

Volume XIV Number 6 December - January, 2003

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A NOTE FROM THE ARM OF THE CHAIR

At the Board meeting in September, we spent quite a bit of time talking about communication in Area XII and how that applies to our membership. We talked about how to plan events for a wide range of interests and how to publicize the events. The conversation seemed to drift around several topics until someone asked, "Why DO we attend bell events?" Everyone jumped in with reasons: to see old friends, to go to interesting places, to party, to have fun, and, oh yes, to learn about bells. Then ConferenceChair@areaxii.org came up with the slogan, "AGEHR - the perfect excuse."

Let's think about this for a moment. Our choir joined with two others to travel together and give two concerts on the trip to Reno. For us, this Area XII Conference was *the perfect excuse* for a lovely trip to Nevada. Over 70 ringers, chaperones, and spouses spent 5 days together. We all carried bell cases and equipment, ate together, made music together, learned together, and raved about what a great time we had. The children in two different choirs were able to participate in two concerts and perform at the conference. If you ask them what they enjoyed most, it was the swimming pool and the fun zone near the ringing area. For them, the Conference was the *perfect excuse* for a weekend of play. Now ask the directors about the conference, and they will probably say that the Conference was the *perfect excuse* for extra practice to learn the music that will pay off in increased ringing skill this fall. One of our chaperones decided that the trip was the *perfect excuse* to travel as a family and participate in an activity that was completely new to them.

Every ringer knows that after attending a bell event and spending extra hours preparing music, each person in the group is a better ringer. Every ringer learned something new in a class or from one of the conductors, and that will translate into improvement for the entire choir. Every director loves to hear a ringer announce something that was "learned" in a class, and the director secretly smiles because one of the clinicians has just reinforced something that the director has been trying to teach all along. We all know that we have broadened our musical knowledge. But what is the first thing that we think of? We had FUN!

In this *Twelfth Tone*, there are **43** events listed beginning December 1, and more will be added, I'm sure. Which of these events is best for you? Attending a bell concert is a great social event for your choir and will inspire your group to aim for a higher level of musicianship. All groups benefit from watching others play, but this is especially valuable for new or inexperienced groups. Note how many events are planned just for directors or aspiring directors. You are sure to get new ideas and have a chance to talk with other directors. Try a Spring Ring to expose your choir to a different director and an opportunity to participate in massed ringing. Remember, AGEHR - *the perfect excuse* to _____ (and YOU can fill in the blank!)

Now, from the point of view of the event planner: is anyone going to come? Don't wait until the last minute to sign up. Often there is a

minimum number needed to cover the costs, and if that minimum is not reached by a certain date, an event may be cancelled. Give the contact person a call to say that you are interested. Even better, send in your registration early.

Elsewhere in this *Twelfth Tone* is a notice about the loan program for bells and handchimes. Are you a regular classroom teacher who would like to provide music for your students? There are many activities that can be done in a regular classroom with one set of handchimes. My favorite with second graders combined reading and music. Each chime was colored coded for chords. Songs were written out on chart paper with the words in the color of the chord to be played. Students then played and sang along. Just about any song that primary children like to sing can have a handchime accompaniment. Gary Delk can give you many ideas for using bells and chimes in a classroom setting as well as providing support for music teachers who would like to start a handbell program in schools.

Did you receive a note from me on November 7 by email with the current list of coming events? Have you received the e-newsletter from your Regional Coordinator? If not, Area XII does not have your email, or the address we have is no longer valid. Contact me, Rudy Rodriguez, or your Regional Coordinator with your current email so that you will not be left out of the communication loop.

For the next six weeks, bellringing is my *perfect excuse* for playing Christmas music and entertaining for the holidays. What is yours? - Lee Waggener, Chair

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NEW MEMBERS

New Members in September

Consuelo Juarez, Theresa
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Bakersfield, CA

Gage, Ruthie
Las Vegas Jr. Academy
Las Vegas, NV

Dupont, Sheila
Emmanuel Faith Community
Escondido, CA

Caulkins, Beverly
Trinity Lutheran Church
Gardnerville, NV

Austad, Kjell
Encino, CA

Cleek, Carolyn
Chico, CA

Carl, Robert
National Music Publishers
Tustin, CA

Newark Community Church
Newark, CA

Llewellyn, Denise
South Lake Tahoe, CA

Long, Kathy
Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church
Lafayette, CA

New Members in October

Kyung, Hye

New California Conservatory
Buena Park, CA

Ciaramitaro, Tom
Concord, CA 94518

Hopping, Carol
La Verne, CA 91750

Piantka, Anya
Incline Village, NV 89451

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VOICES FROM THE PAST

(The third in a series.)

