



HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA

ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA

QUAVERS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER, 2015

Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA

COLLABORATIVE QUIZ

- When given a project, you:
 - Dissect the task into smaller tasks
 - Tend to procrastinate
 - Work the task backwards
 - Start working on the first idea that comes into your head
- Before you begin a project, you need to know:
 - What the expectations are
 - What the purpose is
 - What your role is
 - What the final project will be
- You are:
 - Always on time
 - Frequently late
- You become frustrated when:
 - People don't understand your ideas
 - People don't pay attention to details
 - People don't understand things as quickly as you
 - People don't see the consequences of their actions
- When you are learning a new concept, you:
 - Read the summary immediately
 - Pay attention to outlines and headings
 - Keep detailed notes
 - Concentrate on learning vocabulary
- When you respond to a problem, you:
 - Tend to react emotionally
 - Keep you emotions in check
 - Analyze the situation for the best solution
 - Recall similar experiences and how you resolved them
- When you meet someone for the first time, you:
 - Recall their name
 - Remember their face
 - Identify specific details about them
 - Associate them with circumstances or events

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Team building is an important part of a director's work as many people need a strong sense of belonging in order to give of their time and talent. You want them there for each rehearsal since that's going to make the group the most successful, but they're humans. As I've stated in other articles, sometimes the problem with a bell choir is the humans. Each is diverse and dynamic, but each is different and it is your job to figure out how to convince them that they **need** to be in your group.

Some of the things that I do in my work as a high school vocal music teacher can be categorized as team building activities. I will detail a few and, if you, like you can use what you want, or flip to one of the better articles! Or check out the concert calendar or the ads.

My Friends and Neighbors: This is a great ice-breaker and is a non-threatening way to help people out of their shell. Sit the group in a circle and have enough chairs for all but one person. You could start with a volunteer or just time it out so the last person standing must begin. Whoever is standing in the center says "I want to meet all of my friends and neighbors who (fill in the blank). Such as have two different-color socks on today; liked "The Golden Girls"; played football in high school; have more than one sibling; have ever rolled a car into a ditch; thrown up at an airport; etc. As soon as this is said, anyone in the group who has done the thing must stand up and run around the room to a different seat and try not to be the last one out. Whoever was "it" also may dive for a chair.

Human Treasure Hunt: This takes some planning, but can be done without much struggle. I've done this as an online quiz where kids must find people then submit their answers to me with a Google form or other online interface. It's sort of like *Friends and Neighbors*, but with fewer chairs thrown. Here are a few ideas: find ten people with the same eye color; find three people that are exactly the same height; find four people with your exact shoe size; find the person in the group with the longest name (first, middle, last).

One Word Story: Standing in a circle, begin a story where each person in the group can only add one word.

One Word Story, Pt. 2: Standing in a circle, begin a story where each person in the group can only add one word, BUT may not use any word containing the letter N or W or whatever you choose.

Tap, Clap, Clap your Neighbor, Clap: Stand in a circle where everyone is the right distance away to clap both of their neighbor's hands, side-to-side, begin slowly and increase speed. Tap your thighs, then clap your hands together, then clap your neighbor (don't miss!), then clap your own hands again. Every separate motion happens on one beat, so all four things make one measure. This is EXCELLENT for people who struggle with focus. (Squirrel!!!)

These and many others can be fun ways to begin a retreat or even a weekly rehearsal with the right group. Know when they're done and **move on** to something else because too much of anything can be ruinous. Go Team Go!

