



Summer Handbell Plans

by Lori Fenton, Area 8 Chair

As I'm writing this, the holiday season has recently passed and it's a dreary January day. Many of our Area 8 members are dealing with cold, snow and/or ice this weekend and I'm hopeful they were all able to stay safe and warm. And when you receive this issue of Quavers, we're still going to be mired in the depths of winter.

What's Inside

- 1 Summer Handbell Plans!
- 3 Iowa City Handbell Festival
- 4 Kansas GatherRING
- 5 Pinnacle Local Liaisons
- 6 Campanae Celebrare with Cathy Moklebust
- 7 Celebrating 40 Years in the Guild
- 9 Wichita in the Archives
- 10 River City Ringers Showcase Handbells at NMEA Conference
- 12 Area Leadership
- 13 Upcoming Events

What better way to beat the winter blues than talk about SUMMER handbell events? Below is a list of events being sponsored by HMA this summer, all of them relatively close by.

Pinnacle

I hope you've all heard that Pinnacle 2025 will be held July 9-12 in Wichita, KS. There is something for everyone at this event – ringing tracks, classes, and performances. There will be EIGHT concerts presented over the course of four days. Two of the performances will be from Area 8 ensembles – Columbia Handbell Ensemble and Rezound!. You can find all the details about registration options (daily options available), classes, performances, and more [here](#).

Distinctly Teen

In parallel with Pinnacle will be the Distinctly Teen event, for ringers ages 13-18. The choir will perform as part of the Pinnacle event. Details can be found [here](#).

Master Series

Master Series, taking place August 18-21 in Livonia, MI, (just outside of Detroit) is a unique opportunity for the development of conductors, composers and solo ringers. More information can be found [here](#).

Into the Forest

On the heels of the Master Series, from August 21-23, will be Into the Forest, an event for all levels of bell tree ringers. This event will also be in Livonia, MI. All the details are [here](#).

Summer Handbell Plans, continued

I hope to see Area 8 well represented at Pinnacle. Our local liaisons are hard at work making sure this will be a great event for everyone. If you've never been to a national event, this is a prime opportunity to do so. Just getting to see all the performing groups is worth attending! If you know any handbell ringers or directors who aren't HMA members, this would be the perfect event to invite them to, even if it's just for a day. National events showcase the best of what handbells has to offer – dedicated leadership, talented musicians, valuable classes, and vendors for all things handbells (i.e. shopping!).

As a way for all of us to spread a bit of sunshine this winter with each other, please feel free to share pictures, videos and posts of what you and/or your groups are up to on our Area 8 public Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/111239002283161>). It's a great way for all of us to support one another as well as to get to know our fellow ringers a bit better.



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*Dick Crusinberry
Iowa State Chair*

*March 28 & 29!
Please join us for
massed ringing,
classes, and
reading sessions.*

Iowa City Handbell Festival

by Dick Crusinberry, Iowa Chair

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church will once again host the Iowa City Handbell Festival on March 28 and 29, 2025. Our clinician this year will be Lee Afdahl, well-known handbell conductor and composer. Our festival will comprise a reading session with snacks and beverages on Friday evening, as well as a daylong event including rehearsals, a massed ringing and classes for beginning ringers on Saturday. This festival should help ringers to improve their skills while creating community.

Lee is Director of Music Emeritus at First Presbyterian Church in Rochester, Minnesota and has fifty years of experience in leading handbell ensembles in Michigan and Minnesota. He has been a sought-after clinician for handbell conferences both here and abroad. He has served in multiple offices in HMA, and has taught intermediate and advanced conducting for HMA seminars, including most recently teaching conducting for certification for HMA. Lee is also an active composer and arranger of handbell, instrumental and choral music with over one hundred compositions and arrangements in print.

All sessions will be held at St. Andrew Church. On Friday evening we will have a low-key reading session with Lee, and on Saturday we will have rehearsals, chances to connect with other ringers, as well as optional skill-building classes. These will culminate in a massed ringing Saturday afternoon. The repertoire for the festival is available [here](#).

Registration for the Iowa City Handbell Festival will open in early January of 2025, and can be accessed [here](#). All handbell organizations with ringers ages 18+ are welcome to attend either as individuals, partial handbell choirs, or full handbell choirs. Registration fees will be \$40 per person for the Saturday session; for the Friday session the fee will be \$5 for those attending both Friday and Saturday, or \$10 for those only attending Friday evening.

