



QUAVERS

AREA VIII: ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA
SEPT, 2008

FOND FAREWELL

Greetings to all!

I can't believe two years have passed since I became your Area VIII Chair. What a journey it has been! I have thoroughly enjoyed running your board and hope I have done you proud.

We had some great programs as an area – our recent conference, *Peoria Rings My Bells*, was wonderful. We reviewed your comments and will take them under advisement for the next event.

We had a great *Young Ringers Festival* in Branson, MO last summer. Small numbers but a fantastic time! We are repeating it next year the last weekend of June. Please encourage your young ringers to attend. They will get to perform for a real audience and enjoy the fun of Branson. The conference center is inexpensive enough to encourage the families of the young ringers to come and make a vacation of it. More information will be coming with the next *Quavers* and on the website as soon as possible.

Make sure to check out your state's website and see what is being offered.

Plan to attend at least one event this next year, if possible. You can even go to a neighboring state if it works better for you.

As always, the Area VIII board is there to serve you. Please do not hesitate to contact one of us if you have any ideas, questions or concerns or would like to volunteer for anything. Again, thank you for the privilege of serving as your Area Chair. I have really enjoyed it and look forward to serving the Area and AGEHR in the future.

Debbie Llewellyn ~ Area VIII Chair



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TRAINING THE NON-MUSICAL

One of the best things about handbells that anyone can learn to play! Ringing is really a team sport, with people of all different musical abilities making music together. If you approach things with that attitude, it's easy to incorporate ringers without a musical background.

If blessed with access to a second set of bells, or even just a set of chimes, you can employ the buddy system for beginning ringers. Pair an experienced ringer with the beginner and have them double the same part. The new ringer will start to pick up on sounds and techniques if they have someone to follow. They will also be less worried about the incorrect sounds they are making because their buddy will be carrying the part until they are comfortable doing so on their own.

It is also helpful to keep the ringer at one position for the first two or so pieces. This way they get used to reading the same line and space. At this point however, switch the ringer to a new ringing position; in this team sport, everyone needs to learn how to play at different places on the field. While introducing two new bells, you can keep the constant of the "space note" in the left hand and the "line note" in the right hand (depending on the assignments of course) but now give the ringer two new note names to learn. Approaching the learning of two note names at a time can be less intimidating for someone who has never read music before.

"Everything gets better with practice" is another team reality that everyone can learn. Each rehearsal, choose a technique to practice that even the experienced ringers could use as a refresher. You don't want to single out a new ringer as the one for whom you really want to teach the technique. By having everyone do the exercise, everyone can benefit from the review.

If you wish to take a more democratic approach to the team, you can use a silent voting method to determine who is making progress on the music theory side of things. For example, you can write a rhythm pattern on the board and clap it for the group. Tell them to hold up fingers against their chest for the beat number that you clapped wrong. It's not only easier to then figure out who gets it and who doesn't because answers aren't being shouted; it's easier for a ringer uncertain of the answer to feel more comfortable answering. You can do this for a variety of question and answer rounds.

Finally, don't let the non-musical ringer feel like they are far behind everyone else musically. No one wants to feel that they were chosen last for the team. They may have delayed joining the handbell choir (or picking up any another instrument) for lack of musical experience reasons. Spend one-on-one time before rehearsals with the new ringer, teaching techniques with theory hidden in the exercises to make it more fun than theory on its own. As they begin to enjoy the technique and being part of the group, the theory part will come along and they might not even realize how musically inclined they could become.

Go team!

Kristin Kalitowski ~ Illinois State Chair

The Raleigh Ringers

David M. Harris, Director

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A community handbell choir



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YOU DON'T NEED TO READ MUSIC

In my situation, all I seem to get are students from the middle and elementary schools who *claim* that they cannot read music but they would really like to ring bells. I soon find out that they *choose* not to read music because they just don't *feel* like it. After I find out that they can play the clarinet or violin, I get the real story that they can read music; they just are not used to looking at the whole score which can be very intimidating.

I will be honest, I have also had the person who would love to ring bells but are afraid to even try because they cannot read music. I tell all of my bell ringers that I will work with them if they need help with the music and also not to worry because we all make mistakes and that is why we have pencils and practice!

