

FUNDAMENTAL TONE

Newsletter of Area I, Inc. • American Guild of English Handbell Ringers

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

Volume XXV, No. 2

May 2011

Upcoming Events



October 23, 2011
Massachusetts
Skill Building Workshop
Lynn, MA

**Election
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From the Festival Chair
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Notes From The Chair...



Handbell Musicians of America: A Brand for the 21st Century

Recently I attended national Area Advisory meeting for AGEHR and I was struck by a story Jenny Cauhorn, our national executive director, told about a conversation she had on the elevator of the hotel where the meeting was being held. After being asked if she was in Minneapolis for the Philosophy Conference, Jenny replied that she was here for a board meeting for a non-profit that she worked for. The gentleman asked which organization, and she replied "I'm the executive director for Handbell Musicians of America."

"Oh, cool! I love hearing handbells," replied the gentleman.

Jenny was excited because, for once, she did not have to explain every word in the organizations name.

Brands constantly evolve. Have you noticed that the familiar Kentucky Fried Chicken is now branded as KFC? Successful businesses update their logos and brand identities to remain fresh and relevant in their market place. As our organization transitions from branding ourselves as AGEHR to our new brand, Handbell Musicians of America we are not losing any of our rich history. We are just adapting a more inclusive "nickname" to help people better understand who we really are. Officially we will still be AGEHR but our brand will reflect the Handbell Musicians of America. Now the brand identifies us as organization for musicians who perform with handbells.

In addition to the updated new "nickname," national has launched the new initiatives campaign to fund some much-needed improvements in technology. If you have not taken a few moments to visit the AGEHR

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Visit the Area I website at www.agehrarea1.org
www.handbellmusicians.org for the National office website.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR...

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website since January, I would encourage you to do so. First, you will need to set up your new member ID and password. If you are like my father, and the idea of going on the computer is about as much fun as going to the dentist, take a few moments to view the video Katie Schlegel put together on how to update your profile. The whole process should be quicker than waiting in line at Starbucks for your venti non-fat ice caramel macchiato, and then you will be able to log in and enjoy some of the new benefits coming online.

In the past *Overtones*, Jenny

Check out Lifetime of Ringing on AGEHR's website:
<http://www.agehr.org/tutorials/index.asp>

highlighted the new "Lifetime of Ringing" page on the AGEHR national website. This is one of the newest benefits to go live and I'm very excited about the possibilities this new project has in store. This is basically a personals ad for ringers and directors. "Church handbell director seeking bass ringer for full time ringing position. Must enjoy weaving, sight reading and long walks on the beach." (Ok, I just threw in the long walks on the beach to see if you were still awake.) If you are a ringer who is

new to an area and you are looking for an ensemble to join, or if you are a director looking for ringers to join your choir, Lifetime of Ringing is an excellent resource made possible through the new initiatives program. You can find a link to Lifetime of Ringing on the Area I website.

I hope to see all of you in Amherst this June and I encourage you to check out the new benefits appearing on the national AGEHR website. Now I think it's time I order my venti non-fat caramel macchiato and go for a nice long walk along the Charles River. 🗡️

Griff Gall, Area I Chair

AGEHR Area I Officers

Elected Officers

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machair@agehrarea1.org
New Hampshire Joan Fossum (603-224-0866)
nhchair@agehrarea1.org
Rhode Island To Be Announced
Vermont Jerilyn Bergdahl (802-425-2177)
vtchair@agehrarea1.org



From The Festival Chair...

UMASS here we come!

Festival Conference '11 is now just around the corner. The snow is finally gone and we have played our Easter and spring music. Hopefully you have had the chance to ring festival music in this past year in your churches, schools and communities.

There are over 600 people registered for festival and now the task is underway assigning classes and housing. If you have any questions about registration, please contact Sue Henderson or Sue Wilber at registrar@agehrarea1.org.

Peter Coulumbe will be putting together the Saturday night variety show. If you didn't get a chance to put that on your form when registering, you may send him a note at pcoulombe@comcast.net. The mini-concerts are being scheduled by Joan Fossum and Sue Chamberlin. Be sure to attend all the mini-concert sessions to support these groups who have worked so hard on their presentations and to find new repertoire for yourself. It's also great entertainment, and it's free with your registration!