Please contact either me or Austen Wilson if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you in Iowa City in March!



Clinician Lee Afdahl takes the podium in Iowa City

Kansas GatherRING

by Amy Knudsen, Kansas Chair

Right: Kansas State Chair Amy Knudsen takes participants “back to the basics” during the first session of the Kansas Handbell GatherRING!



Amy Knudsen
Kansas State Chair



Kathy Leonard of Manhattan, KS, leads a sight ringing session at Trinity Lutheran Church in McPherson.

Right: Kendra Flory demonstrates proper grip in the four-in-hand class.



Left: Julie Assel runs a weaving drill during the Kansas Handbell GatherRING! in McPherson, Kansas, last September.



A mini bell tree “forest” suddenly appeared at Trinity Lutheran Church in McPherson, Kansas, for Julie Assel’s Bell Trees class. She even sent some participants home with instructions on how to make a simple bell tree processional pole.



Above: Kendra Flory demonstrates a method of four-in-hand ringing.

Meet the 2025 Pinnacle Local Liaison Team!

What could possibly be on their minds?



Amy Knudsen, Kathy Leonard, and Janelle Flory Schrock are ready to wrangle equipment!

Can you Volunteer or Loan Equipment for Pinnacle?

The team is asking for:

- Volunteers to work before and during the event
- Handbells & Handchimes & Foam, *oh my!*
- * Select percussion instruments
- And a little bit more!

Benefits:

- Knowing you are assisting with promoting the art of handbell ringing
- One-year membership in HMA for loan of 3 octaves or more of bells or chimes
- Volunteers receive free meals during their shifts
- Meet new friends and handbell lovers

Connect with Local Liaison Team for More Information

- Amy Knudsen (Kansas City, KS)
ks.area8@handbellmusicians.org or Alknud1232@gmail.com
- Janelle Flory Schrock (McPherson, KS)
communications.area8@handbellmusicians.org
- Kathy Leonard (Manhattan, KS)
kantink@ksu.edu

Handbell Musicians of America



July 9-12, 2025 • Wichita, Kansas



Byron Jensen
Nebraska State Chair

Celebrate With Bells!



Clinician
Cathy Moglebust

*For more information,
please visit the website,
or contact me [here](#).*

Campanae Celebrare with Cathy Moglebust by Byron W. Jensen, Nebraska Chair

The Nebraska Committee is pleased to host Cathy Moglebust for our Spring Workshop on 21-22 March 2025. Moglebust is no stranger to anyone involved with handbells, and chances are, your organization's music library has several of her original compositions or arrangements.

St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, is our workshop venue. This beautiful facility provides convenient space for unloading and loading equipment, and lots of room to set up. Located at 8550 Pioneers Blvd., the church is surrounded by eating establishments and motel accommodations (if needed). On Saturday enjoy a scrumptious Italian meal. Our own Nancy Youngman and husband Curt had a bountiful garden last year, and made enough spaghetti sauce (including vegetarian style) to feed half a platoon of bell ringers!

A Director's Workshop led by Cathy is on Friday evening (March 21) from 7:00 to 9:00. This time allows directors and other ringers to ask Cathy specific questions about ringing technique, repertoire, and conducting.

Saturday's workshop (March 22) begins at 8:30, with closing bell at 3:30 pm. A lunchtime concert by Lincoln's Bell-issimo will present selections by Cathy Moglebust and a sight-reading session will be led by the Nebraska Committee.

Cathy and the Nebraska Committee have selected six pieces to work on during the Saturday workshop. Three selections must be purchased by attendees prior to the workshop dates. The other three selections will be provided and can be purchased after the workshop. (Some of these selections may already be in your music library.)

All information and registration for the Nebraska Workshop is found online [here](#). Registration costs are \$20 for students; \$45 for HMA members; and \$55 for non-HMA members. Ringers under the direction of an HMA member will pay the membership price. Individual ringers, and full or partial handbell choirs are welcome. Tables will be provided, but you need to furnish your own equipment: foam, bells/chimes, music notebook, mallets, etc.