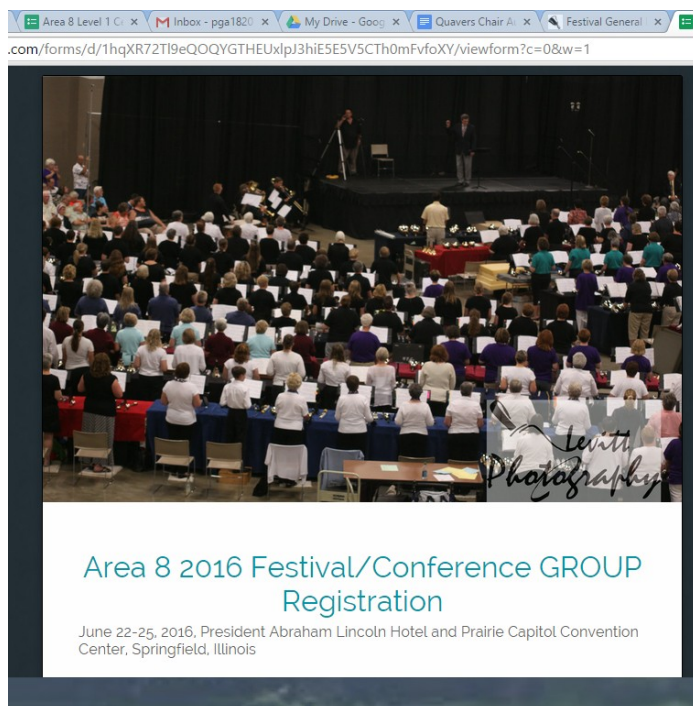
Patrick Gagnon ~ Area 8 Chair

Festival Registration

Area 8 Launches **Online Registration** for Ring in the Land of Lincoln!

Our Area has been taking logical baby steps to use all of our available technology to the greatest advantage. First, we moved our newsletter, *Quavers*, to an online, full-color format, greatly reducing our printing and mailing costs, and our carbon footprint. Second, as of your unanimous approval of our By-Laws revision last summer, we will now vote for future elections online. Finally, we have moved away from the last *great biennial waste of paper*, the Festival/Conference registration process! You can enjoy our first sharp, sleek, efficient, green, and affordable online registration, which is now live and open! Visit www.areaviii.org and select the 2016 Festival/Conference tab to navigate to our information page. Please read this entire page as it will likely answer questions that may come up as you complete the registration. You might even give it a few reads - there is a LOT to take in.

Once you are ready, you can select which of three options is the one for you—Group, Individual, or Daily registration. All are similar, but probably only one is perfect for you. We've worked very hard to make this work and we can't wait to have your information come *flooding* in, to have your music orders for the awesome 2016 repertoire come *flooding* into an HIC member, and to have you and your equipment come *flooding* into the Prairie Capital Convention Center on June 22, 2016, just ten fast months away.





(Continued from page 1)

8. You would rather:
 - A. Organize an event
 - B. Participate in an event
9. At work, your space:
 - A. Is very organized
 - B. Reveals how detailed oriented you are
 - C. Is disorganized because you are too busy
 - D. Is covered with sticky notes with important information
10. After a workshop, you:
 - A. Have a better understanding of the concepts
 - B. Immediately implement the resources that are specific to you
 - C. Build upon what you learned
 - D. Think of ways you will teach others



There are many different reasons why groups use team building activities. Whether it's a committee, staff or a handbell choir, team building can improve communication, boost morale, build relationships and motivate a group.

I am a huge fan of chamber music. Out of the many musical ensembles I've performed with over the years, the most meaningful experiences for me have been in a chamber music setting. A handbell choir is essentially a chamber music group. Every member of the group has a vital role to play. A bell ringer can't rely on a section of musicians playing their exact same part. The nature of chamber music forces us not only to be aware of our own individual performance but also how we fit into the ensemble as a whole. And that makes team building a must!

A great way for handbell musicians to connect is to simply spend time together away from rehearsal. My church group rehearses on Sunday mornings, and we have forty five minutes between the end of our rehearsal and the beginning of a church service. During that time, the majority of us gather in the lobby, drink coffee and chat. We all have learned so much about each other during our *coffee hour* and have become friends. We are now much more connected to each other emotionally, and that helps us in our ringing as well.

Another great way to team build is to take a field trip as a group. Go see a concert together. Work up a short program and perform it at a nearby school or nursing home. This coming Advent, my church handbell choir will be traveling to a Chicago area church to perform on their Christmas concert series. Traveling with a group is yet another way for the ringers to get to know each other and work together outside of a rehearsal. I have made great friends on bus rides and carpools to concerts and tours!

A polishing party is yet another way to build relationships in your handbell choir. It's an opportunity to visit and toss around performance ideas for the group. At my church group's last polishing party, we enjoyed coffee, breakfast, and lots of good conversation. We came up with ideas for repertoire, collaborations with other music groups within the church, and talked about some out-of-the-box performance ideas for next season.

My ideas for team building are mostly about cultivating relationships within the handbell choir, not game-type activities. I'm not the game type. But if you are, check out www.ringinpraise.org.uk. The site has lots of team building games geared specifically for handbell choirs. The Handbell Musicians of America website is another great resource, as well as the *Overtone* publication.

