

FUNDAMENTAL TONE

Newsletter of Area I, Inc.

American Guild of English Handbell Ringers

Atlantic Provinces, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Volume XX, No. 1 Update

Fall 2005

AGEHR Area I Officers

Elected Officers

Chair:

Nancy Reynolds
(802-748-4760)
chair@agehrarea1.org

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Sue Henderson
(978-851-3024)
chairelect@agehrarea1.org

Secretary:

Linda Lamb
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secretary@agehrarea1.org

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treasurer@agehrarea1.org

National Liaisons

Education:

Griff Gall
education@agehrarea1.org

Special Needs:

Jeannie Cushman
specialneeds@agehrarea1.org

Other Officers are listed on
page 2.

Bell Notes from Nancy

I find it hard to believe that I am writing this, my first column as Chair of Area I. Fifteen years ago I didn't even know how to read music and I knew nothing about handbells other than the fact that I enjoyed hearing our choir when they played in church. Little did I know that taking a beginning ringing class with my middle daughter in order to find a way to spend some mother-daughter time with her would be such a life altering experience. In a matter of three months, I could at least find *my* notes (reading music was still a ways down the road), had mastered the physical basics of ringing, and both my daughter and I had become permanent members in bell choirs at our church. Less than a year after picking up my first bell, I attended my first National Festival, and the rest is history. Because of my training as a physical therapist, my choir director, Phil Brown, often asked me for advice when someone in the choir was feeling an ache or pain, or was finding it hard physically to achieve something he was asking of them. Together we developed a program of exercises and strategies to foster the physical well being of our choir and, in so doing, discovered the positive impact this had on the quality of the music we were able to produce. We began sharing what we had learned, either together, or individually, at state and area events, and about seven years ago, he recommended my appointment as the Special Group Liaison on the Area I Board. That's how I got to where I am today.

The changes in the art of handbell ringing over the past 15 years have been unprecedented. We now ring differently, the techniques we use are more varied and intricate, and the music is more demanding and exciting. The leadership role Area I has always played in AGEHR is well documented and is the result of the passion and dedication of the directors and ringers in our

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Visit the Area I Web site at: <www.agehrarea1.org>

Area. I am humbled by the responsibility that has been given to me to nurture that passion and dedication over the next two years, and take that responsibility very seriously. You have elected officers and are represented by a Board of Directors dedicated to listening to and working with you to creatively meet identified needs and wishes. To that end, the Board has appointed Sue Henderson to Chair Festival/Conference '07, and she is already working to finalize a site, clinicians and the F/C committee. Please say yes if she calls upon you to assist in some way with this important event in AREA I. I urge you to visit the area Web Site, <www.agehrarea1.org>, to find out more about us.

In the end, it is your voice, your creativity, and your assistance that will allow us to continue to evolve and grow with our art form. I can't wait!

Nancy Reynolds, Chair Area I

Reports

Connecticut

Jean Degan conducted a workshop at the Stratford Methodist Church on September 24. This was designed as a local skill building event and hopefully it will provide an impetus for similar local events throughout the state for those who cannot attend larger state-wide events.

Some other upcoming events include:

- First Church of Bethlehem Handbell Choirs will present their Christmas Town Festival Concert

at noon on Saturday, December 3, 2005 at the church. This annual event is part of the Christmas Town (note the town name!) Festival.

- First Church of Wethersfield will be holding its Super Bell XIV Concert on January 29 at 4:00 PM, featuring all five of their Bell Choirs. This is an annual event for these groups, and is part of their 2005-2006 Concert Series. There is no admission charge, but a free-will offering will be taken. For further information, contact the church at 860-529-1575, extension 209.
- The Avon Bell Festival will be held at Canton Center Church at 4:00 PM.

St Luke Lutheran Church in Gales Ferry is looking for a replacement for Jane Nolan, who recently resigned. The church has 6 bell choirs; for further information, please contact Terri Meyer at <terri@stluke.info>. Another church in Connecticut looking for a handbell director is the UCC church in Southbury. The choir practices one hour per week in the evenings, and they play once a month in church. The church is willing to pay an hourly stipend to the director. If anyone is interested, please contact Nancy Schoeck at <njs121@aol.com> or by phone at 203-262-1892 after 5 PM.