Patty Marquart Ginny Fleming Dick Coulter Diane Levorson Gary Delk Mystery Chair

In this series, former Chairs of Area XII have consented to a written "interview" about their experiences, memories, and other thoughts about Area XII. Each has been given the same set of questions, which appear within the text of their responses. As we approach the 50th anniversary of AGEHR in 2004, I hope that this series will offer us a brief perspective of our past as we look forward to the next 50 years of "...uniting people through a musical art..." - wlw

1. **WHEN, WHERE, and HOW** did you get started in handbells?

I first heard a handbell choir play in 1956 or 57, when Bob Hieber from Battle Creek, Michigan brought his choir of junior and senior high school boys to Union Seminary for a demonstration. I thought that bell ringing was a big gimmick. "I will never use handbells", I said to my classmates.

About 2 years later, in my position as Minister of Music at Trinity Methodist Church in Newport News, Virginia, I discovered that the males in my high school singing choir - who, at one time could read music, had lost their reading ability because while they went through voice change, they participated in sports and not music. I thought to myself that it would be great to have them find an activity which would keep them reading music so that when they got into high school, they would be able to keep up with the girls. Consequently, I talked the church into buying a set of Whitechapel bells. We got three octaves, I think. I remember that it took about 18 months for them to arrive from England - a very long time for us to wait.

About the same time, a church in Norfolk, Virginia had a purchased a set of Schulmerich Handbells. They didn't sound very good to me, and I thought I would never use them. I only mention this to show how changeable we all are. Later, I completely reversed my position.

I remember attending the first convention/festival in St. Louis, Missouri. What an eye-opening experience that was. There was a choir that rang from real music - even eighth notes - from memory. I couldn't believe it! We were using simple chordal music in my church. Another memory was of hearing the Potomac Ringers from Washington, DC. They were directed by Nancy Poore Tufts, who later became the President of AGEHR and who used large charts and a pointer. Her ringers read alphabet letters, not notes.

Later, when I was living in Berkeley, CA, we started a choir of two octaves. We attended the first California festival, which was in Santa Barbara. I think there may have been 10 choirs there, but I'm not sure. It was a meager beginning - probably not more than 120 ringers - if that many.

2. **WHAT FORMAL MUSICAL TRAINING** did you have prior to working with handbells?

I have a Bachelor of Science in Music Education (emphasis on Choral Conducting) from the University of Idaho and a Master of Sacred Music from Union Theological Seminary, New York City. I have done further graduate work in Europe through the University of Oregon and at Northwestern University - all of this was prior to beginning to work with handbells.

3. **WHAT** is your favorite handbell composition, and **WHY** is this work meaningful to you?

I don't have a favorite handbell composition. Composing for handbells keeps developing so much. Some of my favorites are: *Sharon's Song* by Donald Allured because it helped us to learn about phrasing and legato playing - something which we hear very rarely these days, I think; *Textures* by Everett J. Hilty because it gave us new sounds and "textures" for bells; John Bartsch's compositions - particularly an untitled piece for Harp and handbells which he wrote for the Bells of the Cascades - also *Spirit Wind*; *Arabesque* by Debussy (now arranged by Kodama, but we played it from the piano score) because my choir played it for national and did a bang-up job; *Reflections* by Betty Garee because it provides a sense of movement and inner beauty.

4. **WHAT ADVICE** would you give to someone who is just starting to work with handbells?

I gained the most help and knowledge by attending - and giving - workshops on handbell techniques. I would strongly urge new directors to attend as many as possible and to have their ringers attend as many as possible. One of my pet peeves with handbell ringing - and it has been from the beginning - is that director's and audiences are more impressed with speed and loud ringing than they are with phrasing, legato playing, and understanding the inner spirit of the music. Therefore, I would advise beginning conductors to study the score, to learn what the composer was trying to express, to develop ways of dealing with the "give and take", "stress and release" and worry less about showmanship.

5. **HOW LONG** have you been a member, and **WHAT** has *The AGEHR* meant to you?

Part of this is answered in #1. I think my membership actually began in 1959, but I'm not sure - at any rate it was a long time ago. AGEHR was a very dominant/major part of my life (and my family's life) for many years - particularly when I was on the National Board. I was fortunate to be involved with the early years of AGEHR and helped to form some of the policies upon which we are founded. Attending either a Regional or a National Convention was always part of the program for my handbell choirs - for many years. These gatherings gave my program a focus.

It seems to me, in retrospect (isn't hindsight 20/20 vision?) that AGEHR grew too rapidly, and we did not know enough about seeking outside professional help. As a result, there have developed political camps in support of one person or another, or in support of one school of playing or another, and so forth. Also, directors have worked hard at protecting their own work and not sharing ideas fully. I'm not particularly happy or unhappy, at this place in my life, to admit to having been a part of AGEHR. I had hoped that we, as an organization, would have included former officers - not because of their "former officer-ness," but because of their experience - similar to grandparents. ACDA includes all of their past presidents in a council which always meets at the time of the annual meeting of their board - and which gives a report to their board. I think AGEHR could benefit from that type of thing.

