



## Keeping A8 Connections

by Sharon Schmidt, Area 8 Chair

Greetings!

With spring, we are finding new hope that we'll be returning to ringing as we did in the past. That date is still elusive, but your Area 8 Board has begun exploring options for a June 2022 festival in the Kansas City area. We have several resources to

help us find the venue, and we will be investigating ringing and meeting spaces other than hotels and large convention centers. The current plan is to utilize all the work that went into the 2020 event: repertoire, schedule, faculty, and classes. We're in the process of contacting the previously contracted clinicians to see if they are interested and available. I hope to have more details to share with you in the July Quavers.

So! If a 2022 festival is on your radar, and you're starting to select music for your group(s) for 2021-2022, don't forget to consider the 2020 repertoire! The listing is available on our website on the 2022 Festival tab and we'll review it in the July Quavers.

While we wait for that elusive date, we've been offering Fourth Friday Focus – monthly virtual offerings. Here's what we've offered so far:

**January: Sampler Session**, with topics from Malleting with Professor Bell and Clapper to Solving that Problem Measure to Top Sellers from Choristers Guild

**February: In-depth Session**, Mark Your Music with Beth Ann Edwards

**March: Sampler Session**, with topics from TD & RT with Professor Bell and Clapper to Bell Trees for Beginners to What Happens at National Seminar

**April: In-depth Session**, Solo & Ensemble Skills for These Times: 4-in-Hand with Beth Ann Edwards, Weaving with Kristin Paul Diaz, and Examples: Putting these Skills Together for Your Ensemble with Sharon Schmidt

You can register for past and future sessions at <https://area8.handbellmusicians.org/fourth-friday-focus/>.

I look forward to seeing you on a fourth Friday night!

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## Your Opinion Matters!

Please take a few minutes to fill out a brief survey about this issue of *Quavers*, the Area 8 newsletter. Click here to access the survey.

# Have YOU Renewed?

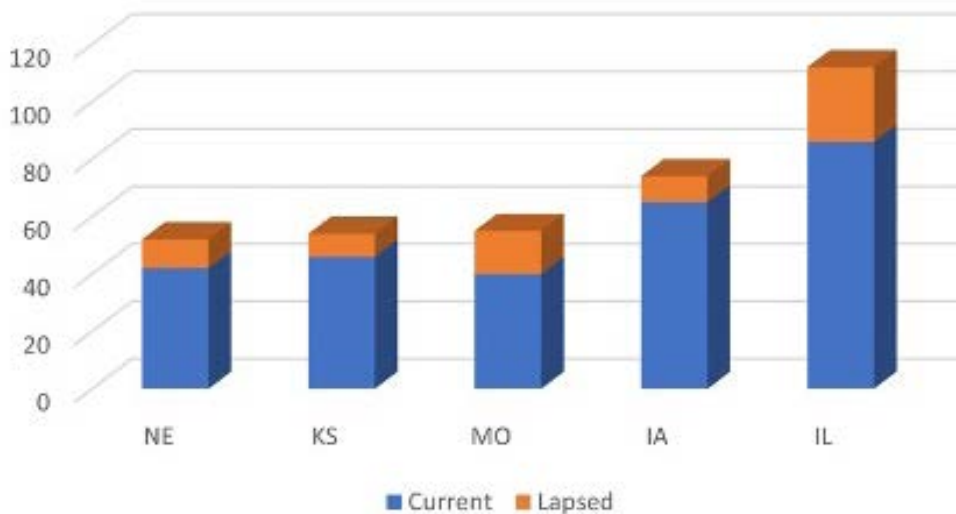
by Chris Peck, Membership Chair and Chair-elect  
Let's talk about membership!

Membership in Handbell Musicians of America allows you to:

- *Connect* with fellow handbell musicians
- *Provide opportunities* for growth and education in our handbell community
- *Support* the organization that is dedicated to advancing the handbell/handchime art through education, community and communication

If you have questions about membership, contact your Area 8 Membership Chair Chris Peck ([membership.area8@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:membership.area8@handbellmusicians.org)) or Kim Braswell ([kbraswell@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:kbraswell@handbellmusicians.org)), our Regional Membership Coordinator at the National level.

