

Handbell Musicians of America Area 1, Inc.

www.area1.handbellmusicians.org

Connecticut
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Sue Wilber, *Chair*
chair.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Martha Goodman, *Chair-Elect*
chairelect.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Jean Degan, *Past Chair*
pastchair.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Joan Fossum, *Secretary*
secretary.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Sue Chamberlin, *Treasurer*
treasurer.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Handbell Musicians of America
Area 1
Biennial Report of the Education Liaison
June 2015

Since starting as the Education Liaison in the fall of 2013, the position has been in somewhat a state of flux while I have figured out the best role for it. I feel that it can be described more broadly as being involved in music education in many settings—not just in the public schools. Holly Cerullo has done an amazing job with the Chime Loaner program, working hard to promote the program and making sure the chimes are being used. Her report gives greater detail about our efforts to have handchimes available in the public schools. A special thank you needs to be made to the Back Bay Ringers, who have provided a two-octave set of handchimes to Boston area schools since 2007 through donations collected at the annual Boston Handbell Festival. The 2014 recipients were the Wood End and Birch Meadow Elementary Schools in Reading, MA (Melissa Steiger, music specialist) and the 2015 recipient was Rachael Sordillo, music teacher in the Holbrook School District.

As Education Liaison, I have served on the committee developing our 'Project Education' initiative, which has evolved into the Skill Builders' workshops that were held in various

locations throughout the Area. The idea behind it was to offer a low-cost workshop for ringers who would like to hone their ringing skills while working on Festival Conference music. They were held in various locations throughout the Area on two or three days so that people wouldn't have to drive far to attend. Clinicians were recruited from the many talented directors that we have in Area 1.

Three workshops were held in the fall of 2014, which focused on the Massed Choir music, and two workshops were held in the spring of 2015, focusing on the Coppers Division music. The fall workshops, which were held in Fall River, MA, Chelmsford, MA and Concord, NH were attended by anywhere from 10 to 20 people. Two spring workshops were held, one in Southwick, MA, which had 12 attendees, and one in Putnam, CT, which had 17 attendees. For the first full year of offering these, they were considered a success, and we hope they will grow.

Workshops in non-Festival/Conference years will include a fall "director's boot camp" for those ringers who have found themselves tapped to be directors, and don't know what to do. Solo and ensemble ringing will be offered in the spring.

In order to evaluate the relevance of the offerings that Area 1 provides to members, a survey was developed for ringers to give feedback on what changes might need to be made in the future. The results are being tallied and evaluated for report to the Board at their next meeting.

It has been my pleasure to serve as the Education Liaison for the last two years, and I look forward to continuing service. My goal for the next two years will be for us to work on getting music educators aware of the benefits to using handbells or handchimes in the classroom.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlene Ruesenberg
Concord, NH