SFS Members & Friends Social
Wednesday August 4, 6:30-8:30
Upper Manito Park

The board of SFS invites members, past members and friends to our annual Member Meeting and Social on Wednesday August 4 at Upper Manito Park starting at 6:30. Come see friends in the safety of the outdoors. Bring chairs and your dinner. We will have the Jam Band members playing informally as well as visiting for the first time in over a year and a half. In addition, Sally Jablonsky and Milo of the Pony Club will give a concert of old-time fiddle tunes and songs. Also, you will get to meet our new board members for this season.

You can renew your SFS memberships at the Social, too. By signing up then, you will qualify for raffles - winners that night will receive musical CDs, dance lessons and more! It is all free and will be great fun!

Directions to Upper Manito Park:
Upper Manito Park is at the southern end of Manito Park. It borders 25th Ave and Tekoa. The easiest way to get there is to drive up Grand and turn west on 25th Ave. You may also drive up Bernard or even Monroe and turn east on 25th. In both cases continue onto 25th until you see the park on the north side of the street. There is plenty of parking behind the playground. We have reserved the small shelter in order to have electricity for our concert and announcements. But unless there is rain, bring chairs or towels to sit in the grass.

Memberships are Open!
Renew yours for our 2021-2022 Season at the social, see above, or online any time.

Since we have decided not to offer printed newsletters, we will end the choice of printed or digital memberships. The board has decided that individual memberships are $25 and family memberships are $40. Other categories like sustaining remain the same.

We already have two categories of new memberships covered!
Galen Chamberlain is our first ‘Hero‘ on the new season giving $100 in addition to his renewal membership. He has been a member of SFS for nearly 15 years! Thanks Galen, your donation helps to cover costs like insurance, post box fees, computer updates and office supplies.

And…
Several business have had a wonderful relationship with SFS - supporting our efforts and in turn our members have supported them. Let’s welcome our newest business violin maker Geoff Seitz who lives in St. Louis. Forty years ago, Geoff lived in Spokane and played a key role in the music and dance scene. This past spring we featured an article about Geoff. Not only does he make violins but he sells other violins and instruments. Need help or advice just email Geoff at Seitzviolins@sbcglobal.net.

SFS Mission
The purpose of the Spokane Folklore Society shall be to promote a broader community awareness and involvement in cultural folk traditions, such as music, dance, and other folk arts through such social and educational events as concerts, dances, festivals, workshops, lectures, demonstrations, and newsletters.
www.spokanefolklore.org
Vaccination Policy for SFS Dances

Your SFS board has decided to resume dancing at the Woman’s Club on Wednesday September 22. It has been a long time since we danced and we are so looking forward to seeing and dancing with everyone!

In order to make your experience as safe as possible, we will be requiring all participants including dancers, musicians and callers to show proof of vaccination before entering the hall. This decision involved a great deal of discussion and investigation. Currently the guidelines for the state of Washington allow those who are vaccinated to be in doors without a mask and in close quarters with one another. However, those who are not vaccinated must be masked and must remain socially distanced (six feet) from one another. Obviously, this guideline doesn’t work for the kind of dancing we do. We are also concerned about the recent variants resulting in increases in covid cases especially among those not vaccinated. And finally, other communities (for example Portland) are requiring proof of vaccinations. We want you to feel safe while dancing inside.

In the coming weeks, we will be developing a strategy to accommodate the proof of vaccination decision at which time we will share that plan with you; so, everyone will be prepared for our September dance.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments please address it to any of our hard-working board members. Thank you for understanding our decision and know that we are actively monitoring the situation and will make adjustments in our goal to provide a safe and fun dance environment if and when necessary.

See you dancing! 

— The Board of Spokane Folklore Society

Mark your calendars for a Special Dance:

FRANNIE MARR will be calling to AUDREY KNUTH and LARRY UNGER, aka AUDACIOUS

Wednesday September 29th at the Woman’s Club Hall, 7-10 pm. $10/$8 members.

