

QUAVERS

AREA VIII: ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA
JULY, 2005

FAVORITE CHRISTMAS PIECES

Have you ever heard the expression "change is for the better"? This statement is especially true for AREA VIII. The Board has made a major alteration in our upcoming conference in 2006. This modification will greatly benefit attendees and make for a more financially secure meeting. Because of rising costs and added fees for the Omaha location, we felt it necessary to look at other locations for our 2006 conference. We have learned from your completed surveys that you prefer an arena environment where all can be seen and heard. Cedar Rapids was a good example of that.

Our search led us to an excellent location just minutes from Omaha at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa, just across the river from Omaha. It is a beautiful, sparkling, new convention center with a smaller arena that is within our budget and the classrooms are perfect for our needs. The convention center is located in a new section of town with new construction going up every day. By 2006, we will be surrounded by a shopping center and wonderful eating opportunities. Construction crews are working furiously to finish an extremely large Bass Pro Shop right next to the convention center.

Free parking is just one of the many ways you will save money. Hotels near the Convention Center are very reasonable. The Country Inn and Suites, which connects to the Convention Center, is \$79 for a standard 2 Queen bedroom, and \$89 for a King Suite. The Comfort Inn and Suites, which is very close to the Convention Center, is only \$74.99 per night. This will save you approximately \$15 - \$25 per night. So, if your choir chooses to stay 4 persons per room it would be a very reasonable hotel cost. One of the MOST exciting savings is gained by these hotels providing FREE breakfast which includes hot biscuits and gravy, cereal, pastries, English muffins, bagels, toast, juices, milk, coffee and tea. This represents a savings of approximately \$7 per day per person.

The wonderful people from Nebraska, under the excellent guidance of Natalie Radcliffe—the Nebraska State Chair, will still be our hosts. Nebraska has so many willing workers to help us procure bell sets, help with local musicians and do all the local work. We appreciate these people so very much. We couldn't have a successful conference without them.

We are very excited about the plans for the Area VIII 2006 Main Conference. As you can see, we have been diligent in our search for what we feel is the best place at the best price. This decision serves to make the event more affordable for Area VIII while at the same time, saving you money and assuring a great conference. Start making plans for a wonderful time from June 29 - July 1, 2006.

Marilyn Droke ~ Chair, Area VIII

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IL-TOP FIVE

Whether in school or church, we have all come to the end of another year. Instead of taking the summer off, what do we do? We start planning for next year's events. Christmas is a highlight for many of us—especially if we are bell ringers. As a director, I get tired of the same old pieces that we hear on the radio and sing at church. So I am always searching for new pieces to share with my ringers and congregation. Here are a few that stumbled upon.

Change Ring Prelude on 'Divinum Mysterium' by Fred Gramann

A great piece to use if you want to introduce Gregorian Chants and change ringing. This piece is filled with mixed meter for those people that need a time signature to understand the chant more clearly. But eventually the ringers will recognize the Gregorian chant *Of the Father's Love Begotten*. All ringers are involved all the time. Fred even uses a "round" during the change ringing. Very creative and a great crowd pleaser.

Were You There on that Christmas Night? by (Sleeth) / M.L. Thompson

Even though I do not consider myself a choral person, I am familiar with many of Natalie Sleeth's anthems. This piece can stand-alone or be performed with SATB. It also includes handchimes. A great piece for use at the Christmas Eve service.

Now the Green Blade Riseth by Kevin McChesney

Sing We Now of Christmas is the Christmas title for this tune. While most of us associate this piece with Christmas, it can serve Easter as well. Choirs of all ages love the rhythmic drive that Kevin uses with mallets throughout this rendition. Isn't it great to have a piece that serves more than one season?

Night the Silence by (Kantor) / Robert Ward

While this is an original composition, it is a **must** for bell choirs. I first heard this with a beautiful alto voice accompanied by the bells. However, this piece can stand alone as a bell anthem. The handchimes add another depth to the piece that gives it a richer texture. And on top of all this, the composer intertwines *Silent Night*. "Absolutely gorgeous" is what we heard from the congregation after performing it at the Christmas Eve service.

Travelers from Nazareth by Kathleen Wissinger

Introduce a new Christmas carol to your congregation this yuletide by playing this piece as a solo or joining with the SATB choir with the bell choir as accompaniment. This original hymn describes Mary and Joseph's trip to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. The introduction and interludes are a haunting melody that stays with you for days afterward. Each verse builds as it nears the climax of the piece. By verse four, some creative chime assignments are needed to successfully perform this section. But with careful preplanning, it can be well executed.