6. **WHAT POSITION(S)** have you held in *The AGEHR*, and **WHEN** did you serve in each position?

The first position I remember is Chairman of Area IX (before it became Area XII), and then Chairman of Area XII (must have been about 1978 - Ginny Fleming referred to that in her article in the last *Twelfth Tone*, but I can't find it). I believe that I am the only person who was Chairman of two Areas without changing jobs or residences. Of course, prior to any of that, I was active on several committees doing planning for local and regional festivals, I was elected to be President-elect of AGEHR in 1987 and succeeded Linda McKechnie as President in 1989 and then, of course, Immediate Past President in 1991.

7. **WHAT FUTURE** do you see for handbells? More to the point, **WHAT** do you think **MUST HAPPEN** in order to elevate handbell ringing to the level of public support and recognition enjoyed by community orchestras, choral ensembles, and the like?

It is difficult to know what we can do in order to bring handbells into the real arena of "acceptable" music - similar to choruses and orchestras which are supported by local communities. We need to get away from playing music which is either: 1) too showy with little content or 2) arranged from some other medium. SONOS has tried to lead the way and is, apparently, succeeding to some extent. I think we need to encourage the composition of a whole lot more music for handbells that is "unique" but not necessarily "avant garde", that is easily understood without being trite or simple, and something which sings with beautiful phrasing, exciting harmonies and which will challenge the listeners' ears and minds.

As I have pondered this last question a little more, it seems to me that we might have to get to the point of having many more ringers in an organization than we do now - similar to the manner in which some Japanese conductors have developed their groups. After all, an orchestra has several violinists - why shouldn't a handbell group have many more ringers. By doing that, we could perhaps develop the ability to perform deeper and larger works. I would have to think more about that. - *Dick Coulter* [Return](#)

REGIONAL REPORTS



San Francisco Bay Area Report

Tammy Raetz tammrae@earthlink.net

Tammy Raetz has assumed the Bay Area Regional Coordinator position, with Dave Ruder assisting in the transition. The e-newsletter is going out monthly, and efforts are being made to add ringers as well as directors to the list. Requests to be added should be sent to Bay_Area@areaxii.org. The following is updated and excerpted from the most recent edition of the Bay Area eNews:

Many handbell choirs took part in 9-11 memorial services last month, and Caroline Harnly shares her experiences:

"Temple United Methodist Church [San Francisco] had an evening service with the theme of forgiveness. I rang the duet version of Kevin McChesney's 'Make Me An Instrument of Thy Peace' which he wrote in remembrance of the Columbine tragedy. I played the bottom part on bells, and the Director of Music at Temple UMC played the top part on the flute. It was very effective.

Six of us from the St. Andrew Presbyterian Church Handbell Choir in Pacifica played at an outdoor service sponsored by the American Legion at noon. We played Patricia Sanders Cota's 12 bell arrangements of 'Amazing Grace' and 'America Medley' on tone chimes."

THE MARCHING HANDBELL CHOIR rang its way down Pacifica's main thoroughfare at the annual "Pacifica Fog Fest" on Saturday, September 28, and concluded a successful day by ringing and singing with residents at two Peninsula retirement homes. This prize-winning and always popular ensemble features members from three chapters in Oregon, Northern and Southern California, who practice in their own regions once a month and join together to perform in three or four parades a year. Watch for their nationally televised appearance in the San Diego Holiday Bowl Parade on December 27. Overheard along the Fog Fest route in the MHC's wake: "How do I join???" If you are asking the same question, email Gail Hybarger at ca-unicorn@pacbell.net.

SONOS GOES INTERNATIONAL!

Press release:

"June, 2002 - Much of the inspiration for the American handbell community has come from Japan, through the work of the late Katsumi Kodama. It is fitting that the first trip Sonos takes out of the United States will be to Japan in mid-December of 2002." Read more about the upcoming Sonos tour to Japan at <http://www.sonos.org>.

BAY AREA COLLEGE OFFERS HANDBELL TECHNIQUE COURSE

Pacific Union College, Angwin, CA (Napa Valley) has beginning and advanced bell choirs. We also offer a course in handbell techniques for prospective conductors.

We offer A.S., B.S., and B. Mus. degrees in music with variety of concentrations including music education and performance. The department is NASM accredited, and the college is very highly rated in *U.S. News and World Report*.

Del W. Case, DMA
Professor of Music
<http://www.puc.edu>

OPENINGS FOR RINGERS

The First Immanuel Lutheran Church Bell Choir is looking for more ringers. We have about 8 regular ringers but could use more to enable us to play a wider range of music. We could also use some subs once in a while.

We are close to San Jose State University and invite anyone interested in playing with us to contact the director, Anita Jamison-Blanks, at ajblanks@worldnet.att.net [(408) 453-8879], or coordinator, Joyce Bonnett, at joy2joyjlb@aol.com [(408) 378-3641]. Looking forward to meeting some new people!"

