



Happy Fall, Everyone!

by Chris Peck, Area 8 Chair

It is an honor and a privilege to write to you as your new Area 8 chair, a job which I don't take lightly.

Change is everywhere. Seasons change and life changes. My family and I recently moved from Nebraska to Illinois (which is my fourth – and hopefully, final) Area 8 state. I changed jobs and I changed doctors. I even changed bell choirs.

In the past couple of decades, I've rung in two community bell choirs, and I've directed a few church bell choirs, but I haven't rung in a church bell choir in a LOOONG time. Now I do, and I enjoy it. I'm that sub that is needed every week to ring one position or another. So far, I've rung in about three different positions. I find there is less pressure. I don't have to coordinate ringers' schedules or mark music. Conversely, there is more opportunity to help others around me. I can help with page turns and model good technique.

I can also help my neighboring ringers try to figure out a challenging measure in the music. Watching someone else direct also gives me new perspectives when it comes to directing, ways in which I might change my style of directing in the future.

Speaking of change... There have been some changes to your Area 8 board personnel. Your Area 8 board has been busy wrapping up one two-year cycle and beginning a new two-year cycle. At our recent meeting, we bid farewell and shared our thanks with several board members whose time of service has ended for now. This includes Kendall Ladd and Kirsten Hendrickson as Illinois co-chairs; Linda Lunt as Communications chair; Laura Kopff as Events Coordinator; Patrick Gagnon as Education Chair; and Sharon Schmidt as Area 8 Chair.

We welcome new board members Tami Kofron as Area 8 Treasurer and Lori Fenton as Area 8 Chair-Elect and Membership Chair. Amy Knudsen joins us as Communications Chair and Trey Bures is our new Missouri Chair.

We had many good discussions at our meeting in Des Moines recently and you are going to start hearing about them in your Quavers, in your email, and on social media.

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You may start hearing about:

- how your friends who have not been to a Area 8 Festival might benefit with the new Scholarship Fund, in which you all raised more than \$2500 at our recent festival in June.
- smaller workshops and clinics throughout Area 8.
- a return of Professor Bell and Clapper
- your friends spotlighted here in Quavers. Yes, that's right. We're going to start up a new column in this newsletter: Ringer Spotlight. We want everyone to know about the amazing ringers we have in Area 8. Go to the [Area 8 Quavers webpage](#) and look for the link to the questions. Feel free to nominate yourself, as well. More information, plus some sample questions, can be found on Page 3 of this *Quavers*.
- how we might still be looking for those someones that would make a great Iowa or Illinois Chair or Co-Chair. Email me [here](#) if you, or someone you know, might be interested. Let me know at chair.area8@handbellmusicians.org
- you might starting seeing more QR codes in Area 8!
- Festival 2024 plans.

I am excited and looking forward to serving a your Area 8 Chair for the next couple of years. We have a great team moving forward!

Correction from previous Quavers:

Anne Cowley from Iowa won the opportunity to help ring the closing bell last June. Her name was misspelled.

Festival Photo Reminder

Please send to [Laurie Austin, Area 8 Historian](#), your photographs from the Area 8 Festival you just attended in Kansas City. Unfortunately I was



unable to make it to the festival to photograph it myself, so I would be grateful if you shared some of yours with me. Please email your photos and descriptions of the people and/or events they portray.

Area 8 Board

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Ringer Spotlight

by Beth Ann Edwards

Do you know, or know of, a ringer that deserves a moment in the spotlight? Maybe it's your ringing neighbor or a ringer you have admired from afar at a festival or workshop. Maybe it's YOU!

Yes, you can nominate yourself. It's time to let our lights shine here on the pages of the Area 8 Quavers. We've made a list of questions that can help start the conversation, and left some room for unique comments from the spotlighted ringer.

A new Quavers feature is born!

To nominate a ringer: direct them to the [Area 8 Quavers webpage](#), and click on the link for Ringer Spotlight.

To access the form directly [click here](#).