IA-TOP NINE

The Advent and Christmas season is going to be here before we know it, so now is the time to starting thinking about what we're going to put in front of our choirs to play. After canvassing our state committee, here are some of Iowa's favorite pieces known as 'Peck's Picks'.* (Try them out!)

Sing We Now of Christmas by Karen Lakey Buckwalter

A great piece that uses a variety of Advent tunes in conjunction with the organ.

Joy to the World by Cynthia Dobrinski

An excellent piece to use for a hymn during the Advent service, which incorporates organ, timpani, trumpet or brass quintet, and optional congregational singing

Shades of 'Forest Green' by Tim Waugh

A mystical sounding English melody with optional finger cymbals that is very accessible for most choirs.

Carillon for Advent by H. Dean Wagner

A well-written piece incorporating *Veni Emmanuel* plus the use of suspended bells and chimes.

O Come, All Ye Faithful by D. Linda McKechnie

This piece weaves the Advent melody with Bach's classical melody *Sheep May Safely Graze* and is easy for the ringers. There are three performance options: 1) bells and solo C instrument; 2) bells and keyboard; 3) bells and orchestra.

Stille Nacht by Betty Garee

This is still the best Advent piece as it is well written with a few chromatic surprises at the end.

Away In A Manger by Cynthia Dobrinski

If you have a good flutist, I highly recommend this arrangement for flute and handbells. The harmonies are wonderful and she keeps all the ringers busy, as usual.

Hand in Glove Set 1 / Hand in Glove Set 2 by Gary R. Smoke.

If you have a group of 4-6 ringers (I used six) this collection of Christmas favorites works great. HandbellWorld.com says, "They are great for traveling to all those bell outings, especially at Christmas time". They range some in difficulty but fit within the 'easy' category. Tables are not necessary for these collections. Bells needed are D5-A6.

Don't forget to take some time for you and your family (for us, that includes the four-legged variety) this summer before Fall rehearsals resume.

*No Iowa committee members were harmed in the writing of this "Peck's Picks" article. Thanks for the contributions to this list of Iowa Christmas Handbell Favorites! Try one out!

Chris Peck ~ Iowa State Chair

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Call: 712.623.4096 and ask for Chris

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Kansas Ringing Team Tshirts are still available. Contact me if you want them delivered to the festival in Springfield, MO.

KS-Top Nine

Contrary to some beliefs, handbells are NOT just for Christmas! There is a wealth of great music out there to choose from with more already in my mail-box this month. If I had to list my favorite pieces, though, the ones we enjoy ringing and the ones the audience/congregation enjoys hearing, it would include these tunes:

A Johnny Marks Christmas by Doug Wagner

Included in the medley are *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day, The Night Be-fore Christmas, Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree,* and *Rudolph*. It was a good thing I just happened to pick this one up—the title never would've grabbed me, but it is certainly a crowd pleaser.

Jingle Bell Rock by Boothe/Wagner

Think "Home Alone". Lots of chances for dancing within the bell choir...works best with "ho, ho" hats on!!!

Burgundian Carol by Eric Rothe

Requires a soprano glockenspiel and two quick bell tree ringers. Only a few bells are needed to produce this big, cool sound.

The Journey by Louise Frier

You can actually FEEL the camels swaying as the Wise Men are traveling to the Christ Child.

Gloria Fanfare by Michael Akers

A simple but elegant level 2+ introit that can be rung with 2-5 octaves of bells based on the tune *Angels We Have Heard on High*.

Change Ring Prelude on 'Divinum Mysterium' by Fred Gramann

Flat-out gorgeous piece based on *Of the Father's Love Begotten*. This piece is a very effective way to prepare the congregation for worship.

In the Bleak Mid-Winter by Holst/Buckwalter

Very lush chords that are descriptive of snow falling and cold winter days. We have rung this for so many years but it is still one of our favorites.

Two Christmas Carols by Davis/McKlveen

Stille Nacht from the Mannheim Steamroller collection. Other title included is *Christmas Lullaby*. Be sure to add a violin like Mannheim Steamroller does. This is a beautiful arrangement.

Ukranian Bell Carol by Hart Morris

A perennial favorite. I once had a youth choir that had rung this for so many years that they could ring it from memory—in the dark! A very impressive piece and a wonderful way to teach your choirs about repeat signs.

I'm sure there are many more but these tunes come to mind first—they must be some of my favorites.