Proof of vaccination required.

Lady of the Lake Fall Music and Dance Weekend.

Fall registration is open!

The incomparable Camp N-Sid Sen is the place, 1-3 October, 2021, is the time.

The ever-buoyant Frannie Marr will be calling to Audacious, Audrey Knuth and Larry Unger, a tremendously versatile, world-class duo you may have danced to before in Spokane and know you don’t want to miss.

We’ll also be dancing to a new local band Banna Damhsa (Irish Gaelic for “Dance Band”). Jan Clitzer, devotee of Celtic culture and music and passionate fiddler teams up with Dave Beach with his driving guitar and mandolin, and Char Beach with her rich guitar, harp, bodhran and voice. Join Char for a song circle during the weekend.

Back in Spokane after a long career organizing the Social Dance Program at Oregon State University, Cathy Dark will lead a variety of social dances. Hambo, old time waltz, Romanian, or even cowboy line dance are possibilities.

Lady of the Lake Fall Weekend runs from Friday Dinner through Sunday morning, including two evening dances, two morning dances, numerous dance and music workshops, five hot meals, abundant snacks...

Proof of full COVID-19 vaccination completed by September 17th 2021 must be presented at camp. Currently we are planning a fully-enrolled camp. If conditions change and enrollment must be trimmed, early paid registrations will have priority.
The Fall Folk Festival has reserved space at Spokane Community College for Nov 13 and 14th. We are currently accepting applications although we do not know what state guidelines will be for mass gatherings in the Fall. We hope to be able to host a live festival at full or modified capacity. If this is not possible, we will contact everyone who has applied with details about a Virtual Festival. Performers will be asked to submit a video. Applications are available on our website www.spokanefolkfestival.org or call 509 828-3683 and leave your address to receive an application in the mail.

Our membership contest proved too hard! No one was able to identify these musicians so we turned to some "old timers" many of who were actually in the photo for help - including Judy McClarin, Paul Kinderman, Geoff Seitz, Dawn Holiday, and Don Thomsen. With all that help, we were able to identify everyone!!

First row, left to right: Judy McClarin - mandolin, Andy Miller - mandolin, Paul Kinderman - mandolin, Bob Childs - violin, Dawn Holiday - violin, and Daral Carroll - violin.


All these musicians had gathered to celebrate the wedding of Jack and Nancy Lindberg in 1979 at the Church in Wildwood, Sagle, Idaho near Lake Pend Oreille.

Many of these musicians played significant roles in the foundation of traditional music and dance in Spokane. Andy, Paul, Tom, and Barb were part of the Deliverance Center Gospel Band; Paul was its leader as well as one of the founders of the Spokane Folklore Society. Linda and Catherine were both early presidents of SFS. (as was Nancy Lindberg). Judy, Darla, and Joe (as well as Jack) were part of our first contra dance band, Irish Jubilee. Bob was our first contra dance caller. Dawn later played in multiple old time bands and singing groups. Kathy is a proud highland piper.
Callers Corner
I had an amazing experience on June 19, 2021. I attended a contra dance!!! And I actually called the dance!!

The Palouse Folklore Society (PFS) in Moscow, ID, decided to run their summer series, from May to August this year, with increased hand washing stations, fans in every window and doors open. They encouraged dancers to come who were vaccinated (86% of attendees reported that they were). In the summer they have held their dances at the Blaine Schoolhouse for at least three decades. This is a delightful former one room schoolhouse located about 8 miles south of Moscow. PFS has spent many hours over the past years refinishing the floor, putting in a new roof and painting, so this venue is a beautiful and very fun place to dance! I would encourage everyone to attend one of their summer dances!

Approximately 35-40 people attended the June dance, including several SFS dancers from Spokane and Coeur d’Alene. The band playing for the dance was Arvid Lundin and Deep Roots. I would imagine that most of you are familiar with this spectacular Celtic band. The band members are Dave and Char Beach, and Cheri Lyman, in addition to Arvid. The tunes they play are fast-paced and fun to dance to. They have been a premier contra dance band for many years. They also perform at many local venues.

