



HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA

ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA

QUAVERS NEWSLETTER

MARCH, 2016

Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA

D. Allured

M. Kettiehut

B. Payn

D. Davidson

F. Gramann

B. Garee

K. Leonard

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ELECTED	ELECTED	APPOINTED
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The Raleigh Ringers

David M. Harris, Director

8516 Sleepy Creek Drive • Raleigh, NC 27613

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A community handbell choir

Our task for this edition of *Quavers* is to write convincingly about a Handbell Icon. This would be a person or institution that is influential to the Guild, and to handbells as an art form. My Icon is the person who taught me the most about handbells, and who also included lessons about life, music making, and about dedication to something I love.

Karen Leonard lives in Massachusetts and she is, among other things, a past National President of the Guild. She is the person who taught me to LOVE handbells. She is someone who has some of the best one-liners in history.

Let me share the first one: I auditioned for her community choir, Merrimack Valley Ringers. At the conclusion of my audition, she looked me up and down, and concluded: **"Well....you're trainable."**

Later in my career as an MVR ringer, during a rehearsal close to our spring concert season, Karen uttered four words that many of us still hold dear: **"That was ALMOST GOOD."** I was floored. We had worked so hard at something for so long, and it was still merely "almost good." Someone suggested titling our new CD "Almost Good!"

However, this was possibly the most important collection of words I would ever hear. Karen's assertion that we had not achieved perfection opened a realm of possibilities I hadn't considered: we will never be perfect, but we can never stop trying to get there.

I'll leave you with another Karen Leonard one-liner. After this you can surf over to www.areaviii.org and register for the Area 8 Festival/Conference in Springfield, Illinois, June 22-25, 2016. Maybe you should also register for the Pre-Conference Directors' track so you can learn some of your own one-liners! Are you ready? Here it comes - from a handbell icon to you: **"It's never too late to improve."**

[Patrick Gagnon](#) ~ Area 8 Chair



The Nominating Committee, chaired by Past Chair of Area 8 Dolan Bayless, along with appointed members Joyce Miller and Nancy Youngman, are presenting the following nominees for election to the Area 8 Board, found on pages 8-10 of this issue.

Every two years following the Area 8 Festival, the members of Area 8 exercise their vote to select a Chair-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer for the area. The slate of candidates has been approved by the Executive Committee of the Board and is now being presented to the area membership. Electronic voting will take place in July with the elected officers taking office effective October 1.

Please get acquainted with these people who have said "yes" to being a nominee for our three elected offices and then exercise your right to vote!

[Dolan Bayless](#) ~ Past Chair Area 8

Elections



As a self-professed bell groupie, I'm so excited about this month's topic! Growing up as a ringer I admittedly didn't pay a lot of attention to composer names or who was conducting at festival events. Though I do remember playing a lot of Cynthia Dobrinski, as many of you may have during the 80's. But as an adult, participating in a number of ringing events and being exposed to a wide repertoire, my awareness of composers and conductors increases and I have been so blessed to know some of the greats.

I have to start with **Don – "The Don" – Allured**. My first exposure to him was in August of 2001 at my first Bay View Week of Handbells. He was still conducting the whole event at the time and what a wonderful experience it was to ring under his baton! And he was never short on good ringing advice. I'm sure everyone has heard his **"Mart is a technique, not a dynamic."** Even a few years later, after he had passed the baton on to Carl Wiltse, Don would still conduct one of his pieces. Though his health was failing, he lost at least 20 years as soon as he stepped on the podium. If you've played any of his pieces you know how complex they are and the degree of artistry they require to perform them well. In 2006, the ringers at the 30th Week of Handbells (myself included) got to perform and record Don's last composition, *Epilogue*. Don always reminded us that any mistake we made would be recorded for all time. We recorded it multiple times that day and we probably still never got it as perfect as he would have wanted. But that was the thing about Don – he expected nothing short of perfection and as a ringer you wanted to deliver.

