regulations regarding live gatherings. We hope to be able to present live performers on Nov 13 and 14th, 2021.
The Spokane community was first introduced to contra dancing in the late 1970s and early 1980s. During this time, many contra dancers were also enthusiastic about folk and swing dancing. Their instructor, Cathy Dark, made these dances fun and accessible with her kind and inviting approach.

Cathy grew up in Spokane. Public education played an important role in her journey in dance, first as a participant and later as a teacher. Encouraged by her sixth grade physical education teacher, Cathy participated in an all-city square dance class held every Saturday morning at Havermale Junior High School. The free classes were sponsored by Silver Spurs, an organization led by District 81 physical education supervisor Red Henderson. An avid square dancer, Red, in 1946 patterned Silver Spurs after a similar program started by Lloyd Shaw at Cheyenne High School in Colorado. By the time Cathy joined in 1966, Silver Spurs had grown substantially in the twenty years since it began. Hundreds of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders danced every Saturday morning. In addition, a Junior group met in the afternoons where they learned square, ballroom and folk dances and then performed throughout the schools and community events.

Cathy and her group even traveled to the 1969 National Square Dance Convention in Seattle. She then joined the Senior group of 10th, 11th and 12th graders who were often taught by experts brought in by Red including Gordon Tracie (Scandinavian), Dennis Boxall (Eastern European) and Ed Long (ballroom).

Cathy thrived in this environment so much so that she approached her high school guidance teacher about dancing in college. She was told that she was “too old” having no experience in ballet or modern dance. With her father’s advice, Cathy attended Central Washington College where she majored in home economics with the intent of teaching. While at Central she continued to follow her passion by joining a small on campus square dance club. She also took the only dance class available, Basic Rhythm, a required course for Physical Education majors. The class proved important for her development; she learned how to break down dance moves and teach them to a wide range of people.

Like so many in our own folk dance community, Spokane Expo 74 played an important role in Cathy’s life-long career. A friend encouraged her to see a performance by the University of Oregon folk dance ensemble. She was “shocked that you could do dancing like that in college.” Moved by the performance, she immediately approached the director of the ensemble about transferring, but U of O did not have a degree in home economics. Undeterred, Cathy returned to Central Washington, took way too many classes at once and graduated a year early.

(Continued on page 4)
She then entered the University of Oregon and in two years received an additional degree in Dance. During that time, she joined the folk dance ensemble and started teaching ballroom dancing. Relying on her Silver Spurs experience, she offered a kind of swing dancing many had not seen before. Her ballet teacher after seeing her teach said “You really can dance.”

After graduation, one of her professors wrote a grant through the School Assembly Services for her to demonstrate and teach folk and square dancing to elementary through high school students throughout the Midwest. For nine months, she taught five days a week, two assemblies a day. It was hard work. She laughed when she recounted that she went through three partners. But it was here that she honed her skills as a teacher. When you have a bunch of elementary school kids, you learn quickly how to teach succinctly and quickly. And she also learned another skill: teach what your audience is interested in. In this case, it was line dancing influenced by the film Saturday Night Fever. The high school students loved it!

Cathy returned home to Spokane in summer of 1978. In the course of the next few years, Cathy played an integral role in creating or growing several dance organizations including Big Foot Folk Dancers, Schastye Folk Ensemble, Silver Spurs and Dancing After Dark.

In the summer of 1978, Cathy met Sylvia Gobel and together with six or eight others began folk dancing outdoors weekly on the floating dock in Riverfront Park. Thus, was born the Big Foot Folk Dancers.

Sylvia had also grown up in Spokane. After graduating from Western Washington College and spending some time in Europe, she returned to Spokane with an interest in folk dancing. Because she did not have access to music specific to these dances, she and a few other dedicated dancers drove to Pullman weekly for a folk dance offered by a WSU sponsored club. Once she met Cathy the weekly drive ended.

Cathy provided the music and many of the dances for the Big Foot Folk Dancers. As Cathy once noted, “I am a jack of all trades and master of none!” She was a perfect match, drawing on her diverse repertoire of Eastern European, German, Scandinavian, South American, clogging and ballroom dances. Once the weather turned, Big Foot left the dock at Riverfront Park and went inside. The first venue was the Sinto Senior Center and next was Joseph Pineau Center. The summer and indoor weekly dances attracted as many as 30 dancers at a time, as well as spectators who often invited the dancers to demonstrate at community events.

