

Much of what sets Paint Creek Folklore Society apart from other folk organizations is captured in a snippet of the title...folklore society. We're a combination "folk music, folk song and traditional dance" group interested in not only participating in all these things but also interested in the lore of all these things. We not only dance, we organize a major dance event, enlist a band and callers, and invite members and the public to join in a splendid evening of movement, musical entertainment and social time with friends old and new.

Our society's first exposure to old-time dancing was at The Galactic Steam Dulcimer Circus organized by Paint Creek member Eddie Damm and held at the Detroit Historical Museum November 13, 1976. PCFS members were invited to this convention-like event by Eddie. Two carloads of members went to participate in the lap and hammered dulcimer jams that were a part of the day's activities. During that gathering, an impromptu dance was organized and led by Dale Johnson from the Detroit area, utilizing the many musicians who had come to the circus. Dale specifically called contra dances as it appeared they fit the era of the music and the limited space in the museum. Many of the Paint Creekers jumped in to dance while the others played as part of the jamming dance band.

Our second exposure came in the early summer of 1977, when PCFS member Joe Vermilion hosted a party at his parent's home in Birmingham and invited members of Paint Creek to join. As the party gathered momentum, Burt Schwartz from the Detroit area (he and Dale Johnson had met at Pinewoods Dance Camp) stepped forward and lined us all up to do a contra dance. Since a few of us had done this before, we joined the contra lines and cheered the group of musicians forming at the head of the set, including Bob Hubbach and John Carter from Paint Creek. Burt had been the Detroit area contact for the Country Dance & Song Society (CDSS) since 1972 and had dance leadership experience from his days at Ball State University and Wayne State University. Burt's instructions commenced, the music filled the air and away we danced. It was an immediate hit with everyone and we sought more of it.

At the August 14, 1977, Paint Creek Picnic hosted by Rosemary Kornacki (of Ruffwater and Just Friends fame) in Troy, Clogging and Contra Dancing were the workshop. Paul Tyler, an associate of Burt Schwartz was our workshop leader. He got us all warmed up with a clogging workshop then lined us all up for contra dancing as Bob Hubbach, John Carter and Al Smitley formed the band. There was hardly a soul that sat out as we wrapped up the afternoon's picnic with dancing. We were hooked. The subsequent PCFS "Zing Into Spring" and "May Play Day" weekends included contra and square dancing with some folk dancing as part of those events (starting in April, 1978).

In December 1977, Burt Schwartz and Paul Tyler started the Detroit Country Dance Society with weekly lessons in many forms of traditional dance. In May 1979, Burt and the DCDS started a monthly Saturday night Contra and Square Dance at St. Timothy's Church in Detroit. The music for the dances was provided by the Ruffwater Stringband, comprised of members from Paint Creek Folklore Society.

On February 11, 1984, PCFS hosted its first "Starry Night for a Ramble" community dance. It was organized by members Jan Pavlinak and Susan Stolz with the intent of providing a full evening of dancing for Paint Creek members and the Rochester area communities. It was held on the second floor (wood) in Bethany Baptist Church in Pontiac. The Ruffwater Stringband was enlisted for the music and the callers were Paint Creek members, John Freeman, Glen Morningstar and Al Pavlinak. A guest caller, Stig Malmo from Denmark (visiting with the Morningstars) also provided an international flare. The dance was PACKED and a great success. Jan and Susan had decorated the hall phenomenally with moons and stars and holiday lights hanging down from long cords stretched from side to side in the dance hall. Our contacts at Bethany were Paint Creek members, Al and Joann Shulte. At about this same time, Jan Pavlinak and Sharon Robinson started an activity in Paint Creek called the Remedial Dance Band. Joann Shulte

often helped lead the Remedial sessions too. It was a forum for members to play dance tunes at a very slow pace so as to learn them and use them for dances when requested.