It was so wonderful to see a roomful of dancers smiling, laughing, whooping it up and enjoying themselves! At 10:30, people wanted to keep on dancing! And listening to the band’s amazing tunes reminded me of what I have been missing for the last 15 months! The contra dance community is on it’s way back! I can hardly wait for dances to resume in Spokane!

Nora Scott

Forty Years Ago——

Dancing in the Woods: Priest River
By Penn Fix

In 1981, twenty-six contra dances occurred in several small communities north and northeast of Spokane. These dances, mostly called by Penn Fix, were hosted by local organizers and musicians who loved the music and dance and how these two factors help to nurture community in places like Rice, Sandpoint, Creston, Bonner’s Ferry, Republic. And especially Priest River.

Dancing in Priest River centered around two friends, Bob Elliott and Cliff Stansell. Both were musicians; both moved to the Priest River area in the 1970s attracted by the “serenity” of the land; both worked hard on that land; both built their own cabins; both met their spouses and raised their families there. Remarkably, amidst all of this, they found time to play music and for a short time in the early 1980s they helped to create a dynamic dance scene in the woods of Priest River. This is their story.

Bob Elliott grew up in the Twin Cities, MN and attended the same high school as Garrison Keilor. He moved into Minneapolis in 1965 and lived in the “West Bank”, a part of the city that bordered the Mississippi. He attended the University of Minnesota and worked as a lab tech building neuro physics equipment that was sold all over the world. In what he later called “his double life” Bob also played guitar in jug bands. The “West Bank” was a hot bed of
creativity, arts, and music. There Bob met and played with Pop Wagner, John Berquist, and Bob Douglass (of Powder Milk Biscuits Band fame.)

A friend in his lab invited him to drive his stuff out to San Francisco. Bob had lots of friends from Minnesota who had moved to California so he was sure of place to stay. While there he got a call from his parents who encouraged him to stop on the way back in north Idaho to see a piece of property they were thinking of purchasing. When he arrived in Priest River area he was “smitten” by the beauty of the land. He actually described the initial experience as being “blindsided by the mountains and lakes; the clear air and clear water.” Returning to Minneapolis, he gave notice and by the fall of 1969 was headed back to Idaho. This life changing decision, he later recalled, was “strongly instinctive.” He was “fed up with the Vietnam era politics” and “really tired of the Minnesota culture where much was said and little was done.” Pragmatically, he didn’t miss the mosquitoes and humidity of the upper Midwest either!

Once in Priest River, Bob realized that his current skill set as a lab technician was not in high demand. His first job was splitting cedar posts and rails in Nordman, Idaho. Bob admitted that work in north Idaho was “hit and miss.” Eventually he would find work as a diamond core driller in mineral exploration that took him to remote areas in Alaska, Colorado, Montana, and north Idaho for long periods of time in the summer and then return to Priest River in the fall through the spring. But when he first came to Priest River, he would drive down on the weekends to Spokane to volunteer at the Provincial Press, a counter culture magazine. (The press first called Spokane Natural had been started by Russ Nobbs in 1968. It survived as the Provincial Press from 1970 to 1972). There he met his first wife, Sally Hawkins. Together they purchased their own land in Priest River and built their cabin.

Throughout the first few years living in Priest River, Bob had difficulty finding anyone to play music. That of course changed when he met Cliff Stansell. Cliff grew up in Gold Beach, a small Oregon coastal town just north of Eureka, CA. He first learned to play guitar and later banjo and mandolin. Not surprising, both his dad and aunt were musicians. His mother was a self-taught botanist who passed her love and knowledge of the woods to her son. Cliff attended Southern Oregon University in Ashland, OR but dropped out after a couple of years; just in time to drafted. He served his time as a MP in Washington, DC where he learned that he was “not a city boy.”

