



HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA  
ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA

## QUAVERS NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 2017

Handbell Musicians  
OF AMERICA

**Too many bells**

**Maintenance**

**Communication**

**Page turns**

**Techniques**

## PESKY PROBLEM SOLVERS

Ads	3, 4
CHAIR	3
Events	8
IOWA	5
KANSAS	6
NEBRASKA	7
PAST CHAIR	4
Officers	2

ELECTED	ELECTED	APPOINTED
CHAIR: <a href="#">Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal</a> 295 Town Center Blvd Gilberts, IL 60136 630.699.3802  TREASURER: <a href="#">Sharon Schmidt</a> 28 Oriole Ct Naperville, IL 60540 630.369.9879  PAST CHAIR: <a href="#">Patrick Gagnon</a> 211 S Victor (P.O. Box 314) Hubbard, IA 50122 641.373.2972	CHAIR-ELECT: <a href="#">Beth Ann Edwards</a> 1810 NW 80th Ct Clive, IA 50325-5610 515.490.9408  SECRETARY: <a href="#">Pat Latshaw</a> 5205 W 83rd Terrace Prairie Village, KS 66207 913.219.3643   Like us on <a href="#">Facebook</a> Visit us on the <a href="#">WEB</a>	COMMUNICATIONS: <b>Open</b> QUAVERS: <a href="#">KC Congdon</a> WEBMASTER: <a href="#">Wendi Calkins-Levitt</a>  FINANCIAL ADVISOR: <a href="#">Stephen Swanson</a> MEMBERSHIP: <a href="#">Michael Allen</a>  EDUCATION: <b>Open</b> HISTORIAN: <b>Open</b> RESOURCE LIBRARIAN: <b>Open</b>

	<a href="#">ILLINOIS</a>	<a href="#">IOWA</a>	<a href="#">KANSAS</a>	<a href="#">MISSOURI</a>	<a href="#">NEBRASKA</a>
Chair	<a href="#">Ben Hafner</a> 18175 Dillon Ln Villa Park, IL 60181 630.696.6929	<a href="#">Lori Fenton</a> 3213 45th St Des Moines, IA 50310 515.229.6712	<a href="#">Staci Cunningham</a> 21370 Harper Rd Chanute, KS 66720 620.433.7223	<b>Open</b>	<a href="#">Linda Ashley</a> 9107 Meadow Dr Omaha, NE 68114 402.320.5312 402.397.9551 (h)
Treasurer	<b>Open</b>	<a href="#">Mary Lee Parks</a>	<a href="#">Karla Denton</a>	<a href="#">Suanne Comfort</a>	<b>Open</b>
Secretary	<a href="#">Beth McFarland</a>	<a href="#">Donna Sprague</a>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Open</b>	<a href="#">Byron Jensen</a>
Website	<a href="#">Wendi Calkins-Levitt</a>	<a href="#">Wendi Calkins-Levitt</a>	<a href="#">Wendi Calkins-Levitt</a>	<a href="#">Wendi Calkins-Levitt</a>	<a href="#">Janet Chiocchi</a>
Other	<i>Events</i> <a href="#">Sharon Schmidt</a>  <i>Registrar</i> <a href="#">Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal</a>  <i>Chime Mentor</i> <a href="#">Diane Oster</a>  <i>Food Coordinator</i> <a href="#">Anna Piro</a>	<i>Historian</i> <a href="#">Tina Gehrke</a>  <i>Chimes</i> <a href="#">Aaron Hansen</a>  <i>Eastern Rep</i> <a href="#">Cat Walker</a>  <i>Western Rep</i> <a href="#">Yvonne Johnson</a>	<i>Chimes</i> <a href="#">Shirley Myers</a>  <i>Past Chair</i> <a href="#">Cherryl Cox</a>	<i>Chime Chair</i> <a href="#">Anne Miller</a>  <i>Membership, St Louis</i> <a href="#">Sherry Boland</a>  <a href="#">Christie White</a>	<i>Registrar</i> <a href="#">Deann Nicolaus</a>  <i>Chimes Coordinator</i> <a href="#">Nancy Youngman</a>  <a href="#">Jessica Kite</a> <a href="#">Mike Allen</a>  <a href="#">Joyce Miller</a> <a href="#">Angela Wright</a> <a href="#">Charles Cohen</a>



**Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal****~Area 8 Chair**

Happy New Year!