Jane Nolan and Mobby Larson are putting together the Sunday morning worship service. You may remember Rev. Larson from last festival. It was a perfect worship time on Sunday morning. Be sure to join together to sing and praise the Lord in this non-denominational service.

Borrowing sets of handbells and chimes with foam and mallets is a must to make a festival work. If you have bells and chimes that you can

loan us, Dan Moore will gladly give you all the details DanielMoore@wheeler-school.org. The bells will not only be insured while in our possession but you will also receive a stipend for allowing us to use them. You will receive even more if you deliver them to UMASS! If that's not possible, Michael Steele will gladly go and pick them up and even return them to you at the end of the festival on Sunday or Monday.

This will be a great time for all who are able to come together at UMASS for four days. If you are unable to attend the festival, pack up the family, handbell group, bell lovers from your area and journey to UMASS Amherst on Sunday afternoon for our final concert at 3 p.m. in the Mullins Center. It will be a wonderful experience to hear over 600 people ringing at the same time! Also at this concert, announcements will be made about Festival Conference '13. 🛠️

Jean Degan, Festival Chair and Area I Chair-Elect



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Achieving Beauty of Tone and Articulation While Developing Interpretive and Stylistic Properties

By Dr. William Payn

Reprinted from *Overtones*,
May/June 1995, Vol. 41, No. 3,
with permission from the
publisher, the American Guild
of English Handbell Ringers.

In the early stages of handbell ringing, the sound was at one continuous dynamic level for all tones, rarely changing other than as a result of shifting registers. The sound of early tune ringing was like that of a sophisticated music box,

incorporating a rather fast tempo. Conductors were virtually unnecessary except to give cues for entrances and cut-offs. The advent of original compositions in the middle of the twentieth century heralded the development of technical and musical aspects of ringing never before realized. At this time, certain properties peculiar to handbell ringing had to be addressed, particularly that of articulation, as well as beauty of tone within a continuous legato line. Damping, a relatively new concept of articulation in the 1950s, quickly became the "norm" by the end of the 1960s, and, in fact, encouraged sustained tones requiring shape and rhythmic energy. At the same time, the application of melody and accompaniment required and encouraged strong developments in interpretive and stylistic avenues.

Whereas in choral music, a tangible emotion already established by the words is heightened by the music, handbell music relies solely on the music to provide emotional response. This point alone, within the context of historical implications and influences, gives us pause to consider the myriad of stylistic possibilities open to us in our current twentieth century interpretations. Now, as we approach the twenty-first century, it is imperative that we, as conductors, consistently strive to interpret artistic intent in the presentation of a work. We must become architects of color, emotion and feeling, creating sounds that touch deep in the listener's heart and being.

In music where words determine and invite a particular emotional response, dynamics are established as a result of the text. Take, for example, the American spiritual: the anguish evident in "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" does not invoke the same dynamic content as the cry of joy in "Every Time I Feel the Spirit." Handbell music, on the other hand, ignites certain feeling and reactions without relying on text. Therefore it is once again the responsibility of the conductor and choir to convey honest interpretations through musical artistry and with a constant dedication to the aesthetic experience.

Certain interpretive and stylistic means of expression are extremely important to consider if one is committed to musical artistry: 1) the projection of melody; 2) consideration of precise vertical relationships; 3) technical manipulations peculiar to handbell ringing; and 4) phrasing, tone quality/articulation.

Dr. William Payn

William Payn is Director of Choral Studies and chairman of the Department of Music at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. Active as a composer since the early '70s, Payn has written over 22 published handbell compositions, many of them commissioned works, which are performed virtually every week in the U.S. and abroad. He is in constant demand as a handbell clinician and festival conductor throughout the world and has conducted national and area festivals for AGEHR. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from Westminster Choir College and his Doctor of Musical Arts in organ and harpsichord literature from West Virginia University. As a member of the American Choral Directors Association, Payn has served as Pennsylvania state president. (*Added recently from Bucknell's website*): Bucknell's popular annual Candlelight Service of Carols, featuring Payn's Chapel Choir and Rooke Chapel Ringers, has been taped and repeatedly televised nationally by PBS since 1988 and was nominated for an Emmy in 1996. He is currently Music Director and Conductor of the Susquehanna Valley Chorale and Orchestra.