So who can compare to the Don? Perhaps someone who learned from him? **David Davidson** was one of those people. I rang under him several times at Distinctly Bronze. Don's influence on him was so evident, especially in what David expected from you. He passed away shortly before a Distinctly Bronze event but his absence only motivated us to ring

that much better.

I've never had the opportunity to ring under **Fred Gramann** but have had the chance to ring *by* him at the Week of Handbells. His arrangements are among some of my favorite bell pieces ever – *Fantasy on King's Weston* being near the top of that list. His ability to weave tunes together into something truly new and wonderful is unparalleled. And he is as kind as he is talented.

I have to end this discussion with **Bill Payn**. I cannot begin to describe my love of this man and his music. One year I participated in or attended four events he was directing, which might be bordering on stalking. He was born to be a handbell director and composer. Very few people understand the instrument as well as he does and it's evident in every piece he writes. I was familiar with his music for a number of years but finally got to work with him when I attended my first Master Class as a ringer. All of the pieces for the class were Payn pieces, which wasn't the norm, but wow, what an opportunity! I've attended several Master Classes since then, partly because it's a really fun ringing experience, but also because I get to bask in the glow of Bill as he works with each student.

There are so many other icons of our art that it would take a whole newsletter to do them justice. As a handbell community we are truly blessed to have the talented composers and conductors we have available to us, so I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities to ring their music, even if you think it's too challenging, or ring under them, whether it's at the upcoming Area Festival, National Seminar, International Symposium or one of the many other handbell events across the country.

[*Lori Fenton ~ Iowa State Chair*](#)

For this article, we were encouraged to write about a favorite piece written by a handbell icon. Some of the names suggested were Don Allured, Betty Garee and David Davidson. When I saw these names, I was at a loss for what to write. I had never heard of these people! Now, some of you are probably thinking "what kind of handbell person is she to not have ever heard of these great, wonderful contributors to handbells?" Well, I have only been in handbells the last 10 years or so and from a part of Kansas where handbells are only for church...and only a small handful of churches at that! Then I realized that I am probably not the only one that has never heard of these wonderful people. So, for those of you who knew Mr. Allured, Mrs. Garee and Mr. Davidson, you may stop reading if you wish! For those of you who would like an introduction...please read on.

Betty Garee is best known for her contribution to and the development of the worldwide library of handbell music scores. Thirty nine of her original works are published. In addition to her published works, she has many transcribed and adapted works as well as several non-published personal arrangements. Most of these works were written for the five handbell choirs she directed at the New Hackensack Reformed Church in Wappingers Falls, NY. The Chlorine Ringers, for whom the music was mostly written, was well known in the United States, Canada and the Netherlands. Betty was also sought out as a clinician and conductor for many workshops and festivals. She taught her ringers the importance of teamwork, cooperation, sharing, and commitment. If you rang under Betty, you probably heard her say many times, **"If you're going to make a mistake, at least make one that can be heard!"** Betty was named an Honorary Life Member of the Guild in early 1986 and a few short months later, she passed away at the age of 59.

When one mentions the name **David Davidson**, many will think of his contribution and involvement with the Guild. He served as Chairman of Area V and was a member of the first Congress of the Guild. He also served a term as the National Secretary and later served as President-Elect, President, and Past-President of (then) AGEHR. David not only served as an officer of the Guild, but he had several contributions that he is well known for. He opened the Guild's na-

tional office in Dayton, Ohio, and was instrumental in the formation of the HIC, or Handbell Industry Council. David was also a well known workshop leader and festival clinician, and it was as a conductor at a festival in Japan that he met Sun-Joo Shin, the executive secretary of the Handbell Ringers of Japan. These two then went on to develop the first International Handbell Symposium which was held in Arcata, California. David's goal for the art of handbell ringing was musicality and this showed with his expert direction of the Distinctly Bronze and Distinctly Bronze West events which are auditioned performance events for advanced ringers. In 1996, David was given AGEHR's Honorary Life Membership award. David, unfortunately, lost his long battle with cancer in September 2009.

Don Allured has been referred to as "the Father of handbell ringing as we know it." This can be proven by looking at his list of accomplishments! Don is well known for his published list of works. He has over 100 compositions and three textbooks. He travelled extensively with several choirs he directed and was also called upon to teach and direct at workshops for handbell ringers and directors. In 1976 he became the first person to create a fulltime job as a handbell clinician. Don's name is also widely associated with the Bay View Week of Handbells where he directed for many years. The emphasis of this week long event was on preparing musically challenging and technically demanding music for advanced ringers. If you had a chance to ring under Don, you probably heard him say, **"ringing the right bell at the right time is only the beginning, not the end."** Not only did Don serve as Guild President, but he was awarded the distinction of Honorary Life Membership and also was given the Guild's highest certification of "Master Teacher" and "Master Conductor." Don passed away in February 2011.

This is just a brief introduction to three very important people to the handbell world as we now know it. I challenge you to look up one of Don's textbooks, one of Betty's compositions, or one of David's organizations and see for yourself how inspiring they are. And I imagine you will come across a few other icons that inspired the handbell community as well! Happy ringing!

[Staci Cunningham](#) ~ [Kansas State Chair](#)

I solicited information from several other Missouri handbell directors and am happy to share their thoughts in this article of Handbell Icons.

Favorite **Don Allured** piece(s):

Don's arrangement of the folk tune "*Annie Laurie*" was cited by several directors. Others that were mentioned were "*O Holy Night*," "*Joseph Dearest*," "*Joseph Mine*," and his original piece "*In Quiet Faith*."

One of my favorite Don Allured stories is his practice of having his ringers play Bach's "*Little Fugue in G minor*" - not from a handbell score, but from the original organ score.

Favorite **Betty Garee** piece(s):

The unanimous answer to this question was "*Stille Nacht*." Another popular choice was "*God With Us For All Time*." Several years ago, I had several piano students in my college bell choir and they really enjoyed playing Betty's arrangement of Grieg's "*March of the Dwarfs*."

Favorite **David Davidson** quotes:

Dolan Bayless, Past-Chair of Area 8 and director of Rebellion shared this: "I felt very close to David Davidson and considered him a mentor, but to come up with a quote is impossible. It was his professionalism and grace that meant so much to me along with the musical knowledge."

Suanne Comfort, past-Missouri State Chair shared this: "I went to Distinctly Bronze for 10 years because of David Davidson. I always kept a notepad and pen handy to write down his gems." Here are a few of those gems: **"Bell ringers think in the moment. You need to think in the next moment. Where is it going?"** Or **"As it gets faster, all the notes can't be the same. Go for the goal posts. Lighten up off beats."** Or **"Take responsibility for the dynamics. Never just placidly stand back and play notes."**

Suanne suggested that our readers might like to search the internet to find "[Crossroads](#)", David's Keynote Address at the

2008 National Seminar in Orlando, Florida. It is a visionary challenge to the Guild that each of us would do well to read annually.

Many thanks to those directors who gave me feedback for this article.

[Cathy Benton](#) ~ [Missouri State Chair](#)

Continuing Education Credits

Did you know? Educators can earn Continuing Education Credits at the 2016 Festival/Conference in Springfield! Through our ongoing relationship with Emporia State University in Kansas, and for a small fee of \$40 per credit per day (which means that one could earn **up to three credits**), your work as an attendee at FC16, and your time filling in the easiest form in history, Continuing Education credit can be yours!

Find the form at [Area VIII](#) and return it to:

Great Plains Music Education Workshops
ESU Department of Music
1200 Commercial St. Box 4029
Emporia, KS 66801-5087

Should you have any questions about this, please contact Marilyn Lake at bklake@smsd.org



Favorite icons? No, not the little squares on your Smartphone screen, but the important people that have contributed to the art of handbell ringing. I asked my colleagues on our Nebraska board to share their favorites and here is what I gathered:

Favorite **Donald Allured** pieces:

"Silverthorne"; "Still, Still, Still"; "Annie Laurie".

I do not recall getting to work with this giant of our handbell world, but I have learned about the love and respect he received from so many ringers that I have had the pleasure of working with at the Bay View Week of Handbells.

Favorite **Betty Garee** pieces: *"Stille Nacht"; "God With Us For All Time".*

Favorite quote from the likes of **David Davidson**: Not really a quote, but I recall the journey he took me on at my first (and his last) Distinctly Bronze. We were playing Elgar's *"August 9th Adagio"*, arranged by Chad Etzel. Three pages, 42 measures. I thought, 'How can this be a Level 4 piece?' It was the emotion and the musicality that he drew from us in those 42 measures that made this a memorable experience.

Favorite quote from the likes of **Mary Kettlehut**: Again, not a quote, but a sharing of experience from one of our Nebraska board members who had the pleasure of working with Mary for many years. "I don't know about specific quotes, but her leadership by example: totally devoted to the Guild, very fiscally responsible (understatement!), her wonderful way of working with and developing young ringers, her ability to continue as a director into her 90s(!), her constant personal encouragement of all I did with bells, and definitely not least, the fact that she served in WWII. It was a privilege to know Mary well and to have her be a "cheerleader" for me. I miss our weekly talks!"

What are some of your favorite handbell icons?

[*Linda Ashley ~ Nebraska State Chair*](#)

Video-conferencing: A meeting format that works!

We recently attempted a video-conference for our usual January meeting of the Nebraska Committee. We have members from at least a 180 mile spread across Nebraska. We do enjoy getting together for face-to-face meetings, but sometimes, especially in the cold and unpredictable winter, it isn't always easy. Email 'meetings' can work to discuss some things, but aren't always effective for items that need to be resolved in a short time-frame.

I found the following information and shared it with my committee members. We set our meeting time. I opened the Google hangout and everyone available was able to join the group and we had a very productive meeting. One member was late joining the meeting, but that was resolved when I determined that she was signing in to the meeting under a different email than I had 'invited' her with. We will be having a follow-up meeting in March using the same format.

You don't need to have a Google email address in order to use Google Hangouts. To get started on Google Hangouts:

- you need a [Google Account](#),
- [download](#) and install the latest version of the Hangouts plugin. The plugin will allow you to use Hangouts with Chrome, Firefox, and Safari browsers.

[*Linda Ashley*](#)

BETH ANN EDWARDS serves as Director of Arts, Handbells, and Youth Choirs at St. John's Lutheran Church in Des Moines, Iowa, where she directs four handbell choirs and a children's vocal choir, oversees all arts programming, and assists with worship planning. In addition to her Master of Church Music degree with Handbell Emphasis, Beth Ann holds a degree in secondary English education, a Bachelor of Fine Arts in visual art, and a Master of Business Administration.

Her ringing career began 30 years ago in a church handbell choir. For the past 15 years she has attended advanced ringing events including Bay View Week of Handbells and Distinctly Bronze, and currently rings in the community handbell ensemble HeartBeat. Beth Ann has directed all ages and levels of handbell ringers since 1999. Her first handbell choir, comprised of junior high school students, shaped director and musicians as they learned to make music, work as an ensemble, and become worship leaders; she never looked back. The education and networking opportunities provided by Handbell Musicians of America have been instrumental in her development as a ringer and director. These experiences led her to attend graduate school to receive a Master of Church Music degree in 2012 at Concordia University Wisconsin, studying with Dr. John Behnke. She has made life-long friendships through handbell ringing, and has learned first-hand how membership in a handbell choir can change lives.