Gregory Fisher is in the process of forming an auditioned community handbell group in the Vernon-Manchester-Ellington-Tolland area – a first in our state!!! At last report, 13 people had attended the first set of auditions, and the final audition was held earlier in October. Anyone interested in pursuing this opportunity can contact Greg at <gregory_m_fisher@uhc.com>.

More AGEHR Area I Officers

Appointed Officers

Festival/Conference Chair: **Sue Henderson** (978-851-3024)
fcchair@agehrarea1.org
Historian/Archivist: **Barbara Bussart**
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State/Provincial Chairs

Atlantic Provinces (Canadian): **TBA**
canchair@agehrarea1.org
Connecticut: **Susan Wilber** (203-407-4189)
ctchair@agehrarea1.org
Maine: **TBA**
mechair@agehrarea1.org
Massachusetts: **Ed Henderson** (acting Chair)
machair@agehrarea1.org
New Hampshire: **Emlee Kohler**
nhchair@agehrarea1.org
Rhode Island: **Andy Wallace** (860-599-8896)
richair@agehrarea1.org
Vermont: **Jerilyn Bergdahl** (802-425-2177)
vtchair@agehrarea1.org

Connecticut was excited to host the Fall Ringing Event on Saturday, October 15 at First Congregational Church in Essex, and by the time the Fundamental Tone is printed, this event will be a part of Area I history. This was designed as a skill-building workshop and was open to all of Area I. Cheryl Harger was the contact person for this event.

After a hugely successful Spring Ring 2005, Connecticut will be holding its next Spring Ring on Saturday, April 1 at Valley Community Baptist Church in Avon. Jane Nolan is the massed clinician. Save the date.

Susan Wilber, CT State Chair

Vermont

Inspired to Ring in Vermont

Inspiration can come from many sources, but two came to mind as I prepared this article. The beauty of the fall colors in the mountains of Vermont inspires directors and ringers here as we plan our fall and holiday schedules. Recently I was able to attend a concert performed by Christine Anderson, exceptionally talented and well known solo handbell performer, at South Congregational Church in St. Johnsbury, VT. An appreciative audience was inspired and amazed at her talent. Planning and hard work combine to bring others the joy and inspiration that comes from hearing a beautiful handbell performance.

Opportunities for inspiration and learning:

The Directors' Roundtable will be held January 28, 2006 at the West Lebanon Congregational Church, W. Lebanon, NH, hosted by Averill Tinker. Held on the last Saturday of January each year, the event helps directors get a head start on the Vermont Spring Ring massed music. A sharing session will be held over lunch to renew friendships and discuss concerns. The afternoon session will be devoted to solving the various difficulties directors may encounter as they go about the job of inspiring and conducting their many-faceted groups of ringers.

Think Spring Mini-Rings: Mini-rings give ringers a chance to ring Vermont Spring Ring music in a more intimate group setting with up to six or seven choirs present. This year mini-rings will be hosted in February by Phil Brown in St. Johnsbury, VT and another hosted in March by Northern Bronze, a community handbell choir, in Burlington, VT. Plans are underway to add two more mini-rings in other areas of the State.

25th Annual Vermont Spring Ring: Plans are well underway to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Vermont Spring Ring to be held April 28th (Directors' Workshop) and April 29th, 2006 in Bellows Falls, VT.

The Commemoration of the 25th anniversary will be a major focus for the day. Committee members include: Mary Jane Bosworth and Don Maher, co-chairs; Marilyn Distleberg, registrar; Jean Wilson and Don Maher, hospitality; Mary Jane Bosworth, facilities; Barbara Hoag, publicity; Beth Smallheer, directors' workshop; Jerilyn Bergdahl, VT chair. Lee Afdahl, director of music and organist at First Presbyterian Church of Rochester, MN will be our clinician. Six classes will be available for ringers during the extended lunch break.

Jerilyn Bergdahl, VT State Chair

Directors' Seminar

Busy schedules in the fall made the planned change in date for this event impractical; so the Directors' Seminar has a **New Format, with a return to the original time and place.** It is back in Nashua in the familiar setting of the Sheraton Tara, as requested by many! But don't mistake it for the same format. We have restructured the event to include workshops that will be appropriate for many new and experienced directors. Also, the Directors' exam will be available. So, come check it. There will be more information available soon at <http://www.agehrea1.org/Pages/Ringing%20Events.html>.