The Projection of Melody

Every melody of horizontal phrase requires a certain inevitableness about it. In handbell music, wide skips between notes can play havoc with, and in fact, interrupt, projection of melody. This can be due in some cases to bells that have not been voiced or adjusted properly. Most of the time, however, the ringers themselves need to work on evenness of tone and to pay particular attention to the properties of tone inherent within the various ranges of the ensemble. For instance, a melody with wide skips that encompasses G₅ to B₆ will require a sensitive understanding of the warmer, more sustained quality of the middle register as the phrase moves in

and out of the brighter upper register where the sound dissipates at a much faster rate.

In handbell music, the projection of melody, particularly in the upper register, is often enhanced and supported by a sensitive

approach to the dynamic makeup of the underlying harmonies. For example, if a melody is meant to rise and fall dynamically, such as

◀ ▶, the ringers who support that aspect of melody (perhaps ringing chords under
(continued on page 6)

2011–2013 AREA I ELECTION RESULTS

New Officers leading Area I for the next two years are:

Chair-ElectSue Wilber

SecretaryNorah Piehl

TreasurerSue Chamberlin

They will join in-coming Chair, Jean Degan,
on the Board on July 1st of this year.



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Upcoming Concerts

Sunday, May 15 4:00 p.m.	First United Methodist Church 25 Church Street • Greenfield, MA
Tuesday, May 17 8:00 p.m.	Boston Handbell Festival Old South Church • Boston, MA
Saturday, May 21 1:00 p.m.	Pioneer Valley Handbell Workshop Church of Christ Congregational, UCC 235 State Street • Granby, Massachusetts
Sunday, May 22 4:00 p.m.	Union Congregational Church 218 Main Street • Groton, MA
Friday, June 3 7:30 p.m.	United Presbyterian Church 314 Main Street • Schoharie, New York
Saturday, June 4 7:00 p.m.	McKownville United Methodist Church 1565 Western Avenue • Albany, NY
Sunday, June 5 3:00 p.m.	St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church 55 Wilbur Boulevard • Poughkeepsie, NY
Sunday, June 12 4:00 p.m.	John Wesley United Methodist Church 270 Gifford Street • Falmouth, MA
Saturday, July 30 Concert 7:30 p.m.	The Temple at Ocean Park (Workshop: 1:00 p.m.) Temple Avenue • Ocean Park, Maine

Would your organization like to present an NER concert or host an NER-led Skill Building Workshop?
Contact us at info@newenglandringers.org or call 978-851-3024. Host venues are currently
being sought for the 2011 Holiday season.

ACHIEVING BEAUTY OF TONE...

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the melody) have to be sensitive to that particular direction of phrase. Otherwise, the intended rise and fall that is implied here will become one-dimensional and stilted. At the same time, any melody that utilizes repeated notes forces the ringer who plays them to produce direction of phrase within each note, either playing each repeated note slightly louder or slightly softer, depending on the intended outcome of the phrase.

Perhaps we do a disservice to our ringers by constantly counting aloud when realizing the beginning stages of a composi-

tion. Because we often (though perhaps unintentionally) accent the first beat of each measure, we immediately project a stilted, unmusical approach to line and projection of melody. In most cases, bar-lines serve only to categorize beats and therefore can otherwise be ignored. In the same light, printed note values can only serve as a composer's framework for careful consideration of rubato, give-and-take within a phrase, and eventual musical sensitivity to the overall direction of a particular phrase.