Cathy had participated in performance dance ensembles her whole life, first with Silver Spurs and then later at University of Oregon, but Big Foot was a recreational group. Cathy saw the need and there was interest among some of the dancers to perform.

In the late spring of 1980, Susan Dankovich moved to Spokane from Michigan for an occupational therapy internship. After the internship she was offered a job; through a friend, she became roommates with Cathy. Susan had danced all her life. She had gone to Poland with her college dance ensemble. She along with Sylvia and others encouraged Cathy to organize and direct Spokane’s first
folk dance ensemble called Schastye, meaning joy in Russian. As Susan later observed, "Cathy created a big version of Silver Spurs."

Schastye performed throughout the region for the next 15 years. Cathy’s enthusiasm carried the day. Even though they had been practicing for under four months, Cathy signed the group up to dance at the region’s largest public event, the Northwest Folk Festival in spring of 1981. While most of the dancers were concerned, Cathy wasn’t! They had great success and returned to the festival for several years. The group performed German and Eastern European dances as well as clogging and swing dances. Schastye performed in community events throughout the Northwest. Their culminating event was a trip to Dagestan in the Soviet Union led by Cathy in the spring of 1990.

When Cathy returned to Spokane in 1978, she was approached by Silver Spurs to assume the directorship of the organization. Long-time director and founder Red Henderson had failing health and while the organization had tried to transition leadership with others, it wasn’t until Cathy was hired that this change successfully occurred. Her long-time association with Silver Spurs and her rich background in a variety of dance forms helped the organization move in a new direction. Over the course of several years, Cathy brought new life into the organization, even taking a group of students to Europe. In 1990, she passed on the directorship to Susan Dankovich who has continued to lead the Spurs to this day.

Many contra dancers learned to swing dance by taking classes offered by Cathy. In the fall of 1978, she taught disco and ballroom classes through Spokane Parks and Rec but quickly realized that she could offer a more diverse selection by going out on her own. Through Dancing After Dark, Cathy offered classes in ballroom, swing, disco, and country swing at the Grotto ballroom on Browne Ave. She drew upon her past experiences in Silver Spurs and University of Oregon. Many participants remember fondly the afterclass dancing at local bars such as Washboard Willie’s and the Tin Ear as well the big band dances at the Davenport Hotel. Cathy also taught swing across the Northwest, working with bands like Casey MacGill’s Planet Lounge Orchestra and Madame Orchid.

When Cathy turned 30, she reached a milestone: either she had to figure out how to make money in the dance world or turn to computer programing. In the fall of 1984, she entered a master’s program in dance anthropology at the Laban Center for Dance, Goldsmith College in London. She followed up on an earlier contact she had made after her Silver Spurs trip, and returned to Romania and traveled with the dance ensemble. She then wrote her thesis on the role of dance in a Romanian community.
In the summer of 1987, Cathy returned to Spokane and resumed her duties with Silver Spurs, Dancing After Dark, and Schastye. But after the European spring tour of 1990 with Schastye, she was hired by Oregon State University to teach dance.

For nearly 30 years, Cathy made her mark at Oregon State University teaching ball room, basic rhythm, and more. She transformed the country western swing classes expanding the classes offered from one to ten classes a term. She was involved in several student-based dance clubs. Her classes were housed within the Activities Department. Competing with outdoor sports and other interests, over 1,000 students danced each term. She also started a student performing group called Cool Shoes which continues to this day.

Teaching has always been at the core of Cathy’s world. Remember she first learned to teach through the Basic Rhythms class at Central Washington. At OSU, she taught that class to Physical Education majors. And she became the editor of *Dance Awhile*, the text book used nationally by all teachers for this class. Two years before she left OSU, she was finally able to push through a teacher training program for dance.

The good news is that Cathy is back in Spokane with her husband. And she has immediately jumped in by offering country western line dances on line as well as being on staff for the 2020 Lady of the Lake Fall weekend. Cathy has never been afraid of putting herself out there. This kind person with her accessible and inviting approach has brought many of our community into the dance world.

**Thanks to our Donors**

Many members have contributed to the Spokane Folklore Society this year in spite of the pandemic. We thank you all!

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$25-$49
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- Marya Nowakowski
- Dan Gore
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(And may you be in heaven before the Devil knows you’re gone!)
The "Londonderry Air" is an Irish air that originated in County Londonderry, Ireland. It is popular among the American Irish diaspora and is well known throughout the world. The tune is played as the victory sporting anthem of Northern Ireland at the Commonwealth Games. The song "Danny Boy" uses the tune, with a set of lyrics written in the early 20th century.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia