

# FUNDAMENTAL TONE

Newsletter of Area 1, Inc. • Handbell Musicians of America

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

Volume XXVI, No. 1

February 2012

## UPCOMING EVENTS

March 24, 2012  
**Massachusetts Spring Ring**  
Tewksbury, MA

April 14, 2012  
**Connecticut Spring Ring**  
Windsor, CT

April 28, 2012  
**Vermont Spring Ring**  
Middlebury

May 5, 2012  
**New Hampshire Spring Ring**  
Laconia, NH



Handbell Musicians  
OF AMERICA

## THIS WEEKEND!

### Directors Seminar

Fri.-Sat., February 10-11, 2012

**Location:** University of  
Massachusetts Campus Center,  
Amherst, MA

## Notes From The Chair...



**So much has happened** since I last wrote for *Fundamental Tone*.

I attended the National Board Meeting in Cincinnati November 4–5, 2011. We were informed of all the changes that have happened since we became Handbell Musicians of America in October.

A few points:

- The Dayton office staff have all changed their e-mails to: .....@handbellmusicians.org
- We received a copy of our new Area 1 logo.
- We were asked to not use an acronym but to refer to ourselves as “The Guild” for short.
- We received a packet of the latest music from AGEHR publications.
- A great deal of time was spent helping each other with problem solving that is unique to each area.

There was so much more. I am always fascinated when I find out what goes on in the national office. They work so hard and help every area to stay current. You can see who they are when you read the articles in *Overtones*. These men and women work tirelessly for us while most of them also ring in local handbell organizations.

In addition to the national office, locally we have the Area 1 board—also an amazing group. You know these people more by face and name (probably because they are the ones who set up and run workshops, write articles, help others as mentors and continue to ring with church, community or school groups. They are also the people who will  
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Visit the Area 1 website at [www.area1.handbellmusicians.org](http://www.area1.handbellmusicians.org)  
or [www.handbellmusicians.org](http://www.handbellmusicians.org) for the National office website.

## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR...

(continued from page 1)

sometimes say, “You do that very well. Would you consider helping others as a mentor or teaching a class?” Please say “yes” if asked or volunteer when you read that they might be looking for someone to help out. After all, WE are the organization. WE are all here to help each other out and to have fun with this wonderful instrument for which we share a love—HANDBELLS and CHIMES.

This fall there were workshops in a number of places and, of course, one of them is the famous High School Ring Out! Phil Brown did an exceptional job again organizing this event and making it happen for the teens. If you know of a high school group that might be interested in participating, but may not know of our organization, inform them now so they might join us and attend this great event next fall. The worst thing about having a great high school group is that they grow up on you and leave for college or other things. Keep your feeder programs going!

On February 10–11, Area 1 directors will meet at UMass Amherst, where we were all treated like royalty for our Festival Conference last June. The Director’s Seminar has moved to this central location and we welcome Kevin McChesney as the clinician this year. I hope you have registered!

Be on the lookout for all the spring rings and other events and concerts that will occur in the next few months. There are Spring Rings in Massachusetts (March 24 with Patrick Gagnon), Connecticut (April 14 with Karen Leonard), Vermont (April 28 with David Weck), and New Hampshire (May 5 with Karen Leonard). You don’t have to live in the state to attend a Spring Ring. Find the date that’s best for you as a group, or as an individual, and go and have fun and learn from some of the greatest. Both Connecticut and Vermont will have many classes to choose from as well massed ringing.

I hope to see many of you at the Directors Seminar and other spring events. 🖋️

*Jean Degan, Area 1 Chair*

## HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA AREA 1 OFFICERS

### Elected Officers

*Chair:* **Jean Degan** (860-543-3638)  
*chair@agehrarea1.org*

*Chair-Elect:* **Sue Wilber** (203-288-5847)  
*chairelect@agehrarea1.org*

*Past Chair:* **Griff Gall** (617-599-8656)  
*pastchair@agehrarea1.org*

*Secretary:* **Norah Piehl** (617-688-5768)  
*secretary@agehrarea1.org*

*Treasurer:* **Sue Chamberlin** (603-942-7884)  
*treasurer@agehrarea1.org*

### National Liaisons

*Education:* **Kimberlee Strepka**  
*education@agehrarea1.org*

### Appointed Officers

*Festival/Conference* **Bill Noss** (603-886-1512)  
*2013 Chair* *fcchair@agehrarea1.org*

*Membership* **Jane Nolan** (860-464-2873)  
*membership@agehrarea1.org*

*Publications* **Bill Noss** (603-886-1512)  
*editor@agehrarea1.org*

*Webmaster* **Linda S. Noss** (603-886-1512)  
*webmaster@agehrarea1.org*

*Bradford Scholarship* **Griff Gall** (617-599-8656)  
*scholarship@agehrarea1.org*

### State/Provincial Chairs

*Connecticut* **Mobby Larson** (860-464-7593)  
*ctchair@agehrarea1.org*

*Maine* **Brian Wilson** (207-781-5880)  
*mechair@agehrarea1.org*

*Massachusetts* **Gail Granum** (508-595-9011)  
*machair@agehrarea1.org*

*New Hampshire* **Joan Fossum** (603-224-0866)  
*nhchair@agehrarea1.org*

*Rhode Island* **To Be Announced**

*Vermont* **Pat Pranger** (802-446-2066)  
*vtchair@agehrarea1.org*

# ACRONYM vs. The Guild

During the last two years, your National Board and your Area leaders have worked hard regarding the *New Initiatives Campaign* which, as you know, included the rebranding of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers to Handbell Musicians of America. In the process of selecting a new name, the National Board and Area leaders also decided that, initially, it is important to avoid the use of the acronym, HMA, when referring to our organization.

The reasoning is that an acronym loses all meaning when it is used outside those “in the know” and it also tempts people to try to sound it out (is it A\*G\*E\*H\*R?? or AGE-er??—or my favorite: EGG-er??). Therefore we should all make a conscious effort to avoid the use of the acronym and use **THE GUILD** as our nickname. This will help us avoid confusion and additional time explaining what the acronym means. Additionally, the word

GUILD refers to a community of artisans which better represents who we are.



So, with all that said, please make a conscious effort to avoid the acronym and share with others that we prefer the use of our full name, Handbell Musicians of America, or The Guild when speaking of our community. Your efforts are much appreciated. 🖋️



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[www.HandbellWorld.com](http://www.HandbellWorld.com)

# Thoughts from a Bell Ringing Neophyte

By Marie Maia

**For a couple of years I listened** to the plea of our music director to join St. Joseph's handbell ensemble. I kept declining because of a heavy work load; but in 2009, I was laid off and joined immediately. Although I returned to work, I have remained a ringer.

I work in the corporate world, but my vocal training began before I went to school, as I come from a very musical family. Through public education, I learned to read music beginning in grammar school and then on into high school. I participated in every vocal choir available to me, both open and through audition. Instrumentally, the only experience I had was in high school playing recorder.

Handbells proved to be a joy and a challenge. First, I was assigned to the bass clef, which I could not automatically read. In addition, the weight of the bells worsened some joint pain I have. The upper bells weren't for me either

because of wrist—and coordination—problems! I have found a home in the A5-B5 position. I find this a natural for me, because I have sung in this range all my life, and I therefore can quickly identify key signatures and incidentals and the impact they have on these notes.

For me, the most difficult parts of ringing handbells have been learning the notation and performing some of the techniques, such as ring touch, mart lift, and the dynamic marking *piano*. Yet with diligent practice, I have happily been able to perform Level 4 pieces.

I have benefited from attending Spring Rings and the Festival Conference at UMass last June. Specialty classes afford the opportunity to practice and understand our instrument in greater depth. I enjoy meeting ringers from New England and studying under instructors from around the country. I'd encourage all ringers to participate and share in the experience. 🖋️

## HANDBELLS NEEDED

Our handbell choir is losing our bells this year because the woman who owns them is moving out of state. Would you happen to know of anyone or some congregation who might be interested in selling their bells? If so, I would sure appreciate if you would forward my contact information to them.

Roger Malmrose  
rmalmrose888@gmail.com  
209.604.6107



## New Hampshire Spring Ring Information

The New Hampshire Spring Ring is set for Saturday, May 5th, at Laconia High School, Laconia NH. This year's ringing division directors will be Karen Leonard, director of the Merrimack Valley Ringers, for Copper and Massed divisions, and Joan Fossum, director of the Granite State Ringers, for the Tins division.

An announcement will be mailed by February 10th. Final details, including music selections, classes and clinicians, will be on Area 1's website: [www.area1.handbellmusicians.org](http://www.area1.handbellmusicians.org). Registration is \$15; \$5 additional for lunch if desired. Please refer to the website for details and forms for registration.

# Hockanum Valley Ringers Select New Director

The Hockanum Valley Ringers, a community based handbell ensemble from Vernon, CT, has selected Lawrence A. Berdensemey to succeed Greg Fisher as their new director. After 6 years as director of the Hockanum Valley Ringers and over 35 years of dedication to the handbell profession in Connecticut and Area 1, Greg has decided to move on to a warmer climate with his wife, Lynn.


Larry began ringing with Jane Nolan, where he is currently a member of the Shoreline Ringers. He has been the handbell director at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, in Gales Ferry,



**Larry Berdensemey and Greg Fisher**

CT, since 2004. Larry received his B.S. in music education from University of Connecticut, and holds a masters degree in education from Southern Connecticut State University.

He has taught for 28 years and is currently a middle school band director in Groton, CT.

The ringers from Hockanum Valley Ringers hail from South Windsor, Ellington, Vernon, Tolland and Manchester. They are committed to promoting the art of English handbell ringing and providing their audiences with exceptional concerts. The Hockanum Valley Ringers are currently recruiting experienced ringers to join their choir. If you are interested in being a part of their ensemble, please email them at [hvringers@gmail.com](mailto:hvringers@gmail.com) or contact Sylvia Yoder at 860-375-0333. 

## Upcoming Concerts



*Musical Excellence  
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[www.newenglandringers.org](http://www.newenglandringers.org)

**Saturday, May 5**  
12:30 and 3:00 p.m.

**Webster Presbyterian Church**  
Workshop and Concert  
550 Webster Road  
Webster, NY

**Sunday, May 6**  
3:00 p.m.

**First United Methodist Church**  
603 State Street  
Schenectady, NY

**Saturday, May 12**  
Time TBD

**First Parish Church**  
9 Cleaveland Street  
Brunswick, ME

**Tuesday, May 15**  
8:00 p.m.

**Boston Handbell Festival**  
Old South Church • 645 Boylston St.  
Boston, Massachusetts

Would your organization like to present an NER concert or host an NER-led Skill Building Workshop? Contact us at [info@newenglandringers.org](mailto:info@newenglandringers.org) or call 978-851-3024. Host venues are currently being sought for the 2012 Spring and Holiday seasons and beyond.



# HANDBELL DIRECTORS...

## ...working with children and youth in churches...

...could you please take 10 minutes and complete a survey?

Results will be reflected in my final paper, required for the Master of Church Music degree at Concordia University Wisconsin. For survey results or clarifications, please contact me.

*bethannedwards@msn.com / 515.490.9408*

To access the survey, please go to this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8T3S3R8>

**Please respond by March 31.**

The survey results will give us a current snapshot of the state of children's and youth handbell choirs in churches. The survey is divided into three areas: church statistics and background, children's and youth handbell choirs, and background of the survey respondent. I will make the results available later this spring or early this summer.

Beth Ann Edwards, Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Des Moines, Iowa / *Westpres.org*

*The Raleigh Ringers*

*David M. Harris, Director*

8516 Sleepy Creek Drive • Raleigh, NC 27613

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*A community handbell choir*

## NATIONAL HANDBELL EVENTS

**NATIONAL SEMINAR 2012**, July 18–21

Cincinnati, Ohio,

**DISTINCTLY TEEN**, July 19–21

Cincinnati, Ohio (part of National Seminar)

**DISTINCTLY BRONZE WEST 2012**,

February 23–26, Bremerton, WA

**15TH INTERNATIONAL HANDBELL SYMPOSIUM**

July 31–August 8, Liverpool, England

## Fundamental Tone

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Quarter page: (3.5" w. x 4.625" h.) \$30.00;  
Eighth page: (3.5" w. x 2.2" h.) \$20.00.  
Payment is due before publication.  
Discounts are available for prepayment of two issues (–5%) and four issues (–10%).  
Preferred formats for ads is a .pdf or .jpg file.



Handbell Musicians  
OF AMERICA

## Photos from Area 1 2011 High School Ring-Out

Amherst, New Hampshire — Sixty youth and accompanying adults performed at the 21st annual High School Ring Out. The event was held at Souhegan High School on November 12th, 2011. Event conductor was Michael Joy.

Photos courtesy of Phil Brown





# Report from CONNECTICUT



First of all this month, please note: I've been working at creating a mailing label list and an email list from the national membership list; and there are a few gaps or bits of outdated information. Please remember to let the national office know of any changes in your contact information. We need that information to keep you "in the loop." Thank you!

## Connecticut Spring Ring

It's time to think about Spring Ring! Yes, it may be cold and windy, and even possibly snowy; but we can all look forward to spring. Spring Ring will be held on Saturday, April 14, at Trinity United Methodist Church in Windsor from 9:00 until 3:45. Bob Gilbert has once again graciously arranged for us to use this great facility.

As always, there will be something for all level ringers, for enrichment, for challenge, and for fun.

If your whole bell choir cannot attend, please know that partial groups or "orphan" ringers are always welcome. Just note on the registration form what positions you

have open. If you have just a couple of ringers who can attend, please consider still bringing your bells/chimes & foam, since we need the loan of several sets for the workshops.

