



# HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA

## ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA

MARCH, 2014

Handbell Musicians  
OF AMERICA

### Iowa Trivia *Ring Davenport*



John Wayne grew up in  
Winterset, Iowa

Glenn Miller was born in  
southwest Iowa



Meredith Wilson, who  
wrote The Music Man,  
hails from Iowa

Donna Reed grew up in  
Dennison, Iowa



Sabula is  
Iowa's  
only town  
on an  
island.

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**Festival Deadline!**  
**Early-Bird**  
**Special**  
**April 15, 2014**

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ELECTED	ELECTED	APPOINTED
CHAIR: <a href="#">Dolan Bayless</a> c/o Kirkwood UMC 201 W Adams, Kirkwood, MO 63122 314.966.8167  TREASURER: <a href="#">Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal</a> 295 Town Center Blvd, Gilberts, IL 60136 630.699.3802  PAST CHAIR: <a href="#">Marilyn Lake</a> 5748 W. 87th Terrace, Overland Park, KS 66207 913.302.1010	CHAIR-ELECT: <a href="#">Patrick Gagnon</a> 211 S Victor (P.O. Box 314), Hubbard, IA 50122 641.373.2972  SECRETARY: <a href="#">Kathy Leonard</a> 1st UMC 612 Poyntz Ave, Manhattan, KS 66502 785.532.4926   Like us on <a href="#">Facebook</a>	COMMUNICATIONS: <a href="#">Pat Latshaw</a>  EDUCATION: <a href="#">Lauran Delancy</a>  FINANCIAL ADVISOR: <a href="#">Cheryl Abney</a> MEMBERSHIP: <a href="#">Stephen Swanson</a> QUAVERS: <a href="#">KC Congdon</a> RESOURCE LIBRARIAN: <a href="#">Kathy Harrison</a> WEBMASTER: <a href="#">Wendi Calkins</a>

	<a href="#">ILLINOIS</a>	<a href="#">IOWA</a>	<a href="#">KANSAS</a>	<a href="#">MISSOURI</a>	<a href="#">NEBRASKA</a>
Chair	<a href="#">Sharon Schmidt</a> 28 Oriole Ct Naperville, IL 60540 630.369.9879	<a href="#">Patrick Gagnon</a> (acting chair until filled)	<a href="#">Cherry Cox</a> 14684 W 152nd St Olathe, KS 66062 316.305.7055	<a href="#">Suanne Comfort</a> 6108 Blueridge Blvd Raytown, MO 64133 816.353.1708	<a href="#">Mike Allen</a> 1414 20th St P.O. Box 347 Aurora, NE 68818 402.694.3580 (H)
Treasurer	<a href="#">Debbie Perisho</a>	<a href="#">Mary Lee Parks</a>	<a href="#">Karla Denton</a>	<a href="#">Cathy Leiboult</a>	<a href="#">Janet Chiocchi</a>
Secretary	<a href="#">Beth McFarland</a>		<a href="#">Staci Cunningham</a>	Open	<a href="#">Nancy Youngman</a>
Web	<a href="#">Gary Dietschweiler</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>Membership</i> <b>Open</b>  <i>Registrar</i> <a href="#">Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal</a>  <i>Chime Mentor</i> <a href="#">Diane Oster</a>  <i>Chime Coordinator</i> <a href="#">Aimee Legatzke</a> <a href="#">Shelley May Hutchison</a>  <i>Food Coordinator</i> <a href="#">Anna Piro</a>  <i>Handbell Services</i> <a href="#">Debi Robey</a>  <i>Student Liaison</i> <a href="#">Ben Hafner</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>Des Moines Area Rep</i> <a href="#">John Cook</a>	<i>Past Chair</i> <a href="#">Kathy Leonard</a>  <i>Chimes</i> <a href="#">Shirley Myers</a>	<i>St Louis Area</i> <a href="#">Sherry Boland</a>  <i>KC Area</i> <a href="#">Kathy Ford</a>  <i>At Large</i> <a href="#">Marilyn Droke</a>  <a href="#">Kathy Harrison</a>  <i>Chime Chair</i> <a href="#">Anne Miller</a>	<i>Chimes</i> <a href="#">Janet Chiocchi</a>  <a href="#">Byron Jensen</a>  <a href="#">Vicky Vandervort</a>  <a href="#">Joyce Miller</a>  <a href="#">Angela Wright</a>  <a href="#">Linda Ashley</a>  <a href="#">Natalie Radcliffe</a>  <a href="#">Charles Cohen</a> <a href="#">Deann Nicolaus</a> <a href="#">Jessica Kite</a>