You should be directed to a form that includes the questions below. Answer the questions and send a photo by the Quavers deadlines (the 10th of January, April, July, and October). If you have questions, [please contact me](#).

Ringer Spotlight Questions

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself. Where do you ring? How long have you been ringing?
2. What is your favorite handbell ringing position?
3. What is your favorite piece to ring? If it's too hard to narrow down, top three is fine.
4. Describe one of your most memorable handbell events or road trips.
5. Any additional information or stories you would you like to share with your Area 8 friends?

Quick Quavers Eight:

1. Schullies or Malmarks?
2. Marts or mallets?
3. Gramann or Payn?
4. Clothespins or dogears?
5. Raleigh Ringers or Sonos?
6. Hard copy or tablet?
7. Polo shirt or anything but?
8. One assignment, or move around?



Beth McFarland

Flexibility with Church Choirs

Beth McFarland, Chicago Area (Illinois) Chair

The cool weather of fall has started to creep into our world. My fall routines, I feel, have taken hold of planning for Handbell rehearsals, work, keeping up with my children's schedules and keeping up with life in general. Just as I feel like things are running smoothly, something always steps in the way, and I must refocus and change the plan.

This fall as we started handbell rehearsals, I had my choir mapped out with three to four months of music for a 3 octave choir, feeling pretty confident that all of my ringers would be returning for rehearsals. Well, then reality set in when only 6 ringers arrived at our first rehearsal. Thank goodness I had a side plan for a smaller ensemble, and we were able to move in that direction. We continue to learn how to be agile and refocus our plans as our choirs shrink or grow.

Even though the pandemic has made many new realities and people may still be hesitant to join the choir, at least we have more music to select for smaller ensembles. Hang in there if you, too, are facing smaller choirs and have had to pivot to a secondary plan. At least we are still making beautiful music to share with our congregations/audiences.

*We value your opinion!
The Area 8 Education Committee is considering events that are geared to children, youth, or college-age ringers. If you have an interest in age-specific workshops or ringing events, please contact Rick Richards, Education Chair.*

Who is our mystery Illinois A8 friend demonstrating the bowing technique? It's Kendall Ladd, teaching a class on handchimes at the International Seminar in Nashville, Tennessee, this past summer.



Passing the Nebraska Baton

Nancy Youngman, Past Nebraska Chair

As I write my last article for Quavers as Nebraska's State Chair, I must say when I took the job 4 years ago, I had no idea what the future would hold. This was my second time as being the state chair--I also held the position in the mid-1990s. (I have been a member of the Nebraska committee since 1989!!) Nebraska had just finished hosting the Area 8 Festival in Omaha, and we were going forward with the energy from that. We already had our Spring Ring for 2019 set up with Tammy Waldrop and we started planning for the Area 8 Festival in 2020 and our Spring Ring in 2021. Well, we all know what happened from there!! We held our 2019 Spring Ring on a very cold day, not knowing that would be the last Nebraska event until 2022. But, the work did not stop.

Our committee continued to "meet" via email, we rescheduled our 2021 Spring Ring twice, we continued as a committee to contact lapsed members (which, because of the pandemic was a difficult task), and I became very busy recording our Fourth Friday series as Professor Bell with my trusty student "Clapper" (aka our Area 8 Chair Chris Peck). The Area 8 Board took advantage of the new way of meeting through ZOOM, and I must say, that was a wonderful way to get to know everyone better, as we met often. And, I really must thank the Nebraska State Committee members—all were frequently in touch and we did our best as a team to continue our work.

Nebraska now welcomes Dr. Byron Jensen as our new State Chair. He has been on the committee for several years, but led a very busy professional life. In the spring of this year, he retired as Professor in the School of Music for Hastings College, so he felt he needed something to do in retirement. Those of us already retired know that the time fills up quickly, so it was easy to convince him to take the leadership role before he found out how busy he'll be!! Byron started the handbell choirs at Hastings College in 2003, and has a very active and fantastic group. He also directs handbells at First Presbyterian Church in Hastings, and is director of the Hastings Symphony. Byron is already at work setting up our Spring Ring for 2023, with the great Nebraska Committee helping along the way!



