



QUAVERS

AREA VIII: ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA
SEPTEMBER, 2007

MEMORIZATION

Greetings, all!

By the time you are reading this, summer will be just about over and fall programs will be starting. I hope you all have had a fun but restful summer. I know I have but I am ready to get back into the swing of things.

This issue's theme is **memorization**. I went to the dictionary and looked up the meaning. It is "to learn something so that you will remember it exactly." Memorization can be an extremely useful tool in handbell ringing. You all do it to some extent naturally. You practice your songs over and over and you tend to know bits and pieces of your part that you can play without looking, which means you have a chance to glance up at your conductor (which you know they love!). You also memorize difficult page turns, either the measure before the turn or the measure after so that you can make the turn when convenient.

You can take this a little further by playing processions. These are usually comprised of four to eight measures that are repeated. Since the name implies that they are played while walking up the aisle, then you have to memorize your part.

Memorization also plays a big part in playing small ensembles such as duets, trios, and quartets. Usually you have to share bells and play a larger range of bells, not just your usual two, three or four. It is easier to learn parts of the piece so that you can concentrate on getting the correct bells or moving up or down the line of bells. If you are also trying to keep an eye on the music at all times, you will probably miss a bell or lose your place in the music.

In memorizing solo pieces, you need to break down the music. Generally you have sections that repeat later in the piece. You concentrate on learning the sections that repeat and then you can pull them all together into one piece.

As you can see, there are many ways to use memorization in handbell ringing. It really does make ringing easier.

Debbie Llewellyn ~ Area VIII Chair

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SHOULD YOU MEMORIZE?

A group I used to ring with from Heidelberg Union Church in Pennsylvania was doing Bill Payne's *Nova* way back when. After we pretty much had it down, our director, Bonny Loney, commented on how repetitive it was and she bet we could memorize it. Well, naturally we all balked, but she made us do it anyway. It was cool when the occasional audience member would notice that we took away our folders when we played it. Any of you who have seen Ring of Fire had to come away impressed that those kids can do a whole concert from memory!

But of course, memorization doesn't have to be so showy. Small bits of memorization are important for watching the director at tempo changes, etc. I used my level 1-2 group of non-music readers as guinea pigs a while ago to prove that they could do it too. I had them playing a 4-bar intro over and over without stopping. Then without warning I turned all their folders over and told them to keep going, and most of them did it. The rest got it when I gave them a minute to study the music before playing it from memory. They were very proud of themselves!

The ultimate memorization is the processional. I recently took Michael Joy's Processional class at an Area II Festival. He taught us one easy way to do a processional: layering—adding (and/or subtracting) parts with repeated patterns using only one or two bells per person. Then no one has to memorize very much. Michael said, "Moving and playing at the same time is not as impossible as it might seem." Well, I made up a simple whole/half/quarter layered pattern for my group to do. The memorization was not a problem. Getting their feet to do what we wanted? Now that was another story. I guess non-music readers would never have done marching band!

Debi Robey ~ Illinois State Chair

IN LOVING MEMORY

Mary Lou Hays of Garden City, Kansas, died unexpectedly on March 30, 2007. Mary Lou directed the Bernadine Bell Choir at First United Methodist Church in Garden City for 29 years, from 1973 until 2002. Loving theatre and music, she was known at Area VIII festivals for her bell choir's theatrical presentations in which ringers often wore costumes and dramatized popular musicals.

Mary Lou loved working with children and often helped her son Mark, Garden City Rec Commission Fine Arts Director, put on musicals each summer.



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WOULD YOU MEMORIZE?

I spent a lot of time thinking about this topic and talking with other fellow directors and ringers about memorization. I found that almost everyone that I talked to currently does not memorize their music or at least doesn't purposely memorize their music.

When it comes to memorizing an entire piece of music, I personally believe that it should be left to the professionals and not the volunteers practice-once-a-week-and-play-once-a-month bell choir. Don't get me wrong; I have found myself on many occasions memorizing different parts of the songs to help myself watch the director for the meter change or to be able to get the page turn.

