



Area 8
Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA

QUAVERS

AREA 8: ILLINOIS, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA
JANUARY, 2013

Captions from the Chair

Greetings in the New Year 2013!

I hope that you had successful school, church, and community programs for worship and for your public concerts. Handbells and handchimes have such an impact upon one's experiences during the holiday times. There is a close association between Christmas and the ringing of music! No matter whether you have rung simple arrangements or the most extravagant and difficult music, you have touched a listener's life and transformed them even if for a moment in time! Your ringing may have healed them from sadness! Your ringing may have caused them to remember a childhood tune! And that is just for the listener. Your experiences of ringing probably helped you to foster a sense of community with ringing friends. So ring in the New Year with enthusiasm and renewal of your groups after a slight break!

I am very excited about the topics explored in this edition of *Quavers*. I hope to learn a new technique of discipline or something that has worked in another place with another director.

My wife, being a non-musician but an excellent listener, often teases me after adult rehearsals by asking "how were the kindergartners tonight?" Then we both laugh as I share that the rehearsal went very well with much accomplished or groan at the lack of accomplishing anything! I have come to realize that just when I think nothing was accomplished in rehearsal, there was probably much that really was accomplished! The musical work may have taken a lower priority, but the camaraderie and the conversation took over with the higher priority. That may be okay as we develop a sense of community in the ringing group. Sharing our lives, our difficulties, our joys, and our concerns will strengthen the bonding of the group and indirectly support our ringing together. I am reminded that a set of handbells is a single musical instrument played by many people! No other musical organization can say the same. We are unique as a group that comes together to make music on a single instrument.

So during this New Year 2013, accomplish much in the *esprit de corps* and in the development of your ringing skills! I encourage you to read every article as I will do to gain some new insight.



Dolan Bayless ~ Area 8 Chair

www.area8iii.org



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A community handbell choir

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Who Runs Rehearsal?

www.il-agehr.org

Whether your group is children or adults, whether you are a ringer or the director, rehearsals are all about making the most of the time you have. And, as many of us are in church settings where music-making shares importance with fellowship, there's a shifting balance between those two aspects depending on the week, what's happened during the day, and what's up next on the schedule.

Ringers: The ringers have a part in setting discipline and expectations in rehearsal. Consider rehearsals as part of your weekly stress relief program — leave your frustrations and worries at the door. Allow the shared goal of music-making to transform how you feel, and therefore how you act. Consider that, on the one hand, a ringer who talks too much will disrupt the rehearsal. On the other hand, a quiet ringer who seldom speaks up to add to the music-making might not meld with the group.

What do you do when they're rehearsing the section you're not part of? Check your email? Text someone? Talk? Perhaps you should put the phone away, be quiet, and use that time to memorize your part or silently practice another part that gives you problems.

Directors: You sow what you reap — you'll get what you expect as long as you are respectful of your ringers and consistent. Do your ringers know what you expect concerning items such as these?

What does your rehearsal time mean? (equipment setup, arrival, departure)

- Attitudes & behaviors (attitude is how you feel, and a behavior is how you act)
- In addition, *your* attitudes & behaviors will impact and shape the atmosphere. Some positive things you can do:
 - Let them know how it's going — WHY are you doing it again? Was it good? Bad?
 - Mistakes are part of the process — make confession a regular occurrence.
 - Show some joy!
 - Don't settle for less than their best — assuming you've selected the right music.

Do you need a rehearsal assistant? If you have 18 3rd-5th graders in the room, the answer is yes! Maybe it's just a parent to deal with bathroom breaks, tussles and water fountain trips, or perhaps it's someone who can also help with finding bells, the right measure or showing a technique. If you have newer ringers, deputize an experienced neighbor to answer questions.

Consider videotaping a rehearsal from the director's point of view — show it to the group so they see what's happening and understand how it impacts the outcome, both musically and from the fellowship aspect of life.

At the end of the day, there is only one answer to the question — Who runs the rehearsal? It's the director, of course!

Sharon Schmidt ~ Illinois State Chair





Crowd Control

...is a part of a handbell musician's life. Any group endeavor works better when we are managing expected results rather than reacting to problems. Although we want to be open to unexpected good things, our plan for rehearsals, concerts, instrument care, group movement, and other activities should be thoughtful and clear.

I feel that the **preparation** one does before each rehearsal or handbell event is far more time consuming and ultimately the most important part of many handbell activities. Here is a snapshot of what this might look like for a rehearsal:

- all handbell equipment is setup before the rehearsal begins
- a plan for the rehearsal period that has a time for a brief warm-up, time for announcements for the good of the group, specific amounts of time for each piece of music, a possibility to change based on musical needs (drop one piece or one section because another selection needs more rehearsal)
- all binders full of music for rehearsal, in rehearsal order, marked as needed
- Passive attention signals (a single, calm tap of the baton on the director's music stand, or some other single, simple, calm gesture that the group is trained to observe)
- Start and *end* your activities (rehearsals, concerts, festivals, workshops) on time!