Beth Ann is a member of the Area 8 Membership Team, she chairs the Donald E. Allured Original Composition Award committee, and has served as secretary on the Iowa (AGEHR) board. She has held several appointed and elected positions in community and civic organizations including Des Moines Choral Society, Arts for the City, and Junior League. Beth Ann is married and has three grown children and two grandchildren. She balances her music activities with painting in her studio, travel, knitting, and reading.



GWEN GEPFORD has been involved in handbells for more than 45 years, transitioning from ringer to director in 1989. Over the past 24 years she has developed the handbell program at Church of the Resurrection, which currently includes seven handbell choirs for ringers of all ages and abilities. In addition to leading morning worship, a favorite part of her position is leading the middle and high school youth on a week-long mission trip, sharing music with the homeless, elderly and children. She has attended three National Seminars and the International Handbell Symposium in Orlando. She looks forward to learning more at the International Seminar this July in Vancouver.

Beginning in 2005 Gwen organized Ring in the Spring, a Handbell Musicians of America endorsed festival. The goal of the festival is to bring in nationally recognized clinicians to a one-day workshop for ringers in Area 8. The festival attracts ringers from the surrounding 5 states, with attendance around 300.

With Chemistry and Medical Technology degrees from Kansas University, Gwen worked for several years at KU Medical Center before returning to her love of music. She enjoys sailing, reading, and skiing with her husband and three adult children, all of whom grew up ringing. Family members are the best subs!



Chair-Elect

SHARON SCHMIDT's active involvement with Handbell Musicians of America began in 1994 when she joined the Illinois State Committee, and she remains active on the committee. At the national level, Sharon was faculty coordinator for the 2003 National Seminar, chair for ten Distinctly Bronze events from 2004-2013, co-chair for the 2007 Distinctly Bronze European Tour, served on the 2008 International Handbell Symposium Committee, and was appointed as national Certification Program Coordinator in 2013. She received the President's Award in 2013 in appreciation of her service to the Guild. After learning to ring in the 1970's, Sharon began directing at Gary UMC in Wheaton, Illinois, in 1985, where she continues to direct Altar Bells and Sanctuary Ringers. A current and charter member of The Agape Ringers, a Chicago-area community handbell ensemble formed in 1992, Sharon was its first (and current) president. She has taught many aspects of the art of handbell ringing at the state, area, and national levels since 1995.

Educated as a chemical engineer with BS & MS degrees, Sharon worked at the Amoco Research Center as a research engineer, economics analyst, supervisor, and project manager. Since leaving in 1999, she's studied music theory and accounting, and exercised her project management skills on Guild events and church projects in addition to operating a small business serving the handbell community. She and her recently-retired husband Gerry enjoy scuba diving when she's not at a "bell thing."



Treasurer

STEPHEN SWANSON is a CPA for the largest local accounting firm in the Quad Cities area. His clients include multiple industries including small to large non-profit organizations. He has served on multiple boards in various capacities. He has enjoyed serving Area 8 as the Financial Advisor and would be honored to serve the Area using his financial background and skills as Treasurer.

Steve was among a group of individuals that formed the Quad Cities very own community handbell ensemble RiverBend Bronze in early 2013. Steve has been involved in music in one form or another for more than 30 years and ringing for nearly 20 years. Since taking over the baton at his church, he has challenged his ringers to improve their group's musicianship, increased its membership, expanded the equipment to include a five-octave set of chimes and a fifth octave of bells, started a second ensemble, and coached duets and ensembles. Steve helped introduce another church to the joys of ringing and to establish their own program. He has been quite active sharing the wonderful art of ringing since being bitten by the bell bug and wants to do more. He looks forward to serving in any capacity that would benefit the Area. He lives in Moline where his cat, Ella, allows him to serve on her staff.



TAMARA MAUER KOFRON holds a bachelor's degree in administrative management and her day job is with Modern Builders where she has been the office manager for more than 26 years.