## Area 8 Membership by State



Area 8 currently lists 290 active memberships and 62 expired memberships. Which category are you in?

*If your church, school, or other organization is not in a position to renew its membership at this time, consider an individual membership. The cost averages out to about \$8 per month. Membership information can be found [HERE](#).*

**CLICK  
HERE**

to join or renew your membership with Handbell Musicians of America.

## Area 8 Board

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### WEB MASTER

Wendi Calkins-Levitt

### EDUCATION

Patrick Gagnon

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Open: Contact Sharon Schmidt

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Kirsten Hendrickson

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Patrick Gagnon

### KANSAS CO-CHAIRS

Julie Assel, Janelle Flory Schrock

### MISSOURI CHAIR

Cheri Leigh

### NEBRASKA CHAIR

Nancy Youngman

Click here to visit the Area 8 website  
for contact information and bios.



## Schedule

May 28	Sampler Night
June 25	In-Depth Seminar
July 23	Sampler Night
August 27	In-Depth Seminar
Sept. 24	Sampler Night
Oct. 22	In-Depth Seminar

# Fourth Friday Focus!

Gather with handbell musicians to chat, learn, and ring at 7 p.m. on the fourth Friday night of the month in a virtual format alternating between Sampler Nights and In-Depth Seminars. Check the website for up-to-date information.

## May Sampler Night, May 28

Based on speed dating, these 90-minute sessions will offer short introductions to handbell topics such as techniques, history, top 10 lists, games, trivia quizzes, and more. Sampler Nights are free.

- Shake and Swing with Clapper and Professor Bell
- Virtual Repertoire Session with Chorageous Publications and Larry and Carla Sue
- Arranging Pop Tunes for Handbells with Ron Mallory
- And more!

## June In-Depth Seminar, June 25

### Developing a Healthy Ringing Gesture

taught by Michèle Sharik

*A nominal fee will be charged*

*Visit the Area 8 web page to register for both sessions!*

## Testimonial from an FFF participant

"I enjoyed the class last Friday evening. I'm practicing what I learned! I did pay for the class on marking the music and look forward to finding some gems of useful information."

*Marjorie from Iowa*

What topics would you like to see included in either format?  
Email your suggestions to [events.area8@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:events.area8@handbellmusicians.org).

*Are you  
working on  
one of the  
repertoire  
pieces for  
next  
summer's  
Area 8  
Festival?  
Submit a  
video!*

# *Showcase Your Ensemble*

by Laura Kopff, Area 8 Events Chair

Is your bell choir back to ringing? (Or maybe you never stopped!) We'd love to showcase our different Area 8 groups in an upcoming Fourth Friday Focus. It doesn't matter what level you are, or how many ringers – we will take all submissions. Do you want to highlight that tricky passage that your group has finally gotten perfect? Submit a video – it doesn't have to be an entire piece, a 30 second clip is fine! Are you and another choir dueling it out to see who can play a piece best? Submit a video – let us decide! Have you been working on one of the repertoire pieces for next summer's Area 8 Festival? Submit a video – if we get enough of the same piece, we can stitch together a full score.

What you should do:

- Find a piece that highlights your ringers' strengths
- Record a video (a 30-60 second clip is fine, or a link to a YouTube video)
- mp4 format is preferred (most phones/tablets automatically record in mp4), but we can work with anything
- Send your video or link to [education.area8@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:education.area8@handbellmusicians.org)
- Be sure to include the name of your group, your church or sponsoring organization, your location, the title of the piece, and the name of the composer/arranger
- Submissions are due by June 15, 2021
- Have other questions?  
Contact Patrick ([education.area8@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:education.area8@handbellmusicians.org))  
or Laura ([events.area8@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:events.area8@handbellmusicians.org))



# Continuing the Tough Conversations

By Kendall Ladd

Central/Southern Illinois State Chair

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position or viewpoint of Area 8 or Handbell Musicians of America.

Back in the July 2020 Quavers issue, I wrote about diversity within the handbell community and what steps we can begin to take to become more diverse and inclusive. Since then, I have been working on my own personal improvement as it relates to allyship, diversity, and inclusion of minority groups. With the trial of Derek Chauvin currently taking place (and this author acknowledges that a lot may happen between the time this article was written and the time that it is published), it prompted me to take another opportunity to bring this topic to your attention.