Mary Jane Zobel
First Immanuel Lutheran Church
374 South Third Street
San Jose, CA 95112

(408) 292-5404

SOLO RINGERS AVAILABLE

Three solo ringers in the Bay Area have prepared pieces for use in worship services. If your church would be interested in hosting one of them, contact Caroline Harnly (prefers San Francisco and Peninsula area, charnly@sfsu.edu), Ruben Mendoza (ruben2003@hotmail.com), or Michèle Sharik (michele@sonos.org).

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

The Directors' and Advancing Ringers' Seminar was held last month at Valley Church in Cupertino. Some new classes were held along with the popular technique classes and reading sessions, and the seminar choir played amazingly well under Lynelle Bilsey's direction, considering the short amount of time at their disposal. Attendees seemed to be having a great time, and comments were positive.

From Bill Mowson (Director of Music at Faith Lutheran Church, Los Gatos):

"Thank you and all involved for putting on a great event today. I especially liked the fact that it was fast paced and there was not a lot of "open" time. It's better for me to start early, skip lunch, and be finished so I have time for other Saturday activities. Great plan!

Thanks again.

Hopefully, some of my ringers will come with me next time."

HANDBELL DVDs/VIDEOS now available! CAMPANILE and the RALEIGH RINGERS both released their state-of-the-art video/DVD productions this month, and handbell lovers across the country are anxiously watching their mailboxes. These projects have raised the art of handbell ringing to new heights, and here's great news: PBS audiences in Raleigh, North Carolina will become handbell viewers - something for handbell lovers to get excited about! If you'd like to see either of these videos make it to our local public television stations,

be sure to contact PBS. If they hear from 200 people, it might happen! See below for contact information, and if you're looking for that perfect gift, check out these websites: Campanile, <http://www.anet.net/~rima/njvideo.html> (or order through Amazon.com); Raleigh Ringers: <http://www.rr.org/cgi-bin/store/agora.cgi?page=video.html>.

Local PBS stations:

KQED, Inc.
2601 Mariposa Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
Phone Number: (415) 864-2000
Email: tv@kqed.org

KTEH/Channel 54
1585 Schallenberger Road
San Jose, CA 95131-2434
Phone Number: (408) 795-5400
Fax Number: (408) 995-5446
Email: programming@kteh.org

KCSM/Channel 60
1700 West Hillsdale Boulevard
San Mateo, CA 94402
Phone Number: (650) 574-6586
Fax Number: (650) 524-6975
Email: info@kcsmpbs.org

To send your request to the national office, write or email PBS Headquarters:

Public Broadcasting Service
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314
Email: viewer@pbs.org

FOR SALE: Three octaves of handchimes, with cases, lovingly used. Perfect for use with the *Ring Along* books. Suzuki. Best offer over \$700.00. Contact Mary Johnson at mgjhson@pacbell.net

ATTENTION, YOUTH CHOIR DIRECTORS: The first-ever Church Youth Handbell Festival for the San Francisco Bay Area is planned for February 8, 2003. This noon to 6:00 pm event will focus on teaching and fun group activities rather than performance. For only \$3.00 per person, there will be classes in multiple bell techniques, and fun classes in rhythm games and Maori sticks, change ringing and "alternative" music-making like boomwhackers and percussion. A final performance will include demonstrations from the classes as well as two simple massed numbers and solo numbers. David Ruder will lead the participants in a massed ring of "Praise to the Lord" by Anna Laura Page, L1, and Kevin McChesney's "Danza," L1+. Valley Church of Cupertino will host. For registration materials, email DianRuder@aol.com, or phone 408-732-0760. [Return](#)



Los Angeles Metro Report

Shirley Heckman la_metro@areaxii.org

The Christmas season is upon us and all our choirs are busy preparing, perfecting, and performing the beautiful Christmas music to which handbells add a special sparkle. Our university choirs at Azusa Pacific and Concordia have given fall concerts, our high school choirs are in demand for programs, Campanile is off for a December tour in Taiwan, and our church choirs are enhancing the worship services of their various congregations.

Directors, be sure to check the 12th Tone Calendar and sign up for one of the many Directors' Workshops which are being offered in Area XII in enhance your skills and effectiveness in working with your choir, whether you are a beginning or experienced director. An added bonus will be the fun of the day and the friendships made with other directors.

If you are not receiving the LA Metro Area e-newsletter each month, you are missing out on timely notices for the Greater Los Angeles Area. Subscribing is easy - just send me an email.



Northern California Report

Louanne Marshall jfmarshall@jps.net

It has been a fun couple of months with workshops scattered around the northern California region. These workshops have been used to get some new choirs started. We have several new bell groups now in Vacaville and Carmichael, and also a couple of new chime groups coming along in Woodland. I know these new ringers would love to hear what you are doing, and when you are playing, so please let me know so that we can spread the word.

For all of you directors, please mark February 15th on your calendar for our director's workshop. It will be in Woodland this year. I am really excited about the possibility of getting some directions from each of you at that workshop as to what you would like to have happening in the future in our region. See you there!