*The Raleigh Ringers*

David M. Harris, Director

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 phone/fax: (919) 847-7574 • email: [rringer@rr.org](mailto:rringer@rr.org) • web: [www.rr.org](http://www.rr.org)

*A community handbell choir*

QUAVERS OFFICE

## Captions from the Chair

The New Year 2014 is now two months old! Where does the time go? Resolutions made are in the past! Statistics say that approximately 45% of Americans make resolutions, and of those slightly more than 50% keep their resolutions into the month of March! I propose two resolutions that can be easily kept for more than six months!

The first resolution: purchase and rehearse the music for the Ring Davenport Festival! If you have not already done so, choose which division you will ring, purchase those pieces that are listed on the website. Purchase also the massed pieces. Check out the rehearsal notes, on the website, provided by our outstanding clinicians. Use the rehearsal notes to teach your groups so they can be well prepared for the festival.

Second resolution: I, (substitute your name), resolve to get the commitments from my individual ringers to attend the Ring Davenport Festival in June! The Early-Bird deadline is April 15 and the registration is a bargain at that price! So solicit the commitment from your ringers and register online or by printing out the forms and mailing them with a check to our registrar.

The ringing ensembles at Kirkwood United Methodist Church in suburban St. Louis are already enjoying and learning the music for the festival. Others in the St. Louis area are also working diligently to learn the music. We are finding humor as well as guidance in the rehearsal notes. Just take a look at the notes from Michael Glasgow to find some humorous quotes that you can use in your rehearsals. My ringers look forward to meeting you in the classes and the ringing rehearsals in Davenport.

We cannot over-emphasize how important it is to get together in Davenport! We are handbell musicians who continue to learn, we continue to ring, and we continue to develop relationships with other musicians. Keep your personal resolutions as they might be. And please keep your handbell resolutions! Your Area 8 Board and I want to see you in Davenport!

The Ring Davenport Festival information can be quickly found by clicking this link: [http://areaviii.org/Festival\\_Info/Festival\\_Info.htm](http://areaviii.org/Festival_Info/Festival_Info.htm) Information is updated regularly so check often. If you bookmark this web address, hit F5 to refresh the page.

I want to also call your attention to a very important subject: Area 8 board elections. Please read the autobiographical sketches of the slate of nominees for the elected board positions in this edition. Voting will take place this summer. Get acquainted with those who are willing to serve! Then vote! Have a voice in Area 8! Be enthusiastic in your support of Handbell Musicians of America! I will see you in a few months in Davenport, Iowa.

*Dolan Bayless ~ Area 8 Chair*

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## Get Your Choir Noticed at Ring Davenport

Area 8 wants choirs, groups and soloists to advertise at our festival. For \$50 your logo will be placed on 10 pencil boxes and for \$200 your logo will be on 25 boxes, the tote and table ad space. Find details at [http://areaviii.org/Festival\\_Info/Festival\\_Info.htm](http://areaviii.org/Festival_Info/Festival_Info.htm)

**Pencil Box:** Your full color logo (2" w x 3" h) on the face of each box that you sponsor. Each pencil box will include a personal hand sanitizer, embossed pencils, tissues, sticky notes, festival pin and a pencil sharpener. Also inside will be your business card and the business card of each package deal purchaser.