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CHRISTMAS IN JULY

MO-TOP FIFTEEN

Christmas—my favorite time of year. I love looking at the lights and decorations throughout the city, selecting and wrapping gifts to put under the tree, as well as attending and participating in various seasonal services and programs. What really makes the season for me is the music—handbells and Christmas music were made for each other.

Away in a Manger arranged by Betty Garee is, hands down, my favorite arrangement of any kind, instrumental or choral, of this carol. This is a 4-5 octave medley of various Away in a Manger tunes with a difficulty rating of level 6. She weaves a triple vs. duple element throughout and arranges the melodic lines into an exquisite piece that seems out of this world. Another arrangement that comes highly recommended by several of my fellow directors is Betty's arrangement of Stille Nacht.

Kris Anthony's *The Holly and the Ivy* and Hart Morris' *Ukrainian Bell Carol* are both outstanding arrangements of these carols. Again, they aren't the easiest pieces in the catalog but if your ringers are up to the challenge, these are well worth the effort as they are both a lot of fun to play.

Most handbell choirs will enjoy ringing Cynthia Dobrinski's Christmas arrangements. *Silver Bells, White Christmas,* and *We Three Kings* are a few that my ringers have asked to play again. *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* is another of her arrangements that I really like. Ringers get some experience with meter changes and the flute part adds a nice texture to the piece.

To set a calm, meditative mood, consider Karen Buckwalter's *In the Bleak Midwinter* that also uses choirchimes, and D. Hakes' *Meditation on an Old French Carol*.

For the smaller group are the Doug Wagner collections, *Five by Five for Christmas* and *Five by Five for Christmas II and III*. These are arranged for five ringers, with each ringer having an individual part. This is a great way to start a small ensemble group.

Kevin McChesney has an arrangement of *The First Noel* that one of my youth groups heard at a reading session and asked me to buy. *Mary, Joseph, and the Baby* is a drama and bells piece by Tammy Waldrop that I have done with middle school ringers. This piece requires two narrators—the donkey and the sheep at the stable.

I have many other favorite pieces and composers, but space is limited. There are so many possibilities for groups of every size and ringing ability. Any time you're at a festival or directors' seminar, take the opportunity to attend some reading sessions. These are great venues for hearing new pieces, as well as pieces that have been around for a few years. Talk with other directors and ringers about music they enjoy playing. Creative ideas are all around you.



NEBRASKA STATE COMMITTEE

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NE-Top Five

It is difficult to think about Christmas in the middle of summer. At this time of year we're busy with outdoor activities such as the pool, lake, camping, grilling and anything else we can fit in. And for those of you with children, there are all of their programs as well. However, this month's article focuses on favorite Christmas pieces.

Las Campanas de la Navidad (The Bells of Christmas), by Hart Morris. This is a level 4 piece, but well worth the effort. As you would imagine, with this being arranged by Hart, there are a lot of interesting rhythms. There are style changes as well as tempo changes. Techniques include mallets or plucks, martellato, mallet rolls and shakes. It incorporates the use of handchimes and there are also parts available for guitar, marimba and percussion.

Now the Green Blade Riseth (alt. tune Sing We Now of Christmas), by Kevin McChesney is a favorite of my bass ringers. There is a rhythmic malletted part for the bass that drives the piece. Martellato is also used to accentuate off beats in the middle section. Careful use of the indicated dynamics adds a sparkle to the piece.

For a change of pace, *Coventry Carol*, by Cynthia Dobrinski is a good choice. This piece shines when the choir is allowed to play the music and not just the notes. Careful attention to musicality will definitely increase the difficulty level.

If you're looking for a change of pace for a concert I've had success with *Jolly Old St. Nicholas* by Cynthia Dobrinski. This is an easy piece and is scored for 2 octaves with the addition of the lower bells in the 3rd octave. Rhythmically there are no note values faster than a quarter note. Even though this is a lively piece, Cynthia has incorporated a slower more meditative section that allows even the beginning choir to play expressively.

If you have a beginning choir (adults or children) or you have a group that will play in the community then *Ready to Ring for Christmas* compiled and arranged by Martha Lynn Thompson and Frances L. Callahan may be a good resource for your library. The pieces are simple straightforward renditions of Christmas carols and a few secular pieces in this collection of 32 pieces.

These pieces are just a few of my favorites of the many, many great Christmas pieces that have been published. You might want to try one of these pieces to add to your favorites list.