Keep them busy! A busy child can be one of your best assets. Planning your rehearsal time down to the minute (or at least down to five minutes) can give you an edge over a child (or, let's be honest with ourselves, a number of children) whose attention span does not endure your group's musical needs. Let's say your F5G5 ringer can't play measure 35. Each ringer could help Debbie the Dinger practice measure 35 by having all treble bells play the G5 as if it were their own right bell, and having all bass ringers play the F5 as if it were their left bell. In future rehearsals, this measure could become a warm-up activity for the whole group. Ringers that are inactive during a brief sectional rehearsal can be asked to review a passage quietly using the knuckle-knock, lightly tapping the casting of their bells with their index finger knuckles (for example "All trebles please knuckle-knock your castings from measure 5-25 while the bass bells work out this assignment.")

Many of us struggle with **discipline** with young ringers – after all, we really need them to come back next week! However, allowing a young person to stay at the table while they are not ready to make music can be destructive. Having somewhere in your rehearsal space where a young ringer could sit quietly, separate from the group, can work for some situations. In some situations, the behavior can be dealt with at the start of the NEXT rehearsal with a positive greeting – "Hi, Johnny. You're an awesome handbell musician and we're going to make great music at bells tonight."

Adults can benefit from positive greetings as well, especially as our rehearsal, a bell festival, a concert, or a workshop might be the highlight of their day. Don't waste their valuable time. Do create a safe, productive environment and you will enjoy your crowds!

Patrick Gagnon ~ Acting Iowa Chair





How Do I Handle This Crowd?

If you work with children or a youth handbell choir, I am sure there has been a time when you have asked “How will we make it through rehearsal?” I hope your choir has more than the 30 minutes I have for a rehearsal. You must be organized and be ready to practice when they get there. Make sure all books, bells and supplies are out and ready to go. This process will save you lots of valuable time.

This age group needs to learn musical notes and terms as well as to learn how to play the bells. I have some music note naming apps on my phone that I have a couple of ringers using while I work on parts with other ringers. While they all love to play songs, they don't all love the song we are playing. Dividing up the rehearsal and working on rhythms and ringing techniques helps keep them all focused.

All parents/guardians need to know what you expect in rehearsal. Also share with them that to learn handbells, you sometimes have to guide a ringer's hand with yours to show proper technique. If discipline is an issue, here are some tips that might help:

- If the ringer acts out or is disrespectful, don't take it personally. When you react by scolding or lecturing, the ringer gets the satisfaction. Stay calm and in control of your emotions.
- Pause, don't react with words but maintain eye contact. Let what was said be realized by the ringer.
- End it and move on. By walking away or going to the next part of rehearsal, the ringer will be unsure of what to do next.
- Enforce and notify. When the incident is forgotten and the ringer is calm, this is the time to talk to them about the behavior. If you have a short rehearsal, the time to talk may be at the next rehearsal. If the disrespect continues, parents need to know what has been happening. Discipline should not be handled in front of the rest of the choir. Discipline is between you and the ringer and possibly parents/guardians.

These steps can also be used if there is an issue with adults. We don't all realize we are being disrespectful or confrontational until someone points it out. By making eye contact and silencing the incident, the ringer has time to comprehend their actions.

These tips came from www.smartclassroommanagement.com (<http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2011/02/19/how-to-respond-to-a-disrespectful-student/>).

Cherryl Cox ~ Kansas State Chair





Be Proactive

In Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, the first habit is Be Proactive. A well-planned rehearsal will keep everyone focused and working toward a goal. The key to an effective rehearsal is keeping everyone actively involved. Know exactly how you will approach each piece and what you want to accomplish with it. In your rehearsal plan, note an approximate time you expect to spend on each piece with times jotted at the side. Ringers should always know the goal toward which they are working – the next worship service, a concert, the handbell festival, the choir tour, etc., so they feel a shared purpose.

Don't give anyone time to become disengaged! Keep *everyone* on task. When it is necessary to work with one section give the others something for which to listen – check their dynamics, check their LV technique, do they have uniform circles, etc. Don't spend too much time with one section. If extended work is necessary with one section or individual, have them come in early or excuse the others early at the end of the rehearsal. Active music making is the best rehearsal management. The more diverse the skill levels of your ringers, the harder it will be to keep everyone focused and interested.