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*there haven't been many direct opportunities to have these tough conversations directly with many of my fellow ringers and handbell enthusiasts ...*

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direct opportunities to have these tough conversations directly with many of my fellow ringers and handbell enthusiasts. Or even have the opportunity to ring with them, which I know many of us miss terribly! But sometimes we should take the opportunity to share simple resources with a "Look what I found!" or "This was really thought provoking. What do you think?"

I've been lucky that my workplace has offered a lot of resources and videos related to this topic, and I have tried to absorb what I've learned to bring back to the handbell community. I've also tried pursuing other resources and learning materials on my own. As a result of the COVID restrictions we find ourselves still experiencing, there haven't been many



Kendall Ladd

## Chicago Area Co-Chairs

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Beth McFarland

## Central/Southern Illinois State Chair

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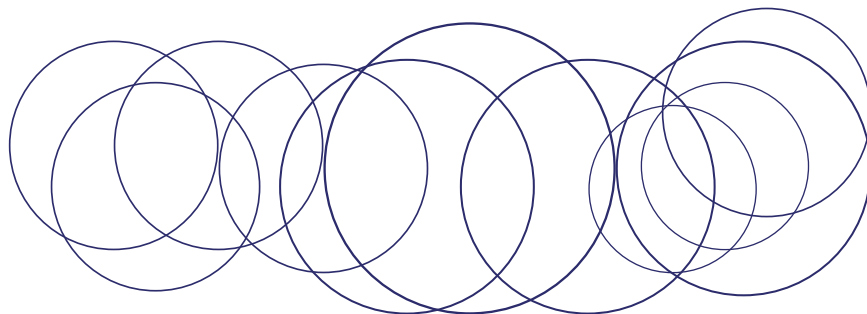
Patti Mangis

## Hand Chime Loan Program Mentor

Open - please contact Kendall Ladd

## Food Coordinator

Anna Piro



I believe one of my favorite resources to share so far has been *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man*, where, in addition to books you can share with avid readers in your life, there are also short videos that you can easily share with others via email or your favorite social media platform (or in my case, using this Quavers article). There are a lot of other great resources out there as well, in the forms of books, podcasts, movies, videos, etc. In fact, if there are any you really enjoy, feel free to share! I'm always looking for resources to use to improve myself and help increase the diversity in our organization.

Shameless plug: if you are interested in having additional conversations about allyship, diversity, and inclusion with others within the handbell community, I will be moderating a round-table session at National Seminar in Arizona this summer called Finding Your Inner Ally.

*Information  
about National  
Seminar can be  
found here.*

## *Finding the Hidden Gems in Your Files*

By Beth McFarland, Northern Illinois Co-Chair

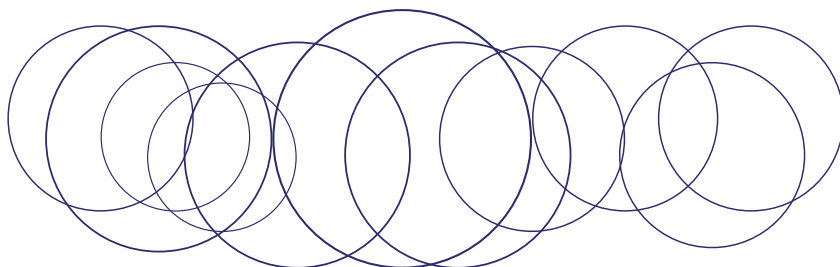
As 2021 keeps moving along and our lives begin to open to more activities, I have found some wonderful hidden gems in my file cabinet to help get my choir back in the groove of ringing.

My church choir has just started back to rehearsals in April and I'm still down two ringers. So, coming back to ringing our music from last spring will not work. As I was preparing for our first rehearsal back, I came across four or more wonderful 2-3 octave pieces that I rang many years ago, and I'm so thrilled to be able to share with my choir now.

Directors, it might be the best time to pull out our older music and refresh our choirs on basic skills or a lower-level music to slowly transition to the music we played before the pandemic. Don't forget to check your files cabinets for those hidden gems from the past, you might find the perfect song for your ensemble that helps kick start your ensemble.