Nancy Youngman

Are you or someone you know looking for a college that has handbells? Click [here](#) for a list of college handbell programs found on the national Handbell Musicians website.

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The Ringer's Wristwatch

Janelle Flory Schrock, Kansas State Co-Chair



This past summer on a trip to Germany, I heard a story about a very devoted bell ringer that got me thinking about how difficult it is to explain to others what ringing bells means to us or why we spend so much of our life dedicated to this art. If that has been your experience, perhaps this story will “resonate” with you too.

A friend of mine, who lives in a rural part of north Hesse, took me to a hilltop chapel called Kapelle Schönberg in a village near her home. In the attic of this chapel were three bells, the oldest dating back to 1490. There was a dust-covered ladder going up to the bell chamber, and at the bottom of this ladder was a long rope tied around a piece of wood and a wristwatch hanging from a nail. How random, I thought.

When I asked our guide about the wristwatch, he told me it belonged to a local man who, three times a day at 7 am, 11 am and 5 pm, would climb the several hundred steps up the hill to the chapel and then the two flights of stairs to sound the bell. Other stewards of the chapel

the man's wristwatch stays hanging on that nail, as a reminder of his devotion

suggested they switch to an automated system, but he insisted on ringing it by hand. That is, until the man passed away suddenly, about three or four years ago.

Though an electronic system now rings the bells promptly on time, the man's wristwatch stays hanging on that nail, as a reminder of his devotion. I instantly found myself wondering about that man and what motivated him to continue to ring the tower bells by hand for so many years, even as others encouraged him to rest. I had my ideas, but will never know for sure.

As we prepared to leave the chapel's attic, I noticed that it was only about 10 minutes before 11 and I asked my friend and our guide if I could stay up there to experience the tolling of the bell. Of course they did not object, but they preferred to go down the steps to the main floor of the building to listen.





The Ringer's Wristwatch, continued

So I stayed, and I listened, and I felt. I felt the resonance of that bell that had announced the dawn, midday, and evening for over 500 years*. It was a sacred moment for me, a healing moment, a transcendent moment.

So many of my life's most holy moments have involved the resonance of bells. I can't explain it to most of my friends. But I know there are those who do understand. I imagine many of you reading this understand. And I'm quite certain that devoted ringer, with his wristwatch, understood too.

*A little research tells me that during World War I and World War II, many bells in Germany were taken, melted down and repurposed as weaponry. One might wonder how these bells escaped that same fate. At the very least, they likely remained silent during times of war.

In Memoriam



George Felix Thompson, Jr. (husband of Martha Lynn Thompson) 2/21/1936 - 10/23/2022

“Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” Ecclesiastes 12:6-7

Martha Lynn writes: “I was with him when his spirit returned to God about 11 o'clock last night. His struggle is over and he is at peace.” After a several months illness, George Felix Thompson, 86, died on October 23, 2022. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Martha Lynn. From 1970-2002 he served as Minister of Music at St. James United Methodist Church where he built a large choral and handbell program. He was a member of and active in the Handbell Ringers of America. A celebration of his life will be later at St. James, 321 Pleasant Valley Dr., Little Rock, AR. 72212. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Thompson Scholarship at St. James.

Does Your School Qualify?

Area 8 offers a handchime loan program to schools in its five-state jurisdiction of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. *Qualifying schools will receive:*

- 3-octave set of handchimes for one semester (approx. 4 months) with teaching materials
- support network and/or mentor
- one-year membership to Handbell Musicians of America.

To check availability of handchimes for loan or to submit an application, please contact Nancy Youngman, Area 8 Chimes Chair.

To learn more about the Chime Loan Program, visit the [Area 8 website](#).

A video featuring Nancy Youngman describes in detail the Area 8 chime loan program and can be found [here](#).

