



## Make Plans for 2024-26!

by Lori Fenton, Area 8 Chair

Greetings, Area 8! I am honored (and honestly, a bit nervous) to be writing to you as your new Area Chair. Before I get into business matters, I just wanted to share a few “fun” facts about myself:

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- I grew up in Sioux City, Iowa, where I learned to ring bells over 40 years ago under the direction of Eleanor Tasker.
- I have lived in Des Moines, Iowa, for 30 years, with a one-year sabbatical in Phoenix, Arizona. I have spent my entire career in the Life & Annuity industry.
- I have been a choral singer, and occasional vocal soloist, for longer than I have been ringing bells. I currently sing with my church choir as well as a community ensemble.
- I am a proud cat lady and am the kitty momma to two senior-aged cats.

Now, on to the important stuff. The outgoing and incoming board met at the end of September, some in person in Des Moines, with the rest joining online. We had a debrief on our time in Columbia, Missouri, in June, and talked about upcoming local events. I shared what I want to focus on in the next two years during my time as Chair. Areas of focus will include:

- **Ringer engagement and membership.**

This should be a priority for everyone! There are so many benefits to being a

member of HMA and so many ways members can connect with other members, whether it’s locally or nationally. You are all the ambassadors for this art that we are so passionate about. What can we do as an organization to reach out to non-members or to enhance the experience for our existing members? Send me your ideas!

- **Governance.** Do you know that we are officially governed by a set of by-laws? Periodically, those by-laws need to be reviewed and updated, with

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*What can we do as an organization to reach out to non-members or to enhance the experience for our existing members? Send me your ideas!*

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changes voted on by you, the membership. Additionally, we need to formalize job descriptions and procedures for all of our board members. If this is the type of work you find interesting, and I know some of you do, we would welcome your participation.

- **Festival planning.** We all know that the festival experience has changed over time. Gone are the days when we can get 400–500 ringers to come to a festival and fill a convention center. We had less than 200 in Columbia, so the board and I need to carefully consider what the 2026 Festival will look like. We know we have a responsibility to present our members with a quality event but also do it in a way that is fiscally responsible. I'll share more details about our plans as we make more concrete decisions.

In closing, I want to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for all of the outgoing board members. They have all done an amazing job to support the art of handbell ringing, both locally and across the area. Additionally, I also want to welcome the new board members and thank those who have agreed to continue on the board in new positions. I'm looking forward to working with each of you!



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# Taking Care of Illinois

by Chris Peck, Illinois State Chair

Attention, Illinois Ringers (as well as southern Wisconsin and northwest Indiana ringers): HMA Area 8 Illinois will host a workshop with The Agape Ringers Saturday, February 8, 2025, at Second First Church in Rockford, Illinois. Details are developing, but be assured there will be massed ringing, classes, a mini-concert by The Agape Ringers, and of course, lunch. Watch your email and Facebook for updates. Registration begins in December.

- If you are in the north-central region of Illinois, and would be willing to help with this event, please let us know.
- If you are in central or southern Illinois and would be willing to help our small Illinois committee support ringers and directors outside of northern Illinois, also please let us know.
- Finally, if you know of any bell choirs or ringers that may not be members of Handbell Musicians of America, please let us know. We want to help them stay connected with what is happening Illinois and Area 8.

Thank you!

Chris Peck (Central/Southern Illinois Co-Chair)

Beth McFarland (Northern Illinois Co-Chair)



*Chris Peck*  
*Illinois State Chair*



## ILLINOIS WINTER WORKSHOP WITH AGAPE

**DATE: SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 8, 2025**

**LOCATION:  
SECOND FIRST CHURCH  
318 N CHURCH ST,  
ROCKFORD IL**

**MASSED RINGING  
CLASSES AND  
LUNCH  
AGAPE CONCERT**

**REGISTRATION OPENS DECEMBER 2024**





Dick Crusinberry  
Iowa State Chair

*“The most obvious advantage is the convenience of storing all your music on one device.”*

# Should I Use Digital Sheet Music?

by Dick Crusinberry, Iowa Chair

My first exposure to digital sheet music was about 15 years ago. A fellow trombonist in the orchestra I played in brought his iPad to rehearsal, having digitized all our performance pieces. We saw it as an interesting novelty, but it didn't catch on. Ultimately, he switched back to paper, finding the iPad more of a hassle than it was worth.

In the intervening years, digital sheet music has become increasingly popular, particularly in genres like musical theater and jazz. Not surprisingly, it has also gained in popularity among handbell musicians. Several ringers in my handbell choirs have recently transitioned to digital. What are the pros and cons of making this switch?

The most obvious advantage is the convenience of storing all your music on one device. No more worrying about losing music or lugging around a heavy notebook. Digital sheet music is easier to organize, allowing you to rearrange the order of your pieces with just a few clicks.