Nevada Report

Barbara Walsh barbagehr@worldnet.att.net

Howdy! It sounds like we'll have a good representation of kids at the Las Vegas 12th Night; my Tintabulations group is going and so are about 50 of Ron Thiele's ringers (you remember them from the Reno conference!). The roller coaster ride lines on The Strip are going to be long! Contact Dixie Bailey (dxbaile3@prodigy.net) or Janet Ty (Jyty@aol.com) if you'd like to attend this Jan. 11-12 event. Also in Las Vegas, Sonos will be giving a concert on March 9 at 3:00 pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Contact the church at (702) 384-4554 for more information.

Our cathedral in Reno is looking to start a handbell group. If you have a used set of 3 octaves of bells to sell or would like to join the group, please let me know.

I actually got an e-newsletter sent out! If you would like to be on the list, please e-mail me at barbagehr@worldnet.att.net.

I've had a couple of directors approach me about starting a Spring Ring here in Reno. What do you think?



Southern California

Micki Mennet-Martin mennet@aol.com

On November 2, 2002, "Back to Basics," the So Cal 2002 Directors Workshop, was held at the San Dieguito United Methodist Church. Ginny Fleming, clinician provided an excellent, well organized, and interesting workshop mixing exercises with the bells, round table discussions, technique instruction to participating directors from Escondido, San Luis Obispo, Poway, Twentynine Palms, Fallbrook, and Huntington Beach. One participant said it was the best workshop he has attended - organized, was able to get all questions he had recognized, and discussed and in a most compatible group. Another said Ginny was extremely well organized and prepared. She knew exactly what she was doing and the progression needed. This participant added it was good having experienced people there to help us with the drills and teach us the correct way to ring. Bill Waggener, Twelfth Tone Editor, and Jo Anne Hammond, Area XII Secretary, came by at different times during the day to extend welcome and greetings from AGEHR. Both contributed a lot to the program.

On November 9, 2002, "Let Freedom Ring" was held at The Christ Presbyterian Church, La Costa and was organized by Ruth O'Neil. The program featured six North San Diego County Handbell Choirs and the Azusa Pacific University Handbell Choir directed by Dr. Donovan Gray. Four selections composed the massed ringing portion of the day and each choir came prepared with a favorite theme selection. Each had a section of time to rehearse between the massed ringing sessions. Together, the participants presented a 4:00 pm concert for the public. Among the participating choirs were Celebration Ringers of Christ Presbyterian Church, JuBELLation and Celebration Bells of the First United Methodist Church, Escondido, Grace Notes of Grace Presbyterian Church, Vista, Bells of Praise from the Solana Beach Presbyterian Church, the Joyful Bells of San Dieguito United Methodist Church, Encinitas, a duet team from First United Methodist Church, Escondido and the Azusa Pacific University Handbell Choir. Dr. Gray also directed the Massed Ring Choirs.

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Rudy's Roost

The Care and Feeding of Ringers Part 1:

Why become a ringer?

One advantage of becoming chronologically-enhanced and having the experience of doing something for a few lustrums is that you learn a few things along the road. Your newly sprouted gray hair gives you the right to pass on some hard-earned lessons to your younger colleagues with the hope that they will not have to endure the same mistakes that you made. So here I am trying to pass on some of the lessons that I have learned at the "College of Hard Knocks." Please remember that these lessons and observations are my own. Your experiences may be different. Please feel free to take what I say with a grain of salt – sea salt if possible.

Have you ever asked your ringers why they wanted to become ringers? What first motivated them to attempt to play an instrument that required the help of NINE other friends to play the silly thing and make music? Now add to that question the fact that many of your ringers did not know how to read music when they first picked up a handbell or choirchime. Why would they ever attempt to learn the foreign language of Music?

To those of us who have played instruments or sung in an organized group (outside of the shower) since we were very young, (I started when I was 7 years old by playing the accordion, honest) reading music is second nature. But to many brand-new ringers, music notation with all those dots, slashes, lines and squiggles look very much like a foreign language script from some long lost Egyptian pyramid. Why do they even try to read that script?

Of course there are as many answers to these questions as there are ringers, but some common themes run through many answers. One word that is never spoken but hidden in many answers is "coercion." Many of us did not start off Life wanting to be a consummate bell ringer. We were "coerced" into "joining the bell choir." I know I was.

Many moons ago, we had a little 2-octave bell choir in our church of which I was NOT a part. You see, I was already very busy in the church. I didn't need to join that new bell choir. That was for other people who were NOT already so busy in serving in the church. Right? Right!