Team building has had a profound effect in both the groups I direct and the groups with which I ring. Strong relationships within the group create an ensemble that is connected and dedicated.

Briana Belding-Peck ~ Illinois State Chair



Greater
Chicagoland Area

AUDITIONS!
Saturday,
November 7, 2015

For questions or further
information, please contact
David Weck at:
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or
630-665-3200 x 120

www.il-agapehr.org

We've all been told that playing handbells is not an individual effort. It is a team effort. We need to rely on everyone to play their part so the whole sounds good. Sometimes it's hard to work or play well with others. We may not know the person next to us very well or the person playing down the table from us. It is just as important to be comfortable playing with everyone as it is learning your part. So how can we accomplish unity within our choir? I always liked to start my church rehearsals with prayer. It took the stress of the day and put it on the shelf for a while. I would ask for a centering of our spirits and the concentration on the hour we had together. That seemed to help. If I happened to forget, I would have someone from my choir remind me quickly! Another favorite is periodic get-togethers. You could meet at someone's house or at a park. Bring along some food and have a picnic! Don't forget the games! Oh! Speaking of games, this is a wonderful way to break the ice with your choir and help relieve stress from the day or just get to know each other. There are several types of games you can look up online, but let me explain to you a few of my favorite. These work great with both adults and kids!

Knots: I have loved this game since I was a kid. Have everyone stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder. Place your arms into the center and grab the hand of two different people. This will create a big "knot" in the center of the circle. Now, untangle yourselves, but don't let go of the hand you are holding on to. This is a great way to see who the leaders of your group are and how people react differently to troubling situations. Who are your nurturing ones? Who are your complainers? How well can your group problem solve?

Silent Telephone: This game is a great one for watching and communicating. Have everyone stand in a line facing the back of the person in front of them. The last person picks a movement (i.e. handbell technique). Once he knows what it is, have him tap the person's shoulder in front of him and show that person the movement once. That person then taps the person in front of her and shows that person the movement once. This continues until the movement makes it to the person in the front of the line. This person must then show the whole group what he saw. Was it the same movement that was started? Discuss with your group how important it is to keep an eye on the director.

Game of Possibilities: I use this game as an icebreaker with my groups and also a confidence builder. For this one, you will need a small to medium sized piece of cloth. Have everyone stand in a circle and select a topic (i.e. food, transportation, handbells). One person starts by taking the cloth and folding it into something that is in that topic selected. For example, if the topic is food a person can fold it into a banana shape. Or they can sit on it and it can be a picnic blanket. Be creative! Once the object is created, the rest of the group must guess what it is. The person folding cannot speak however! Once that object has been used, it cannot be used again. Pass the cloth to the right and continue around the circle. If someone can't think of something, build them up by telling them they can. It's amazing what they end up coming up with sometimes!

There are so many more wonderful games out there to help with group unity and support. I have several more I wanted to share, but ran out of room! I hope this gives you some ideas of how to bring your group closer together. Happy ringing!

Staci Cunningham ~ Kansas Chair

Most of us have enjoyed a summer break from our handbell groups. As we look to a new season of ringing, we have the joy of welcoming returning ringers and new ringers to our groups. As directors we face the challenge of helping our individual ringers become a *team* – *not* just a group of individuals who know how to ring some bells! For this article, I asked several directors for input. The number one suggestion was to do something outside the rehearsal room. These included and stressed the benefits of attendance at handbell festivals and handbell concerts, but there were also suggestions for social events that helped the members get to know each other better. Some ideas included: attendance at other types of music concerts (symphony concerts, Broadway shows, church and/or community musical events); lunch or dinner at a fun restaurant; ice cream after rehearsal at a favorite spot; birthday treats after rehearsal to celebrate ringers who have a birthday that week; service activities at schools, churches or in the community. One local handbell group sponsors a child through Compassion International.

Most directors also affirmed the benefits of taking their bell choir to perform at venues outside the home church or school. Ideas included: performances at area nursing homes and Alzheimer units, senior living establishments, children's homes, hospitals, Christmas caroling with chimes, Christmas performances at a local mall, joint concerts with other churches/schools.....and the list goes on and on.

In my groups, I challenge current members to recruit new ringers. Their circle of friends and acquaintances is a whole new pool of prospects and they take real ownership in this process. It makes my life as a director much easier and brings new ringers to the rehearsal room.