I believe that everyone at one point or another has had the opportunity to memorize a measure or two at the encouragement of the director. I know, as a director, the more eyes that I can see during a difficult meter change or music style, the more comfortable I feel in knowing that the bell choir will be playing all together as a group.

A bell choir processional is a good use of memorization skills. Having the bells enter the church (somewhere away from the tables) and begin to play as they walk toward the tables gives the congregation a sense of excitement. Sometimes these are written out for you at the beginning of the piece or they can just be made up of harmonious chords.

In talking to Jessie Kruger, the Iowa Membership Chair, she said that in college she had a professor who had them memorize their pieces by chords. This was good if they lost their place or had a nerve-induced memory lapse, because at least they could fake it by playing within the correct chord until they found their spot again.

In the end, memorization is up to you (and your director) to make the decision as to when and where it should be used.

Kathryn Jaeger ~ Iowa Chair

Correction

Please note that Raleigh Ringers are NOT the clinicians for the Peoria Conference in 2008.

We are looking forward to Hart Morris and Bill Alexander.



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COULD YOU MEMORIZE?

Have you seen the musical *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*? One of the characters, William Barfee, has a special trick he uses to help him with his spelling. He uses his *magic foot* to write the word in the air. While that can work in some instances, it's not very practical when it comes to ringing. (That, and I would fall down trying to ring and swing my foot around!)

Why should we memorize? Well ... why not? Memorization aids in page turns, and actually allows the ringer to **look at the director**. It's a radical notion, but one that enhances the musicality of the piece and is well-worth trying.

I read several articles on memorization and found a quote by Louis Pasteur that speaks to this topic. It is "chance favors the prepared mind." Amen!

Recently, I played in a bell duo for our church worship services. It's one of "those" experiences where we could have used another rehearsal (or two), but the date had arrived. When one of us got lost on the score, both of us ended up scrambling to get back on track. A little memorization of several key points in the music would have given us a better way to re-gather ourselves. A learning experience for our next outing!

For me, there are several keys to memorizing:

- **Practice, practice, practice.** (It might even get you to Carnegie Hall!) Repetition is key. Do it 4 or 12 or 27 times – whatever it takes to learn it correctly and then play it correctly repeatedly.
- **Learn the whole piece.** You don't have to memorize the whole piece, but you must know how your bells fit into the picture. Be able to sing (or hum or hear or at least recognize) the melody.
- **Memorize in chunks.** Learn the phrase that covers the page turn. Notice when you have a repeated sequence. Learn to read ahead – even just two measures at a time. (This will help you with the pages turns as well.) Use your ears to hear...but don't forget to count!
- **Don't try to memorize the whole piece in one sitting.**
- **Muscle memory is a good thing.** Rehearse it until your hands know where to go even if you have a memory lapse.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** (Did I say that repetition is key?)

It's not necessary to make a big production out of memorizing. Start small and work your way up. Begin by dazzling your stand partner with how you get that tricky page turn every time!

Kathy Leonard ~ Kansas State Chair



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44 YEAR AGEHR MEMBER

Eleanor Tasker has just celebrated her 80th birthday and has dedicated over sixty-four years to church service. Little did she know that her position would touch so many lives. Let's take a look at her accomplishments:

- She began her handbell career when the choir director at Morningside Presbyterian didn't know what to do with seven boys that didn't want to be in the choir. Eleanor had heard about handbells and decided that this would be a great opportunity for these boys. Two octaves of handbells and seven young boys later, the group *Seven Heaven* was born and became very popular. This group was even asked to travel to some of the surrounding churches to share their handbell music. As this group grew, so did their name – with the addition of one more member they became *Seven Heaven Plus One*. Some of these early ringers have continued their love for handbells as they moved away and have found handbell choirs to ring with in their home congregations. One of her past ringers now rings with Martha Lynn Thompson's group.
- Eleanor is a past Iowa Chair and served two terms with that committee. During her time as Iowa Chair she started the first workshop and held it in the Sioux City area. She was very proud to have gotten Dick Litterest from Rockford, Illinois, to be the clinician for this event.
- Eleanor helped to start the *Twelfth Night Event* which is a massed handbell concert on the Sunday around Epiphany. This has been a great success and has been going strong for twenty-seven years!
- Eleanor is a big supporter of area festivals and has been attending festivals since 1974. One of her handbell choirs was invited to provide music at the worship service at an Area VIII Festival in Ames, Iowa. She felt this was an honor and a wonderful experience for the ringers.
- The Okaboji Handbell Camp is another event that Eleanor helped to get up and going to help promote handbells and this camp is still running today.
- Eleanor has spent the past eighteen years at First Lutheran Church in Sioux City, teaches piano lessons and plays the organ on Sunday.
- Eleanor has made many friends over the years in the handbell community such as Andy and Helen Flanagan, Joan Shull, Mary Kettelhut and many others and gives credit to Betty Jo Wilcox as her mentor.

"Music is a national language. We can always speak in music and are always able to worship the Lord." ~Eleanor Tasker, Sioux City, Iowa

Submitted by Kathryn Jaeger ~ Iowa State Chair

To become a member of the AGEHR like Eleanor Tasker, contact Dan Virzi at 1-800-878-5459 or membership@agehr.org.



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THE "M" WORD

We have all heard the quotes: "to glove or not to glove" and "to clap or not to clap." What about the quote "to memorize or not to memorize?" I would guess that most directors shy away from the "M" word during any rehearsal.

In July I attended the AGEHR 2007 National Seminar in Dallas, Texas. The theme was *Beyond The Printed Page: Pursing Musical Artistry with Handbells and Handchimes*. One of the sessions offered was Arnold Sherman's *The "M" Word*. If I would have remembered that memorization was the topic for this issue of *Quavers*, I would have made sure I attended at least one of the sessions. Unfortunately I was unable to attend either session so will have to share some of my own thoughts on memorization.

Two questions among many were asked in Arnold's class: "Why does the word *memorization* often strike fear and trembling into ringers?" and "Is memorizing even necessary?" I often feel that memorization gives the ringers musical confidence and can also add something unique to a concert or church service. I often select a very simple processional that has a basic repeated pattern for both my youth and adult choirs to use as a memorized processional. When everyone has arrived at the tables, ring the **big chord** and continue on with the piece. One could also do the same thing with the first hymn by simply having ringers random ring a processional and then use basic chords during the hymn. Doing something as simple as a processional or hymn setting has much less stress for your ringers and gives them the confidence to know that memorization is really not that difficult.

I had the opportunity this past summer to ring with twenty-six ringers from all over the U.S. and England. In one of the pieces, I rang the same pattern for at least twenty-some measures. By memorizing the repeated pattern, I could have my page turned and simply watch the director. Ringers can easily do the same thing if there are several measures using the same pattern. It does make the page turn much easier.

Another method to help ringers memorize is to rehearse one or two measures several times and then have them watch you. Directors and ringers will be surprised and pleased to know this method does work and can make page turns much more musical. Sometimes directors need to challenge ringers and memorization is often the top of the challenge list.

Begin with small steps and work up the ladder until you have achieved success for your ringers and yourself. Remember, we want to *pursue musical artistry* with our instrument.