Unfortunately, all too often we hear handbell choirs playing with robot-like exactness, while at the same time perhaps displaying tremendous technical facility. No

longer can we hold onto the wind-it-up music box type of ringing that was prevalent half a century ago. If handbell ensembles expect the same legitimacy as that accorded choral and instrumental ensembles, it is imperative that we consistently interpret a composer's intentions with creative, artistic intent. Finally, projection of melody and direction of phrase demand a constant circular motion of the upright bell, from the time it is struck to the point at which it is damped. A stilted, back-and-forth motion of the wrist without a circular connection with the forearm, elbow and shoulder will never produce a musically satisfying tone. Beautiful tone requires motion and energy, no

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Immanuel Lutheran Church
18 Clapboard Ridge Rd. – Danbury, CT

Sunday, May 22, 2011 – 7:00 pm

South Congregational Church
242 Salmon Brook Rd. – Granby, CT

Friday, June 3, 2011 – 7:30 pm

First Congregational Church
1051 State Rd. – West Tisbury, MA

Sunday, June 5, 2011 – 3:00 pm

Southgate at Shrewsbury
30 Julio Dr. – Shrewsbury, MA

Saturday, June 11, 2011 – 7:30 pm

West Chelmsford UMC
242 Main St. – North Chelmsford, MA

Sunday, June 12, 2011 – 7:00 pm

appearing with Bay Colony Brass
Brookside Congregational Church
2013 Elm St. – Manchester, NH

MVR's spring 2011 tour is entitled "Simple Gifts – Traditional and Contemporary". Repertoire is of Celtic and folk origin with some original handbell compositions and even Bach! Tunes include "Greensleeves", "Shenandoah", "Mairi's Wedding" and "Simple Gifts", as well as "Reunir", "Furioso" and a medley from "Les Miserables". Something for everyone – always interesting – always a good time! All concerts are free admission – a free-will donation will be accepted at some – and our two CD's, "Season's Ringings!" and "Kaleidoscope" will be available for purchase. Please join us at one of our concerts. We look forward to entertaining you!



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more details:
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matter how long or short the note. At the same time, gorgeous crescendos and decrescendos can be successfully executed when holding long notes in the bass and lower middle registers (C₃-C₅): a crescendo can be produced by: 1) keeping the bell in the forward position that results in not snapping wrist back after the initial strike; and then, 2) by slowly bringing the bell in the upright position, simultaneously with the circular motion, back to the shoulder. This in fact causes the initial sound (when the clapper hits the bell) to project into the foam cover, and then releases the sound toward the listener as the bell is brought back to the shoulder. This is particularly useful with large bass-clef chords that serve to enhance the forward direction of a melody in the treble clef. At the same time, a decrescendo can be executed by ringing the bell in the normal fashion and then lowering the bell toward the foam cloth and damping on the table.

Consideration of Precise Vertical Relationships

Good ensemble is dependent upon the vertical synchronization of all bells sounding. Just as a pianist cannot play arpeggiated chords unless they are indicated in the score, so must a handbell choir maintain this same kind of precision. For this reason, it is imperative that the ringers and conductor develop consistent connection with each other. The worst possible positioning of tables for this connection is in a straight line. In this position, the

distance between low bells and high bells is far too great for an audible connection, let alone a visual one. This can only be achieved in a □ or △ shape, with the conductor in the center. In this type of configuration, there is never any excuse for ragged passages involving more than two bells playing at the

“...all too often we hear handbell choirs playing with robot-like exactness... No longer can we hold onto the wind-it-up music box type of ringing... prevalent half a century ago.”

same time. In many cases, a melodic line will govern the preciseness of an underlying chordal accompaniment. However, in exposed passages, strong communication within the ensemble is necessary. This is perhaps the strongest argument for insisting that ringers keep their same bell assignments for the duration of the church or academic year (or concert season). Obviously, there are always shared or borrowed bells to be considered, but in the majority of choirs with five or more octaves, C₄-C₈ can almost always be assigned to the same

person for each piece. There is a certain intimacy with which a ringer attaches to his/her own bells, and this is extremely important when one considers the initial preparation for ringing *ppp* or *fff* and all dynamics within these parameters. When a ringer is absolutely certain of how a bell will react, the ensemble can be assured that each individual clapper will strike the bell at the precise moment of the conductor's ictus. This, coupled with a visual communication among the ringers as the chord is rung, will produce amazing results. Of course, none of these considerations will work without clear conducting. Internalizing the inner beat is the responsibility of both conductor and ensemble. However, at crucial points in a score where vertical synchronization requires a clear, precise downbeat from the conductor, it will often clearly define the placement of the intended chord if the conductor will subdivide the preparation beat. For example, if the chord is to be played on beat 1, the conductor subdivided the preceding beat (4+). It is of course expected that at the same time, the ringers will also internalize and visually communicate that inner beat.