**Logo on Tote Bag:** Your logo (one color) will be put on the tote bag given to all Festival participants. This year's tote bag will be a reusable grocery shopping bag, a hit at several Festivals last year.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Taking a Show on the Road to Schools

In Chicago, Orbert Davis is known as a jazz trumpeter and Emmy winning composer. Beyond that, Orbert and long time business partner Mark Ingram have demonstrated a commitment to the children of the city through programs that bring music to schools that don't have funding for arts programs. For several years, various ringers in the Chicago area participated by presenting shows at schools as part of Orbert and Mark's *Discover Music, Discover Life* program.

The audiences for these shows were elementary students with absolutely no exposure to handbells. The script and music (for a quartet) evolved with trial and error to include:

Introductory original music

Section on **Cooperation/Team Work**—demonstration with duet/quartet

Section on **Responsibility**—a skit using the alphabet song to show the consequences of not reading the music or watching the director, having the wrong bell, missing rehearsal

Several music selections

Section with **hands-on** experience for the kids—talked about how a bell/chime works and how the metal vibrates. As they didn't read music, and Ring & Sing tunes weren't familiar enough to impoverished children, each child was given one chime or bell, and then lined up like a piano. They were then tapped on the shoulder when they were to ring, and asked the rest of the kids to guess the song.

Section on **bell history**—used a variety of music to demonstrate change ringing and music for various life events (weddings, funerals, etc.)

Section on **Techniques**—demonstrated all the various possible techniques

Closing Music

The show could be made longer or shorter by changing how many pieces were performed, and what sections were included. The shows were seldom as long as an hour, and more often around 30-40 minutes. The hands-on portion worked with up to about 30 participants. For more than that, more instruments and helpers were needed to tap shoulders, or the process took too long and the kids lost interest.

Music choices are always a challenge as it should highlight bells by using original compositions, but also engage the audience by including popular selections from Lady Gaga and Coldplay. Easy piano versions of the popular selections can be adapted for a quartet with minor changes such as malleting the bass.

Even though adults were presenting to children, think how much more fun and inspiring it would be to have children sharing handbells with children!

*Sharon Schmidt ~ Illinois State Chair*

*(Continued from page 4)*

**3' of advertising space:** reserved specifically for your group for pamphlets and handouts (no selling and no products please). Ringers can pick up information about your group, your concert schedule, website information and your availability to perform.

**Package Deal \$250** Logo on tote (one color);  
3' advertising space; 50 pencil box sponsor

**Package Deal \$175** Logo on tote (one color);  
3' advertising space; 25 pencil box sponsor

**Package Deal \$100** Logo on tote (one color);  
3' advertising space; 10 pencil box sponsor

### A La Carte

10 pencil box sponsor \$50  
20 pencil box sponsor \$100



## Funerals

I feel that having a handbell choir play at the funeral of a ringer is possibly one of the most moving musical events I've ever been a part of. My experience with this was in my first church position that had a bell program. The first months were brutal as I had *no* idea what I was doing. Luckily I was mentored by awesome local directors and was set on the right path. One thing that did happen during those first three months is that I lost one of my ringers who ended up storming out of the sanctuary and screaming at me as she fled, all due to a misunderstanding about when the prelude was being played, which she missed. I have often felt like a failure during my life, but that was a pretty good example.

After some time had passed, we made amends and she returned to the choir, and our relationship as director and ringer, and relationships among the ringers, became very strong. She was a wonderful woman who had been an educator and a foster mother, and a life-long musician and music lover. Perhaps without the fight we would not have fixed the relationship and I would have not learned as much about being a handbell director as I did.

This ringer had battled many illnesses in her life, and finally lost her life in 2006. For her funeral we were asked to ring *Grazioso* by Arnold Sherman, a piece we had just prepared for a local Spring Ring. This piece, along with so many others, was written to commemorate a handbell musician's life. It was a perfect fit for the service, and was important for our choir as we had to shuffle bells and import substitutes which only cemented in our minds the fact that she had left us.

Handbell choirs are unique in the musical world simply because of the fact that it takes the entire team to play "the instrument," which is not complete if someone is missing. I have heard of a practice in some choirs of ringing a piece after a ringer has passed away and leaving the position open as a healing exercise—to acknowledge not only the loss of the person, but of the sound of the bells they no longer ring.