For more information contact Linda Lamb at secretary@agehrea1.org. Registration online at <http://www.agehrea1.org/DirSem/DirRegSem.htm>. Classes will include the following:

- Repertoire Reading sessions throughout the event
- Conducting Classes
- Tips for the beginning director
- How to properly teach techniques
- Selecting Music for your choirs
- Ringing Assignments
- Incorporating new ringers into your choir
- Caring for the physical needs of your ringers
- The National Directors' Certification Test

It is hoped that this event will meet more of the needs of our members by offering a variety of classes that meet directors' individual needs. You will choose which classes you want to attend and there will be continuous massed repertoire ringing in the main hall. The event will run from Friday evening through Saturday with three delicious meals being provided by the hotel. Keep an eye out for more information in our upcoming newsletters and on the Web site.

Linda Lamb

Skill Building Workshop

On Saturday, October 15th, amidst much rain and wind, a group of newer, less experienced ringers met at the First Congregational Church of Essex, CT. for a skill building workshop. Hosted and Chaired by Cheryl Harger, the event was designed to meet the expressed needs of newer, or less experienced ringers for education to help build the skills needed for them to feel more comfortable with playing in general, and participating in local, state and area events such as Festival/Conference.

Members of the Area I Board, including Nancy Reynolds (Chair), Debra LeBrun (Past-Chair); Ed Henderson (acting MA. Chair); Andy Wallace (R.I. Chair); and Jane Nolan (Membership Chair); put them through their paces. The group looked at everything from preparing themselves physically for ringing and learning the proper way to hold and ring the bell, to how to perform all the damping, stopped and ringing techniques found in the music in order to do what the music says to do, and how to sight read. In the afternoon, they practiced how to actually put what they had learned in isolation to use while playing actual music and to do so musically. The growth in the ringing of the people attending was visible and audible to all those present and the resulting enthusiasm was palpable.

One couple, who will be helping to start a bell choir for snow-birds in Florida this winter, traveled from Quebec to touch and play bells for the first time ever. Another

ringer said she had been playing handbells for 5 years, and had been playing them wrong; she was thrilled to learn the way she should ring, and stated she wouldn't feel so overwhelmed at the next Festival/Conference. One group who came as a choir asked about how they could host a similar event. The Board will be doing everything they can to help make that happen. Several expressed the desire for a track for beginning ringers at Festival/Conference to teach what was taught to them today. That idea will be forwarded to Sue Henderson, Festival Chair, for consideration, along with the name of the Board member who indicated he would be willing to teach or coordinate a track for that.

This event is an example of our AREA in action. It came about as the result of an expressed need from the membership, was strongly supported by the Board, and willingly hosted by an area member and her church. As a result, we drew the interest of individuals from Quebec and hooked them on ringing. We all experienced the unique thrill of getting together to learn and ring with others while achieving the goal of improving our reading and ringing skills. **Bellraderie** is a term created by one of the clinicians. Interest for similar events and potential locations was generated, and input was given about ways to improve the value of Festival/Conference for everyone. See photographs on page 6.

Address Change? New E-Mail Address?

If the answer to either of these questions is "YES", please make sure to contact <www.agehr.org> to give them the correct information to assure mailings will reach the correct address.

This process is very easy and is best done by the individual member directly.

1. Log onto the AGEHR Web site <www.agehr.org>.
2. Access "members only" feature found in upper right hand corner of homepage.
3. Know your membership number.
4. It will request your password. If you do not have a password, you can request one at that time and receive it INSTANTLY!
5. Then you can correct your AGEHR information directly.

Additional features are also available at that Web site for "members only".

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Wondering what to do late June of 2007?

Please plan on attending the AGEHR Area I Festival/Conference at the University of Rhode Island! We are currently under contract negotiations with URI to host our Festival/Conference June 28th – July 1st at their beautiful campus in Kingston, RI. The massed ringing area will be in the new Thomas M. Ryan Center which opened in 2002. This venue has many amenities, the most important of which may be the fact that it is air conditioned. Please note that this fact has been verified multiple times!!!! Check out the Ryan Center news release at <<http://www.uri.edu/news/release/html/02-0620.html>> for more information.