The subject of preciseness when considering vertical relationships is fascinating, particularly in light of that “connection” which takes place among ringers, conductor, and ultimately, the listener. Without all that connection, distinctive and musical performances cannot happen.

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ACHIEVING BEAUTY OF TONE...

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Technical Manipulations Peculiar to Handbell Ringing

There are numerous technical difficulties inherent in handbell ringing, which, if not addressed, can often destroy beauty of tone and articulation. The simple act of changing bells within a phrase can, if executed poorly, interrupt flow and direction. For this reason, it is imperative that ringers develop sound solo-ringing techniques (i.e., “the weave”), thus avoiding a double strike of the clapper or a disastrous absence of a strike. In most intermediate

and advance choirs, an excellent four-in-hand technique is imperative. Regardless of whether a conductor chooses to teach interlock of clutch positions (including the Shelley technique for ringing two pitches at the same time), it is necessary that the chosen position allow ringers to execute passages with ease.

There are many other arguments concerning the merits of one position of another. Ringers need to be exposed to all of the possibilities and then to decide which position causes the least amount of strain, so that a relaxed muscle movement will, in the end, allow the passage being performed to have musical breadth and clarity.

One of the most crucial aspects of ensuring musical performance is the process of assigning bells. For choirs that ring 5–7 octaves, this can mean virtually hours of thought on the part of the conductor to be absolutely sure that shared and passed bells do not interrupt the musical intent. Likewise, with the bass bells in particular, one must constantly remember the amount of time needed to switch bells without causing the all-too-familiar “womp” when a bell is damped on the table. This extra stopped sound can eventually destroy musical line.

Passages involving sixteenth-notes present technical problems
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back bay ringers

Boston's community handbell ensemble

~ Spring 2011 Solo Concerts ~

Perpetual Motion

Sunday, April 17, 3:00 p.m.
House of Prayer Lutheran Church, Hingham, MA

Saturday, June 4, 7:00 p.m.
St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, Sudbury, MA

Sunday, June 5, 3:00 p.m.
St. Anne Catholic Church, Salem, MA

~ Spring 2011 Festival Appearances ~

Highlands Handbell Festival

Monday, May 2, 7:30 p.m.
Highlands Elementary School
Danvers, MA



BOSTON HANDBELL FESTIVAL

Tuesday, May 17, 8:00 p.m.
Old South Church, Boston, MA

Please visit www.backbayringers.org to learn about additional performances, receive full concert details, and subscribe to our e-mail newsletter.



Announcing: AGEHR, Area I, Inc.

High School Ring-Out 2011

FEATURING: Nationally recognized clinician/composer **Michael Joy**
and your high school ringers !!

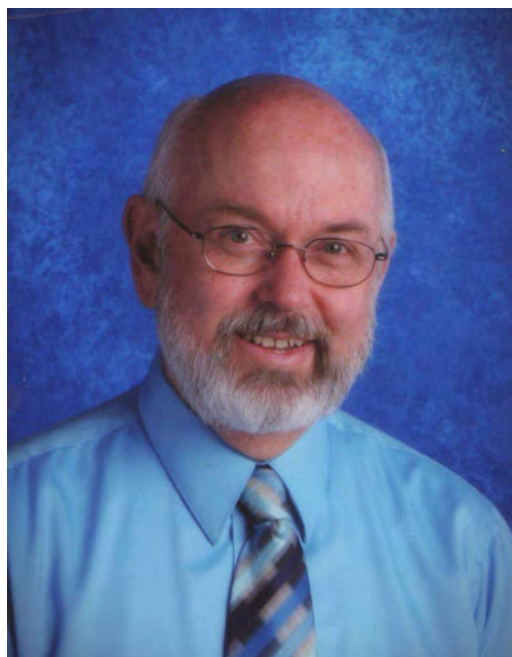
WHEN: Saturday, **November 12**, 2011

WHERE: Souhegan High School, Amherst, NH

COST: \$20 per ringing participant

DETAILS: Repertoire, schedule and other details will be published in the August Fundamental Tone and at www.agehrarea1.org. If you would like details as soon as they are available in mid-May, e-mail Phil Brown, HSRO registrar at stjmusic@sover.net and ask to be added to the HSRO e-mail list.