One last thought on "outside performances" that was brought to mind by that title—actually playing outside. I remember playing a performance outdoors with Merrimack Valley Ringers in Massachusetts. It was windy, it was cold. My music was blowing. An audience member trying to be helpful brought me, during a song, a ROCK, which he placed on my music stand. Imagine my joy to have a rock inches away from my bass bells. Needless to say I had to miss several measures while I dealt with the rock, trying to appear polite and thankful, and trying to avoid cracking a casting. Such fun!

*Patrick Gagnon ~ Acting Iowa Chair*

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

Iowa State is in need of a chair by October 1, 2014. Don't let Iowa miss out on educational opportunities. Inquire today!

Contact: [Patrick Gagnon](#)



## Senior Centers, Retirement Homes, Nursing Homes

I enjoy ringing bells or chimes at nursing homes, senior centers and retirement homes. My father is in a nursing home and I take my chimes and play at least twice a year. The last time I went, there were two or three new residents that had not seen chimes before. They were familiar with bells, so it was fun to share with them the differences.

Planning a visit to a center does take some time and preparation. Most facilities have an activities director that schedules groups. A handbell director or representative of the choir should visit the facility before setting up a performance date. The facility and the choir need to make sure there's enough space for tables and equipment. The facility may not realize a full bell choir takes up A LOT of space.

A theme for the concert can make the performance really fun. Two of my favorite themes are Valentines (love) and 4<sup>th</sup> of July (patriotic). I like these because most church choirs don't get the opportunity to ring this genre in church on Sunday morning. Some examples: *In the Good Old Summertime*, *My Wild Irish Rose* and *The Merry Widow Waltz* found in Martha Lynn Thompson's *Timeless Tunes* (AG3085.) Do your research and have some fun talking about *The Merry Widow Waltz*. *The Twelve Tones System Book 6* (MD006 by Dolores Anderson) has easy versions of *A Bicycle Built for Two*, *For Me and My Gal*, *Let Me Call You Sweetheart* and more. *Porta Four Patriotic* (GRP07 by L. Ramsdell) is wonderful for a quartet or beginning choir. The folio includes *America*, *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, *God of Our Fathers* and more. *A Patriotic Celebration* (WBHB9602 by Kevin McChesney) is a fun level 3 piece with optional flute and snare drum.

Another concert option is to perform the six or seven pieces of music you will be performing at the Area 8 Festival; *Ring Davenport*. Performing in front of this smaller audience will improve your confidence for rehearsals and performance at the festival in June 2014.

If you aren't a teacher or someone who speaks in public, script your performance so you have some interesting tidbits to share with your audience. These should include information about bells/chimes, fun facts about the music you are playing and introducing your ringers. Consider bringing flowers for the residents, if you have a Valentine's theme. If you go patriotic, have everyone wear patriotic clothes or fun hats. When the concert is over allow residents to see the bells up close. Try to avoid just packing up and leaving. You may be surprised to meet a concert pianist or even a lifetime bell ringer.

Cherryl Cox ~ Kansas State Chair

**Early-Bird Special**  
**April 15, 2014**

### ATTENTION:

Do not forget that the **Early-Bird** special is fast approaching. **April 15**

Other deadlines to be aware of are:

Youth Festival 5/1

Director's Pre-Conf Track 6/1

Unpublished Music Reading Session 6/15



## Christmas Concerts

Everyone loves bells at Christmas! It is a joy to bring so much joy to others with the carols and wonderful music of Christmas. Over the years my adult choir has built up a repertoire of favorites we like to use for caroling at Hallmark's Crown Center, the Country Club Plaza, and other Christmas concerts. Our "golden oldies" include several Dobrinski arrangements: *Ding Dong! Merrily on High!*, *White Christmas*, *Silver Bells*, *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*, and *Jingle Bells*—(bring children up from the audience to play sleigh bells). Audiences love to sing along with Doug Wagner's series of four *Christmas Carol Fests* published by Agape. Each of the four is a straightforward arrangement of several familiar carols which can be rung alone or invite audience participation. We like Doug's *Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!*, and his charming *Frosty the Snowman* ends with a malleted coda that sparkles. Put a child in a snowman costume to dance around the audience and everyone is delighted. Other favorites include William E. Gross's *A Nativity Celebration*, Hart Morris's *West Indies Carol* with percussion, Joel Raney's *We Three Kings*, a transcription of the choral classic *Carol of the Bells*, transcribed by Richard Litterst and of course, McChesney's *Now the Green Blade Riseth*. To these we add the repertoire from the current season.

I have a suggestion to save some time. Every year I would spend several hours pulling our Christmas music from the files and putting it in folders, and after Christmas file it all back again. One evening in rehearsal I was lamenting the time I spent every year getting music out of the files and putting it back again. A ringer said, "Why don't you buy some folders and just keep them for Christmas music?" Brilliant! That has saved me several hours each year. Our Christmas "golden oldies" stay in the folder, I just add our new Christmas repertoire each year, and we are ready to go!

Have you considered doing a handbell flash mob? Use a memorized Christmas piece, or a processional you have memorized for any time of year, and gather in a mall, a museum, or a street corner to delight those around. Use this for publicity for your concert or your program.

On our youth choir tours, whenever there are several children in the audience, I like to bring six children up to stand on the chancel step. I give them the C5, D5, E5, G5, A5, and C6 chimes. After learning how to ring and damp, they ring a few scales, intervals, and repeated notes as I point to each of them. Then I say to the audience, "We are ready for our song. When you know the song, you may sing with us." Starting on G5, I point out the melody of *Jesus Loves Me*. After several notes the audience is singing, the children have a successful experience, and maybe the idea is planted in that church that their children should have a chime program.

If you haven't used Ardis Freeman's *Ring Along Christmas Favorites* you are missing a lot of joy. This set of eight books, marked Bell Book C, Bell Book D, etc., has the words for familiar carols marked when to ring and when to damp your chime. In five minutes, *anyone* can be ringing and singing carols! It sounds good, and they are amazed and delighted that they can do that. Invest in a few sets of these books and you have an instant program for Sunday school classes, civic groups, youth group caroling, for the rest of your life!

Suanne Comfort ~ Missouri State Chair

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**FREE LOANER HANDCHIMES FOR YOUR SCHOOL/CHURCH**—The MO chapter of the Handbell Musicians of America has a 3-octave set of Malmark handchimes with reproducible secular/sacred music that will be available for the 2014-2015 school year, at no cost except insurance coverage for that semester or year. The deadline for application is **June 1** for placement by July 1. Please contact at [Anne Miller](#) or [636.349.1817](tel:636.349.1817) for more information and an application packet. Pass the word to your friends, too!



## Weddings

I've directed my choir for more than 20 years and besides our regular church performances, we have enjoyed playing outside of our church, our comfort zone, charity events, salutes to our troops, in concerts at hospitals, retirement homes, museums, at Christmas time, at services at other churches and even some funerals, but for an emotional high, nothing beats playing for a wedding.

If you look for wedding music at handbell music sites, you will see a multitude of choices, and in various formats such as solos, duets, small ensembles, along with full choir arrangements.

Our first wedding was done with five ringers using Douglas Wagner's *5x5 For Weddings, Volume I & II*. Each of these tunes requires five strong ringers as they are playing 3-octaves of handbells, so there is a lot of sharing and passing but it is a real treat to watch and in particular, to play. Just so you know, Wagner also has two other volumes of *5x5* collections for the general church year and for the Christmas season. They are a nice change of pace for your audience, and a nice way to perform when you are missing ringers.