For your non-music reader there is always the question of whether to circle or not to circle. I admit it, I do circle the notes {left-blue, red-right (this way they always know the "r"ed is "r"ight)}. I try to only do this for about the first month or so and then I start having them circle their own notes. This helps them to learn the staff and notes. I also move my ringers around but keep them stationary for the music that will be played on a given Sunday. This forces them to not *own* their bells and learn more notes. I slowly have them play the music first and then go back and mark only the hard parts.

Sometimes placement of the non-music reader can be very important. I will put the non-music reader next to someone that can be supportive and help them to follow along in the music. The same can be said if you have a new member being added to the group who may feel less confident. Putting them next to a helpful ringer will give them a positive practice experience.

Circling notes, placement of a non-music reader are all great ideas but every situation brings a new element. Time, patience and practice is what it takes. I do believe that everyone should be able to enjoy playing handbells. It just takes some time finding where that person best fits in to your bell choir.

Kathryn Jaeger ~ Iowa State Chair

2008 IOWA FLOOD DONATIONS

The Iowa Committee will be taking donations of money, music and supplies for handbell programs that were affected by the *2008 Floods*. Currently Salem United Methodist and Trinity United Methodist of Cedar Rapids are the only two churches that we know of that were destroyed or had damage. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them as they rebuild their programs.

If you know of someone who had handbells and/or handbell supplies or music damaged during this past Summer 2008, please contact Kathryn Jaeger, Iowa Chair.

Cash donations can be sent to IOWA AGEHR:

Iowa AGEHR
c/o Kathryn Jaeger
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memo: *Flood Relief*



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INCORPORATING THE NON-READER

You've gotten the phone call of a Director's dream – there's someone that wants to join your bell choir! You visit with them about rehearsal times, when you will be playing in church, childcare arrangements, expectations, and then, wham! The bomb is dropped...your prospective new ringer doesn't read music! What to do, what to do?

First, **don't panic!** Arrange for a one-on-one session before the New Ringer (NR) joins the group. Use this time to make sure the NR understands the basics of how to ring and damp. Practice ringing on the beat. Show the NR where *their* notes are on the staff, and it probably won't hurt to mark *their* notes for the first few pieces. Work on the basics: counting, note values, rests, etc. Teach the basic words of our bell language. Use flashcards. Have flashcards available for the NR to have at their ringing station. Don't try to teach them every technique in this first session. If possible, have the NR arrive a few minutes early for several rehearsals to review the basics and add new techniques gradually.

Second, **place your new ringer carefully.** Choose music wisely. You don't want to scare them back out the door with huge 16th note runs on their first song! Start by ringing scales so the NR can get a feel for how they fit into the group. Assign the NR a position where they will be busy, but not over-whelmed. This will help the NR from getting lost in the music. Have the NR share a stand with a good ringer/teacher who can help with counting, finding their notes, etc. This mentor can teach the NR *on the fly*, and also help by being eyes and ears for you. Many experienced ringers find they learn a great deal when teaching someone else. If you have the luxury of duplicate bells, have the NR shadow ring until they are more comfortable with ringing and are ready to strike out on their own. If you have problems explaining something to your NR, ask another ringer to explain it to them.

Finally, **continue to work with the NR.** As their experience grows, teach new techniques and rhythms. Allow them to try ringing different positions to find out where they fit best with the bells and the group. Wean the NR away from marking every note and count as soon as possible; recognizing as soon as possible that this will differ for each NR.

I hope some of these suggestions help you. This list is far from exhaustive, so don't hesitate to ask other ringers or directors for other ideas on how to teach a technique.

Happy ringing, to you and your NR!

Kathy Leonard ~ Kansas State Chair



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YOU CAN'T READ MUSIC?

It happens nearly every time one of our handbell ensembles performs. One or two people will come up and tell us how much they enjoyed the music, and how much they would like to ring. But, as much as they would like to, they tell you, they can't ring because they don't have music reading skills.

Are you looking for a place for non-music readers in your handbell program? Consider these options:

Start a beginning group. We often think of a beginning group as a children's group. There is no age limit on learning. You could have a beginning group of senior adults, or an intergenerational group of beginners.