She joined the bell choir at First Christian Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa, more than 23 years ago. The director at that time encouraged her to learn about handbells and all the possibilities they represent as a musical instrument. The director set Tamara on a path that would eventually lead to the joys of solo ringing and a passion for all things handbell.

Tamara enjoys attending national and area events. Her first foray outside of her home church was to participate in Solo Ensemble Extravaganza (SEE) in Glen Eyrie, CO, in 2005. In addition to SEE, Tamara has participated in the Area 8 conferences, National Seminar, and Distinctly Bronze events. "I try to attend as many local (Iowa) events as possible. One of my favorite things about attending is meeting people that enjoy handbells as much as I do and never tire talking about them!"

Tamara has had the distinct honor of sharing her love of handbells as a participant in the Showcase concerts at the Area 8 Conferences in Topeka and in Davenport. What a fabulous experience the Area 8 organization offers to its members!

Tamara looks forward to meeting many more members of Area 8 in Springfield this summer and hopes to find ways to be a more active participant with the organization.



PAT LATSHAW currently serves Area 8 as Communications Chair and has enjoyed working with the Board in this capacity to increase awareness of our organization and improve the lines of communication with our members.

She has been involved with music since an early age and studied flute at the University of Kansas while earning a B.A. in German. She has been ringing for 30 years and is currently the director of handbells at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Prairie Village, Kansas. Pat enjoys solo and ensemble ringing and is a member of Rezound!, Kansas City's auditioned community handbell ensemble. She has been the ensemble's Publicity Director for 8 years.

She is active as a clinician and instructor at regional workshops and Area 8 Festivals and has been involved on the organizing committees for the Fall Show-Me Ring in Missouri and Resonate, an advanced ringing workshop in Kansas.

She currently serves as secretary on the board of directors for the Midwest Chamber Ensemble in Prairie Village, Kansas.



Secretary

Showcase Concert Deadline Approaching!

Area 8 is looking for handbell choirs to *share* a 45-minute Showcase Concert on Saturday, June 25, 2016. Beginning at 11:00 a.m., selected ensembles/soloists will have 5-7 minutes for their presentation. All ensembles are encouraged to apply: chimes or bells, children's groups, youth ensembles, adult choirs, soloists, small ensembles and community groups.

All performers must be members of Handbell Musicians of America through their director or through their organization.

Please remember the deadline for application is **March 15, 2016!**

More information and application materials can be found at <https://form.jotform.com/60136221709145>

Forward any questions to Area 8 Chair-elect, [Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal](#).



Spotlight Concert Deadline may be Extended!

Area 8 is looking for outstanding handbell choirs to perform 30-minute Spotlight Concerts during the 2016 Festival/Conference this summer in Springfield, Illinois. All ensembles are encouraged to apply: chimes or bells, children's groups, youth ensembles, adult choirs, soloists, small ensembles and community groups.

All performers must be members of Handbell Musicians of America through their director or through their organization.

The two 30-minute Spotlight Concerts will take place on Friday, June 24, 2016, during the lunch hour.

More information and application materials can be found at <https://form.jotform.com/60116617145146>

The Area 8 board may extend the submission deadline to **March 15, 2016**.

Forward any questions to Area 8 Chair-elect, [Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal](#).



Upcoming Events

2016	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Mar 5	Ring in the Spring Tammy Waldrop Janet Carter	Church of the Resurrection Leawood, KS	Kansas
Jun 4	Illinois State Reading Session	Fourth Presbyterian Chicago, IL	Illinois
Jul 10-14	Handbell Camp	Heartland Camp Kansas City, MO	Handbell Camp
Jul 12-16	National Seminar Various	Hyatt Regency Rochester, NY	National
Jul 26-30	International Symposium UPDATED INFO POSTED	Vancouver, Canada	IHS

Upcoming Concerts