If not in your library, these selections must be purchased by you and/or your group prior to the workshop:

- "Still, Still, Still" arr. Cathy Moglebust; Choristers Guild CGB210 (2-3 oct) OR CGB644 (3-5 oct)
- "I Will Arise and Go to Jesus" by Cathy Moglebust; Choristers Guild CGB747 (2-3 oct.) OR CGB748 (3-5 oct) (CGB746 is a full score that includes cymbals, tambourine and chime tree.)
- "Come Thou Fount of Ev'ry Blessing" arr. Cathy Moglebust; Concordia Publishing 976925 (3-5 oct)

These selections will be provided at the workshop, or you may bring your own copies:

- "Grazioso" by Arnold Sherman; Red River RRHB0042 (3-5 oct)
- "Crown Him with Many Crowns" arr. By Cynthia Dobrinski; Agape/Hope 2261 (3-5 oct) (A full score and brass parts are available for this piece)
- "Now the Green Blade Rises" arr. Kevin McChesney; Agape/Hope 1892 (3-5 oct)



*Nancy Youngman
Chimes Chair*

*What a
wonderful
network of
people with
the same
interest
(passion!)
we have.*

Celebrating 40 Years in the Guild

by Nancy Youngman

In October 1984, my church purchased a 3-octave set of handbells to start a music program for the teens. I immediately volunteered, because my total experience with handbells had been to see a program by a solo ringer and I was totally mesmerized by it. When the bells came in and we opened those cases, panic set in! What was I to do with them??? I called Ruth Diedrichsen, the person I had seen ringing, and asked for her help. Ruth was a much-respected member of the handbell community and had a handbell choir that was considered to be one of the best at the time. And, that was the beginning of my membership in the Guild, at the time known as AGEHR (American Guild of English Handbell Ringers).

Early Training

Ruth took me under her wing and had me come to some of her rehearsals. She mentioned a Nebraska workshop that was going to be held in the spring and strongly suggested that I attend, and that I also join the Guild, as it had many benefits and much information. Thankfully, I followed her advice!! At that first workshop, I learned so very much, and also was introduced to Sandy Denton and Mary Kettelhut, two other members of the Nebraska State Committee. The three women mentored me in a way that still now, 40 years later, I am trying to pay it forward by helping any director that would like help, whether they're new or experienced! About two years later, they were interested in holding a workshop at my church, which, of course, I was more than willing to do. And, they took it a step further—since I was a teacher by profession, I could teach a class!!! I still remember how nervous I was, but also, how friendly and welcoming the people at the workshop were. And---I was totally hooked!! The next day I was invited to serve on the Nebraska State Committee, a role I still hold today!

Three Mentors

A little “history” on those three women: Ruth, as I said, was very much respected in the handbell world. In her quiet, firm yet patient way, she was the perfect person for me, as I’m a person who can be quite animated at times! Ruth was the Nebraska Chair and served on the Nebraska State Committee for several years, plus served on appointed committees for Area 8. In the early 1990s, Ruth’s choir was chosen to present the Worship Service for the National Seminar. She was going to be short a couple of ringers, so she asked me and a very good ringer of mine to play with her choir. Well, as a fairly new director, I had very little ringing experience, and that was definitely a mind-boggling experience!! But it was only the beginning of loving to ring besides direct. Sandy had also been Chair and

served on the Nebraska State Committee for years, besides serving as Secretary for Area 8. She is probably the exact opposite of Ruth—very bubbly and outgoing! And, with that personality, she helped me be a little more confident and learn to laugh when things don't go as planned, which happens often!

And, then, there is the epitome person in the Guild—Mary Kettelhut! Mary, besides establishing and being a permanent member of the Nebraska State Committee, was one of AGEHR's first Presidents. She was so complimentary of me, always holding me up, leading me, and encouraging me to do all I could. Those of us on the Nebraska State Committee who knew her still bring her up: "What Would Mary Do?" One of my favorite stories that she would tell is how she organized one of the first National Seminars in Lincoln, all on a budget of \$60!!

Serving on the Area 8 Board

Mary was not alone in being very careful with the Guild's money. My first Area 8 board meeting when I had just become Nebraska's State Chair was quite the experience! We drove, for what felt like to me an eternity, to a small rural town in the middle of Iowa (Tama, Iowa), where we had a motel—the old style—long, old, and along the highway. Barbara Kinroth was the Area Chair at the time and had reserved TWO connecting rooms for our board meeting. We met in the men's motel room—there were only 3 of them! The remaining women, probably 8 – 10, shared one room, with 2 to a bed and several cots set up throughout the room. Board meeting accommodations since then have greatly improved, and with the recent practice of ZOOM meetings, both Barbara and Mary would be proud of the savings!

