SFS Membership Renewals

Spokane Folklore Society Memberships expire August 31. We appreciate your continued support. We are very optimistic that we will be able to resume with concerts and dances in the Fall.

Please send in your memberships to make sure that you continue to receive updates about our upcoming Fall events from the Newsletter and the SFS E-List.

SFS Annual Meeting August 4, 2021

The SFS board is inviting everyone including current SFS members and other supporters to attend our annual meeting August 4. It will be held outside in the park known as Upper Manito Park bordering 25th street on the South Hill. We will start at 6:30 with music and maybe even dance! Bring your chairs and your dinners. Set aside this date. More information will follow in our August newsletter.

Help Support Your Folklore Society with Your Amazon Purchases

by Judy Lungren, SFS Treasurer

Here’s a great way for members to support your favorite nonprofit, the Spokane Folklore Society! When you make a future purchase with Amazon, Amazon in turn will donate a percent of your purchase to SFS. Simply log in to smile.amazon.com, then search for and select “Spokane Folklore Society” from the list of charities. After that, whenever you shop on Amazon, go to smile.amazon.com, and Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases to SFS. It doesn’t sound like a lot, but if enough of our members use this service, then it will really add up. Thanks for supporting your Folklore Society.

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
On May 15, SFS board welcomed 30 people who joined in a great evening of dance and music. Cathy Dark started the party teaching us two country western line dances. Full of stomps and grape vines. It was so great getting up and moving around to music. We then were introduced to three of our four nominees for this year's SFS board: Sylvia Gobel, Gina Claeys, and Cathy Dark. Then we were treated to a wonderful concert from the Pony Club with Sally Jablonsky and Milo Krims. Special guest Ruthie Jablonsky joined in to make for an evening of very tight harmonies with soaring cowboy songs. And Sally showed off her skills playing masterful fiddle. Thanks for everyone and especially Brendan Biels who monitored the Zoom tech stuff behind the scenes.

Gonzaga University Choir Concert
On Sunday May 2 2021 the Gonzaga University choirs presented its Spring Master-works to a largely empty Myrtle Woldson Theater, due to Covid restrictions, however the event was streamed and can be viewed with excellent audio and video at the youtube index [https://youtu.be/zO7uDDGdIqo]. Tim Westerhaus conducted The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass which included members of the Gonzaga music department, and a couple of players from the bluegrass community. Tom Carnegie performed banjo and I performed mandolin. If anyone wants to view just the Bluegrass Mass, open the link and index into the program about 51 minutes (unless you want to view the wonderful Misa Criolla.) The full band credits are:

- Jason Moody, fiddle
- Daniel Gore, mandolin
- Tom Carnegie, banjo
- Mellad Abeid, guitar
- Kim Plewniak, bass

-Daniel Gore
Spokane Folklore Society Fall Folk Festival 2021

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.

Serenade in the Forest
By Dawn Holladay

SFS Membership Contest!

We will start accepting SFS membership renewals in August. In the meantime, here is a fun contest. Identify and locate as many of the musicians in this photo.

The submission with the most, wins a SFS membership for the 2021-2022 season! Extra points for knowing the year and the event and place of this photo too.

Here is a list of many of the musicians: Linda Vineyard, Catherine Brooks, Paul Kinderman, Bob Childs, Darla Carroll, Joe Mincks, Dawn Holladay, Kathy Thomas, Judy McClarin, Tom Mittlebronn, Barb Kuhl and more.

So locate a musician and tell us where they are in the photo. Once you are done, submit your answers to myspokanefolklore@gmail.com. We will announce the winner in our August newsletter. Good luck!
Callers Corner

MY FAVORITE DANCE

By Nancy Staub

When I was asked about my favorite contra dance to call, I thought, “well, that’s a hard question; I have so many!” But for today, here’s my favorite: “United We Dance” by Bob Isaacs.

First, what a great title—I don’t need to say anything more there.

Second, the moves are very satisfying. There are long wavy lines up and down the set to start the dance off. Larks are facing out and Robins are facing in, and everyone is holding hands in an allemande type hold. Then you balance right, then left, then slide right, take hands again, balance left then right, and slide left (hard to explain in words!).

It seems like a complicated sequence, but when you get it and your hands automatically find your neighbors’, it’s all pretty cosmic.

Beginners like this dance, because it elevates their dancing experience to a new level—with familiar moves in a different arrangement and a good sense of community with everyone up and down the set. Experienced dancers like it for the same reasons. There’s also a balance and swing your neighbor, swing your partner, and ends with a star left, where you end up flowing right into those long wavy lines…. This dance flows really well and is energetic, with the balances; it’s a wonderful addition to an evening of dancing.