AGEHR Area I Board sponsors this event so we can bring in nationally known directors and offer our high school ringers an exceptional learning experience.



Michael Joy lives in Philadelphia, PA. He has been directing handbell choirs in churches since 1978 and in schools since 1983. He studied handbells with Donald Allured and handbell composition with Arnold Sherman. Michael is currently the middle school music teacher at The Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, PA where he conducts several different handbell groups. For the last 35 years he has also been the Music Director at First Presbyterian Church in Ambler, PA. Michael is a published composer and has taught at AGEHR Area festivals, PMEA district and state conferences, AGEHR National Seminars and the 2008 International Handbell Symposium. He was named Composer of the Year for 2004 by Jeffers Publishing Company for his composition *Dorian Dance*. Michael received the Donald E. Allured Original Composition Award for 2011. Michael is Composer Laureate for the Philadelphia Handbell Ensemble.

*Do your program and your youth ringers a favor and put the
2011 High School Ring-Out on their calendars now!*

ACHIEVING BEAUTY OF TONE...

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unique to bells, since more than one person is involved in the process. The initial preparation for ringing a pitch in the middle of a fast passage is no different from the preparation for a whole-note. The only factors that differ when ringing various note values are arm extension and eventual damp (i.e., the arm is fully extended for a whole-note and closer to the body for notes of shorter duration). A smooth, circular preparation is always the same and will ultimately allow for richness of tone. It is never necessary to “choke” the beauty of the tone by merely dropping the bell from the shoulder with a stilted, downward motion of the wrist. Follow-through is imperative, no matter what the duration of the note.

One other technical problem often facing conductors, caused by the occasional necessity to assign a large bell and a small bell to be played together by one person, is a tendency for the ringer to play the small bell slightly ahead of the large one. To prevent this from happening, a ringer only need to think of playing the large bell as a grace note, and the two bells will sound together every time!

Phrasing and Tone Quality/Articulation

Direction of phrase is imperative to good ringing style, and special attention should be given to contrasts within highly articulated passages. The direction of a

phrase is dependent on the forward motion and final relaxation of musical as well as visual components. Handbell ringing is indeed a highly visual art, and ringers can affect the vitality of phrase by paying careful attention to synchronized movement of the extended arm coupled with the natural movement of the

“Without ever intentionally drawing attention to one person, the ringers can collectively describe with their hands and bodies both the music and its underlying spirit.”

body as they realize that phrase. Without ever intentionally drawing attention to one person, the ringers can collectively describe with their hands and bodies both the music and its underlying spirit. An entire choir can show the beauty in an inner phrase through its graceful movements, or it can show the jaggedness of a passage as it executes various disruptive stopped sounds (e.g., plucking, thumb damping). The music must first become a part of the ensemble and its conductor in order for it to become a part of the listener. One very exciting and unique feature of handbell

ringing is that ringers can actually feel the texture of the tone as it is called forth. This is perhaps most strongly reinforced in music therapy, where choirs have been formed with hearing-impaired ringers whose only connection to the sound is the actual vibration of the bell. Perhaps this is the strongest argument for not wearing gloves while ringing. Without gloves, a ringer can more easily mold and sculpture the music; i.e., by gently squeezing the handle for a repeated note during a crescendo, the ringer can actually shape the forward motion demanded by that phrase. Without gloves, there is never a barrier between the hand and the instrument. The bell can, in fact, become an extension of the ringer's hand, just as the baton becomes for the conductor's.

In many cases, a piece of music will indicate a dynamic level such as *ff* or *pp* coupled with a descriptive phrase, e.g., *ff*—with excitement, or *mp*—freely. Here then, it is necessary for ringers and conductor to interpret and discover the ultimate direction of this passage. For example, a fortissimo passage of twelve measures doesn't mean that every note on every beat needs to be played loudly. The dynamic, in fact, only suggests and clarifies a particular intensity or style, and doesn't necessarily imply a constant hammering of notes over an extended period. Careful consideration of the rise and fall of the phrase can help artistically and stylistically to interpret this twelve-measure *ff* passage with integrity, thereby producing intensity and vitality without

destroying musical direction, tone quality, and articulation. In the same light, a pianissimo passage of twelve measures carries certain stylistic implications of gentleness and warmth while still allowing for natural crescendos and decrescendos within the pp dynamic level which enhance its texture and vitality.