The following are some great ideas from a youth handbell director at a church in the St. Louis area. Her ringers (high school age) end their year in June with a week-long tour to a different geographical area of the country. Special thanks to their director for sharing these ideas!

I have found that any time our students work together on a project, it does more group building than anything I might plan. The projects we have done to raise money for bell tour are baking bread and other baked goods together, making chili together, planning and preparing a chili lunch including entertainment by bell choir members (usually music, but instruments other than bells), and a car wash. We also set aside a time each year (just before bell tour) to thoroughly polish our bells with the pink paste! This also helps with group building. We also assign responsibilities to each choir member, and when we transport equipment and bells to ring elsewhere, although it's lots of work to do this, it is worth the effort because of the group building that results. If choir members are too old to lift heavy cases, tables, etc., it might be an opportunity to include a few younger members of the congregation or school to help out (and may result in recruiting another bell choir member). We also draw names for "secret bell pals" when we go on tour, but this could happen at specific times during the year. These bell pals try to be secretive in doing nice things for the other person (like getting their bells out before rehearsal or even doing a quick mini-polish of their bells), giving an occasional small gift (our group usually gives candy or a souvenir from our travels), and leaving encouraging notes on their bell stand. The devotions before each of our concerts also include a time of sharing about our day – low points and high points. Another thing we occasionally do during this time is sing together the hymns or tunes that occur in our bell pieces. We have also worked together as a group to teach beginning handbells to VBS children.

Cathy Benton ~ Missouri State Chair

Team Building. Turning a group of individual ringers into a cohesive ensemble. Sounds like it should be easy, right? There are many tools at your disposal to make this work.

Retreats are a great option, not only for community groups, but church and school ensembles as well. Spending several hours getting a first look at the season's music, sharing the goals and plans for the season, catching up on what everyone has been doing since the group was last together, are all things that can be accomplished at a retreat. Retreats can be offsite, or at your rehearsal space, depending on your needs. It can also include a meal for added social time.

It is important to make new members feel welcome when they join an established group. One idea could be to assign one choir member to be their mentor or bell buddy. This person could be the one to introduce them to the group.

Devotions can be an excellent way to begin a rehearsal and get that focus on the music and the rehearsal time. There are many excellent resources available for these devotions. The director can share them each week, or members of the ensemble can take turns.

During rehearsals, rhythm games, drills and exercises can help everyone with learning tricky syncopation. Even if it is *not their part*, it will help the group as a whole get everything to fit together.

If needed, certain tasks can be assigned to individual ringers. Getting ringers to take on set-up or put-away tasks can relieve the director to take care of other functions. This activity before the rehearsal can also take care of some of the 'chatty time' that can interfere with rehearsal time.

Social time outside of rehearsal can also benefit the group. Meeting for a meal or just some liquid refreshment can help the ringers come closer together. Potlucks make for fun gatherings at the holidays or at the end of the ringing season.

Always let your ringers know that you are always there to listen to their concerns, help them with tricky passages or finesse a new technique.

Linda Ashley ~ Nebraska State Chair

2015	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
9/19 9a-12p	Ringfest 2015	Ladue Chapel Presbyterian 9450 Clayton Rd, St Louis, MO	HAGSTL
9/19	Back to Bells	Wheaton, IL, Webster City, IA Des Moines, IA	Area 8
10/2-3	Flint Hills Handbell Festival	Camp Wood YMCA 1101 Campwood Rd, Elmdale, KS	Staci
10/24 8:45a	Handchime Festival Lauran Delancy / Kathy Schultz	Good Shepherd Catholic 12800 W 75th St, Shawnee, KS	Marilyn Lake

**CONCERT
LISTINGS?
CLICK BELOW**

Concerts



7-Day Alaska Cruise
with
Guest Conductor
Fred Gramann
July 31* - August 6
2016

Aboard the Celebrity Infinity

Round trip from Vancouver, BC sailing the
Inside Passage, viewing the Hubbard
Glacier, and stopping in Ketchikan, Juneau
and Icy Strait Point, Alaska

Cabins start at \$1371 per person

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to book. For more info, visit:

www.bellsofthecascades.org/cruise

*Departs the day after Int'l Symposium in Vancouver, BC
www.ihs2016vancouver.ca

Upcoming Events