So, for today, that’s my favorite dance. I hope to be calling it again in the fall!

SFS Facebook Page – Online concerts

Many of our local folk musicians have been presenting mini concerts from their living rooms. These are posted on the SFS Facebook page and the Fall Folk Festival Facebook page. Thanks to Greg and Caridwen Spatz, Lyle Morse, Frankie Ghee, Patrice Webb, Brad Keeler and Steve Schennum.

Bigfoot Dances Again

The Bigfoot Folk Dancers have been spotted dancing outdoors on Karen and Justin's front lawn and driveway. Passers-by noted that it looked like they were having fun! If you should happen to come by on the second and fourth Tuesdays between 6 and 8 you would be welcome to join in (wearing masks and socially distanced).

We're just getting our groove back, re-learning the dances we did before the pandemic.

Call Karen or Justin at 509-327-7862 for directions.

CDSS Online Folk Events

The Country Dance and Song Society has a list of many available online events organized by them or organized by member groups and individuals. Some are free, some ask for donations and some require payment. For the complete list cdss.org/online-events

Here’s a sample of the many offerings: Autoharp and Dulcimer gathering, Caller classes, Waltz party, Musician workshops, Song circles, Solo English Country Dance, Concerts and CD release Parties and more.
For Geoff Seitz a broken violin neck changed his life. Little did he know that when he stopped into Glen Stockton’s shop to inquire about repairing his violin that he would end up staying in Spokane for nearly five years. And while in Spokane, he helped to establish the foundation of music and dance that continues to this day.

Geoff grew up in St. Louis, Missouri where he played drums, piano, and guitar. His father played fiddle and mandolin. He too began playing fiddle while listening and playing on Friday afternoon’s old time music sessions on the campus of University of Missouri St. Louis. While at this university, he met Chris German; together they jumped into old time music; and traveled to festivals in the summer like the one held in Galax, Virginia in 1974. In the summer of 1977, the two were headed to the Northwest and ultimately Oregon. When Geoff broke his violin neck in Montana, he headed to Spokane in hopes of finding someone who could repair it. The rest, as they say, is history.

Glen Stockton repaired and built violins. He was the first instructor for the String Instrument Repair program offered at the Spokane Falls Community College; that is the same program that Bob Childs would attend several years later. Besides teaching, Glen operated his own trade shop. When Geoff walked into his shop that summer day, he knew he had found his passion. He was so impressed with the shop and its owner. After returning home to Missouri at the end of summer, Geoff decided “on a whim” to move to Spokane. He dropped out of the university and moved to Spokane with hopes of working with Glen. Not so fast! As Geoff reflected later, Glen turned him down at least ten times. Glen eventually gave in with a little help from the federal government. As Geoff explained, Jimmy Carter expanded federal job assistance programs through the Comprehensive Employment & Training Act; in Geoff’s case, the government paid half of his wage as a trade apprentice. By the way, he made $2 an hour!

For the next two years Geoff worked for Glen learning the craft of repairing and making violins. Glen taught him the importance of the tiniest details; the most important being the kind of glue — in this case horsehair glue. In 1978 Geoff built his first violin. Armin Barnett from Chicago replaced Glen at the SFCC program; Geoff and Armin became friends, sharing in the love of old time music. Armin also helped him with his vocation. After his two-year apprenticeship, Geoff opened his own shop in Spokane.

While in Spokane, Geoff quickly immersed himself into the community. By joining the local food co-op, he was introduced to some of the local folk musicians including Don Tompson and Bill Seims and was soon playing bluegrass music with...
them. He also became involved with the newly formed Spokane Folklore Society; he often found himself alongside Joe Mincks, Catherine Brooks, and Linda Vineyard helping at fundraisers for the co-op such as concerts and dances; on occasion he ran the sound system for the sponsored concerts at the Guild School. He even took classical violin lessons from Helen De La Fuentes.

Joe Mincks and Geoff were approached by the newly formed public radio station to produce a folk music show that was called “Roots and Branches.” This was the precursor of the Dan Maher’s “Inland Folk.” On the show that a controversy arose. Geoff was interviewing Jimmy Borsdorff of Hawkes & Eagles and Jimmy took the opportunity to express his feelings about the Hanford nuclear controversy and Proposition 11. The station felt that Geoff had allowed the interview to get out of hand and Geoff left the show. However, Joe continued it for several years before Dan Maher took it over.