After military service Cliff visited friends in north Idaho where he found the land “pristine and beautiful.” He moved to Priest River in 1974. The following year he reconnected with Betsy whom he had met at a folk festival in Eureka. Her family had decided to leave California and move to Maine. However, they left too late in the year and were forced to stop in north Idaho. They never went any further east. With her three brothers and sister, Betsy and Cliff eventually bought 135 acres and built four homes including their own log cabin. Cliff worked as a surveyor for ten years and then with his GI funding running out entered a two-year apprenticeship program at Spokane Community College to make saddles. For the next 25 years, he hand-crafted saddles, many taking two or three years to finish; he made 75 in that time period. He also ran a woodlot management program using teams of horses to help remove the fallen trees.

Self-described as a quiet man, Cliff made a decision that would change his life. And Bob Elliott’s too. Like Bob, Cliff missed playing music with others who shared his passion and interest. He had heard of a guitar player up in Quartz Creek and he decided to pay him a visit. Bob later recalled that Sally had been looking out the kitchen window and asked if he knew anyone who drove a white Jeep. He said no and she replied, “Well you are about to because he is unloading his instruments and headed for the door.” Thus began a collaboration in 1975 that has lasted a lifetime.

Bob and Cliff were kindred spirits. Bob remembered,” We loved this lifestyle especially with the music draped over it. Traditional music played by people who worked hard all day and picked up an instrument later that night and had enough energy to play.”
Bob and Cliff started by playing a lot of old-time music. At the time, Cliff played mandolin and banjo. While he had a fiddle which he had received from an old timer named Buck Bessie back in Oregon, he didn’t start playing until Bob introduced him to a regional fiddler Roy Simmons. Bob had met Roy near Oroville, Idaho while working in a cedar mill. He heard of an old guy salvaging cedar for posts and rails who played music; when Bob knocked on his cabin door a cranky voice answered, ”Yeah, come on in.” As Bob later recalled, “Roy glanced at me, spit a wad of snooze into an old coffee can and said, ’Do you play guitar?’ Bob replied, ”Yeah, a little.” Roy asked, ”Do you have it?” Bob replied, ”Yeah.” And Roy barked out, ”Well go get it’ and with that he pulled out his fiddle. For several months, Bob holed up with Roy, doing little else than working cedar by day and listening to Roy’s stories of growing up on a farm in the Palouse in the 1930s and of course backing him up on his fiddle until the late fall when the big snowstorms “ran us out!” Eventually Roy made his way up to Bonner county where he met Cliff and gave him some tips about playing the fiddle. Cliff latter admitted that Roy was “loose and sloppy on the fiddle” but at the time Roy’s presence gave Cliff the fiddle bug and he never looked back. Over the years, he became a gifted fiddler getting tips from folks like Roger Muat from Spokane. Bob admitted that “our main connection to the outside world was radio. We listened to folk music shows from the Canadian Broadcasting Company and Spokane Public Radio.” Cliff and Bob expanded their repertoire especially Celtic tunes from Spokane shows like “Roots and Branches” hosted by Joe Mincks and Joann Jacobus as well as one hosted by Geoff Seitz. In the end, Cliff admitted that he had become “half way fanatical about Celtic music.”

Penn Fix drove up from Spokane to call most of these dances. Cliff recommended the Settlement School east of town of Priest River. Built in 1923, the brick school house served a community of Italian immigrants who had first come to the area to build the railroad and then returned with their families. The area was first called the Italian Settlement and shortened to the Settlement. The school provided a one room school house education for nearly two played together regularly, mostly for themselves or their friends. Bob remembered fondly, “Sometimes during bad winters, we’d be snowed in and I’d ride a horse to Cliff and Betsy’s place to spend the night and play music.” Bob hoped to expand the interest in old time music and culture and formed a non-profit organization called PATHS (Pend Oreille Arts, Traditions and Home-Life Skills). The town of Priest River, sick and tired of the drunken brawls that occurred around their Logger Days Festival changed the festival to something more family friendly. Bob and PATHS programed the subsequent Huckleberry Festival for several years. In 1980, he brought out Grey Larsen, Malcom Dalglish and Pete Sutherland, a formidable Irish and American band of the era. That particular festival got Cliff thinking about more public events involving music. That fall, Bob was dragged to a contra dance in Sandpoint in which Seattle caller and musician Sandy Bradley was playing. Bob admitted that “prior to that dance, you couldn’t drag me onto any dance floor; my partner craftily tricked me into trying by telling me that everyone else is having way too much fun to notice if you mess up or not; so get out there and dance.” And so he did and “loved it and never looked back.” Bob loved the dancing but he also remembered the music and most importantly that “the music we played was really dance music; it then all clicked.”