Many of you are probably starting up the second half of your handbell season. And every ringer made a New Year's resolution to be at every rehearsal and performance until summer! Well, a director can dream can't she? As we kick off this year with our *Quavers* edition with tips for challenges you might have in your choir, let me start with some ideas to help you work on the attendance aspect.

**EARLY & OFTEN—**

As a director, you can make sure your members and potential members have the schedule for the year over the summer. Include planned days off as it may seem less overwhelming if they know when they get a break. When you send reminders, include the remaining upcoming schedule every time. As a ringer, as soon as you know you have a conflict, call, email or text your director. They will appreciate the time to plan around your absence.

**COMMUNICATE & COORDINATE—**

Some attendance problems could be avoided when the schedule is set. In my church there are a lot of activities with which I have learned to coordinate for my junior/senior high group: school breaks, holidays, Sunday School, Confirmation Class, acolyte schedule, Sleep Out Saturday (kids up all night before a service is not a good idea), youth group, annual trip to another congregation. Being aware of who is in charge of other activities has made it easier to not double book our members. I look at schedules that are already set

and share our schedule with groups who have not yet planned. We can work out performing at a different point in the service to accommodate departures for special trips. It is important that your supervisor is aware of conflicts you are having with scheduling. They may have solutions for you too.

**BE FLEXIBLE—**

While not ideal, directors could get used to the idea of not always having a full choir. If you are struggling to retain members, offer them "seasons". Perhaps all can do Christmas and April performances, but not everyone can do October or February. It takes more planning on the director's part, but in the end it is less stressful for everyone involved. You could plan for a smaller group in some months (12 bell music or a 2-octave piece). Then your 3-5 octave pieces are for the other performances. Of course, this works better if there are only one or two that you prepare at a time! For full concerts, see the two previous topics; maybe the concert isn't scheduled at the right time. If you are the full year ringer, challenge yourself. Let your director challenge you. Help them have nine people cover a 3-octave piece (typically 11 ringers) by learning Shelley, four-in-hand, weaving, bass bells, or basic solo ringing.

In closing, here is an early reminder of where you can advance your handbell skills and learn more about dealing with smaller choirs.

**Bring It! Ring It! June 23-40, 2018 in Omaha, Nebraska!**

Look for exciting details from Area 8 in the next *Quavers*.

**Patrick Gagnon****~Past Area 8 Chair**

One pet peeve I have for pesky handbell problems can be summarized like this:

**IT WON'T RING HOW I WANT IT TO!**

Learning basic handbell maintenance can improve your experience with bells, and that of your ringers. Here are some links to the maintenance videos and guides:

[Schulmerich](#)

[Malmart](#)

[Whitechapel](#)

If you can't solve the issue yourself, or you feel it may be a bigger one than you can tackle locally, there are many Handbell Industry Council members who would love to service your bells and chimes. Visit the newly designed Handbell Musicians of America website for information on these businesses: <http://bit.ly/2h66myl>

A good place to start is an email or phone call to any Area 8 board member. We are here to serve you and your bells and make your ringing life more satisfying.

**THE BELLMAN®**  
*Serving America's most discriminating ringers since 1987*

**30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**  
**HANDBELL SERVICE SWEEPSTAKES**

**YOU could be one of 30 Winners of Free Handbell Service just for registering, with no purchase necessary.**

**REGISTER at TheBellman.com Today!**

**800-375-BELL**  
888-311-9955

Void where prohibited.

**Lori Fenton****~Iowa State Chair**

In my day job as an accountant for an insurance company, I spend a lot of time and energy on what we like to refer to as “squirrels” – those emails, phone calls and impromptu discussions that distract from and get in the way of the real tasks at hand. Squirrels exist in most tasks, handbells included. As a ringer, there are a few squirrels that seem to pop up more than others.