*Beth McFarland*





Patrick Gagnon

**Iowa State Chair**

Patrick Gagnon

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**Secretary**

Donna Sprague

**Historian**

Christina "Tina"  
Elwood Gehrke

**Western Representative**

Yvonne Johnson

**Eastern Representative**

Cat Walker

*Please continue to keep yourself and your community safe by wearing a mask, frequently sanitizing your hands, and by keeping a social distance between yourself and others. We want you all in West Des Moines this fall for our 2021 Mid-Iowa Handbell Festival with Brenda Austin, and 125 of your best handbell friends.*

# Noteflight and Vaccines Save the Day!

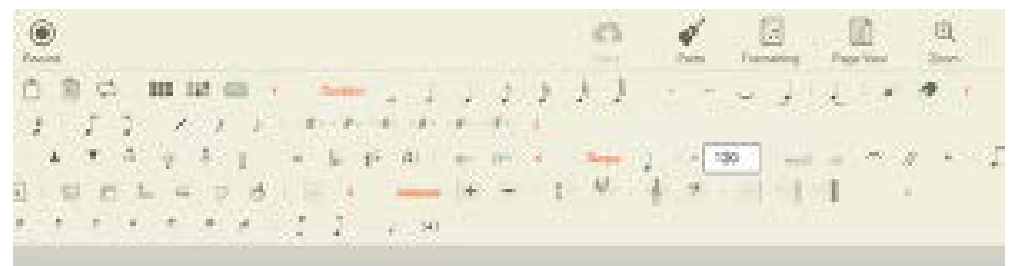
By Patrick Gagnon, Iowa Chair

A trinity of barriers have kept my church bell choir from rehearsing this year. However, we were able to ring a prelude on Easter Sunday during an in-person service for the first time in more than a year. Some things had to fall into place for that to occur:

- Our schedules had to line up (I have several EMT professionals in the group and their on-call schedules seldom allow us to be in the same place at the same time).
- We are all vaccinated! Through our employers, because of our lines of work, and because of our wonderful Hardin County DPH, we all have received two "shots in the arm" which allowed us to ring together, and allowed one immunocompromised member to return.
- I was able to create an original hymn arrangement using a free online resource called NoteFlight!

NoteFlight is a free website that allows users both to create original music, and to listen to hundreds of compositions in the NoteFlight community. There are options to subscribe as a paid user which unlock dozens of features. I used this site extensively during the spring when our schools were delivering 100% virtual instruction.

[Click Here](#) for a fast and easy introduction video that will get you started on your career as a composer and arranger. Anyone interested in my easy two-page arrangement of "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" should email me at [ia.area8@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:ia.area8@handbellmusicians.org). I will happily share.



## Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

(Lyricist) (Composer) arr. Gagnon



*Janelle Flory Schrock*



*Julie Assel*

**Kansas State Co-Chairs**

Julie Assel &  
Janelle Flory Schrock

**Treasurer**

Karla Denton

**Secretary**

OPEN - Contact  
Julie or Janelle

**Chimes**

Shirley Myers

# *When Are We Ringing All Together in Person Again?*

**By Julie Assel**

Area 8 Kansas Co-Chair

Spring has really started to bloom in Kansas and in an average year my handbell choirs would be playing their final worship services in May and my youth choir would be preparing for its tour in early June. A year ago, everyone was starting to realize that the shutdown wasn't just going away in a couple of weeks. I was in shock as I experienced the first Holy Week in my memory with no handbells. By the time August came, I was desperate to play again. I wanted something normal when there were lots of questions about whether even schools would open. So, I went to the church and had our Director of Worship Life record me playing two solo pieces so we could at least see some handbells on our live stream. Another ringer who is on staff at our church also recorded a solo as well. But we missed the ensemble, the camaraderie, the weekly pulse check, the MUSIC!

Unwilling to have another major festival without handbells, I lugged handbell cases to players' homes so we could stitch together duets and trios for Advent and Christmas. And then this spring, as people started to become vaccinated, another Holy Week came upon us. Our church decided to do a live service for Maundy Thursday, and I was desperate to have handbells there. I put out a communication asking if anyone was willing to gather. Even with an adult handbell choir of 14, I only had two others respond, but I jumped on it.