Well, one day, the G4-A4 ringer went on a three week vacation to Canada and our Minister of Music who was also the bell director at the time came to me and asked me to "fill in for a couple of weeks" until his ringer returned from vacation. And since I already knew how to read music, he said it would be "easy to fill in." So reluctantly, I went to the first bell rehearsal and promptly grew two left hands. This was not a good thing because I am right-handed. I also lost my rhythm and my sense of humor. I am sure you can guess the torment I felt at that first rehearsal. I know that many of you have had the same experience. Then to add horror to the nightmare, our director announced at the end of rehearsal that we were ready to ring for the church at next week's service! How do you spell panic: B – E – L – L – S!

Well, I survived my first experience with bells. It was not glorious, but thankfully, it was over. Unfortunately that ringer who went on vacation never did come back from vacation. She met a nice man in Canada while on vacation and returned to California only long enough to pack up her stuff and leave her apartment for O Canada. I was stuck with ringing G4-A4!

The point of my story is this: As directors, we need to be sensitive to the "Whys" behind our ringers who stand on the other side of table ringing their little hearts out. Were they "coerced" to being there? Do they really love making music, even with bells? What is their driving motivation for being there week after week? Once you find those answers, then you can tailor your program planning and conducting style to meet their expectations.

All people, ringers included because they really are people, want to feel important. Most people want to know that you, as director, leader and sometimes inspiration (that's a scary thought, but true), know that they are there. So let them know that they are important. You, Mr. Director, cannot ring all those bells by yourself, although there are some notable solo ringers who get real close. Let those precious bell ringers know that they are important to you, to the choir, and to the bell program.

Care and feed your bell ringers properly. And they will grow up to make beautiful music.

See you next edition, weather permitting, with the next installment of "The Care and Feeding of Ringers." - *Rudy Rodriguez*

Pithy saying for the day:

It's never too late to do the right thing.

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Highlights of the Area XII Board Meeting

Our By-Laws require that a summary of the discussion and actions taken by the Area XII Board must be published in the issue of The Twelfth Tone immediately following the meeting. Accordingly, Area XII Secretary Jo Anne Hammond has provided the following synopsis. - wlv

September 27-29, 2002 - San Jose, California

David Ruder's church was the site of our meetings, and ringers from that area invited the Board members to their homes as guests. This hospitality was very much appreciated.

Lee Waggener rang the opening bell. The Minutes of the previous meeting, as well as the reports from the Regional Coordinators, had been distributed via e-mail prior to the meeting, saving valuable time for discussion of the matters at hand.

David Ruder told us that the Las Lomas School District decided to sell their inventory of handbell equipment. The Board voted to use the funds donated at the Reno conference to purchase the 3-octave set of Malmark handchimes, and we also voted to purchase the 3-octave set of Malmark bells. Both of these sets were designated for use in our Bells in Schools Program. We discussed the growing number of families who are choosing to "home school" their children, and decided that they would be eligible to apply to borrow the equipment.

Rudy Rodriguez said that two Young Ringer events are planned for next May – in Garden Grove and in La Mesa. Gary Delk will be the clinician.

Conference Chair ConferenceChair@areaxii.org gave us information about the Ringers Conference scheduled in Hawaii (June 24-27, 2004).

We will be able to accommodate 400 ringers. Plenty of free time will be scheduled so that the event will have a "vacation" feel. Classes will concentrate on Hawaiian culture instead of handbell techniques. The event will be more expensive than our usual Area conferences, but Mark has already had inquiries from individuals and choirs around the country, so we encourage Area XII ringers to start fundraising efforts now. *There will also be a "Mainland Conference" in 2004 – probably in the Los Angeles area.* It will be a more traditional format, with handbell classes and concerts from featured choirs.

Significant changes are being made in the operation of the AGEHR National Office. See *Overtones* for comments from our new Executive Director. Cheryl Baker and Lee Waggener both feel that the Guild is on the right track with the changes being made.

Bill Waggener was congratulated for the number of advertisements in *The Twelfth Tone*, which help to defray our publishing costs.

The following tasks were assigned (and information or suggestions from Area ringers would be appreciated):

Gary Delk and Barbara Walsh will be compiling a list of handbell educators
Shirley Heckman will be reviewing our Rules and Procedures and making recommendations for revision.
Cheryl Baker, ConferenceChair@areaxii.org and Rudy Rodriquez will be revising the Conference Planning Guide.
Regional Coordinators were asked to compile a list of all handbell events planned in their region.

SING THE AREA XII WEB SITE

One of the increasingly important means of communication with our membership is the electronic medium, which is why you have been requested to let us have your email address(es) so that you can received the e-newsletters that our Regional Coordinators and Area Chair periodically send out.

However, a more immediate source of information about Area XII and the activities going on is the Area XII web site, which is currently maintained by Mel Tully, our current Electronic Liaison. The URL for the Area XII main page is:

<http://www.areaxii.org/>

The main page provides links to other pages of the site:

At the top are four icons for California, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Young Ringers' Conference next May. Clicking on these will take you directly to the respective pages where you can read past regional newsletters and information about the two YRCs.