Digitization also eliminates many of the hassles associated with paper music. It's easy to read, even in low light. Page turns can be accomplished with a foot pedal or facial gesture—a particularly important consideration in handbell music, where both hands are already busy. You won't have to deal with books or scores that won't stay open, or pages flipping on their own in a breeze.

However, there are significant downsides to consider. The most notable is the cost of the necessary equipment. While music can be stored on any device, most musicians prefer a larger iPad for easier reading. A 13-inch iPad can cost nearly \$1,000. A foot pedal costs between \$75 and \$125, a stylus about \$10, and an application like ForScore around \$20. So there's a significant initial investment to go digital.

Furthermore, some musicians prefer the tactile experience of paper music, finding it easier to mark music with a pencil than to use a stylus on a PDF. Digital displays typically show one page at a time, while some musicians prefer seeing two pages at once. Additionally, getting permission to make digital copies of sheet music, though it's becoming easier, still adds an extra step.

Personally, I'm still on the fence about switching to digital. While sticking with paper music is simpler in many ways, the advantages of digital are hard to ignore.



# Hello, Kansas!

by Amy Knudsen, Kansas Chair

So this is my first ever article for Quavers and I'm feeling a bit hesitant, especially since I'm not used to doing anything remotely like writing an article that people would want to read.

As I reflect over the last year of my life, I realized that I have had some challenges come my way, and even though I am a person who really likes to stay in her comfort zone, I definitely stepped outside of that box.

A business opportunity presented itself to me in the spring, and though I thought, 'boy, that would be fun,' I've been on a steep learning curve since then. Some of you are aware that Jean Darby has retired from working on handbells. She offered the supplies to Third Bell on the Right, who would rather stay on the creative side of handbells, so I said I would do it. Well, after working on six sets of handbells, I realize that I didn't know everything and still need to learn more. Challenging? Absolutely. Rewarding to see the instrument we love get cared for? Also yes.

Area 8 Festival in Columbia – I signed up to teach a class. I had to come up with something that maybe no one else would think of. So I thought – I am a musician who has been performing in groups since elementary school band, I should do something about studying scores. Now I would love to say that the class was a huge success, but I really can't. My one participant didn't fill out an evaluation, but I do feel like I taught him something. I also helped him realize that he knew more about reading music than he thought he did. Challenging? Absolutely. Rewarding? Also yes.

Another challenging opportunity came up this fall with the Kansas GatherRing. As a member of the state committee, I helped as I could to help the event run smoothly. Then they needed help with presenters, so I volunteered to teach a Back to Handbell Basics class and a Basic Handbell Maintenance Class. For the Back to Basics class, I took ideas from the Healthy Ringing book by Susan Berry and from the notes I had from taking a similar class presented by Brenda Austin. Did we cover everything I wanted? No, but I know that I did teach the participants some new things. As far as the handbell maintenance class, I thought that maybe even though people are handbell ringers, do they really know about the instrument? I took apart a Schulmerich bell, talked about the different parts and then had the participants diagnose what was wrong with a line of bells that I had purposely 'messed up.' We then discussed what to do to fix the issue. That was a lot of fun – and the participants had a great time. Challenging? Absolutely. Rewarding? Also yes.

And last but not least: I am attending Distinctly Bronze West for the first time this month. Talk about challenging music. I've had the whole range of emotions: 'I got this' to 'what on earth was I thinking' to 'Nope, going to make a fool of myself' and now I'm mostly back to 'I can do this.' Challenging? Absolutely. Rewarding? It will be if I can just let go of the anxiety.



Amy Knudsen  
Kansas State Chair

*“So here’s  
what I’m  
proposing  
to all of you:  
try something  
new.”*

*Want to be involved in Area 8? The Area and State committees welcome all volunteers, and will find tasks that fit your schedule. Check Page 2 for contact information.*

*Hello, Kansas!, continued*

So here's what I'm proposing to all of you: try something new. Step outside of your comfort zone. If you only ring in one spot in a choir, try a different one. No matter where you stand (C4 – C7), your left hand will be a space note and your right hand will be a line note. Directors – maybe try a different type of music, or if a piece calls for all handbells and you can, play it on hand chimes instead.

And the challenge doesn't have to be musical: go to a new restaurant; attend a concert or festival for something you don't know much about; sign up for a class to learn a new craft; read a book from a different genre. You might find your next favorite thing. Or, at the very least, learn what you don't like. I believe in that kind of self-awareness. And give yourself credit for trying.

Thank you for reading this far – and I hope to meet all of you. If you have any ideas that you'd like me to write about, please contact me at [ks.area8@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:ks.area8@handbellmusicians.org).

And don't forget, please send your performance schedule to Area 8 so that we can get those advertised.

## *Spring Event Planned for Missouri*

### **spRingfest 2025**

Join fellow ringers for a one day workshop filled with learning, laughter and new friends. We will be ringing five massed pieces and the day will culminate with a public concert. Please see website for repertoire selections.