Double the ringing positions. For each handbell position at the table, have a matching chime position. The experienced handbell ringer models technique for the inexperienced chime ringer.

Use alternate notation. Create your own musical notation using shapes, colors or symbols. Look for resources that incorporate alternate notation such as the *Ring-Along* series or Kirtsy Mitchell's collections.

Teach by rote. Teach your ringers a simple melody that can be accompanied by another instrument. You can also use hand cues to create a chordal accompaniment for voices or solo instrument.

Use the bells-plus approach. Bells-plus is not limited to bells and another instrument. Look at including art, dance, or drama with your bell program. Look around your church or school for hidden talent that can add to the handbell experience.

Is a handbell program the exclusive club of music-reading ringers? Absolutely not! There's a place for those who want to learn to ring and those who bring their own special talents to the group. Experiment and have fun.

Kathy Harrison ~ Missouri State Chair



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I WOULD LIKE TO RING BUT...

The church bell choir has been in place for say five to ten years with the same ringers coming each week. Suddenly a ringer moves away and you need someone to fill that position. A small quiet voice says, "I would be interested in ringing in the bell choir." "Wonderful," you say. The small voice says, "But I do not read music." You ponder your answer with a very long pause. I am sure that has happened to many of us in the past and will continue into the upcoming season.

How do we, as directors, add a non-musical person to the bell choir? It is a big challenge, both for the director and the rest of choir. Not wanting to turn any person away, here are a few suggestions that might possibly work.

Of course, the simplest and easy way would be to mark the notes for the new ringer (in pencil, please). "To mark or not to mark" is much like "to glove or not to glove." I know directors who still mark every single note in each ringer's music and the choir has been ringing for several years. My thought would be to mark a couple of pieces and then gradually delete the marking of notes. I use a quick short-hand for my eighth grade ringers so that by the end of school year, they can read music without any markings. One problem with marking notes is that ringers look only at the letters and not the notes; therefore they do not learn to read the notes.

I have used a ringer mentor policy in one of my choirs. I move a good reader/ringer to stand with the new ringer to help her with the notes and all of the handbell markings. This gives the new person a feeling of confidence and we do not have to stop during rehearsals to tell her what various signs and symbols mean in the music.

A third possibility would be to offer a summer *Read & Ring* for anyone interested in joining the bell choir. We have taken four Monday nights during a month and worked with new people to show them all of the handbell techniques they need to know. There is no pressure to continue with the choir in the fall, but for those who continue, it helps them feel comfortable and not so much like a ringer out of the water.

All directors have many ways to help a non-music reader person become a ringer. Patience and encouragement on the part of the choir and director is very important so the new person will want to come back each week.

Joyce Miller ~ Nebraska State Chair



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AN IOWA FLOOD STORY

June 2008

Salem United Methodist Church is flooded. Later, 90,000 gallons will be pumped from the basement.

The folks there thought they had done right by the bells in moving them from the basement to the main floor. But that wasn't high enough. The water was four feet high in the sanctuary. Not only that, the fuel tank from the sheriff's department across the street added to the mix of nasty water.

I, Jane Metcalfe, brought the bells to my home in an effort to save them. We own two octaves of Malmark bells. I have been in touch with Malmark and the local refurbisher. Because of the fuel contamination and spores, both recommended that I not just ship them to Malmark to sit in a line waiting for attention. So I removed the handles (half of them with water inside) and clappers, put all the pieces in Ziploc bags and carefully washed all the castings in Ivory soap. They are now beautifully arrayed on my dining room table.

July 2008

Good news was just heard from Malmark! They are willing to donate used parts and cases for the two octaves.

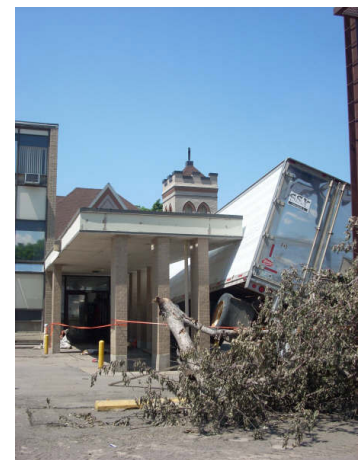
Janet Metcalfe ~ Salem United Methodist Church, Iowa



Salem UMC
Cedar Rapids, IA
2008



Inside the sanctuary. You can see the organ pedalboard resting on the pews.