Upcoming Area 8 Events

November 2022

November 6, 2022

4:00 pm Gateway Ringers Fall Concert
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Ballwin, Missouri

November 13, 2022

6:30 pm Bell-issimo Concert: We've Got Talent!
First Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

December 2022

December 2, 2022

12:00 pm Bell-issimo Concert
St. Paul United Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

6:00 & 7:00 pm Prairie Bronze Handbell Ensemble
Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, Kansas

7:30 Lawrence Community Handbell Choir Concert
St. Joseph Catholic Church, Shawnee, Kansas

December 3, 2022

2:00 pm RiverBend Bronze Christmas Concert
First Lutheran Church, Geneseo, Illinois

7:00 pm Bells in Motion presents: A Ringing Christmas
First Presbyterian Church, Champaign, Illinois

December 4, 2022

2:00 pm and 6:00 pm Bell-issimo Concert with Lincoln Symphony Orchestra
Lied Center for Performing Arts, Lincoln, Nebraska

3 pm Prairie Bronze Handbell Ensemble Concert
First Presbyterian Church, Newton, Kansas

4:00 pm Bells in Motion presents: A Ringing Christmas
Faith Lutheran Church, O'Fallon, Illinois

December 8, 2022

12:10 pm poco Rezound! Concert
Village Presbyterian Church, Prairie Village, Kansas

December 9, 2022

7:00 pm Rezound! Holiday Concert
Christ United Methodist Church, Independence, Missouri

7:00 pm RiverBend Bronze Christmas Concert
St. John's United Methodist Church, Davenport, Iowa

More events listed on the next page

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Events & Concerts

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and October to be included
in *Quavers*. To submit
a concert or event for
inclusion, click [here](#) or
go to the A8 Website,
Events page.

Questions?

Please send all questions
and comments about
this and future *Quavers*
publications to Beth Ann
Edwards, Editor:
[newslettereditor.area8@
handbellmusicians.org](mailto:newslettereditor.area8@handbellmusicians.org)

*Find the most up-to-date
calendar and details
about events on the
[A8 website](#).*

Please check websites for
updated calendar and event
information.

Due to social distancing and
COVID-19 requirements,
events may be cancelled after
this newsletter is distributed.

*Find the most up-to-date
calendar and details about events
on the [A8 website](#).*

If your church, school, or other organization is not in a position to renew its membership at this time, consider an individual membership. The cost averages out to about \$8 per month. Membership information can be found [here](#).

December 10, 2022

2:00 pm RiverBend Bronze Christmas Concert
St. John's United Methodist Church, Davenport, Iowa

4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Sounds of the Season Concert
Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church, Elmhurst, Illinois

6:00 pm River City Ringers Christmas Through the Years Concert
First Presbyterian Church, Bellevue, Nebraska

7:00 pm Rezound!! Holiday Concert
Village Presbyterian Church—Antioch Campus, Overland Park, Kansas

December 11, 2022

2:00 pm River City Ringers Christmas Through the Years Concert
Augustana Lutheran Church, Omaha, Nebraska

3:00 pm Rezound! Holiday Concert
St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Overland Park, Kansas

3:00 pm RiverBend Bronze Christmas Concert
St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa

December 12, 2022

4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Sounds of the Season Concert
Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church, Elmhurst, Illinois

7:00 pm Church Concert
Eastminster Presbyterian, Wichita, Kansas

December 16, 2022

7:00 pm Des Moines Concert Handbells 2022 Winter Concert
St. John's Lutheran Church, Des Moines, Iowa

7:30 pm Lawrence Community Handbell Choir Christmas Concert
First Presbyterian Church, Lawrence, Kansas

December 17, 2022

7:00 pm Des Moines Concert Handbells 2022 Winter Concert
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Urbandale, Iowa

National Events

February 2023

Distinctly Bronze East 2023
02/23/2023 12:00 PM - 02/26/2023 08:00 PM ET
New Bern, North Carolina

Reaching for Bronze
02/24/2023 08:00 AM - 02/26/2023 08:00 PM ET
New Bern, North Carolina

July 11-15, 2023

Handbell Musicians of America National Seminar
Irving Convention Center/Westin Hotel
Irving, Texas