***Brenda Austin, Clinician***

**Saturday, February 22, 2025 - (9:00 - 4:00)**

**First Presbyterian Church, Kirkwood, MO 63122**

*An additional, optional Friday event will be offered at the same location from 7-9 pm featuring a Read and Ring Technique Session with Brenda Austin.*





Byron Jensen  
Nebraska State Chair

*Nebraska ensembles, as well as ensembles throughout Area 8, look forward to concerts and events in the next few months. The schedule is listed on Pages 17 & 18 of this Quavers issue, as well as the Area 8 website.*

# Who Wants 6,000 Bells?

by Byron W. Jensen, Nebraska Chair

Last June at the Area 8 Festival, someone familiar with Hastings College, the institution I retired from, asked whatever happened to the Winston Jones bell collection. The short answer is nothing. For those unfamiliar with this story, Winston Jones collected all types of bells: school, church, maritime, railroad, presentational bells, the little bells that your mother or grandmother collected for her curio cabinet, strings of sleigh bells, bells weighing over a ton to those under a few ounces. Bells attributed to the Medici Family and Napoleon, and a bell commemorating 9/11. Winston's first bell was from his bicycle in 1924. By age twelve, he had nearly 600 bells, mostly in his parents' basement.

Winston graduated from Hastings College in 1939, went into the Navy as a medical aide, and worked for a time as a makeup artist in Hollywood. Eventually, tiring of summer humidity in south central Nebraska, he purchased land in Colorado and moved his collection to Evergreen. Winston displayed his bells in a large portion of the acreage, and in roughly eighty percent of the cabin where he and his wife lived. (They had no children.) By the time he died in 2006, he had over 8,000 bells! The stories about collecting these bells from around the world would be fascinating, but unfortunately, Winston didn't write much.

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*By the time he died in 2006, he had over 8,000 bells!*

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*One display inside Winston's cabin*



Many of the outdoor bells, including Buddhist temple gongs, were set up to be rung. The cabin's walls, display units, and even the ceiling were packed like sardines. Understandably, children under ten years of age were not allowed indoors. Almost every bell was identified in some manner indicating its date and origin. Winston's Museum of Historic Bells was visited by bell enthusiasts and curiosity seekers alike from all over the world. For the Fourth of July, he invited the community to visit and simultaneously ring the outdoor bells at 1:00 pm.

Because Winston feared his bells would be sold indiscriminately and the collection dispersed, he agreed to bequeath his collection to Hastings College sometime in 2005. After one cold Colorado week of inventorying, appraising, and packing, the bells came to HC. The estimated value approached \$1 million. My department chair and I identified about 200 bells to be used for three primary purposes on campus: those with connections to liberal arts, displays in various buildings, and an outdoor educational walking tour. None of this came to fruition because money was not included in the gift, and quite honestly, there were more important needs for the college to invest its money. Several of the largest bells were sold to pay the appraiser and moving costs.

The bells selected by HC remain locked in various rooms. A bell placed on the football field that had been on the campus's first stadium was stolen. Obviously, securing outdoor bell features is a complicated concern. The approximate 6,000 remaining bells have been boxed and housed in a covered facility without climate control for nearly fifteen years.

Sad as it may be, that is the reality. If you have ideas on how to disperse this bell collection, and yes, probably break up the collection, I am sure a monetary deal and plan will be gladly reviewed by the college. I am not responsible for negotiating these parameters, but I can steer interested parties in the right direction.

*One small section  
of Granite Glen  
outdoor bells*





# *River City Ringers – Omaha Celebrates 35 Years*



Who would have thought that a handbell choir begun 35 years ago on a dream would have grown to become the first community handbell choir in Nebraska? Our name has changed throughout the years, but the goal has remained the same: to promote the art of handbell ringing.

Joyce Miller founded the choir in 1988 with a generous grant in memory of Ruth Giger, an Omaha native and renowned piano and organ teacher, who was president of the Omaha Music Teachers Association and the Nebraska Federation of Music Clubs. Ruth's love of music lives on today in five octaves of Schulmerich bells purchased with that grant, creating the Fremont Community Handbell Ensemble.

Our beginning was less than auspicious. Finding a place to practice and store equipment can be difficult, and we were fortunate to rehearse at Midland Lutheran College's chapel. There was just one catch. We did not practice in the chapel. Our rehearsal space was under the chapel. We entered from steps outside leading into the basement into a tiny storage room. The ceiling was low and there was no room to walk between the tables. We shared our space with the boiler room, which was

known, on more than one occasion, to provide its own notes as we practiced! In spite of it all, it was our place to practice, and we literally had nowhere to go but up!

Our rehearsal space changed often over the years, from that chapel basement to several churches and a retirement center. We even crammed ourselves into a small living room of a church parsonage, where (we are not making this up) one of our ringers, 9 months pregnant, crawled under the table to get out, went to the hospital that night to give birth, and returned to rehearsal the following week, baby in tow!