**PAGE TURNS—**

This has to be the number one problem for most ringers. Unfortunately, there isn't much music editors can really do about this, which leaves ringers to figure out a solution. It would be really nice if they could avoid key or meter changes at a page turn, though. If you are in a group that shares music, hopefully at least one of the ringers is free to turn the page at an appropriate time. My preferred option is to figure out how to turn the page early and possibly memorize a measure or two. There's also looking on your neighbor's music (assuming they have turned the page successfully) and figuring out when you can eventually turn your own page. There are other options like copying measures and taping them to the page or cutting your music like a “dutch door”, which I know works for some ringers.

**CHALLENGING BELL ASSIGNMENTS—**

Most bell choirs assign bells chromatically and this usually is sufficient for playing the piece well, but not always. A chromatic run of 16<sup>th</sup> notes in the 4s, a quick switch between bells and chimes; those few measures that just aren't doable per the traditional assignment. A

lot of ringers aren't sure how to figure out a solution, like reassigning the accidentals or getting help from a neighbor with the chimes. Bell ringers can be a stubborn bunch and sometimes we like the challenge of seeing if we can get it. We need to be willing to do what's best for the quality of the music rather than what's best for our inner bell diva.

**MULTIPLE TECHNIQUES—**

I think one of the most challenging things can be to ring one bell and shake the other at the same time. Next to that would be ring, mart, pluck, ring, mallet, mart lift (or something similar). We get lost in executing the techniques and stop paying attention to the importance of those techniques to the overall texture of the piece. Again, asking for help from another ringer can sometimes be the easiest fix. But if you're determined to get it, then practice it enough to make sure it can be executed within the context of the piece. Remember, a mart is a technique, not a dynamic.

**NOT GETTING TO PLAY—**

It can actually be very challenging to have to just follow along for several measures, or maybe pages. It's easy to get lost, skip measures, or just lose a sense of the overall piece. Maybe this is a time for creative bell assignments or finding ways for those ringers to assist others who might be overly busy. If, as a ringer, you find yourself with nothing to do, make sure that you are still hearing the piece in your head and most importantly, still counting. If you have to, make notes in your music that will help keep you in the music.

**Staci Cunningham****~ Kansas State Chair****TOO MANY BELLS,  
NOT ENOUGH RINGERS**

I currently play in a 5-octave bell choir, but we only have 11 people playing those 5-octaves. This causes some of us to play more than the typical two-note-plus-accidentals set up. Whether I'm playing treble or low bass, I could have anywhere from 6-10 bells and/or chimes. Now, I do solo ring, so typically this is something I can handle. But sometimes I have to think out of the box to handle some of the more tricky runs.

I almost always lay out my assigned bells in keyboard order when I start working on a piece. This allows me to ring through the piece already knowing where I need to reach for my bells. As I play through, I take note of the tricky spots and then let my mind work!

My usual go-to is weaving through the tricky spot. Weaving is when you ring a bell in one hand while picking up the next bell in the other hand and while ringing *that* bell, damp the first bell, place it on the table and pick up the third bell. Usually this technique will fix the tricky spot, but sometimes the run is too fast to get everything rung and placed in time. This is where I have to step outside of the box.

My next solution is to break out of keyboard order. Sometimes a run will not allow you to weave, so by placing the two or three bells I play with my left hand together and those I play in my right hand together, I eliminate the need to weave. Let me show you what I mean. In one piece I play C3, F3, G3,

A ♭ 3, B ♭ 3, and E ♭ 3. It is a fairly fast piece, so weaving was not an option on these bigger bells. The run went like this E ♭ 3, B ♭ 3, A ♭ 3, G3, C3. So I placed my bells in this order – F3, C3, G3, B ♭ 3, A ♭ 3, E ♭ 3—and that allowed me to “walk” my hands down instead of crossing them. My right hand plays E ♭ 3 then the A ♭ 3 while my left hand plays the B ♭ 3 then the G3. The only weaving I would have to do is grab the C3 with my right hand since my left hand has just played the G3. My runs are now smooth and easily accessible by rearranging my bells this way. And it actually helped other spots in the piece become easier to ring as well.