Natalie Radcliffe ~ Nebraska State Chair

BEGINNING RINGERS WORKSHOP

September 24, 2005—one day workshop hosted by the Nebraska State Committee in Omaha, Lincoln and Kearney. You might have a whole choir of beginners or just one or two ringers that need a little extra help to bring them up to the level of the rest of the choir. Massed ringing as well as basic classes will be available. Watch the mail for registration forms which will be coming out this summer.



WANT ADS

Be the Featured Choir at the 2006 Area VIII Conference

"Ringin' Up Another Storm"

Area VIII is searching the world to find a featured choir for its 2006 Conference in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The chosen choir will present a concert following the Opening Banquet on Thursday, June 29, 2006. Interested choirs are invited to submit an audition tape (VHS or DVD preferred, compact disk or cassette tape will be accepted) containing at least two selections by 9/1/05 to:

Burnell Hackman 3517 Jeffco Boulevard

Arnold, Missouri 63010

The selection will be made by an anonymous panel. The winner will be notified by October 1, 2005. A \$1,500.00 honorarium will be given for the performance. Questions should be directed to Burnell Hackman, 636-464-0096 or via e-mail burnell@bhackman.com. You may down load an application from the website: www.areaviii.org/featured_choir.htm

BELL DIRECTOR AND/OR CHILDREN'S CHOIR DIR. Send Resumes to:

Batavia Congregational Church 21 S Batavia, Batavia, IL 60510 630-879-1999 (O) 630-879-0187 (fax) Bataviaucc@sbcglobal.net

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Auditions!

We are looking for talented ringers. Auditions will be held August 29. If interested, call 877–7WE–RING.

www.chicagobronze.com



AGEHR SPONSORED EVENTS

2005	EVENT	CLINICIAN	LOCATION
Jul 10-15	Intergenerational Handbell Camp 15th Anniversary	Various	Heartland Pres Conf 16965 NW 45 Hwy Parkville, MO Kipp Willnauer 913.856.2932 Willnauik@hotmail.com
Jul 20-23	National Seminar	Various	Intercontinental Hotel Dallas, TX www.agehr.org 937.438.0434
Sep 24	Beginners' Workshop	Nebraska State Committee	Omaha / Lincoln / Kearney Contact: Natalie Radcliffe www.agehr-ne.org 308.236.9815
Oct 21-22	Area V Fall 2005 Festival/Conference	Debra Carr	Kentucky International Conference Center Louisville, KY Contact: Skip Sluder 812.332.7323 Sluderc@indiana.edu www.areavagehr.org
Oct 22	Ringers' Workshop Sponsored by the Illinois State Committee	Bells in Motion	St John's Lutheran 2477 W Washington St Springfield, IL Contact: Kim Congdon www.agehr-il.org 309.365.2910
Nov 11-12	Eastern Iowa Children's Handbell & Handchime Festival (with Directors' Seminar)	Shosh Meyer	St Andrew Pres 1300 Melrose Ave Iowa City, IA Matthew Penning 319.338.7523 Matthewp@saintandrew-ic.org









UPCOMING CONCERTS

2005	CONCERT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Jul 9 7:00p	Strikepoint of Minnesota	Grace UMC 3700 Cottage Grove Des Moines, IA	Grace UMC 515.255.2131
Jul 17 5:00p	The Agape Ringers	Queen of Martyrs 103 & Central Park Evergreen Park, IL	David Weck 630.665.3200 x 120 www.agaperingers.org
Jul 23 8:00p	The Agape Ringers Closing concert for National Seminar 2005	Intercontinental Hotel 15201 Dallas Parkway Dallas, TX	David Weck 630.665.3200 x 120 www.agaperingers.org
Sep 18 4:00p	The Agape Ringers	Wesley UMC 21 E Franklin Naperville, IL	David Weck 630.665.3200 x 120 www.agaperingers.org
Oct 16 4:00p	The Agape Ringers	St. Patrick Church 15000 W Wadsworth Rd Wadsworth, IL	David Weck 630.665.3200 x 120 www.agaperingers.org
Dec 4 2:30p	The Agape Ringers With North Shore Choral Society	St Faith, Hope & Charity 191 Linden St Winnetka, IL	David Weck 630.665.3200 x 120 www.agaperingers.org

AREA VIII COMPOSER

Susan E. Geschke was born in Illinois and received her doctorate in Germanic Linguistics from the University of Illinois in Champaign/Urbana. After receiving her doctorate, she taught at the college level until retiring to stay home with her two boys. She returned to college to earn a degree in music, because there was always a song in her heart that needed to be written down. After spending more than 20 wonderful years living in Southern California, she returned with her husband and sons to her "roots" in Illinois to be closer to her extended family.