Our name has also changed several times. First we were the Fremont Community Handbell Ensemble, then the Omaha Metro Handbell Choirs, consisting of both the Ambassador Ringers, River City Ringers and, for a few years, even a Youth Community Handbell Choir. Later, the two adult choirs merged and now, for over 15 years, we are known as the River City Ringers of Omaha. The name covers not only the area where our ringers live but also where we typically perform, spanning from Hastings, Nebraska, in the west to Omaha, across the Missouri river to Council Bluffs, Iowa, in the east, and beyond.

There certainly isn't space to list the myriad of places we have performed in our 35 years. Sure, there are the typical places, like churches, senior living facilities and cultural venues. We have performed Veteran's Day concerts, All Hallow's Holiday Festivals, John C. Fremont Days summer festival, weddings, funerals, bar mitzvahs, numerous concert series, and handbell festivals. And our smaller six-ringer choir, Bit of Bronze, has performed at libraries, hospitals, private parties, book stores, sporting goods stores, and at Christmas tree lightings. However, there are several noteworthy memories that will forever be inscribed in the annals of River City Ringers.

- While playing in the entryway before an Omaha Royals baseball game at Johnny Rosenblatt Stadium, the sun was so bright we could barely see the music. And it was so hot – how hot was it? It was so hot that the handles of our Malmark bells began to soften and bend as we rang!
- Bit of Bronze arrived to provide after-dinner music for a law firm Christmas party. As we entered, we discovered not only that the Italian restaurant was tiny and dimly lit, but that the party-goers were already rip-roaring drunk, very happy, and rowdy! As soon as we started playing, half the crowd started singing along, while the other half was shouting out requests for other songs.
- And we can't forget the coldest Bit of Bronze concert, playing outside in the snow at a Christmas tree lighting ceremony. How cold was it? So cold that we had to put the bells under our armpits to warm them up! And the wind was blowing in our faces so hard we could barely see the music because of the tears in our eyes.
- Following a Christmas concert with the Nebraska Brass Band, we packed up our handbells, chimes, and equipment and moved them outside for loading. We waited, waited, and waited for our fellow ringer and fearless U-Haul truck driver, Kristen Oertell, to bring the truck. But alas, the truck would not start! The culprit? One failed engine starter!

Since 2020, RCR has been under the direction of Rick Richards, and with his guidance we have continued to grow musically, learning how to bring out the emotion and mood of the music in ways that touch both the audience and us. And we are excited to perform and celebrate our 35 years at the Area 8 Festival this June in Columbia, Missouri. Of course, River City Ringers would not have existed this long without grants from the Paul and Oscar Giger Foundation, Fremont Community Foundation, the Baer Foundation and Nebraska Arts Council, as well as many generous gifts from our patrons and all who have supported us. We are truly humbled, blessed and thankful. Interested in ringing with us? Check out the auditions link on our website.

And now, here is the River City Ringers, 35 years young, By The Numbers:

- 15,894+ YouTube views
- 394 Titles in our music library
- 178 Handbells, handchimes and silver melody bells. 239 if we include a 5-octave set we can borrow for those tricky passages
- 100 Degrees playing outside at a baseball game
- 81 Current and former ringers
- 30+ Churches performed in
- 7 Hand trucks (dollies)
- 7 Ringers freezing their keisters off at a snowy Nebraska outdoor tree lighting
- 5 Committees that help with fundraising, performance ideas, social media, etc.
- 3 Online COVID concerts
- 2 Commissioned pieces
- 2 Ringers with 20+ years in RCR.
- and 1 Broken U-haul truck!

Find us at [rivercityringers.com](http://rivercityringers.com), our YouTube channel, and on Facebook.



# *The Past is Prologue*

## *Spotlight on Solo Handbell Pioneer Ginger Hulet Zyskowski*

By Laurie Austin, Area 8 Historian

One of the things I love about doing history is that you can set out to research one thing, and get totally derailed by something else that is equally fascinating. That's what happened here, when I was reading articles about the festivals that came after the 1960 St. Louis National Festival. In *The First Quarter Century*, a book of AGEHR history, there is an enticing little tidbit about a talented young musician from Hutchinson, KS, named Ginger Hulet, who appeared at the Detroit National Festival in 1963. According to that article, she was "known all over the country for her singing, dancing, ringing act. She uses marimba, vibra-harp, Swiss bells, cow bells, mallet bells, four-in-hand bells, and English bells—all made by David Workman. And Ginger rings everything—over 100 bells—all by herself." Naturally, I wondered what became of her. I put on my Sherlock Holmes hat and went to work, and it turns out this story is much, much better than even I was expecting.

