



HANDBELL MUSICIANS OF AMERICA

ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA

QUAVERS NEWSLETTER

MARCH, 2017

Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA



REASSIGNING BELLS

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Officers	<u>2</u>

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

	ILLINOIS	IOWA	KANSAS	MISSOURI	NEBRASKA
Chair	Ben Hafner 18175 Dillon Ln Villa Park, IL 60181 630.696.6929	Lori Fenton 3213 45th St Des Moines, IA 50310 515.229.6712	Staci Cunningham 21370 Harper Rd Chanute, KS 66720 620.433.7223	Jeff White 2576 Pioneer Dr St Louis, MO 63129 314.803.6324	Linda Ashley 9107 Meadow Dr Omaha, NE 68114 402.320.5312 402.397.9551 (h)
Treasurer	Open	Mary Lee Parks	Karla Denton	Suanne Comfort	Open
Secretary	Beth McFarland	Donna Sprague	Open	Open	Byron Jensen
Website	Wendi Calkins-Levitt	Wendi Calkins-Levitt	Wendi Calkins-Levitt	Wendi Calkins-Levitt	Janet Chiocchi
Other	<i>Events</i> Sharon Schmidt <i>Registrar</i> Kristin Kalitowski-Kowal <i>Chime Mentor</i> Diane Oster <i>Chime Loan Coordinator</i> Patti Mangis <i>Food Coordinator</i> Anna Piro <i>Central Illinois Rep</i> Pam Wall <i>Western Illinois Rep</i> Don Wood <i>Handbell Services Rep</i> Debi Robey	<i>Historian</i> Tina Gehrke <i>Chimes</i> Aaron Hansen <i>Eastern Rep</i> Cat Walker <i>Western Rep</i> Yvonne Johnson	<i>Chimes</i> Shirley Myers <i>Past Chair</i> Cherryl Cox	<i>Chime Chair</i> Anne Miller <i>Membership, St Louis</i> Sherry Boland Christie White	<i>Registrar</i> Deann Nicolaus <i>Chimes Coordinator</i> Nancy Youngman Jessica Kite Mike Allen Joyce Miller Angela Wright Charles Cohen

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

Looking for ways to reassign some handbells for your choir? You'll find some great ideas in the pages ahead!

Looking for an awesome handbell experience in 2018? Look no further than right here!

Bring It! Ring It!
June 27-30, 2018

We've got exciting plans in the works for you:

- **Ramada Plaza Hotel in Omaha, NE:** Our venue is in the midst of a complete renovation this year, even the sleeping rooms! It will be an almost brand new place when we arrive.
- **Water Park:** Our venue has a water-park! It too is being upgraded this year. We'll have special ticket pricing during our event.
- **Timothy Waugh:** is excited to join us in Area 8, coming from the east coast. He'll be leading two of the divisions as well as mass ring pieces.
- **Barbara Meinke:** will be heading in from the west coast, and leading one of our divisions and a mass ring selection.
- **Larry and Carla Sue:** Recently relocated to the midwest, Larry will be conducting our Bronze Ensemble experience. He and Carla will entertain us with a concert of their 12 bell music.

- **Timbré:** Artistic director Michèle Diana Sharik and the rest of the ensemble bring their show to us for a featured performance. I hear they even have a Minister of Smoke and Mirrors... Timbré will also be teaching a number of classes for the event.
- **Youth Track:** The Area 8 Festival Committee invites all youth ringers to attend Bring It! Ring It! The youth component will run Thursday evening, June 28, through Saturday evening, June 30. Ringers will rehearse and perform with clinician Patrick Gagnon, and break-out sessions will be designed with youth in mind. There will be plenty of time to spend at the on-site water park, which is included in the youth track registration fee. The Festival offers the perfect balance of ringing, learning, networking, and playing.

Sound like a great time? Of course it does! Let's all get it on our calendars.

Next edition, be on the lookout for the repertoire for the event.

BRING IT! RING IT!
June 27-30, 2018
Omaha, Nebraska

Ben Hafner**~Illinois State Chair**

How the heck am I supposed to get **that** note? Figuring out tricky or chromatic bell passages is not always an easy task.

Letting the ringers figure it out for themselves is a good exercise and challenge for some groups, but time needs to be provided to do this, or music needs to be made available to be looked at outside of rehearsals. This needs to be done early on, like before or at the first rehearsal of a piece. And an indication of final tempo is important—just because you can do it at rehearsal tempo doesn't mean it'll work up to speed.