History of Starry Night for a Ramble and the Paint Creek Country Dance Orchestra

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In preparation for the February 9, 1985, Starry Night for a Ramble dance, Judi Morningstar enlisted regular members of Paint Creek to play for the dance. She pivoted from what had been called Remedial Dance Band, and focused on learning tunes for the Starry Night dance, with graduation being the dance itself. Their name was chosen as the Paint Creek Country Dance Orchestra. She held the practices before the Paint Creek meetings from October through the February before the dance. Our second Starry Night dance in 1985 returned to Bethany Baptist Church, again hosted by Jan Pavlinak and Susan Stolz and was a sell-out. John Freeman, Glen Morningstar and Al Pavlinak returned as the callers and the Paint Creek Country Dance Orchestra debuted that night. The orchestra has continued to this day, led through the years by Judi Morningstar with guest leader appearances by Joann Shulte.

At the second Starry Night dance February 9, 1985, the concept of "Hug Coupons" was launched to raise additional monies for Paint Creek and to support WDET Public Radio in Detroit. Half of the proceeds from the sale of the coupons were donated to WDET. Through the next few years, funds raised by the hug coupons or candies coupons were matched by Paint Creek as a donation to WDET.

The Starry Night dances continued at Bethany Baptist Church through 1989. The Baptist ministry sold the church to another denomination after that dance and we moved to Central United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall in Waterford for the 1990 dance. In addition to callers John Freeman, Glen Morningstar and Al Pavlinak, members Jim Tait and Arlene Schubert led dances in 1989 and 1990. The annual dances continued at Central United Methodist Church through 1994 with the exception of 1992 when we did a Starry Night for a Ramble Sadie Hawkins Dance at the Southfield Civic Center. The Paint Creek Country Dance Orchestra during this period shared the evening's music with Aunt Lu and the Oakland County All-Stars (Brad Battey Jr., Judi Morningstar and Sharon Robinson).

In 1995, Paint Creek Folklore Society and the Detroit Country Dance Society began co-hosting the Starry Night Dance with Karen Missavage (Dunnam) joining as caller. The new dance venue was All Saints Episcopal Church in Pontiac. In 1997, Oakland County Traditional Dance Society (OCTDS) began co-hosting this dance with Paint Creek and that co-hosting continues to this day. The venue remained at All Saints Episcopal Church for the 1997 dance, and OCTDS member David Glick joined Glen Morningstar as callers. For the 1998 SNFAR, a new venue, First Baptist Church in Royal Oak, was selected. David Glick and Glen Morningstar called at this new location with guest caller Gil Simon. Hug Coupons continued to be a hit. The Paint Creek Country Dance Orchestra continued to share the evening's music with Aunt Lu and the Oakland County All-Stars through the 2000 SNFAR. For the 2000 SNFAR, Steve Gold stepped in as caller for David Glick. For the February 2003 SNFAR, the dance moved to the Hunter Community Center in Clawson and remained there through 2011. In 2005, a Silent Auction replaced Hug Coupons as means of raising monies to support local charities and host organizations. Tom Allen, Drake Meadow and Peter Baker joined the caller's pool during this period. In February 2012, Starry Night for a Ramble moved to the OCTDS regular venue of First United Methodist Church in Troy where it remains to this day. The Paint Creek Country Dance Orchestra with Judi Morningstar as leader continues strong in its original intent and has enlisted many members and alumni of Paint Creek as musicians through these years. Tom Allen, Peter Baker, Stephen Loftus and Ed Vincent have shared the caller's mic with Glen Morningstar as well. The Covid Pandemic tabled the Starry Night for a Ramble dances for 2021, 2022 and 2023.

WE'RE BAAAA-ACK!! February 10, 2024, is our next Starry Night for a Ramble and the Paint Creek Country Dance Orchestra has been in session getting ready for that night. Show your support for Paint Creek Folklore Society and Oakland County Traditional Dance Society by joining in the fun this year. Veterans Tom Allen and Glen Morningstar will lead the dances. We return to First United Methodist Church in Troy from 7:30-10:30 pm with a warm-up session for new dancers from 7-7:30 pm. \$10 General Admission. Look for flyers and announcements...bring a friend...see you there!!!