### THE DANCING AND RINGING DUET

Ginger Hulet Zyskowski grew up in Hutchinson, Kansas, in the 1940s and 1950s. When she was two years old, she was exhibiting problems with her balance, so her parents enrolled her in tap dancing. When she was

four, her dancing teacher partnered her with a little boy from Little River, KS, named Dean Anderson, and they grew up performing together. When Ginger was eight, her grandmother thought these cute little dancers needed a gimmick and purchased each a set of eight plastic, colorful Melody bells, which they added to their performance. Their careful set design included table covers that did not go down to the ground, so the audience could see their dancing feet while they played the bells. They were spotted by local TV personality Helen Gard, who invited them to play on her KTVH talent show on December 28, 1955 and their popularity snowballed. In 1956, they played 56 public appearances from Kansas City to Oklahoma.

It was time to invest in more instruments. Next came the "Swiss bells" from Kansas City manufacturer, David Workman. These were two duplicate 1.5 octave sets, one for each performer, of small tuned bells that had springs for clappers. With more than just the eight diatonic notes they were used to, a new range of songs was open to them.

This is the set of bells they were using when Lawrence Welk's "Top Tunes and New Talent" producers contacted them to appear on his nationally televised variety show. It turns out, Ginger's teacher Anna Hurty had contacted "Top Tunes" on their behalf, submitting a recording and talking up their bells-and-dancing act. On April 22, 1957, eleven year olds Dean Anderson and Ginger Hulet appeared live on national television playing handbells. In addition to their handbell act, they also danced a couple of numbers with other Welk performers, including Larry Welk, Jr. and Peggy Lennon. Toward the end of the show, Lawrence Welk and Ginger Hulet danced a waltz. The performers they met while they were there were generous with their time and gave autographs. It was there that Ginger met the Lennon Sisters, who at that time were fairly new to the show. They stayed in contact over the next few years and the Hulets hosted the Lennon Sisters a couple of times when they traveled to perform at the Kansas State Fair. They also met Pete Fountain, noted clarinetist, who was just starting his tenure on the Welk show.



*Dean Anderson and Ginger Hulet perform on their first bells during a talent show.*



One of the important things that Ginger and her mother learned from Lawrence Welk was the importance of being valued as a musician. During their time in Hollywood, Welk had taken them aside and stressed that they should always have a contract that outlined what services they would provide, and what that will cost. The simple conversation about the logistics of being a paid professional was probably the best lesson they learned.



*Ginger and Dean as they appeared playing bells live on national television, April 22, 1957.*



*Ginger and Dean during the rehearsal of the Lawrence Welk show.*

## A PIONEERING SOLO ACT

Ginger had meanwhile taken up other musical instruments. She took piano lessons on and off (she says she was terrible and didn't really like it), she played mallet percussion instruments like xylophone and marimba, and was pretty good on the saxophone, too. While she was taking marimba lessons, she would see the sparkling red drum set in the music shop and really wanted to play that, but girls weren't allowed to play the drums and that remained a dream. She also acquired more Workman bell sets that were of various timbres and styles—Piccolo bells (with a cowbell-like shape); Four-in-Hand bells (four bells set on one handle, each rung in a different direction); and English handbells (with long clapper shafts, one side of the clapper head made with leather and one side with wood); and Mallet bells (spherical castings mounted to a rack). By the time she was 13 in 1959, she and Dean had parted ways and she had shifted to solo public performances.

Ginger became known at this point as the "Musical Bell Charmer." She appeared with this moniker on the cover of a magazine called Practical English holding her David Workman four-in-hand bells.

As she traveled around and performed, her earnings continually paid for her new sets, costumes, additional instrumentation, and gas and lodging to get to the gigs. Her mother was her chauffeur, costume designer, and manager. Her father helped to build set pieces, like a table with a mechanism that would release an American flag during her performance of "Grand Old Flag."

In 1959, they traveled to Dallas so Ginger could perform for an audience of 15,000 at an International Kiwanis Convention. That was an exhausting experience because she played several concerts while she was there—separate performances in different spaces for several different delegations meant schlepping all of that equipment multiple times. Then they traveled to Springfield, Illinois, where Ginger attended and performed at an American Bell Association convention. (The ABA is an organization of bell ringers, enthusiasts, and collectors of all kinds of bells, from dinner bells to tower bells.) Life changed significantly when Ginger was selected as one of 1200 young musicians to attend the national music summer camp in Interlochen, MI. That summer, she had actually attended camp as a saxophonist rather than a percussionist, but in her mind

she was already making the shift. Because the drummers in her junior high school couldn't read music notes, and because she already had significant experience playing mallet instruments, her music teacher would send her from the saxophone section to play the mallet percussion whenever a piece called for it. She decided that's really what she liked. Ginger started high school in Hutchinson and attended Interlochen in the summers, but when Interlochen became a full-time Academy for the Arts in 1962, she was in the first graduating class of students in 1963 and her focus was percussion.

Regular readers of this series will recall that handbell choirs were really taking off across the country in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and that Schulmerich handbells were first developed and promoting their two octave sets for sale in fall of 1962. With over 300 orders for bells by the end of 1963, Schulmerich was expanding their production to three octaves.