For the next three years (1981-1983), Bob and Cliff organized and played for monthly dances in Priest River; first at the Settlement School and then at the Blue Lake Grange. Penn Fix drove up from Spokane to call most of these dances. Cliff recommended the Settlement School east of town of Priest River. Built in 1923, the brick school house served a community of Italian immigrants who had first come to the area to build the railroad and then returned with their families. The area was first called the Italian Settlement and shortened to the Settlement. The school provided a one room school house education for nearly two

(Continued on page 7)
decades. However, by the time Cliff and Bob had discovered it, it had fallen into disrepair though managed by and rented out by Knights of Columbus. The roof leaked; the bathrooms didn’t work all the time; the drinking water was suspicious if not hazardous; and the building wasn’t always ready to be used. One time Bob and Cliff had to buy five gallons of stove oil to heat up the place; and another time they spent a frantic hour taking down a golden gloves boxing ring that was left up. In spite of these conditions, the Settlement School was perfect for dancing. Once past the doors, a group of stairs led up to a wonderful wood floor and stage bound by windows on both sides of the hall and a high ceiling. It had the feeling of a New England town hall.

And dancing was so fun. Betsy Stansell remembered that there was never a bad turnout. Everyone looked forward to the dance. Bob added that a “surprising section of people” attended the dances. Friends and acquaintances would bring others. Also, dancers from other communities including Spokane, Moscow, Ellensburg, Helena, Nelson, and neighboring Sandpoint traveled through snow storms and rain to dance at the Settlement School (it helped that the county sheriff lived on the same road assuring that the road was always plowed!)

The core of the dancers remained those who lived as Bob noted, “tucked back in the mountains” and woods around Priest River. He remembered them as “creative and interesting folks.” While Betsy was wary of the term “back to landers” as “overused”, many of these people were not born in the area but came from places like California and the west side of Washington and Oregon. They bought land around Priest River. They sought to be self-reliant; not wanting to be dependent on normal supply chains for fuel and food. They grew gardens; built log cabins without electricity. They didn’t go to town often and by the nature of the land, they didn’t live close to one another. The dances were an important part of their lives. Living isolated, the dances provided a way to meet others who were like minded. They didn’t have a lot of money and dances were inexpensive. Betsy recalled, “They loved the dances. Everyone looked forward to them. It gave them something to do. It brought people together; it was fun and social.”

According to Bob, Loretta Decker was a “neighbor, a few miles upstream on Upper Quartz Creek.” Encouraged by a friend, she came just once to a dance at the Settlement School. And it changed her life. She had moved with her eight month old daughter and husband in 1975 from Spokane to a 16 x 16 cabin made of junk lumber that sat on five foot stumps. It was one big room with a sleeping loft. In the winter they would let the fire go out and in the morning they could see their breathe. The water in tea kettle was always frozen. Seeking to “live out of town” in “tranquility”, Loretta raised and home schooled three children while at the same time hauling water up the hill, chopping wood since they had no electricity and tending to a garden. She cooked and canned on the stove in the middle of hot summers. While the work was hard, Loretta remembered the life as “really freeing and exciting.” As she was growing up, she thought of herself as “wimpy” but out in the woods she learned how strong she was. And dancing became part of her new found confidence. When she returned to Spokane for good with her three children in 1983, she sought out the dance community as a single mother. She became a regular dancer at the monthly and later weekly contra dances; and she participated in a dance troupe called Dance Soup that even performed at the Norwest Folklife Festival (“an amazing experience”)