Our biggest wedding experience involved the wedding of one of my own ringers. She was getting married and wanted our bell choir to provide all of the music for her wedding. Added to this responsibility was the fact that it was going to be an outdoors wedding at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. It was going to be a 5:00 pm wedding, in the middle of August. We learned a lot that day because we had never played outside up to that point, and we had to learn to manage the heat, the sun, the nerves, all of the music we had to play, and the breeze, which although played havoc with our pages, did help keep us from getting too hot. One of the most spectacular moments was when the bride rejoined the choir in her white wedding gown sandwiched between all of the rest of us in black, as we played for her husband. She chose for us to play *My Heart Will Go On* from the movie Titanic, arranged by Kevin McChesney. This is a beautiful piece for a wedding but appropriately so, it does seem to go on and on.

There are two other classic pieces that I think provide a powerful impact for weddings, and they are:  
 1) *Trumpet March and Trumpet Finale* arranged by David Sanders with optional trumpets and  
 2) *Trumpet Tune Fanfare* arranged by Arnold Sherman with organ and brass. As a former trumpet player these are always favorites of mine for weddings and with the bells, result in a terrific musical experience. I would also recommend *Angels' Canon*, arranged by Michael Larsen. This is a wonderful little duet piece for weddings, and again, small ensembles are such feasts for the eyes. Lastly, Purcell's *Trumpet Tune* translates well for handbells. There are several arrangements of this tune available; I have two in my library, one by Ellen Jane Lorenz, and another by Karen Roth (my favorite).

Weddings present unique challenges for our choirs, but the rewards are well worth the efforts expended to prepare and present the pieces. Plus, they leave such a great lasting impression with everyone. There is just something about handbells and weddings that are simply meant for each other.

*J. Michael Allen ~ Nebraska State Chair*



**Easter Nest**  
**Recipe**



**Dr. Michael Allen** has been involved in handbells for more than 20 years. His mother was a church organist for 50+ years and when she passed away, his family purchased a 2-octave set of Malmarks and Michael was chosen to direct. He's been conducting and playing since '94, in his 4-octave choir, Proclamation. He was recruited to serve on the Nebraska committee in '96 by his mentor, past National AGEHR President, Mary Kettelhut, and he's been the Nebraska chair for the past four years. He's really enjoyed the involvement at the Area level and he even attended his first National Seminar last summer.

His other passion is Optimist International in which he's been a member since 1980. Optimist International is a worldwide organization of volunteers striving to bring out the best in the youth in their communities. He's been involved at the state level, having served as a distinguished and an outstanding Governor and beyond at the National and International levels for 25+ years. He's served as an International Vice President and on the International Board of Directors for four years. He's chaired all of their Growth and Membership Serving Committees; he's spent three years as the International Finance Chair overseeing a \$6.5 million budget and he's chaired the International Convention for three years, most recently chairing their upcoming International Convention this July.

On the professional side, he's been a dentist, caring for patients, for nearly 40 years.

Michael feels that his leadership skills and many years of experience in working with volunteers will certainly assist him in leading Area 8 into the future and he humbly asks for your vote for the position of Area 8 Chair-elect.

## Chair-Elect

**Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal** is completing her 2<sup>nd</sup> term as Area 8 Treasurer. She registers Area 8 members for Ring Davenport, coordinates with the Festival venue, and maintains a profitable event budget. She previously served as Illinois Chair, starting mid-term in '07 after being Illinois Registrar. That year she also was equipment loan coordinator for the Peoria Area 8 Festival, organizing all those handbell sets! She has maintained her commitment to the Illinois Committee as the current Registrar.



At a young age, Kristin caught the handbell bug, and began ringing at Santa Maria in Mundelein, Illinois. At college she became manager and treble sectional leader for Purdue Bells. When not ringing, she pursued a civil engineering degree. She now works as a senior project engineer at Civiltech, preparing plans and cost estimates for roadway projects from concept to construction.

A current musician with The Agape Ringers, Kristin served four years as President of the group, motivated in both planning and budgeting. Her fiscal responsibility aided the group in planning for their future. She currently organizes the group's educational events and was co-chair for eight years for the group's annual holiday production. Always apt to share her love of handbells, Kristin has taught at private and Guild workshops in the Midwest, and Area 2, 7, 8 and 10 Festivals. Sunday mornings you can find her directing a junior/senior high bell choir at Gary UMC in Wheaton. The rest of her time is spent with husband Joe and twin daughters who soon will be old enough to love handbells too.