It was a great time to be a young and exciting handbell soloist, and Ginger was making truly remarkable appearances as a 17 year old girl in 1963. The AGEHR festival in Detroit was held June 26-28. Martin Reeher, the festival's chairman, wrote in his bulletin promoting the festival, "Great news. GINGER WILL BE IN DETROIT! Who, you say? GINGER HULET, that's who—just the greatest little thing to happen to bell ringing since P.T. Barnum, that's what!"

Her performances there, which were accompanied by a pianist, served as the official debut of those newly manufactured Schulmerich handbells on the national stage. She didn't have a lot of time to practice on the new bells in advance because she had just graduated high school and was attending Interlochen summer

camp before going off to college. You can hear this performance for yourself because Ginger still has a recording of it! The half-hour performance includes a mix of her different bell instrumentation, including several songs on the new Schulmerich handbells. When you hear it, you can tell the difference in her familiarity on her various instruments—the Schulmerich songs have slower tempos; the others are fast and played with energy as though she had been playing them for many years. As you'll hear in the recording, the crowd loved her performance!



### **Ginger Hulet – A ONE-GIRL VARIETY SHOW**

By the time she was performing in 1963, Ginger had multiple sets of bells and percussion instruments. On the tables, from left to right, are three sets of bells: David Workman's Swiss bells with spring clappers; Workman Piccolo bells, shaped somewhat like cowbells; and Workman English handbells with long clappers. Behind her are a marimba, a vibraphone, and Workman Mallet bells.

#### **Ginger Hulet – AGEHR National Festival Concert – 1963**

0:00 June is Busting Out All Over – performed on Workman Swiss bells with spring clappers  
 2:00 Around the World in 80 Days – debut of Schulmerich handbells  
 4:50 Hold Me in Your Arms Dear – performed on Swiss bells and Workman Piccolo (Cow) bells  
 7:00 Bluebells of Scotland/Saints Go Marching In Medley – performed on Workman 4-in-Hand-Bells  
 8:25 Peg-O-My Heart – Swiss bells  
 9:05 Alexander's Ragtime Band – Piccolo bells  
 9:40 For Me and My Gal – Piccolo bells  
 11:00 Finlandia – Schulmerich handbells  
 13:15 Four Leaf Clover/Ain't She Sweet/[Unknown Song] – Piccolo bells  
 15:30 [Unknown Song]/My Buddy – Schulmerich handbells  
 18:15 [Unknown Song] – 4-in-Hand-Bells  
 19:45 Sweet Georgia Brown/Sheik of Araby/Waiting for the Robert E. Lee – Piccolo bells  
 23:00 [Unknown Song] – Schulmerich handbells  
 25:00 You're a Grand Old Flag/Yankee Doodle Dandy/Stars and Stripes Medley – Piccolo Bells  
 26:45 Allegheny Moon – Swiss Bells



*Follow this QR Code to  
hear Ginger Hulet's 1963  
AGEHR performance*



Just one month later at the Interlochen summer camp, she played timpani with Van Cliburn on stage, but that wasn't even the highlight of the summer. A few days later, she had to leave camp to go to the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) conference. There she performed on July 22 in a high profile concert presented by musical instrument manufacturers Ludwig, Holton, Kay, Musser, and Schulmerich. She shared the bill with some truly remarkable artists: jazz drummer Joe Morello (who at that time played with Dave Brubeck), jazz bassist Ray Brown (who at that time played with Oscar Peterson), Dick Schory and his Percussion Pops Orchestra, and noted rudimental drummer Frank Arsenault. Ginger said that Joe Morello always teased her that she was a tough act to follow because her performance showed him up. His inscription on her program says, "To Ginger. You killed me—Hope to hear you again soon. All the best, Joe Morello."

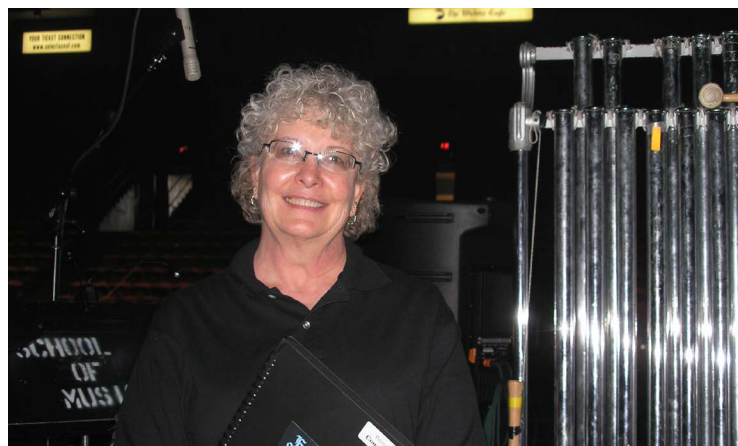
Ginger appeared in two promotional photos in the NAMM materials, playing a vibraphone for Musser and handbells for Schulmerich. Schulmerich was trying to spread the word to music dealers across the US that they had this new handbell product to sell, and Ginger was a very effective way to promote them. She got offers from other bell companies to consult on their products, but in reality her bell days were numbered. After spending a decade dancing and ringing, it was time for college.