By the time Loretta left Priest River, the dance scene
there was also changing. The Knights of Columbus got suspicious of all the cars in the Settlement School parking lot; they had been charging Bob and Cliff $40 a dance but decided they were making too little so they increased the rent to $200. Little did they know that dancers were charged $2 a person, $3 for a couple and kids were free. Since there wasn’t a volunteer, money was not collected at the gate but instead everyone was on an honor system with some never paying. Cliff hoped to make enough to pay for strings that he wore out at every dance. And Penn often offered to take nothing. As a result, Cliff and Bob moved the dances north of Priest River to the Blue Lake Grange that Bob described as “a nice quaint old place; but it was long and narrow and thus had lousy acoustics.” Never the less there were some memorable dances held there.

For the August 1982 Huckleberry Festival, Bob invited his friend Pop Wagner from Minnesota to play and sing in several concerts held in the town. Later that evening, a dance was held at the Blue Lake Grange with Pop playing and calling along with Fat Streak O’Lean, Bob and Cliff’s band with Pat McClean. Eric Johnson, one of the Spokane regulars who drove up to Priest River, recalled the evening. “It was too darn hot so we danced outside the hall for the first half.” Later the Spokane based dance troupe Schastye demonstrated some clogging; followed by more dancing with Pop and Penn Fix taking turns calling.

In some ways this dance was the pinnacle. While dancing in Priest River continued until December 1983, it became harder and harder for Bob and Cliff to find the time to devote to organizing the dances. Cliff was living part time in Spokane learning to make saddles; Bob was away drilling in remote areas like Alaska. As Bob noted many of the original back to landers moved away after ten years or so. They were replaced with people with different agendas like the survivalists who had little interest in the dances. When no one appeared willing to step in to help, Bob and Cliff decided to stop the dances.

Cliff left Priest River in 2008 to care for his mother back in Gold Beach. He immediately formed a band and he continues to play for contra dances up and down the Oregon coast. He also has completed three albums recently featuring both fiddle tune and songs all written by himself. Betsy stayed in Priest River; content to live on the land she dearly loves. Bob left Priest River for Spokane in 1986 but returned to Priest River with his wife Janny and their son in 1992. He recently reflected on his long-ago decision to move from the city to north Idaho. “We were eager to be understudies of the local culture and the way of life; I like to say that ‘while I wasn’t born here, I got here.’” Bob and Janny live on 50 acres of that “pristine” land where he plays a little music, tells some great stories, and occasionally dances in Sandpoint.
In the Good Old Summertime

In the Good Old Summertime. Chorus

In the good old summertime,
In the good old summertime,
Strolling thro’ the shady lanes, with your baby mine.
You hold her and she holds yours
And that’s a very good sign
That she’s your tootsy-wootsy
In the good old summertime.

In the Good Old Summertime

There’s a time in each year that we always hold dear,
Good Old Summertime.
With the birds and the trees-es and the sweet scented breezes,
Good Old Summertime.
When your days work is over, then you are in clover,
And life is one beautiful rhyme,
No trouble annoying, each one is enjoying,
The Good Old Summertime.

In the good old summertime,
In the good old summertime,

Strolling thro’ the shady lanes, with your baby mine.
You hold her and she holds yours
And that’s a very good sign
That she’s your tootsy-wootsy
In the good old summertime.

To swim in the pool, you’d play ’hookey’ from school,
Good Old Summertime.
You’d play ’ring-a-rosie’ with Jim, Kate and Josie,
Good Old Summertime.
Those days full of pleasure, we now fondly treasure,
When we never thought it a crime,
To go stealing cherries, with face brown as berries

Editor’s note: Click here for a nice soundtrack!

Hope that you enjoy a nice summer waltz! — Joy Morgan