In a vocal choir, talking can be minimized by assigning seats and separating the "friends," but the many considerations of bell assignments may make separating the "talkers" more difficult. In a youth choir, it can be very helpful when the older students exert leadership and help keep others focused. I encourage and appreciate the leadership of seniors. Make ample use of praise. Acknowledge the good things in the rehearsal – "I like the way Carol's bells are ready," "John gets the 'watching the director' award," "Thank you for always following me on that retard." Be sure you have the attention of everyone and don't attempt to talk over the chatter of some. Silence on the director's part can be very effective – simply wait; punctuate your waiting by extending it 3 to 5 seconds after the room is quiet, then resume in a quieter voice than usual. Non-verbal cues can be effective – facial expressions, body posture, hand signals, or previously agreed upon cues.

Being proactive is about being prepared and in control. It's about knowing what is going to happen and when. Directors who are courteous, prompt, enthusiastic, in control, patient, and organized provide examples for ringers through their own behavior. In 42 years of directing youth, I have sent one ringer out of a rehearsal, and that was for open disrespect and discourtesy, not just for being out of control. In those 42 years, I have called two parents about their child's behavior. In one case, it was quite helpful. In the other case, the parent asked, "Well, what do you want ME to do?" On the other hand, positive reinforcement with parents is quite beneficial. Let them know how well their child is doing, the leadership they are showing, how their musicianship is improving, their helpfulness to other ringers, etc. Positive reinforcement is always best!

Suanne Comfort ~ Missouri State Chair



www.agehr-mo.org



Adults Are Like Kids Are Like Adults

This issue of *Quavers* deals with youth choir issues such as time management, getting their attention, keeping them busy and disciplinary thoughts. Even though you may only direct adults, children/youth handbell choir concepts are often applicable to adult choirs as well.

In dental school (I am a dentist, after all), a concept that was drummed into us was to “treat your children like adults and your adults like children, and you will be just fine!” Essentially meaning that a few adults may exhibit degrees of childish behavior, especially if they have had some bad dental experiences when they were younger, whereas today, younger patients love to come to the dentist as they’ve never had any bad experiences and thus, deserve to be treated as the adults like whom they are acting!

I think that may be true with some of our bell ringers. Issues such as getting/keeping their attention, keeping them busy, controlling between-ringing chatter, phone calls, etc., all are issues a director may have to manage, be it children or adults.

Being mindful of their time is a great place to start. We need to show our choirs that we value their time and pledge to start and stop on time and to not waste their time during rehearsals. A very wise person once told me to instill the following concept of time within my ringers; “If you are 15 minutes early, you are on time, if you are on time, you are 15 minutes late!!!” It is unfair to those who always arrive early for others to habitually arrive late or at exactly the time rehearsal is to begin, expecting others to have gotten their bells out. It is the ringer’s responsibility to see that the correct and necessary bells are out, mallets & chimes if needed, pens/pencils, all of the items that might be needed during a normal rehearsal. Making others wait while the late ringer gets his/her “stuff” out is very disrespectful of the others and wastes a lot of valuable time which could be spent rehearsing.

Make sure your ringers understand that if they have difficult sections within pieces, that it is incumbent on them to work on them **outside** of rehearsals . . . they are to take their music home and work on the trouble spots on their own time. I wouldn’t allow them to take bells home, but they can use kitchen spoons or other “things” to simulate handbells, mallets or chimes, allowing them to work on rhythms, weave patterns, bell changes, tempo, etc. Again, it is inconsiderate to others to have to spend precious rehearsal time on individual sections that can be worked on at home.

Another pet peeve of mine is when some ringers think they are also directors and are quick to shout out measure numbers to others in the middle of rehearsing a number. I emphasize to my choirs that this is not a democracy, but rather a dictatorship and as the director, “I is thee Dictator,” and as such, it is my responsibility to control the rehearsal. This means the flow of the practice, the pieces to rehearse, what sections we are working on, the musical decisions regarding tempo, volume changes, musicality, in essence, any directorial/performance decisions. I will entertain comments and suggestions, but the final decision is up to me, the dictator, eerr director of the choir!

Discipline hasn’t been an issue with my choirs since I began having offenders do 25 pushups for disciplinary reasons. And as a side benefit, my ladies are developing great upper body strength. Seriously, discipline issues aren’t something I have to deal with...we rehearse in a church for Pete’s sake, they are adults and everyone is very respectful of each other. And if not, they give me 25!

Playing in a handbell choir can be great fun, very rewarding and a great personal growth experience; we just have to all learn (as we once did in the days of sand piles) to “play well together” so we can all enjoy the benefits.

Dr. J. Michael Allen ~ Nebraska State Chair

www.agehr-ne.org





Things You Should Know

2014 FESTIVAL: JUNE 25-28
BETH WATSON-JUDD
MICHAEL GLASGOW
DISTINCTLY DAVENPORT: TBD

2016 SPRINGFIELD, IL

2018 OMAHA, NE

Have you decided whether or not you want to be part of the VIRTUAL HANDBELL CHOIR?