Community groups usually have people from different backgrounds, so each person's approach to "figuring it out for themselves" might not be compatible. There may need to be a single, ultimate authority to make such decisions, whether it's the director, or a designated ringer that the group knows has final say—so no griping with that poor person!

Less advanced groups, where not everyone may have the experience or understanding to figure it out amongst themselves, may need the director to dictate. Plus, the director knows all the ringers, and can give away things to those they know can handle it. And can put their foot down with those who might whine about it.

I come from a community group background, and we usually have the luxury of having access to extra bells, often from the members' home churches, to place elsewhere on the table to cover those one or two notes that "just don't work" where normally assigned. It amazes me how many people think of this as a "cheat". Are we here to make the most of musicality or to highlight the personal

aptitudes (or lack thereof!) of the "bell hogs"? Besides, some people are *thrilled* to have the "garbage part", with a *gazillion* bells in front of them, even if they mostly only play once or twice each.

Thinking outside the box is a must. Chromatics in the treble in 4+-octave groups can be problematic because of the added burden of ringing the octaves (not all of us know how to do traveling 4-in-hand). Extra 6s could be shelleyed by the 5s ringers (assuming their chromatics aren't crazy too) leaving the treble ringers to handle the 7s—the highest notes heard, and therefore, usually the most important. This also keeps the extra bells needed within the 3-octave range.

Bass assigning can get especially crazy. Each piece really needs to be looked at on a case-by-case basis. Keyboard order...no good for running scales. Lines and space...no good for thick chords. Start by assigning the most-used bells, and then fit in the lesser used ones as you can. This requires a lot of advanced work on the part of someone. Many directors don't have the time, or specialized knowledge. Have a regular bass ringer responsible for this. Let the bass have a sectional to work it out. We've also occasionally pulled in an extra body to help out in the bass.

And lastly (but don't tell my directors this), you can always leave some notes out! Get those melody notes and forget about the accompaniment. If the note is doubled somewhere else on the staff, yours most likely won't be missed.

*Debi Robey
Bells In Motion, Springfield, IL
Madison Area Concert Handbells, Madison, WI*

Lori Fenton**~Iowa State Chair**

Most of us ring in choirs with very “typical” bell assignments. For some ringers, quick bell changes or accidentals can cause some issues. I used to wonder if bell composers or arrangers paid attention to these type of things—generally speaking, no. It’s not up to them to figure out how to execute the piece; they just write what they want to hear. Some composers may take the time to figure out alternate assignments and note as such in the piece, but I find this is the exception, not the norm.

I’ve written before about ringers having the opportunity to review a piece, without ringing, to identify those areas that are going to cause issues. The director should also be aware of these situations and be prepared to point them out to the ringers if they aren’t able to identify them on their own.

I’m a big advocate of allowing ringers to work out issues with their neighbors or other ringers in general. This promotes ringers’ awareness of more than just their part and forces them to look at the music more holistically. If this is something new for your ringers, teach them how to look for solutions. Don’t give them the answer; ask them what options seem to be available.

If a ringer has a bell that only rings a few times but is hard for them to get to, maybe there’s another ringer who consistently has nothing during those times and can take the bell. High treble bells are often handed off to the under-utilized bass ringer. This may not be an option, however, if the acoustics in your performance space would make that

sound odd.

If a piece has a lot of runs, it might make more sense to assign bells in steps rather than chromatically. This is often used in the bass section. This might not be an option if your ringers are committed to their positions but it could be worth trying if necessary.

If your group is small in numbers but large in talent, you might be able to get very creative. This involves a lot of analysis of how to assign the bells and a lot of flexibility in being able to read multiple staves, but the concept can still be applied to the average choir, especially if you’re short a couple of ringers for standard assignments. You might have a few ringers who are able to pick up a random assignment of bells. It will take some work to figure out who has what, but ask those ringers to be part of the process. They might just relish the challenge!

Coaching your ringers to think outside the standard assignments, and to problem solve, will help them grow as ringers and musicians. They might fight you on it and it might not be doable in the end but it’s worth at least giving it a try. Start slow, support them in the process, and hopefully you’ll ultimately have them taking ownership of how best to ring the most difficult pieces smoothly.