The next trick was to find music that would fit. One of the players was very experienced, including being very confident with four-in-hand ringing, while the other was most comfortable with just two notes. So, I picked a couple of pieces from Choraegus ([choraegus.com/ring](http://choraegus.com/ring)): "Abide with Me" (8 bells) and "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (six bells with piano accompaniment).

We set up two six-foot tables at 90-degree angles with stands for music, one at each end and one in the middle. We gloved up and masked up and, for an hour and a half on a Tuesday night, we rehearsed with a joy that rivaled the high of playing together at a festival. We were just so happy to be ringing TOGETHER again. But the story does not stop there.

That Maundy Thursday, that service which points so strongly to gathering together, we saw other players in the congregation. For them, hearing the bells in person also was a powerful experience. One member, who had not been physically in our building since March 2020, was in tears. To sit and listen to the music which was so familiar and important to her was such a blessing for her as well, a balm for her weary soul.

Our trio will keep playing (though we are likely to expand as more become vaccinated). And unlike a usual year when we are just ending in May, we have committed to keep ringing until we can all ring together in person.





*Cheri Leigh*

**Missouri State Chair**

Cheri Leigh

**Past Chair**

Suanne Comfort

**Treasurer**

Suanne Comfort

**Membership**

Sherry Boland

**Chime Chair**

Christie White

*Your school  
might benefit  
from the chime  
loan program!*

# Chime Loan Program Check-In

By Cheri Leigh, Missouri State Chair

In these times of COVID, how has the Chime Loan program been working? I talked to Katie Curtright of Rich Hill Elementary in Missouri about her experience with the chimes.

**How have the chimes fit into your overall music program?**

They have been really useful in helping students to understand whole steps and half steps, chords, and major and minor key patterns.

**A related question, how has this improved your students' ability to read music?**

Overall, I think it really helped them relate what they hear with the music they see on the page.

**Have you purchased music especially for the chimes?**

We have boomwhacker music that worked really well for the chimes when they were learning the note names.

**What grades benefited most from the chimes?**

Third through sixth grade seem to benefit the most.

**What advice would you give to other music programs that are considering using chimes with their students?**

Purchase gloves, pads, and tables for the chimes to use. Put them to use in class as often as possible. They are a wonderful tool!

The chimes are available for purchase by the schools that use them for a discounted price.

## *Does Your School Qualify?*

Area 8 offers a grant program to schools in its five-state jurisdiction of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

*Qualifying schools will receive:*

- 3-octave set of handchimes for one semester (approx. 4 months) with teaching materials
- support network and/or mentor
- one-year membership to Handbell Musicians of America.

To check availability of handchimes for loan or to submit an application, please contact Nancy Youngman, Area 8 Chimes Chair.

To learn more about the Chime Loan Program, visit the [Area 8 website](#).

A video featuring Nancy Youngman describes in detail the Area 8 chime loan program and can be [found here](#).

# How Can We Keep From Ringing?

By Linda Ashley

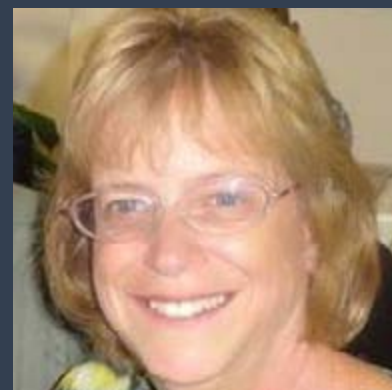
Member, River City Ringers

March 2020 changed our ringing world dramatically. Similar to most every church or community ensemble, River City Ringers had sudden issues to deal with. We rehearse and store our equipment at a retirement community in Omaha. Quarantine/isolation practices immediately blocked us from our rehearsal space. The difficult decision was made to cancel our spring concert season.

Our board worked hard over the spring and summer, and by fall we had a plan to get back together. The church where our new director, Rick Richards, is the music director, agreed to let us rehearse in their facility. A small number of people were allowed into the retirement community to retrieve our equipment and what music we needed. We were lucky to be able to also use bells from our host church and the churches of a couple of our ringer/directors. This allows us to ring with no shared bells or chimes. Everyone has their own table and the bells, chimes, and mallets that they need. We all wear masks per the policy of our hosts, and the bell handles are wiped down before the bells are stored for the next rehearsal.