Joyce Miller ~ Nebraska State Chair

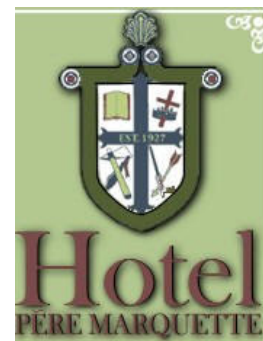


AGEHR SPONSORED EVENTS

2007	EVENT	CLINICIAN	LOCATION
Sep 22 9a-3p	Kansas Fall Ring http://home.kc.rr.com/kansasarea8/	Kipp Willnauer	1st UMC Harris Activity Center 530 Poyntz Ave Manhattan, KS Brenda Heard Brenda@ehumc.org
Oct 4-7	Distinctly Bronze http://www.agehr.org/learning/dbindex.asp	David Davidson	New Bern, NC 800-878-5458
Nov 3 9a-4:00p	Illinois Fall Workshop www.il-agehr.org	The Agape Ringers	Northminster Presbyterian 10720 N Knoxville Ave Peoria, IL Debi Robey
Feb 2 2008 9a-3p	Illinois Young Ringers Festival www.il-agehr.org	Tim Waugh	Santa Maria del Popolo 116 N Lake St Mundelein, IL Debi Robey
Mar 1 2008 9a-4p	Kansas Ring in the Spring http://home.kc.rr.com/kansasarea8/	Kevin Bogan Cathy Moglebust	Church of the Resurrection 13720 Roe Ave Leawood, KS Gwen Gepford 913-491-6461 Gwen.gepford@cor.org
June 19-21 2008	Area VIII Conference	Hart Morris Bill Alexander	Peoria, IL www.areaviii.org/
Aug 4-8 2008	International Symposium	various	Orlando, FL www.agehr.org/learning/intlsym.asp 800-878-5458
Aug 6-8 2008	Distinctly Teen	Tim Waugh Jason Wells	Orlando, FL www.agehr.org/learning/distinctlyteen.asp



2008
Area VIII Conference
June 19-21
Peoria, IL
Mark your calendars!





UPCOMING CONCERTS

2007	CONCERT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Sep 23 4:00p	The Agape Ringers	St Peter Lutheran Church 111 W Olive Arlington Hts, IL	Wally Luettschwager 847-259-4185 (church)
Oct 14 4:00p	The Agape Ringers	St Paul Lutheran Church 515 S Wheaton Ave Wheaton, IL	www.stpaulwheaton.org 630-668-0020 (church)
Nov 18 7:00p	1st UMC Bell Choirs Christmas Concert	1st UMC 1032 Maple Downers Grove, IL	Pattie Barnes 630-953-0146 Bellhog@juno.com
Dec 9 3:00p	Hastings College Bell Choir & Symphony Orchestra	Hastings College Masonic Auditorium Hastings, NE	Byron Jensen Bjensen@hastings.edu
Dec 15 3:00p	Rezound!	Powell Gardens 1609 NW US Hwy 50 Kingsville, MO	Pat Latshaw 913-341-5725 www.rezound.org
Dec 15 4:00p 7:00p	The Agape Ringers <i>Sounds of the Season</i>	Parkview Community Church 764 St Charles Rd Glen Ellyn, IL	For tickets, call KC Congdon 309-365-2910
Dec 23 4:00p	Allegro Handbell Ensemble	Union Church 137 S Garfield Hinsdale, IL	Michael Surratt 630-323-4303 Msurratt@uhinsdale.org

**You too can have your handbell choir
concerts posted on this page. Just send
your information, as listed above, to:**

**KC Congdon, *Quavers* Editor
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**Deadlines are the FIRST of the even number
months.**



YOUNG RINGERS CAMP RECAP

Thought you would all like to get an update on how the Young Ringers Camp in Branson, Missouri went this year. We had a small but wonderful group. There were fifty-plus ringers, directors, chaperones and Area VIII staff. We had four busy but fun-filled days. The kids came prepared, worked hard together and gave two fantastic concerts.