Our massed directors will be Bill Mathis and Michael Helman and the conference committee is already hard at work to insure you each have a wonderful experience.

Mark your calendars and watch for more information on the Area I Web site!

Sue Henderson
Chair- Elect, Area I
Festival/Conference '07 Chair

Are You in Shape to Ring?

Now that we are back into the swing of the fall rehearsal schedule, we need to make time to do warm-up exercises before we start to ring. We may need to stretch between pieces, too, if we are ringing hard or at risk of re-injury.

Does your director lead the stretches or is there someone else in your choir who gets you started? Are you expected to warm-up during set-up or does the group do them together as you start your rehearsal time together?

It can be as simple as doing one stretch for each area: neck side stretch, shoulder rolls, elbows locked straight, wrist waves, fingers spread out then fist. We each have our favorite stretches, according to our body's needs. Make time to do the ones you need as part of your preparation to play. Many overuse injuries are preventable - pain-free ringing is happy ringing!

Jeannie Cushman, Special Needs Liaison

Just for the Holidays!

Holiday Greetings Cards

Send your holiday greetings handbell-style this year! Our attractive new 5" x 7" cards are sure to bring a smile even to non-ringers' faces. All cards come in packs of 12 with matching envelopes.

Candlelight Bell Card: A tranquil image, a burning candle reflecting in a bell casting, adorns this card. Inside: *May Your Holiday Season be Melodious and Bright.* Red envelopes.

5229 Candlelight Bell Holiday Card, pk of 12 \$4.95

Angel Bells Card: Original artwork of three angels singing to fill the air with music decorates this unique holiday message: *May the Voices of Angels Ring like Bells Throughout Your Holiday Season.* Gold envelopes.

5231 Angel Bells Holiday Card, pk of 12 \$4.95

"SleighBell" Card: This fun and playful card is definitely one of a kind! Santa rides on his "sleighbell" on his way to deliver toys to all the children! Inside: *When what to my wondering eyes should appear, But Santa riding a bell with his nine Reindeer! Merry Christmas!* Green envelopes.

5230 "SleighBell" Holiday Card, pk of 12 \$4.95

Handbell & Chime Ornaments

Our beautiful golden handbell ornaments are guaranteed to bring joy to ringers in the holiday spirit. Perfect as gifts as well! Handbell Ornaments ship and store flat, then can be opened into three-dimensional ornaments for your tree. Chime ornaments do not open, but will make a fantastic addition to the festivities!

5872	Handbells and Staff Ornament	\$6.00
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5874	Chime Snowflake Ornament	\$6.00
5875	Chime Messiah & Noel Ornament	\$6.00

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Skill Building Workshop



The couple to the right of Ed Henderson traveled from Quebec to learn how to ring bells because they will be leading a group in Florida in January.



Jane Nolan leading the Skill Building Workshop.



Some of the participants at the workshop.

Bradford Scholarship Applications

The deadline for applying for Bradford Scholarships for directors to attend their first National Seminar (formerly National Directors' Seminar) is Tuesday, January 31, 2006. Contact Emlee Kohler, NH State Chair for more information. The National Directors' Seminar will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on July 12-15, 2006

Revised By-Laws Accepted

By a vote of 88 to 1 (with one abstention), the revised by-laws have been accepted by Area I. This aligns the

by-laws of Area I with the National by-laws. Thanks to those members who took the time to read them and send in their vote.