We have been taught to play in keyboard order—and I agree with that! But sometimes keyboard order has to go out the window and some creative placements have to happen to make a piece flow smoothly.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

1. *That at one time, it was illegal to serve ice cream on cherry pie in Kansas?*
2. *The First UMC in Hutchinson was built in 1874 during the grasshopper plague. As a result, thousands of grasshoppers are mixed into the mortar of the original foundation of the building.*



**Linda Ashley****~ Nebraska State Chair**

Musical ensembles can have a variety of problems that interfere with pulling off a great performance. Quite a few boil down to adequate rehearsal time. Some of the ideas gleaned from the Nebraska directors include: BYB—Behind Your Bells! (not the usual definition)

Discuss with ringers what time to be **be-hind your bells** and ready to ring. This does not mean the time to be walking in the door to set up.

**Start on time** and **end on time**. Expect ringers to respect each other's time by being punctual and in turn, the director must respect the ringers' time and schedule by ending rehearsal on time as well. Sometimes there are tricky passages and bell changes to figure out. This can take away from full rehearsal when it involves only a few people. Encourage sections of the choir to meet outside of regular practice (arrive early, stay late) to work on those pesky passages. A regular rehearsal time can become a sectional time if some ringers happen to be absent. Keep a calendar available for the ringers to write down when they know they must be absent from rehearsal. Have a contact system for them to alert you when they have a sudden illness or work conflict. Attendance issues can be a problem when working with youth and busy parents and sports/school conflicts. I have used a small reward (a pencil box full of fun pens and pencils) to encourage attendance with my youth. Perfect attendance during the month gets to pick from the box. They can always use the pens and pencils at school, so this is great to

them.

Encourage your ringers to attend outside workshops for the opportunity to learn from others.

For example, Nebraska ringers can attend a workshop with composer/clinician Jason Krug on March 24-25. See the Nebraska webpage for the registration form. <http://agehr-ne.org>

**DID YOU KNOW?**

1. *Nebraska has more miles of rivers than any other state.*
2. *The Lied Jungle, located in Omaha, is the world's largest indoor rain forest.*
3. *Nebraska is the only state of the union that has a unicameral legislation (one house.)*
4. *Nebraska was the first state to complete its portion of the mainline interstate system, a 455 mile stretch of four-lane highway.*
5. *The Nebraska Cornhuskers have been to a record 27 consecutive bowl games and 27 consecutive winning seasons.*
6. *The University of Nebraska Cornhusker football team has produced more Academic All-Americans than any other Division 1 school.*

# Upcoming Events

2017	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
1/4-7	College Ring-In 2017	Lovers Lane UMC Dallas, TX	<a href="#">National</a>
2/18	Ring in the Spring 2017 Kevin McChesney Sara Washington	Leawood, KS	<a href="#">Kansas</a>
2/18	Workshop with The Agape Ringers	Gary UMC Wheaton, IL	<a href="#">Illinois</a>
2/23-26	Distinctly Bronze West Kathy Ebling Shaw	Welches, OR	<a href="#">National</a>
3/24-25	Nebraska Spring Ring Jason Krug	St Mark's UMC Lincoln, NE	<a href="#">Nebraska</a>
7/11-15	National Seminar	Hyatt Regency Orange County Garden Grove, CA	<a href="#">National</a>
7/13-15	Distinctly Teen	Hyatt Regency Orange County Garden Grove, CA	<a href="#">National</a>
Oct 5-8	Distinctly Bronze East Dr. William Payn	New Bern, NC	<a href="#">National</a>
2018	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Jun 27-30	Bring It! Ring It! Area 8 Festival	Omaha, NE	<a href="#">Area 8</a>
Jul 17-21	National Seminar	Grand Rapids, MI	<a href="#">National</a>
Jul 19-21	Distinctly Teen	Grand Rapids, MI	<a href="#">National</a>
Aug 6-11	18th International Symposium	Cairns, Australia	<a href="#">International</a>