River City Ringers, Omaha, Nebraska



*Nancy Youngman*

## **Nebraska State Chair**

Nancy Youngman

## **Registrar**

Linda Ashley

## **Scholarship Committee**

Janet Chiocchi

## **Secretary**

Byron Jensen

## **Members**

Michael Allen

Jessica Kite

Deann Nicolaus

Brian Lew

Angela Wright

Jonathan Rippe

## River City Ringers, Continued

We learned how to request sync licenses and were able to record our Christmas concert at a church that graciously produced the recording and posted it on their website as part of their concert season. There was no audience at that concert. We are following the same plan for our spring 2021 season. We may be lucky to have a small audience at our spring concert, so that is very exciting for us.

Following these practices, thankfully no one has become sick from coming to rehearsal. Those who did contract the virus did so elsewhere and stayed away from rehearsal appropriately. We have been lucky to have an adequate sub list for those situations.

We hope that those of you waiting to get your choirs back together find a way to make it work. In the meantime, there is a lot of new music for small ensembles with no bell sharing. We hope you are able to join us online for our spring concert. We have been working on some great music.

[www.rivercityringers.com](http://www.rivercityringers.com), Facebook – River City Ringers (Omaha) Also sites on Instagram, Twitter and YouTube



*Are you or someone you know looking for a college that has handbells? Click here for a list of college handbell programs found on the national Handbell Musicians website.*



Handbell Musicians of America  
**NATIONAL SEMINAR**  
GLENDALE-PHOENIX, AZ • 2021

Registration is now open for National Seminar!  
July 13-17, 2021, Glendale-Phoenix, Arizona

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Visit the National Website  
for more information.

# Upcoming Area 8 Events

Please check websites for updated information. Due to social distancing and COVID-19 requirements, events may be cancelled after this newsletter is distributed.

## Area 8 Fourth Friday Events

To register, visit the Area 8 website.

Friday, May 28, 2021

Area 8 Fourth Friday Sampler

Friday, June 25, 2021

Area 8 Fourth Friday Seminar: Topic TBD

Friday, July 23, 2021

Area 8 Fourth Friday Sampler

Friday, August 27, 2021

Area 8 Fourth Friday Seminar: Topic TBD

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## July 2021

Saturday, July 10, 2021 -Tuesday, July 13

Handbell Musicians of America National Seminar: Glendale, Arizona

Tuesday, July 13 - Saturday, July 17, 2021

Handbell Musicians of America National Seminar: Glendale, Arizona

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## October 2021

Friday, October 8, 2021

6:00 pm Beer, Wine, and Bells: Des Moines, IA

Saturday, October 9, 2021

8:00 am 2021 Mid-Iowa Handbell Festival: Windsor Heights, IA

**Does your choir or ensemble have an upcoming concert or handbell event?** Area 8 can help you publicize your event. When the forms found on the Area 8 website event page (found here) are filled out, the event is posted on the Area 8 website, Quavers, monthly e-blasts, and Facebook posts.

## Handbell Happy Hour

Sponsored by Handbell Musicians of America

Looking for a fun way to help ease self-quarantine and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic? Join us for a casual, virtual chat with your handbell friends.

**Join the Chat!** Each chat will be hosted by a member of the national staff or board of directors. Use this time to check in with each other, share ideas for staying musically connected, and discuss your love for all things handbell. No need to pre-register, just follow this link (<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1482015406>).

So grab your favorite snack and beverage and join us for an hour online!

Check the HMA website [HERE](#) for dates and topics.

## Publishing in Quavers

6 publications per year, published in odd months.

## Articles

Articles are due on the 10th day of even months.

## Advertising

Click here for more details about advertising in *Quavers*. 6 ads for the price of 5! Run 5 identical ads in 5 successive *Quavers* and get the 6th ad free.

## Events & Concerts

must be submitted by the 25th of even months to be included in *Quavers*. To submit a concert or event for inclusion, click here or go to the A8 Website, Events page.

## Questions?

Please send all questions and comments about this and future *Quavers* publications to Beth Ann Edwards, Editor: [newslettereditor.area8@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:newslettereditor.area8@handbellmusicians.org)

*Find the most up-to-date calendar and details about events on the A8 website.*