They arrived Thursday to set-up, rehearse and a get-to-know one another. Friday was more rehearsal time and a trip to Celebration City for roller coaster rides and a laser light show. There was a little rain early on but it cleared up later and was a great night. Saturday was more rehearsal time. That afternoon, we packed everything up and moved it down to The Landing. This is a new shopping and eating area down by the lake that was celebrating its first year of business. We were the opening act for a Motown group. We set up in front of the dancing fountain. This would have been fine but it had one more time of "dancing" to the music before we played! Thank goodness we have table covers that can protect the bells! We played before a crowd that swelled to probably 1000 before we were done. We had our camp T-shirts on, of course, and afterwards those of us who stayed down there for dinner received many, many compliments on the kids. We even had to contend with a seaplane that decided to go back and forth behind us on the water, not once, not twice but five times! On Sunday, we had a small church service and another quick rehearsal. Then we packed up again and went to the Dixie Stampede where we were the *pre*-preshow. We wedged in ringers and tables on a very small stage and played 20-30 minutes of music for those coming in for the show. After the kids performed was a wonderful juggler. Most of us then stayed to enjoy the show. It is one of those "eat with your fingers" shows and features the War Between the States. It was a lot of fun. After this, it was time to go home. I hope everyone had as good a time as I did.

Debbie Llewellyn ~ Area VIII Chair



PEORIA

RINGS OUR BELLS!

HERE IT IS – THE NEWS YOU’VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR!

AREA VIII FESTIVAL CONFERENCE 2008
PEORIA CIVIC CENTER
PEORIA, ILLINOIS
JUNE 19-21, 2008

OUR HOTEL IS THE PERE MARQUETTE
(one half block from Civic Center)

OUR CLINICIANS

HART MORRIS & BILL ALEXANDER

THE REPERTOIRE

TINS (LEVELS 1-2)

JOSHUA FIT THE BATTLE OF JERICO
ACCOLADE
FESTIVAL INTRADA

MARTHA LYNN THOMPSON
KATHLEEN WISSINGER
JEFFREY HONORE

HP1880
HP2391
AG35254

SILVER (LEVELS 2-3)

I’M GONNA SING
AS THE DEER
ROCKING CAROL

VALERIE STEPHENSON
PATRICIA COTA
HART MORRIS

CGB483
HP2056
RRHB0041

GOLD (LEVELS 3-4)

ANGEL’S CAROL
IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL
OVATION OF PRAISE

RUTTER/TUCKER
CATHY MOKLEBUST
ARNOLD SHERMAN

HP2359
AL20206
HP2349

BRONZE (LEVELS 4+)

SICILIENNE
FESTIVAL SANCTUS
PASSACAGLIA

FAURE/CURRIER
CATHY MOKLEBUST
HANDEL/GRIFFIN

BEHB256
AU1110659
BEHB3

MASSED

SIYAHAMBA
RONDO BORINCANO
WHEN IN OUR MUSIC GOD IS GLORIFIED
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBIAN

HAL HOPSON
TIM WAUGH
ARNOLD SHERMAN
KEVIN MCCHESNEY

HP1869
FM20143
HP2414
JHS9402

PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR FUTHER UPDATES AND NOTES



Announcing Director Opening for the Gateway Ringers

The Gateway Ringers of St. Louis, MO, are currently seeking applicants for the position of director, effective January 2008. The director must be comfortable with conducting level six handbell music. The responsibilities include selecting repertoire and securing performance venues. Rehearsals are Sunday evenings, January through May and August through mid December. A stipend is budgeted by the group to offset expenses. Anyone interested should contact Kim Amos at 314-518-5724 or kamos@charter.net no later than September 30, 2007.

Announcing Open Auditions for the Gateway Ringers

Want to ring with us instead? The Gateway Ringers are looking for experienced musicians to join us for the 2008/2009 season. Auditions will be held on Sunday, November 4, 2007, at Kirkwood Baptist Church, Kirkwood, MO. For more information, contact Kim Amos at kamos@charter.net prior to Friday, October 19, 2007.

About the Gateway Ringers

The Gateway Ringers is an auditioned community choir comprised of handbell ringers from the St. Louis metropolitan area. Our mission is to inspire excellence in musicianship and heighten awareness of handbell music. The group has been in existence since the fall of 1995 and performs using five octaves of Malmark handbells and three octaves of Malmark Choirchimes®. The Kirkwood Baptist Church graciously provides rehearsal space and equipment. The group is organized as a not-for-profit organization.

Website: <http://www.gatewayringers.org/>



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