New Members

Please welcome these new members to Area I:

Jo Deen Blaine Davis, New Canaan, CT
Jeanette Gross, Middlefield, CT
Sarah Spencer, Stratford, CT
Allison Matthews, Jamaica Plain, MA
Julie Stevens, Lexington, MA
Tim Archibald, New Minas, NS Canada

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Save that Date

Area I Festival/Conference
June 28 - July 1, 2006

Directors: Bill Mathis and Michael Hellman

Coming Events

Date	Event	Location	Contact
November 5, 2005	High School Ring Out	Amherst, NH.	Phil Brown 802-748-3894
November 20, 2005, 4:00 PM	New England Ringers Concert	First Church of Deerfield Deerfield, MA	Ed Henderson 978-851-3024
November 27, 2005, 4:00 PM	New England Ringers Concert	Rogers Center for Performing Arts Merrimack College, N. Andover, MA	Ed Henderson
December 2, 2005, 7:30 PM	New England Ringers Concert	St. Clare's Church, Braintree, MA	Ed Henderson
December 4, 2005, 6:45 PM	Merrimack Valley Ringers Concert	D'Youville Senior Care Facility 981 Varnum Ave., Lowell, MA	Karen Leonard
December 16, 2005, 7:30 PM	Merrimack Valley Ringers Concert	St. Malachy's Church 99 Bedford Street, Burlington, MA	Karen Leonard
December 17, 2005, 7:30 PM	Merrimack Valley Ringers Concert	First Congregational Church 9 Ayer Road, Harvard, MA.	Karen Leonard
December 18, 2005, 7:00 PM	Merrimack Valley Ringers Concert	Pilgrim Congregational Church 26 West Street, Leominster, MA	Karen Leonard
December 31, 2005, 7:15 PM	Merrimack Valley Ringers Concert	First Night, Worcester, MA	Karen Leonard
January 6, 2006	Board Meeting	Littleton, MA	
January 7, 2006 - 7:30 PM	Merrimack Valley Ringers Concert	West Chelmsford Methodist Church 242 Main St. W. Chelmsford	Karen Leonard
January 28, 2006	Sounding Good, Looking Better Ensemble Ringing	St. Paul's Church Pawtucket, RI	Andy Wallace RI State Chair
February 10-11, 2006	Area I Directors' Seminar	Sheraton Tara Nashua, NH	Linda Lamb
April 1, 2006	Connecticut Spring Ring	Valley Community Baptist Church Avon, CT	Sue Wilbur CT State Chair.
April 1, 2006	Vermont Youth Ring	Bellows Falls, VT	Jerilyn Bergdahl VT State Chair
April 1, 2006	Merrimack Valley English English Handbell Festival	Tewksbury Memorial High School	Ed Henderson Karen Leonard
April 28, 2006	Vermont Directors' Workshop	Bellow's Falls, VT	Jerilyn Bergdahl
April 29, 2006	Vermont Spring Ring		Mary Jane Bosworth Don Maher
May 6, 2006	Rhode Island Spring Ring		Andy Wallace
May 13, 2006	Spring Board Meeting	Hamden, CT	
June 16-18, 2006	New England Ringers Concert mini tour in New England		Ed Henderson
July 5-9, 2006	New England Ringers Concert Fifth Annual Summer Tour		Ed Henderson
November 10-11, 2006	Adult Ringers Weekend		Kathy Merrill 802-748-8915
August 19-23, 2006	Family Handbell Camp		Linda Lamb
January 2007	Bells of the Cascades Mexican Rivera Cruise		Rick Knapp the_knapps@comcast.net



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UPCOMING APPEARANCES

2005 HOLIDAY CONCERTS

Sunday, Nov. 20, 4 PM	First Church of Deerfield Deerfield, MA <i>Suggested Donation \$10</i>
Sunday, Nov. 27, 4 PM	Rogers Center for the Arts, Merrimack College, North Andover, MA <i>Admission \$12 (in advance), \$15 (at the door)</i> <i>Children & Seniors \$8 (in advance), \$10 (at the door)</i>
Friday, Dec. 2, 7:30PM	St. Clare's Church Braintree MA

Would your organization like to present an NER concert? Contact us at newenglandringers@aol.com, or call us at 978-851-3024. Host venues are currently sought anywhere in New England for Spring 2006, and for NER's Fifth Annual "World" Tour in Summer 2006.

Area I folks who attended Distinctly Bronze, directed by David Davidson



Left to right: Carolyn Gardner (RI), Karen James (VT), David Davidson, Jeannie Cushman (VT), and Karen Leonard (MA).

agehr

Deadline for next
issue: January 18, 2006

FIRST CLASS

*The Fundamental Tone
Newsletter of AGTHR Area I
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