## A PERCUSSIONIST and MENTOR

Ginger went to college at the University of Michigan, where she played orchestral percussion in the advanced concert band but because she was a woman was not allowed to play in the marching band. During those years she observed other drummers closely but had to learn how to play a drum set on her own. She graduated in 1968, having never taken a real lesson on how to play a drum set, yet went on to establish percussion studios wherever she lived and eventually served as the pit percussionist at Music Theatre Wichita for 29 years.

Ginger said she tried to play in a bell choir as an adult once, but found that it was a completely different thing to only play some of the notes at a specific time. She quickly realized it was not for her, so she hasn't returned to ringing. Instead, she played percussion in orchestras, operas, and theater pits; and taught students for decades. She has played with artists ranging

from Luciano Pavarotti to Mannheim Steamroller. Her private instruction studio, the Drum School, operated for 35 years in Hutchinson, attracting students in a 150 mile radius. They routinely participated in her yearly Stickpeople concerts. Many of her students have themselves become music teachers and band directors, and she speaks proudly of the former student who became the center snare in the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps (one of the Army's elite bands).



*Ginger Hulet Zyskowski stands with the orchestral percussion as she prepares for Mannheim Steamroller's "Fresh Aire" concert at the Coliseum in Wichita, Kansas, in 2007.*

But there is one former student who is especially interesting for our story. When she was a kid, Marie Clyatt was one of those percussion students in Ginger's Drum School from 1991-1996. Marie grew up in Hutchinson and had been active in her church handbell choir since kindergarten. She became a skilled percussionist and only stopped taking lessons from Ginger because she left to attend Interlochen Arts Academy as a freshman.

When I contacted Marie, she gave a moving account of her former teacher. "Ginger saved me. During my tween and early teen years I was in a very dark place. Ginger made me feel worth something, and percussion with her gave me an outlet to express all my pain and confusion. She guided and prepared me for the Interlochen audition and helped convince my parents that letting me move 5 states away to boarding school was a good idea. After my lessons each week we would walk to the old downtown drugstore and soda fountain and have a chocolate coke. I don't know how many of her other students she took there, but it made me feel special. She played percussion for all the touring Broadway musicals that came to Wichita, several times she would bring me



along and I would get to sit in the pit with her during the show.... I'm not sure if she realizes how important she is to me. I have tremendous respect for her strength and musicianship. To be an independent female percussionist and have a 30+ year career spanning the 1970s -2000s is remarkable. She paved the way for women in a very male dominated instrument (especially in the theater pit world)."

Marie Clyatt-Larson now works for Handbell Musicians of America, organizing its Distinctly Bronze East and West events. She said, "When I started percussion lessons with Ginger (in 5th grade) I remember seeing her homemade mounted bells (a version of Malmark's Cymbells) and a mounted 8 in hand set. (One handle had 4 castings with the clappers going in different directions.) ... We lost touch for a while, but then reconnected because of DBW. I knew she had moved to Seattle and decided that being within 3 hours and not seeing her was unacceptable." It was at that point they really began to understand their handbell connection. Marie said something about Distinctly Bronze and AGEHR, and Ginger said she used to be a member of that organization many years ago. The stories came flying back.

Marie continues, "Then last year we met up at Interlochen's alumni weekend. After over 20 years we


finally got to walk campus together. ... Ginger is amazing, and I am so grateful that she saw something in me."

Who would have thought that two girls from Hutchinson, Kansas, could play such a connected role in our handbell history? While the handbell part of Ginger's life was brief, it helped launch the rest of her extraordinary career. Our handbell community owes a debt of gratitude to this woman, who when she was just a girl helped popularize our instrument on national TV, on stages large and small across our region, and at huge conventions for international audiences.

Ginger has retired from creating music and her focus is now on creating poetry. When I tracked her down, she graciously and enthusiastically shared her story, photos, programs, and articles from those days. She has a website where you can read more about her and her remarkable career as a musician and poet: <https://gingerz.works/music-career/>.

I would like to thank Ginger Hulet Zyskowski for her willingness to share her memories and memorabilia from this time in her life, for her helpful corrections to my mistakes, and for being a trailblazing woman percussionist. I would also like to thank Marie Clyatt-Larson for her invaluable contributions to this story.

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## Does Your School Qualify?