A whole new meaning to "door to door service". The semi is wedged under/into the carport.

More photos of the flood can be seen at www.salemwarmheart.org/photoalbum.html and clicking on the 2008 Flood icon.



PEORIA RINGS MY BELLS



The Catholic Church across the street from the Peoria Civic Center.

“My arm sure is getting heavy and all I’ve got is this light, little stick.”

~ Hart Morris



“Why do they give us chairs? They never let us sit down.”





CONFERENCE PHOTOS



Look at how BIG these bells are! They are as big as a person's ... torso.

Massed ringing floor at the Peoria Civic Center.

Peoria
Civic
Center





AGEHR SPONSORED EVENTS

2008	EVENT	CLINICIAN	LOCATION
Oct 2-5	Distinctly Bronze www.agehr.org/learning/ dbindex.asp	David Davidson	New Bern, NC
Oct 25 9:00–4:00p	Ringer Workshop www.il-agehr.org Kristin Kalitowski	The Agape Ringers	Prince of Peace Lutheran Schaumburg, IL



UPCOMING CONCERTS

2008	CONCERT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Sep 14 4:00p	The Agape Ringers	Bethany Lutheran Church 8 S Lincoln St Batavia, IL	Lisa Johnson 630-482-2465
Oct 25 7:00p	Rezound! Handbell Ensemble	St John LaLande 805 NW RD Mize Rd Blue Springs, MO	Pat Latshaw 913-341-5725 news@rezound.org
Oct 26 4:00p	The Agape Ringers	Ridge UMC 8607 Columbia Ave Munster, IN	Peggy Schu 219-924-5396
Nov 8 5:00-9:00p	Rezound! Handbell Ensemble	Tuileries Plaza Festival 6109 NW 64th St Kansas City, MO	Pat Latshaw 913-341-5725 news@rezound.org
Nov 22 7:00p	<i>An Overture to the Holiday Season</i> Choirs of 1st UMC	First UMC 1032 Maple Ave Downers Grove, IL	Pattie Barnes 630-953-0146 bellhog@juno.com
Dec 6 7:00p	Chicago Bronze	Community Presbyterian Church 1111 E Madison St Lombard, IL	www.chicagobronze.com
Dec 7 2:00p	Chicago Bronze	ELA Library 275 Mohawk Tr Lake Zurich, IL	www.chicagobronze.com
Dec 12 7:00p	Rezound! Handbell Ensemble	Atonement Lutheran 9948 Metcalf Ave Overland Park, KS	Pat Latshaw 913-341-5725 news@rezound.org
Dec 13 1:00p	Chicago Bronze	Warren-Newport Library 224 N O'Plaine Rd Gurnee, IL	www.chicagobronze.com
Dec 13 4:00 & 7:00p	The Agape Ringers <i>Sounds of the Season</i> w/Joel Raney & Jane Holstein	Parkview Community Church 764 St Charles Rd Glen Ellyn, IL	For Tickets contact: KC Congdon 309-365-2910 www.agaperingers.org
Dec 14 4:30p	Chicago Bronze	St Martha's Catholic Church 8523 Georgiana Morton Grove, IL	www.chicagobronze.com



After 8/15, please visit the website for election results. **www.areaviii.org**

Chair-Elect: Dolan Bayless or Ed Rollins

Treasurer: Cheryl Abney or Kathryn Jaeger

Secretary: Ruth McDonnell or Natalie Radcliffe

Music Educator Training Seminar

9/13/08 Q Center, Chicago

This one-day seminar will discuss ways to incorporate bells and chimes into the music classroom at all levels while meeting the national standards. This event is presented by members of AGEHR's Music Educator Advisory Council, a team of experienced music educators who are using these techniques in their classrooms today.

www.agehr.org/events

AREA VIII

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NON-PROFIT

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