Excellent phrasing ultimately affects tonal quality and articulation. Ringers and conductors alike must set the mood for each composition they ring and, in rehearsal and performance, must determine with every passage what gesture will give it life. Sometimes, triadic chords can sound rather dull and lifeless. Adding a bit more sound to the middle note (the third) will add lustre to the tone. Sometimes, long whole-notes will seem flat and colorless. Moving the bell in a singular circular motion from the striking of the bell to its final damp will ignite a new sense of energy and motion. Sometimes a fast passage involving many upper-register bells will sound shrill and brassy. More sound from the inner bells and a little less from the uppermost bells will produce an exciting, energetic, well-articulated sound that is pleasing to the ear.

Handbells and Foam Needed for Festival!



While our chairperson and committee are working hard on last-minute festival details, you can do your part:

We need Bells and Foam!

- 3 octave bell sets
- 4 octave bell sets

- 5 octave bell sets

- Foam

We are in a big need for all the above, but mainly 3- and 4-octave sets of bells and all the foam we can get!

Stipends are available, more if equipment is delivered and retrieved. 🗑️

Contact: Dan Moore

Danielmoore@wheelerschool.org
or 401 528-2187

Within all of the technical aspects discussed above, it is perhaps most important to constantly remind ourselves to listen to the music. If we are sincere and honest in our creative music-making, then in performance, our own musical intensity as conductors be felt vitally by players and listeners. All too often, it is easy for a ringer to get caught up in his/her own little pocket of sound, without being aware of the implications of that sound as it applies to a

particular passage within the music. Likewise, a conductor can become equally side-tracked. To achieve the very finest musical performance requires absolute focus among the performers. This means that ringers' eyes are always on the music—never wandering throughout the audience. Watch a handbell choir play from memory. This is perhaps the ultimate intensity and connection for which we all should strive. 🗑️

Fundamental Tone

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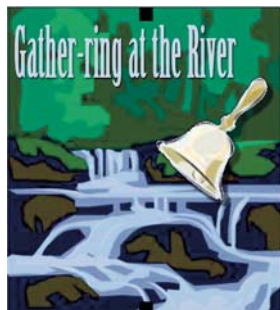
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REPORT FROM VERMONT

Springtime News from Vermont

April 29th and 30th, over 280 ringers representing 32 ensembles from Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts experienced the joy of **"Gather-ring at the River"** the official name for the 30th annual **Vermont Spring Ring and Directors' Workshop**. The Spring Ring was held in Bellows Falls, VT, and the Directors'



Workshop across the Connecticut River in Walpole, NH, thus the ringers are "Gather-ring at the River." We also developed the logo from this theme. Through the years we have developed many 'catchy' names and logos, which add to the fun and excitement planned for the events.

The clinician was Monica McGowan, who was here in 2007 and back again by popular demand. The repertoire for Massed ringing was: *Renewed Spirit* Michael Mazzatenta, *Fantasy on Immortal*, *Invisible* Douglas Floyd Smith; *For the Beauty of the Earth* Arr. J. D. Frizzell; *Animato* Arnold B. Sherman. Classes included a Repertoire Reading Session, Beginning and Advanced Four in Hand, Bass Bell Technique, Schulmerich Maintenance, Beginning Solo Ringing and Weaving. New this year was a class on Tai' Chi, which should allow ringers to relax and unwind.

Friday night, Apr. 29th, sixteen directors gathered for the annual Directors' Workshop. The evening began with a dinner and then Monica McGowan lead a class entitled 'Aspiring and Inspiring Discipline,' which "explores the various requirements of the discipline for the aspiring ringer and director."

Planning started a year in advance and committee members worked from a Yearly Planning Calendar that was developed and then revised and improved each year for the past 17 years. The Planning



Calendar is a valuable asset for committee members with already busy schedules, because a huge task is now divided into manageable monthly tasks. Nonetheless, this committee and committees in the past have done a fantastic job of making each Spring Ring unique and their own.