There will be an opportunity for a few groups to offer a selection during the sharing concert, but time is limited. If you are interested, please let me know.

Karen Leonard will be our Massed Ring director. She has selected three pieces:

- **Prelude on Thaxted** – arr. Michael Helman – AG36045 3-6 oct. with 3-5 oct. chimes, Level 3
- **Chanson** – Kenneth Lowenberg – AG23037 2-3 oct., AG46028 4-6 oct. compatible with 3 oct. chimes (B5-A6), Level 2
- **Joyful Rhythm** – Kevin McChesney – CGB 219 2-3 oct., CGB 689 3-5 oct. compatible, Level 1+

Karen will also lead an advanced workshop for ringers who would like to perform the selected piece at the Sharing Concert: **Canticle of Praise** – Arnold Sherman – AG35288 – 3-5 oct. (Level 4–)

It is most helpful if everyone attending has had some practice time on these pieces, so perhaps you can work them into your spring schedule (and budget!) Remember that no photocopies will be allowed.

The cost per ringers is still only \$10. "Coffee and" will be available, but bring your own lunch. Registration forms along with the list of workshops are being sent to all CT registered members of Handbell Musicians of America. If you do not receive one, please contact me ASAP. It would be helpful if you are interested in coming to send me a quick email with estimated attendance, so we can incorporate that into our planning. 🖋️

*Mobby Larson, Connecticut State Chair*



## REPORT FROM VERMONT

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Hello fellow ringers. This is the start of another exciting year for handbell ringers in the U.S. and Vermont.

Let me introduce myself as your new Vermont State Chair of the Handbell Musicians of America. My name is Pat Pranger and I LOVE HANDBELLS! I am a self-employed CPA who lives in Wallingford with my 4 cats. I am a proud member of the New England Ringers and I also play the “buckets” with Karen James at the Rutland United Methodist Church. I am available to help with your questions regarding Vermont and Area 1 activities and can be reached at [vt@area1.handbellmusicians.org](mailto:vt@area1.handbellmusicians.org)

Thanks to the hard work of Jerilyn Bergdahl, Karen James and Phil Brown there is something scheduled in Vermont during nearly every month of the year. We are the little state that could.....

*VermontStrong!* There has been an active fall schedule of workshops with more coming up! I will give a short recap here.

On November 12th over 60 kids totally impressed clinician Michael Joy with their enthusiasm and preparation for High School Ring Out. Phil Brown organized the 2011 event, held in Amherst, NH. The day of November 10, 2012, has been designated for the next Ring Out, so get your young people psyched now.


A big focus of the Vermont handbell community has been education. To that end there were two skill building workshops held this fall. On September 24th Phil taught a northern workshop in S. Burlington to 15 attendees. Karen James conducted a southern workshop in Manchester on October 15th. The variety of people coming to these workshops was best represented by the elderly couple who signed up just because they wanted to learn more about the bells their granddaughter was ringing in school. They had a wonderful day of learning and ringing.



Next up are the events to help ringers and directors prepare for Spring Ring. On January 28th there will be a Roundtable of directors and ringers spending several hours going over techniques and ideas on ringing the SR music. You can bet that by 2pm, Karen and Phil will have every one humming “Call To Celebration” all the way home.

There will be 2 “Mini-Rings” this year...Feb 11th in St. Johnsbury, and March 10th in Essex Junction. These 3-hour sessions help go over Spring Ring music but in more relaxed, intimate settings. These rings fill up fast, so be sure to register early.

As for Spring Ring, registration materials have been sent out with a due date of March 1st. We are very excited to have David Weck as our clinician. I saw David conduct his group, The Agape Ringers, at Pinnacle held in Nashville in 2010 and was blown away. What a magician with the baton. “SpRing Bells in Middlebury” will be held at Middlebury High School on Saturday April 28, 2012 culminating in the famous ice cream social followed by the massed concert. In addition, there is a directors workshop on Friday evening with David. I urge you and your group—no matter how new or small—to not pass up this opportunity to meet your peers and make music together.

I hope to see you at some of these events. Be sure to come up and introduce yourself. Until then... ring out. 

*Pat Pranger, Vermont State Chair*



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# Report from MASSACHUSETTS



## MASSACHUSETTS SPRING RING Saturday, March 24, 2012

Massachusetts announces its annual Spring Ring! We look forward to seeing as many of our ringer friends as possible. Please support your handbell choirs and directors by planning to attend this event.