**Sharon Schmidt's** active involvement with Handbell Musicians of America began in 1994 when she joined the Illinois State Committee. She's still on the committee, serving as chair for her second time following several terms as treasurer. 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 recently appointed as national Certification Program Coordinator. In 2013, she received the President's Award in appreciation of her service to the Guild.

After learning to ring in the 1970s, 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 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 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.

# 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 Membership Chair and would be honored to serve the Area using his financial background and skills.

Steve was among a group of individuals that formed the Quad Cities very own community handbell ensemble RiverBend Bronze in early 2013, which is already in high demand throughout the area. 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 5<sup>th</sup> octave of bells, started a second ensemble, and coached duets and ensembles. He recently has helped introduce another church to the joys of ringing and to establish their own program.

Steve 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.

Quad Cities



**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 three handbell choirs and teaches music and visual art to underserved students.

In addition to her recently completed Master of Church Music degree (Handbell Emphasis), Beth Ann holds an undergraduate English degree and a Master of Business Administration; she has taught college-level courses in marketing, management, and office administration.

Appointed and elected positions in community and civic organizations include Junior League (secretary and communications director) and elementary school parent group (president). Beth Ann served as secretary on the Iowa (AGEHR) board and she chairs the Donald E. Allured Original Composition Award committee.

## Secretary

**Kathy Leonard** is currently serving her first term as Secretary for Area 8. Previously, she has served the Area as Membership Chair (2011-2012) and Kansas Chair (2007-2010), including being a member of the Topeka 2010 Festival Planning Committee.

After admiring the bell choirs for several years, Kathy started ringing bells in 1990. In 2007 she was tapped to direct the children/youth bells and adult beginning bells at 1st United Methodist Church (Manhattan, Kansas), including a home school ensemble. She continues ringing with Allegro Ringers and singing in the Morning Glory Choir.

A Music Education (Choral Concentration) graduate of Bethany College, she is also an active member of her local P.E.O. Chapter (where she has served all offices—twice as secretary and president), and is a lifetime member of Sigma Alpha Iota. More than 30 years of working in information technology at Kansas State University assures her daily that there is still much to learn for her role there as IT Licensing Specialist!

When not working at K-State or at church (ringing, singing, or directing), you may find her working in the office for KSU football and basketball games (Go CATS!), quilting, reading, or solving Sudoku and crossword puzzles. The best times are spent with her family, husband Evan and daughter Amanda, who are also ringers.



# Upcoming Events

2014	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Mar 1	Ring in the Spring John Behnke, Marilyn Lake, Kathy Ford	Church of the Resurrection 13720 Roe Ave, Leawood, KS	<a href="#">Kansas</a>
Mar 2 2p-8p	Middle/High School Handbell Festival Suanne Comfort	Peace Lutheran St Louis, MO	<a href="#">HAGSTL</a>
Mar 7 7p	Nebraska Directors' Workshop KC Congdon	1st St Paul's Lutheran 501 N Burlington, Hastings, NE	<a href="#">Nebraska</a>
Mar 8 8:30a-4p	Nebraska Spring Ring KC Congdon	1st St Paul's Lutheran 501 N Burlington, Hastings, NE	<a href="#">Nebraska</a>
Mar 22	Handbell Ringing Skills	Gary UMC Wheaton, IL	<a href="#">Illinois</a>
Jun 25-28	Area 8 Festival <i>Ring Davenport</i>	Davenport, IA	<a href="#">Area 8</a>
Jul 6-10	Intergenerational Handbell Camp	Heartland Center Parkville, MO	<a href="#">Camp</a>
Jul 15-18	National Seminar	Sheraton Atlanta, GA	<a href="#">National</a>
Sep 12-13	Flint Hills Handbell Fest	YMCA Camp Wood Elmdale, KS	<a href="#">Kipp Willnauer</a>

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