Staci Cunningham**~ Kansas State Chair**

The choir that I currently ring with has recently lost several ringers. In fact, we have gone from a 5-octave choir to a 2-octave-trying-to-be-a-3-octave choir! This has caused some issues in assigning due to the fact that we have ringers from all levels of experience. There are a few that are uncomfortable playing anything but their two notes and there are a few that can handle maybe an extra note or two. And then there are a couple who love a challenge! More than once I have received a text from our director a few hours before rehearsal asking if I could handle this or that while ringing.

One of those interesting assignments had me playing "rescue" notes. We were playing a 2-octave piece that included many accidentals and also chimes. There were some tricky bell changes that happened to fall in with a few of those who have issues with anything outside of their normal two bells. We happened to have one extra person who could not take on extra bells, so I was given the task of playing the extra notes. I believe I ended up with Eb5, F natural 5, and G6 in bells and four other handchimes. It was definitely a challenge, but all the problem bells were taken care of and the piece came off beautifully.

Another way we have worked in problem bells is by teaching the choir techniques like shelley and four-in-hand. This allows for quick pickups needed and drop offs of bells. If hands are not big enough for either of these two techniques, then weaving may be the way to go.

Sometimes there may be one spot that is tricky, but all other times that note is

easily playable. If this is the case, it may be necessary to ask your neighbor if they can play for you. One particular piece that we are working on right now has me ringing a chime while malleting a suspended bell at the same time. I decided that it just wasn't going to work without possible issues, so I looked at my neighbor's assignment and asked her if she would be able to help me out. We decided that she could play the chime since she was already playing a chime in her other hand for that same beat. Now it sounds smooth and quiet instead of loud and clunky!

When problem bells surface, don't be afraid to think outside the box and try something different. If it doesn't work for you, there is no reason to force it. Ask a neighbor for help. Try a new technique. Maybe have someone step in and help with just that one song to grab the problem bells. But don't give up. There is a way to make it work!

Linda Ashley**~ Nebraska State Chair**

We have all had occasions where a particular bell causes us a problem in making a passage smooth and musical. So, what do we do?

I do a good deal of the bass assignments for River City Ringers and have a few things I always look for. Can the GAB3 ringer handle all of the bells in that range for the whole piece? Are there any runs that could be problematic? We have a number of instances where the next ringer down has to play the G3 so that the A and B can be played cleanly.

Trust your ringers to resolve these problems on their own. An experienced ringer should be able to come up with a solution. We had a piece at Christmas which was extremely challenging for the EF6/7 ringer. There were many quick changes involving the Eb and F# bells. We had an extra ringer, so one person rang Eb6/7 and F6/7, the other person took E6/7 and F#6/7. It worked very well.

They may be able to have their neighbor pick it up. A refresher course in weaving may also be sufficient.

If it is a solitary accidental that is getting in your way, look at the other positions. There may be someone else with a free hand that can take that bell. If it rings more than once and you have the luxury of duplicate bells, they may be placed where another ringer can get to them.

We have a piece this spring where the Ab3 and Bb3 are played only once in a chromatic 16th-note run with the A3 and B3. One player can't do that. We gave each of the other two bass ringers one of

these bells and the passage works.

As a last resort, you may have to sacrifice a note or two for the sake of clean ringing. Examine the musical line and determine which notes are most important.

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Upcoming Events

2017	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
3/24-25	Nebraska Spring Ring Jason Krug	St Mark's UMC Lincoln, NE	Nebraska
4/29	Resonate with Rezound! Handbell Ensemble	Overland Park Christian Church Overland Park, MO	Rezound!
7/11-15	National Seminar various	Hyatt Regency Orange County Garden Grove, CA	National
7/13-15	Distinctly Teen Hart Morris	Hyatt Regency Orange County Garden Grove, CA	National
8/19	St Louis Area Reading Session	Kirkwood Baptist Kirkwood, MO	Missouri
10/5-8	Distinctly Bronze East Dr. William Payn	New Bern, NC	National
2018	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Jun 27-30	Bring It! Ring It! Area 8 Festival	Omaha, NE	Area 8
Jul 17-21	National Seminar Various	Grand Rapids, MI	National
Jul 19-21	Distinctly Teen	Grand Rapids, MI	National
Aug 6-11	18th International Symposium	Cairns, Australia	International