The bottom half of the main page has a table with other links:

Calendar leads to coming events as up-to-date as possible;
Conferences leads to four logos representing each of the past or coming Ringers' Conferences;
Bells in Education leads to information about the Area XII handbell and handchime loan program, including how to apply;
Officers will take you to who to contact for any Area XII business and a click on any name should set you up to send an email;

AGEHR will bring up a page with two other links - clicking on the AGEHR logo will take you directly to the national AGEHR web site, and clicking on Cheryl Baker, who is our Representative to the National organization, will allow you to send her an email; if you go to the National page, there even is a link back to the Area XII site if you want to return easily;

Directors Workshops leads to a list of the currently scheduled workshops for directors and how to register for them;

Regional Newsletters leads to the most recent news items produced by our Regional Coordinators;

Twelfth Tone will bring up a list of past issues that are available for viewing on your monitor - just click on any issue highlighted in blue;

Websites in Area XII leads to links to websites belonging to other handbell individuals or organizations in Area XII; currently, 9 are listed;

Hawaii 2004 leads to an information page about the Ringers' Conference in Hawaii in two years; as soon as the plans are further along and more information becomes available, this site will be your first source of information about the Conference.

10 Commandments For Ringers will take you to something you might want on your bell room door!

Somewhere on nearly every page, there is a line that says, "Return to Main Page". If you get lost and can't recall exactly how to get back to where you started, click on this line and you will be returned.

For many of us, this article is probably unnecessary. However, many others may have less experience negotiating the web and might benefit from some encouragement and directions. Regardless of your own expertise on the internet, if you haven't already done so, check it out!

If you have any comments or questions about the site or its content, please contact Mel Tully. If you have something you'd like placed on the Area XII web site, contact Mel Tully. Our web site is in constant flux because both new, updated material is added regularly to keep it current and Mel is very much in the process of continuously developing and refining the graphics, links, etc. - *wlw*

NEW CD FROM OPUS

The Opus Handbell Ensemble has a new CD coming out by the end of November called "Rhythmic Intensity". For more information, check their web site at www.opushandbell.org.

Getting the Word Out

Recently, I taught a class at the Bay Area Directors and Advancing Ringers Seminar on using communication and media to reach more people with handbells. Since I became a ringer, it has concerned me that choirs put so much effort into perfecting their music but often have few resources for making sure that their music gets to the ears of interested audiences!

Both church choirs and community groups can benefit from improved communication by using all the media tools at hand.

Communication begins at home:

Most important is to improve communication between choir members and the director. If choir members know what pieces will be rehearsed so they can come prepared, and if directors know ahead of time who will be late or absent so they can arrange for subs, rehearsal time can be used efficiently. Many directors use weekly flyers, email, postcards or phone trees, or a combination of these.

Talking to hosting organizations:

After the ringers and director know the scoop, who gets it next? Make the best possible use of existing routes of communication: Church bulletins, newsletters, bulletin boards, handouts, website, participation in rallies, banner locations. Especially important is a positive information flow between choirs and their hosting body regarding use of the facilities. It can be helpful to appoint a liaison to ensure that misunderstandings and scheduling conflicts are less likely to occur and to help promote the efforts of the ensemble.

Meet the press:

When there are special performances or concerts on the schedule, knowing what to do with this information is vital. Either the director or someone in the choir can write up short descriptions of upcoming events with basic information that includes date, time, place, cost of tickets, if any (or freewill offering), and contact information.

One trick of the journalism trade is to write three different paragraphs ranging in size from one or two sentences of basic information to an entire page with group history and director biography. Two copies of these press releases should be sent to local papers, radio and television stations, one addressed to the Community Calendar editor, and one to the News editor. Good quality photographs increase the likelihood of getting mentioned, if only by serving to intrigue the editor!

Other ways to get your message out:

- Posters and flyers
- Business cards
- Sample videotapes
- Brochures

Full press kit

There's more?

Ensembles ready to advance to the next level can take further steps to reach the public:

- Start to assemble a mailing list, both of postal addresses and email addresses;
- Join forces with a good cause, such as Ronald McDonald House;
- Adopt a school or retirement home or hospital;
- Offer workshops to local choirs or to the general public through community centers, adult ed, church classes, etc.;
- Make an appearance at local events (library, community gatherings, art and wine fairs, shows, local businesses, holiday events, etc.);
- Create T-shirt or polo shirt designs, imprint keyrings or pencils, etc.

Knowing what to do is one thing; knowing where to look for information is another! Gather local media contact information through sources such as the phone book, an internet search engine, the library information desk, and newspaper mastheads. Don't neglect that most important source of all: the grapevine. Publicity is merely the process of putting words in people's mouths, for it's word of mouth that really builds an audience. - *Tammy Raetz*

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IMHO: Applause and the Response Factor

Perhaps I'm an old fuddy-duddy, but there are times when the applause following a vocal choir or handbell ensemble's playing seems totally inappropriate. These times occur when the musical art has reached an aesthetic high, engaging the listener to the extent that the boundaries between the music, the performer and the listeners are so interwoven that the moment deserves to be appreciated without distraction.