Susan recalls that her composing all got started with a melody she couldn't get out of her head that she wanted to share with her handbell choir. She says, "It is very fulfilling to realize that some of the songs I've been given by God are being returned to Him in worship." She has over 40 handbell publications to her credit.

Being a Christ-centered family as they reach out in love to each other and to use their God-given talents to give praise to the Lord and Savior is Susan's goal! Once Christ is truly the head, the teamwork, music, and excitement are spectacular! Mrs. Geschke hopes that through her music, she can bring a little joy into people's lives.

Forthcoming titles: *I am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus*, Choristers Guild; *Hyfrydol*, Hope Publishing; *In the Bleak Midwinter*, Hope Publishing.



MEMBER BENEFITS

Help to Get You Started

- Handbell Notation Booklet
- Local Support
- Scholarships
- Chime Loan Programs
- Mentors
- Lending Libraries

Support to Keep You Going

- National journal, Overtones
- Members-Only Online
- Area Newsletters
- Handbell Hotline
- Voting privileges in local, area and national elections
- Salary survey information

Come Ring along the River

Area V Fall 2005 Festival/Conference

Oct. 21-22, 2005

Kentucky International Conference Center Louisville, KY

Debra Carr, Clinician

For information contact: Skip Sluder 812.332.7323

sluderc@indiana.edu

Registration information available online at www. areavagehr.org

Events to Help You Grow

- National Festivals
- National Directors' Seminars
- Area Festivals
- State workshops
- Repertoire reading sessions
- New releases from the publishers
- Technique workshops
- Massed ringing opportunities
- Classes on issues regarding handbells/ handchimes
- Networking opportunities with other handbell enthusiasts
- Courses of study tailored to special interests
- National Directors' Seminar

Endorsement for Your Events

Mailing labels at a discount

Director of Music Ministries at Concord Trinity UMC-St Louis

<u>Job Description</u>: Conducting duties include directing the Adult Chancel Choir, handbell choirs, and Contemporary Praise Band. 30 hour/week position

Required: Bachelors degree in Music, basic computer skills, 3 years exp. in church setting.

<u>Contact</u>: (314) 842-2060 ctumc-gw@swbell.net Concord Trinity UMC 5275 S. Lindbergh, St. Louis, MO 63126



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Christ the King Lutheran Carolyn Laxson Iowa City, IA

St Francis of Assisi Lori Ancona W Des Moines, IA

St Joseph Catholic Terri Hodge Marion, IA

St Henry Catholic Dave Staron Marshalltown, IA

St John Lutheran Jodi Bierschenk Newhall, IA

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1st Presbyterian Cory Cronbaugh Shellsburg, IA Rosita Yao Downers Grove, IL

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Burr Ridge UCC Jill Rohrback Darien, IL

Hosanna! Lutheran Al Schmitt St Charles, IL

Marilyn Shultz Lansing, IL

Bethel Lutheran Lois Gotha Palatine, IL

St Andrew's Lutheran Mundelein, IL

Jennifer Laabs Palatine, IL

Sandra Blackwell Peoria, IL Ascension Lutheran Wichita, KS

Gloria Dei Lutheran John Cargile Wichita, KS

Christ Lutheran Cheryl Ringeisen Overland Park, KS

Enterprise Academy Elsy Gallardo Enterprise, KS

Pleasant Hill UMC Amy Crouch Topeka, KS

Katherine Schultz Wamego, KS Grace UMC Paula Patterson Springfield, MO

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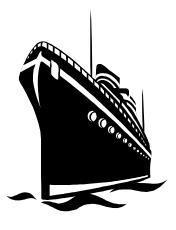
Hanover Lutheran Keith Koenig Cape Girardeau, MO

Hope Lutheran Rayleen Platter Osage Beach, MO

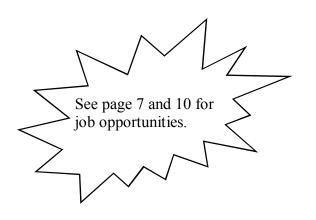
Willard Presbyterian Willard, MO

Darlene Clanton Neosho, MO

Welcome aboard new members. Consider yourself among friends.









Is your address incorrect? Are you moving? Then contact Headquarters: Dan Virzi 800.878.5459 x 112 membership@agehr.org

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