Besides the radio program and helping the Spokane Folklore Society, Geoff also shared his musical talents. At first, he played with local musicians who loved bluegrass and old time music. But his real impact on the dance and music scene occurred when Geoff answered a newspaper ad from a group of Idaho musicians looking for a fiddler. Guitar player Bob Sylvester moved from California to live on some land outside of Coeur d’Alene. He often played with a banjo player from Harrison, Idaho named Marcia Boyer along with a mandolin player, John Goodwin. But they needed a fiddler who could play old time fiddle tunes. (Continued from page 5)
Geoff answered their call; and thus, was born Spokane’s first old time fiddle band (not to be confused with bluegrass, please!). Sweet Water String Band was named for the “sweet” well water found on Bob’s property. For the next three years, this band established itself not only as a concert band but also a dance band. They played for most of the square dances sponsored by the Folklore Society in 1978 – 1980 using as Geoff remembered a club square dance caller from the Spokane Valley. They also played in north Idaho including the Halloween dance at the old Iva Lee Hall in Coeur d’Alene. In the spring of 1980, when Penn Fix began the first regular dance series in Spokane, he hired Sweet Water String Band to play for the square dances that were on 1st Saturdays; the contras with Bob Childs and Irish Jubilee were 3rd Saturdays. The square dances were called by Wild Bill Regan whom Geoff had met during a Pullman, WA dance and recruited to call in Spokane. Geoff and his band were on staff for the early SFS April festivals.

Geoff also traveled throughout the Northwest during his stay in Spokane. He and John Goodwin played at the Northwest Folklife Festival in Seattle. There they formed friendships with the Gypsy Gypo band along with the likes of Armin Barnett and the Hurricane Ridgerunners. The highlight of Geoff’s playing in the area happened when he was asked to play fiddle with Sally Sublette and her band the Hot Potatoes in Boise. They opened for a concert featuring Bill Monroe, the father of bluegrass.

In the fall of 1981, Geoff left Spokane for the “gypsy life” of a traveling musician. He found himself in Europe where he took violin lessons in Italy. After almost two years, he returned home to St. Louis and set up a repair shop in the house he grew up. In 1987, he moved into a commercial building and set up business that included the selling of violins and other instruments as well as the repair of them. Now after thirty years, he continues to run a very successful business selling violins ranging from $350 to antique ones that are over $100,000. It is not unusual for him to sell three hundred instruments a year. One customer marveled at the feel of his store, crowded with instruments on the walls, floors and shelves. Geoff has a reputation for collecting unique even quirky instruments and has all the stories associated with them.

In addition, Geoff builds and sells his own violins. He draws his own patterns; his sound holes and purfling are unique. He has a well-guarded varnish recipe. Besides the way it sounds, Geoff believes, the physical beauty of the violin is really important. The mark of a great violin has a “uniqueness to it. It does something to you when you look at it, like a painting does. It will move you a little bit.” His violins retail in the range of $10,000 to $20,000.

In spite running a business, Geoff has found time to follow his passion of playing old time music and in fact master the fiddle. He specializes in Missouri style playing with according to one reviewer “a relentless bow arm.” In 1985 he returned to the Galax Fiddle Contest and in its fiftieth year, he won the contest over 250 other fiddlers. In 1993, he won the fiddle contest at the Appalachian String Band Festival in Cliff Top, WV. These contests were a “testament to his ferocious skill as a fiddler,” noted another reviewer. Actually though, these contests are not his thing really; playing for dances are. Since returning to St. Louis, Geoff has played and helped organize square and contra dances all over the mid-West. Early on he returned to the Northwest for a regional tour as well as playing at the 20th anniversary of the American Fiddle Tunes Festival in Port Townsend; later, he toured with Bob Childs and Armin Barnet and the Hurricane Ridgerunners along the East coast.

Geoff Seitz continues on a journey that started with a broken fiddle neck 40 years ago in Spokane, WA. Running his store; buying and selling unusual instruments; serving as a resident historian of Missouri style fiddling; organizing weekend festivals; and playing hard and fast for dances.
You're A Grand Old Flag

G C G D7 G Bm
You're a grand old flag, you're a high flying flag;

G D7 G D7 G Ddim D7
And forever in peace may you wave;

Am7 D7 Am7 D7 G B7
You're the emblem of the land I love,
The home of the free and the brave.

Em Em7 A7 D7 Am F7

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

Hope that you enjoy song, Joy a good ol' patriotic song for July!—Joy Morgan