Guild Life Today

I know that my 40 years in the Guild have enriched my life and I am forever thankful for the moment I said, "I'll do that!" with absolutely no idea what I would be doing. What a wonderful network of people with the same interest (passion!) we have. From going to events, serving on the state and area boards, helping to organize events, teaching, being a clinician, and most of all meeting people from all over, along with the information and help along the way, our guild is a marvelous organization! And, look to the examples that Ruth, Sandy, and Mary were to me—take someone under your wing and show them what this means!

The three women mentored me in a way that still now, 40 years later, I am trying to pay it forward by helping any director that would like help, whether they're new or experienced!

Wichita in the Archives

The Past is Prologue

By Laurie Austin, Area 8 Historian

With the Handbell Musicians of America hosting Pinnacle in Wichita, KS, this year, it got me to thinking—how many big handbell events have been held in Wichita over the years? After all, it is the largest city in Kansas. A flip through our Area 8 archives showed surprisingly few mentions of Wichita. It's possible we have simply missed collecting materials about events in Wichita over the years, or perhaps it has not seen as much handbell action as you might expect.

In the recent past, Wichita has played host to some concerts by touring community handbell groups and local churches—Rezound! of Kansas City performed there in 2023. Eastminster Presbyterian had a concert there in 2022. Twin Cities Bronze (MN) performed there in 2019. The Raleigh Ringers (NC) performed at the Orpheum Theatre in 2010. The Jubilation Ringers had a concert there in 2001.

I found mention of some workshops and local festivals in the archives. There was a handbell workshop sponsored by the Kansas Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists in nearby Derby in 2002. Brenda Heard and East Heights UMC in Wichita hosted a South Central Kansas Handbell Festival in fall, 2003 with guest clinician Arnold Sherman. There have been various appearances by bell and chime ensembles at KMEA Conventions in Wichita over the years. And finally, Kathy Leonard and Linda Maloney sponsored the Kansas Handbell Lock-In with Michael Kastner serving as clinician there in 2009. They focused on learning repertoire that would be used in the upcoming Topeka Area 8 festival the following year.



I also found a program from an April 1985 handbell festival that featured a guest conductor, Ed Rude, from Wichita. The festival itself was held at Bethel College in North Newton, KS. At the time of the festival, Mr. Rude had taught music in the public schools in the Wichita area and was serving as the Director of Handbell Choirs at First Presbyterian Church of Wichita. He had previously served in other Wichita churches as a minister of music. The festival featured several groups from McPherson and Newton, also Hesston, Halstead, and Rude's choir from Wichita. Their massed repertoire included: "Gloria" by Dobrinski; "Shall We Gather at the River?" arranged by Wood; "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," arranged by Wagner; "Psalm 19 (for double choirs)" arranged by McCleary; "Beside Still Waters," by Starks; and "Praise and Alleluyas (sic)" by McCleary.

Honestly, though, that's the best I could do with events in Wichita. So that makes me wonder—is the upcoming Pinnacle program the first big handbell event in Wichita? It is certainly the first in many years! I hope you'll show your support for this major event in our area and attend in July. I'll be glad to see you there.

Do you remember a Wichita event that I haven't listed here? Do you have a program or other documents that can help tell the story? If you would like to share a copy with Area 8, please contact me at historian.area8@handbellmusicians.org.

River City Ringers Showcase Handbells at NMEA Conference

by Nancy Blackwell

On November 21, 2024, the River City Ringers of Omaha had the honor of performing at the Nebraska Music Education Association (NMEA) conference in Lincoln, NE. NMEA, a professional organization for music educators, is dedicated to advancing music education across Nebraska by providing opportunities for professional development, advocacy, and the promotion of music programs in schools. River City Ringers was one of several groups chosen to perform through a video audition process.

In addition to their performance, the River City Ringers of Omaha and Bell-issimo of Lincoln introduced educators and attendees to the joy of handbell music through an innovative and interactive “Handbell Playground.”

The “Handbell Playground” offered a hands-on experience designed to immerse conference participants in the art of handbell ringing. Jennifer Johnson of Omaha, Liane Kirmis of Plattsmouth, and members of Bell-issimo, including Nancy Youngman, Joan Michelsen, Susan Hoover, and Kaylee Hoover, provided expert guidance and instruction. Using educational resources from Handbell Musicians of America, they taught participants proper techniques for handling and ringing the bells. Attendees of all skill levels were invited to explore the instruments and collaborate to play a short piece of music.