In December, David Wurth, chair of the event, sent invitation letters to Massachusetts area handbell choirs. David announced that Patrick Gagnon will be the massed conductor at this year's festival. Groups will gather in the gymnasium of Tewksbury Memorial High School, Tewksbury, MA at 2:00 pm, set up, and begin rehearsing. Highlight of the day will be a concert performed at 7:00 pm. Choirs or ensembles will take part in massed ringing, as well as solo selections, if registration and time permit. Registration deadline is March 1, 2012.

The massed pieces for Spring Ring are as follows:

- **A Mighty Fortress is Our God** – arr. Cathy Moglebust – CGB362 L4 – <http://handbell-world.com/music/MusicPiece.cfm?piece=10460>
- **Prelude on Thaxted** – Michael Helman – AG36045 L3 – <http://handbellworld.com/music/MusicPiece.cfm?Piece=14153>
- **Three Sketches** – Cynthia Dobrinski – MHP2351 L3 – <http://www.handbellworld.com/music/MusicPiece.cfm?Piece=11200>

A Tins (formerly known as Youth) Division is being planned this year. **Laudare** – Kathleen Wissinger – CGB599 – L1+ – <http://www.handbellworld.com/music/MusicPiece.cfm?Piece=12976>

### Schedule for the MA Spring Ring Festival:

2:00 – 3:00 individual choir setup and rehearsals as scheduled  
3:00 – 4:30 massed rehearsal –  
Copper Division in gym

4:30 – 5:00 individual choir rehearsals as scheduled  
5:00 – 5:30 massed rehearsal – Tins Division in gym  
5:00 – 6:00 supper and fellowship (bag supper) – Coppers in cafeteria  
5:30 – 6:00 individual choir rehearsals as scheduled  
5:30 – 6:30 supper and fellowship (bag supper) – Tins in cafeteria  
6:00 – 6:30 final massed rehearsal – Coppers in gym  
7:00 – 8:30 concert in gym  
8:30 – tear down; refreshments in cafeteria

Registration cost is \$7.50 per ringer (you may list multiple choirs on a single form), which covers performance royalties, guest musicians, massed conductors, and insurance liability coverage. Participants typically bring a bag supper and share fellowship time together before the final rehearsal. Following the concert they enjoy refreshments with the audience, which are supplied by the participant groups. The program is sponsored by the Handbell Musicians of America.

Questions regarding the MA Spring Ring? All questions about the day may be sent to David Wurth at [maspringring@gmail.com](mailto:maspringring@gmail.com). **Remember – deadline is March 1, 2012.**

For complete information you may click on this link: [http://agehrarea1.org/EventFiles/maSpringRing\\_2012/massSpringRing2012\\_registration.pdf](http://agehrarea1.org/EventFiles/maSpringRing_2012/massSpringRing2012_registration.pdf)

## MERRIMACK VALLEY RINGERS RINGING SKILLS WORKSHOP, Saturday, May 19, 2012

The Merrimack Valley Ringers will be hosting a Ringing Skills Workshop at the Southwick Congregational Church in Southwick, MA, on Saturday May 19. More details will be available soon on the Area 1 website.

Sincerely, and with a mind toward uniting people through our musical art. 🖋️

Gail Granum, MA State Chair

# MASSACHUSETTS SPRING RING 2012

**DEADLINE**

## REGISTRATION FORM

**MARCH 1st**

Tewksbury Memorial High School

Patrick Gagnon, Music Director

March 24, 2012

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ The Guild Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Church/School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Coppers Choir Name \_\_\_\_\_ # of ringers \_\_\_\_\_ Youth? Y / N

Director's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Tins Choir Name \_\_\_\_\_ # of ringers \_\_\_\_\_ Youth? Y / N

Director's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of ringers registering \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$7.50 per ringer = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

We are bringing \_\_\_\_\_ linear feet of tables. Please be accurate in your space request. If your space needs change due to a change in the number of ringers, you **MUST** notify us.

*We would like to perform in the final concert:*

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Composer \_\_\_\_\_

Performers (choir name, soloist, ensemble) \_\_\_\_\_

*For multiple groups, please list additional requests on the back of this form.*

**----- To avoid duplication, the musical selection(s) will be confirmed by the registrar via e-mail. -----**

We have room for # \_\_\_\_\_ orphan ringers at the following position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I am an orphan ringer and am willing to ring the following position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to *AGEHR Area I, Inc.*

Please print out and complete this form  
and return via "snail mail"

**WITH PAYMENT** by March 1, 2012 to:

David Wurth  
Registrar MSR  
79 Proctor St  
Salem, Ma 01970

Questions? Email David Wurth [maspringring@gmail.com](mailto:maspringring@gmail.com)