Area 8 offers a handchime loan program to schools in 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 2024

### November 3, 2024

4:00 pm The Gateway Ringers in Concert  
St. Peters UCC Church, Washington, Missouri

### November 10, 2024

4:00 pm Kansas City Bronze Season Opening Concert  
Countryside Christian Church, Mission, Kansas

## December 2024

### December 6, 2024

12:00 pm Bell-issimo First Friday Christmas Concert  
St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert  
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

7:00 pm Lawrence Community Handbell Choir in Concert  
Old Mission United Methodist Church, Fairway, Kansas

### December 7, 2024

1:00 pm Chicago Bronze Holiday Concert  
Wauconda Area Public Library, Wauconda, Illinois

2:00 pm Lawrence Community Handbell Choir in Concert  
Fairlawn Church of the Nazarene, Topeka, Kansas

3:00 pm RiverBend Bronze Christmas Concert  
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Peoria, Illinois

4:00 pm Christmas with Kansas City Bronze  
St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Kansas City, Missouri

4:00 pm Des Moines Concert Handbells Concert  
Trinity United Presbyterian Church, Indianola, Iowa

7:00 pm Rezound! Holiday Concert  
The Rex Theater, Clay Center, Kansas

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

7:00 pm Chicago Bronze in Concert  
Barrington United Methodist Church, Barrington, Illinois

### December 8, 2024

1:30 pm Chicago Bronze in Concert  
Ela Public Library, Lake Zurich, Illinois

3:00 pm Lawrence Community Handbell Choir in Concert  
First Presbyterian Church, Lawrence, Kansas

4:00 pm Bell-issimo with Lincoln Symphony Orchestra's Deck the Halls Concert  
Lied Center for Performing Arts, Lincoln, Nebraska

4:00 pm Bells in Motion presents A Ringing Christmas  
First Congregational Church, Springfield, Illinois

### December 9, 2024

7:00 pm Chicago Bronze in Concert

## Publishing in Quavers

4 publications per year,  
published once each season.

## Articles

Articles are due on the  
10th day of January, April,  
July, and October.

## Advertising

[Click here](#) for more details  
about advertising in *Quavers*.  
6 ads for the price of 5!  
Run 5 identical ads in 5  
successive *Quavers* and get  
the 6th ad free.

## Events & Concerts

must be submitted by the  
25th of January, April, July,  
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)

*Please check  
websites for  
the most  
up-to-date  
calendar  
and event  
information.*



## More Area 8 Events

Friendship Village of Schaumburg, Schaumburg, Illinois

### December 13, 2024

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

7:00 pm Rezound! Holiday Concert  
First United Methodist Church, Blue Springs, Missouri

7:00 pm River City Ringers of Omaha Holiday Tapestry  
All Saints Episcopal Church, Omaha, Nebraska

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

### December 14, 2024

2:00 pm River City Ringers of Omaha  
First Presbyterian Church, Bellevue, Nebraska

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

3:00 pm Des Moines Concert Handbells Concert  
Plymouth Congregational Church, Des Moines, Iowa

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

7:00 pm Rezound! Holiday Concert  
First Baptist Church, Richmond, Missouri

7:30 pm River City Ringers of Omaha in Concert  
Presbyterian Church of the Master, Omaha, Nebraska

### December 15, 2024

3:00 pm Rezound! Holiday Concert  
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Olathe, Kansas

3:00 pm River City Ringers of Omaha in Concert  
Augustana Lutheran Church, Omaha, Nebraska

### December 16, 2024

7:00 pm Lawrence Community Handbell Choir in Concert  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Lawrence, Kansas

## February 2025

### February 21 & 22

Springfest Handbell Event with Brenda Austin  
First Presbyterian Church, Kirkwood, Missouri

## March 2025

### March 21 & 22

Spring Handbell Event, Cathy Moglebust, Clinician  
St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

### March 28 & 29

Iowa City Handbell Festival, Lee Afdahl, Clinician  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Iowa City, Iowa

*Find the most  
up-to-date  
calendar and  
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events on the  
A8 website.*



### January 3-5, 2025

A performance event for  
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\*Accommodations and travel not included • Scholarships available



### Repertoire

**A la Nanita Nana**, arranged by Sondra Tucker, Lv 3, Morning Star Music Publishers (Spain)

**Cantad al Señor**, arranged by Jason Krug, Lv 4, Alfred Handbells (Brazil)

**The Girl from Ipanema**, arranged by Mitchell Eithun, Lv 4, Alfred Handbells (Brazil)

**Guazabara**, by E. Bayoan Rios-Escribano, Lv 4, From the Top Music (Puerto Rico)

**Intermezzo** (Act IV) from Carmen, arranged by Kevin McChesney, Lv 4, Jeffers (Spain)

**Riu Riu Chiu**, arranged by Cathy Moglebust, Lv 3-, Jeffers (Spain)

**Verano Porteño**, arranged by Carlos J. Avila, Lv 4-, From the Top Music (Argentina)



Full event details, registration, and hotel information  
at <https://bit.ly/collegeringin25>