All teaching materials were provided by the HMA Bells in Schools Committee.



Their presence at the NMEA conference was a celebration of artistry, collaboration, and the transformative power of music.

Attendees were excited—especially high school and college students encountering handbells and chimes for the first time. Many shared comments like, “My grandma’s church has them,” but had no personal experience with the instruments. Watching their faces light up as they mastered thumb damping and seeing their broad smiles as they performed a lively rendition of “Old McDonald” was heartwarming for everyone involved.

One particularly memorable moment occurred when a young man approached the booth with two friends and said wistfully, “I always wanted to play in a bell choir.” Without hesitation, Liane Kirmis replied, “Today we’re going to make your dreams come true!” She quickly assembled an impromptu 5-minute choir with other passers-by, turning his dream into a reality.

The handbells’ charm extended beyond attendees. A neighboring exhibitor from a string instrument booth remarked that his time in a bell choir had been instrumental in developing his rhythmic skills, illustrating the versatile benefits of this unique musical experience.

Nancy Youngman, who also serves as the Area 8 Handchime Loan program chairman, expanded the event’s impact by distributing 20 applications to educators interested in receiving chimes for use in their classrooms. This effort further demonstrated the commitment to growing the reach of handbell education.

This inspiring initiative was made possible by the generous support of an anonymous donor, whose funding allowed the River City Ringers to bring the engaging and educational booth to life.

Through their performance and interactive exhibit, the River City Ringers underscored their dedication to fostering a greater appreciation for handbell music and its integral role in music education. Their presence at the NMEA conference was a celebration of artistry, collaboration, and the transformative power of music.



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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

February 2025

February 8

8:30 am to 4:00 pm Northern Illinois Handbell Workshop

Featuring The Agape Ringers

Second First Church, Rockford, Illinois

February 21 & 22

SpRingfest Handbell Event with Brenda Austin

First Presbyterian Church, Kirkwood, Missouri

March 2025

March 2

4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert

First Congregational Church of Western Springs, Western Spring, Illinois

March 15

8:30 am - 12:30 pm Ring with Rezound! Sight-Reading Workshop

First Christian Church, Independence, Missouri

March 21 & 22

Spring Handbell Event, Cathy Moglebust, Clinician

St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

March 23

4:00 pm Spring Concert, Kansas City Bronze

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Lee's Summit, Missouri

March 24

7:30 pm Spring Concert, Kansas City Bronze

Countryside Christian Church, Mission, Kansas

March 28 & 29

Iowa City Handbell Festival, Lee Afdahl, Clinician

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Iowa City, Iowa

April 2025

April 27

4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert

First Presbyterian Church, Normal, Illinois

May 2025

May 4

3:00 Concordia University, Nebraska Handbell Concert

Concordia University, Nebraska Borland Music Center, Seward, Nebraska

May 16

7:00 pm Lawrence Community Handbell Choir Concert

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Lawrence, Kansas

May 17

7:00 pm Lawrence Community Handbell Choir Concert

Ottawa Municipal Auditorium, Ottawa, Kansas

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Events page.

Questions?

Please send all questions
and comments about
this and future *Quavers*
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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

May 18

4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert
Jubilee Bible Church, Medinah, Illinois

3:00 pm Lawrence Community Handbell Choir Concert
First United Methodist Church, Lawrence, Kansas

June 2025

June 6

7:00 pm Des Moines Concert Handbells Concert: Music of Love, Joy, and Passion
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Urbandale, Iowa

June 7

3:00 pm Des Moines Concert Handbells Concert: Music of Love, Joy, and Passion
Plymouth Congregational Church, Des Moines, Iowa

October 2025

October 5

4:00 pm The Agape Ringers Concert
First United Methodist Church, Lexington, Illinois

National Events

Visit <https://handbellmusicians.org/events/> for more information

Feb. 27 - March 2

Distinctly Bronze East & Crescendo, New Bern, North Carolina

July 9-12

Pinnacle & Distinctly Teen, Wichita, Kansas

August 18-21

Masterclass Series (conducting, composing, solo & ensemble ringing)
Livonia, Michigan

August 21-23

Into the Forest Bell Tree Event, Livonia, Michigan

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

Handbell Musicians of America



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