Two Think Spring Mini Rings were held in preparation for Spring Ring. One mini-ring attended by over 20 ringers representing several ensembles was held in February in St. Johnsbury, VT, and hosted and directed by Phil Brown. The other mini-ring was held in March in Essex Jct., VT, and was attended by over 50 ringers representing 8 ensembles and was hosted and directed by members of the Northern Bronze, a community handbell ensemble.

Upcoming Events

Directors will gather for the **Summer Directors' Meeting** at the home of Karen James in Pittsford, VT on July 27. Topics for discussion will include: preparations for an additional Think Spring Mini-Ring; plans for at least two Skill Building Workshops in Vermont this fall; plans and evaluation of Spring Ring classes and evaluation of past events year and setting dates and planning for additional events in the coming year.

Look for Information on Skill Building Workshops to be held in the fall. Look for more information on the Area website, Vermont e-newsletter, or other Vermont publications. 🗡️

Jerilyn Bergdahl, Vermont State Chair

A whimsical illustration of a fairy with blonde hair and white wings, holding a large yellow bell. Below her are two more yellow bells hanging from green stems.

Bell Trees and More

Visit BelltreesAndMore.com
on a regular basis to **see** and **hear** our entire list of published pieces. The latest releases and other website information will be featured on the HOME page.

Please register on the website.

Louise Frier Composer/Arranger
813 293-5855 belltreesandmore@aol.com

A Request for An Event

THE REQUEST

This summer, our town is hosting a well-known community handbell ensemble for an evening concert as well as an afternoon workshop for bell ringers. We would like to send mailings out to all area bell choirs, but we do not have a list or contact information. Since we know that many bell choirs depart for the summer, we are anxious to get info out to them as soon as possible. Would you be able to get us a list of bell choirs as well as contact info, director's name, etc.?—Thank you.

THE RESPONSE FROM THE AREA I CHAIR

Thank you for contacting AGEHR for help with this event. The workshop and concert sound like a wonderful opportunity for Area I members to learn more about our instrument.

AGEHR will be happy to send you mailing labels to use for this workshop, if the workshop is an AGEHR endorsed event. AGEHR does not provide the membership information for promoting concerts, although Area I does list the *concerts* on our website. (Your concert is currently listed on the Area I website with time TBA.) The workshop will only be promoted through AGEHR if the event is endorsed, and we are only allowed to provide membership information for endorsed events. The benefits and process of having your event endorsed are located on the national website: <http://agehr.org/events/sponsorBeneCriteria.asp>

Complete the following three forms:

1) Request for Event Endorsement:

<http://agehr.org/events/SponsoredEndorsed/Sponsored%20Endorsed%20Application.pdf>

2) Budget:

<http://agehr.org/events/SponsoredEndorsed/Sponsored%20Endorsed%20Event%20Budget.pdf>

3) Membership Information Request:

<http://agehr.org/events/SponsoredEndorsed/Membership%20Data%20Request.pdf>

Mail the forms to me:


Griff Gall
277 Shawmut Ave., Unit 1
Boston, MA 02118

After Your Event:

There is an endorsed event fee as detailed on the national website:

1–99 paid registrants – \$0.75 per registrant per day
100–499 paid registrants – \$1.00 per registrant per day
500+ paid registrants – \$1.50 per registrant per day

Area I has simplified this fee: 1–66 paid registrants is \$0.75 per registrant per day, or 66 registrants and higher, a flat fee of \$50.00 is charged, payable to AGEHR Area I. This would be paid to AGEHR Area I after the event, and submitted with the event report: <http://agehr.org/events/SponsoredEndorsed/Sponsored%20Endorsed%20Event%20Report.pdf>

If you have any questions about this application, or this process, please let me know. I know it may seem like a lot of paperwork, but it is pretty straight forward and simple. Once the event is endorsed, AGEHR national and Area I will be happy to list the workshop on our website. 

Thank you,
Griff Gall
AGEHR Area I Chair

Discover all the benefits of endorsed events and get your information here:
<http://agehr.org/events/sponsoreventapp.asp>