Check it out at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QXOF9VIyyA>

Deadline in which to participate is: **March 1, 2013**



Do you have ideas for topics you would like discussed in *Quavers*? Drop me an idea at NewsletterEditor@Area8.handbellmusicians.org



Mid-Winter Events with Hart Morris



Dinner and Dialogue

Enjoy an evening with handbell composer and clinician Hart Morris, Twin Cities Bronze Artistic and Music Director, Amy Maakestad, and the Twin Cities Bronze Ensemble.

Workshop

Spend a day refining your ringing skills with the handbell master and rhythm guru, Hart Morris.

For more information or to register please visit our website at www.twincitiesbronze.org

Twin Cities Bronze January Schedule

12th Night Meltdown Concert

Jan. 12 7:30 pm - Peace UMC, Shoreview, MN

Dinner and Dialogue with Hart Morris

Jan. 25 6 pm Hilton Garden Inn, Shoreview, MN

Mid-Winter Workshop with Hart Morris

Jan. 26 8 am - 4 pm - Peace UMC, Shoreview, MN

Twin Cities Bronze Auditions

Jan. 27 4 pm - Peace UMC, Shoreview, MN



Visit our website: www.twincitiesbronze.org



Upcoming Concerts

2013	CONCERT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Feb 21 7:00p	Jewell Handbell Choir William Jewell College	1st Baptist 1101 N Main St Sikeston, MO	Christie J. White whitec@william.jewell.edu
Feb 22 11:00a	Jewell Handbell Choir William Jewell College	Portageville Middle School 904 King Ave Portageville, MO	Christie J. White whitec@william.jewell.edu
Feb 22 7:00p	Jewell Handbell Choir William Jewell College	1st United Methodist 300 College Ave Kennett, MO	Christie J. White whitec@william.jewell.edu
Feb 23 5:30p	Jewell Handbell Choir William Jewell College	Cabool United Methodist 501 Paul St Cabool, MO	Christie J. White whitec@william.jewell.edu
Feb 24 2:00p	Jewell Handbell Choir William Jewell College	Missouri Recital Hall (Cottey College) 1000 W Austin Blvd Nevada, MO	Christie J. White whitec@william.jewell.edu
Feb 24 7:00p	The Agape Ringers	St Mark's Lutheran 675 N Mulford Ave Rockford, IL	www.agaperingers.org
Mar 17 4:00p	The Agape Ringers	Oswego Presbyterian 1976 Illinois Route 25 Oswego, IL	www.agaperingers.org
Apr 13 4:00p	Embellish & The Agape Ringers	First Presbyterian 7551 Quick River Forest, IL	www.agaperingers.org
Apr 19 7:30p	Rezound! Handbell Ensemble	Grace Covenant Presbyterian 1110 College Blvd Overland Park, KS	www.rezound.org
Apr 20 3:00p	Rezound! Handbell Ensemble	Bishop Spencer Place 4301 Madison Ave Kansas City, MO	www.rezound.org
Apr 21 4:00p	Rezound! Handbell Ensemble	Venue Visitation Concert Series 5141 Main St Kansas City, MO	www.rezound.org
Apr 28 5:00p	Chicago Bronze	Emmanuel Lutheran Belvidere, IL	www.chicagobronze.org
May 4 7:00p	Bells in Motion	Zion Lutheran Church 500 S Old Route 66 Mt Olive, IL	www.bellsinmotion.org
May 5 4:00p	Bells in Motion	Douglas Ave UMC 501 S Douglas Springfield, IL	www.bellsinmotion.org



Upcoming Events

2013	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Jan 24 3:00p	MO Baptist Univ Ringers MMEA	Tan Tar A Salon C Lake of the Ozarks, MO	www.nmea.net/content/75th-annual-nmea-service-workshop-conference
Feb 1-4	Master Series	Tucson, AZ	http://handbellmusicians.org/events/master-series-2013-registration-now-open/
Feb 2 9a-3:15p	Young Ringer's Mini-Festival Monica McGowan & KC Congdon	Grace Lutheran Church & School River Forest, IL	http://www.il-agehr.org/events.html
Feb 16	Handbells, Handbells, Handbells (workshop w/The Agape Ringers)	Community Presbyterian Church Clarendon Hills, IL	http://www.il-agehr.org/events.html
Feb 28- Mar 3	Distinctly Bronze West Fred Gramann	Bremerton, WA	http://handbellmusicians.org/events/distinctly-bronze-west-registration-now-open/
Mar 2	spRINGfest John Behnke	Peace Lutheran Church St Louis, MO	Burnell Hackman burnell@bhackman.net
Apr 20	Spring Handbell Workshop	Wilson Performing Arts Center Red Oak, IA	http://www.agehr-ia.org/Events/Events.htm
Jul 24-27	National Seminar	Portland, OR	www.handbellmusicians.org