I often hear the question, "Do you think we should applaud in church?" While most people have no problem with applause at a concert, many wonder if it is ever appropriate to applaud during a worship service. In today's church, we go from one extreme to the other. Some churches make no audible response at all and others applaud everything. A response is needed, but perhaps we should consider what might be a more uplifting response in the context of worship.

True worship involves emotions. Those emotions are often engaged by a stirring sermon or a musical presentation. People need and want to respond. Culture often dictates the response. Applause is probably out of context following a beautiful rendition of a song like *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* or *The Lord's Prayer*.

What are some of the other kinds of responses that might be more appropriate? Here are some possibilities that you might consider and encourage. We have seen all of these work:

- * Bookend the musical offering with readings of appropriate scripture texts;
- * Have the accompanist pick up the arrangement from its final key with the congregation singing all or a portion of the hymn on which the arrangement was based;
- * Transition quickly to another appropriate hymn;
- * Have the worship leader or pastor conclude the musical segment with prayer;
- * Have the worship leader do a quick transition to the next part of the service with a few appropriate comments related to the music;
- * Insert a time of silent prayer following the music announced in advance or immediately following the music;
- * Have the worship leader read a stanza from the text often used with the tune;
- * Dim the lights at the conclusion of the music.

Further, we can discourage an expectation by the bell choir that if they do not receive applause, their music was not appreciated. Our body language and comments need not convey that message. Perhaps remarks like, "You were great, you looked stunning, incredible playing, terrific performance, you were so cute" (to children), or laughing at their mistakes, or behavior (children), can be replaced by, "What a blessing to the church, thank you for serving the Lord in this way, you led us so beautifully in worship".

The applause syndrome of today is largely the product of the electronic church. When the musical offering is seen as part of a performance, applause seems appropriate. When it is seen as an act of worship, other kinds of responses seem more appropriate. While attending the International Handbell Symposium in Korea this past August, I heard one of the magnificent Japanese ensembles "blow us away" with a sensational performance during a solo performance. The only appropriate response in the concert situation was a standing ovation with loud

applause and bravissimos. The same group played a chilling version of "Amazing Grace" during the next morning's worship service. Their attitude and body language approach as well as the worship leader's direction led us into a deeply moving time of reflection.

To applaud in worship? Maybe, sometimes. To respond? Absolutely! - *David Ruder, Chair-elect*

IN MY HUMBLE OPINION

...I'm hoping to start a little series called IMHO which will raise a few thought provoking issues, most of the time with some solutions, but certainly my opinions. Be interesting if anyone responds, and if we need to, publish letters to the editor with different viewpoints... - *David Ruder, Chair-elect*

This message to me accompanied the opinion piece by David Ruder, Chair-Elect of Area XII, found on page 10. Personally, I'm eager to see what might develop from this new series and most particularly to publish any responses from the membership - whether in agreement or in challenge. There is a lot about bellringing that is open to a wide range of opinion. If you have any perspectives, positions, or opinions to contribute, you are openly invited to share your thoughts. - wlv [Return](#)

AREA XII HANDBELL AND CHIME LOAN PROGRAM

How would you like the free use of a three-octave set of handbells or handchimes next year for one semester? The American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, Area XII, has a set of each available exclusive for public or private school use.

Use them with your vocal choir, start a handchime or handbell performance group, or use them with your music appreciation classes. The equipment, complete with pads, instructions, and a consultant (by phone!), is available for all grade levels through university. Obviously, the hope is that your school will be so enchanted with the bells that you will wish to purchase your own set. To date, nearly a dozen schools have been involved with this highly successful program.

For further information and application for next year's loan, contact:

Gary Delk, Bells in Education Coordinator
1320 N. Marlei
La Habra, CA 90631
(562) 697-7805
ouitch@aol.com

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NOTE FROM THE KEYBOARD

"Those who *can*, do; those who *can't*, teach."

Having been an educator at various levels and in two disciplines over the last 39 years, I find this "witticism" incredibly fraudulent, for in nearly every instance I can envision, if you can't *do it*, you can't *teach it*, either.

Yesterday, I drove down the I-15 from Claremont to an Area XII Directors' Workshop in Encinitas to be another representative of the Board (Secretary Jo Anne Hammond had already stopped by and Southern California Regional Coordinator Micki Mennet-Martin was the organizer) and had a chance to participate in the lunch-time round table discussion led by Clinician Ginny Fleming and facilities host Karen Zerlaut.

Beyond the pleasure of chatting with long-time friends and making some new acquaintances, I was struck by the wide range of participants: from someone who has been directing for less than two months to several who have been involved for decades. Yet, in the course of the discussion, the questions from the neophyte generated just as much enthusiasm, response, and advice from the group as some of the perhaps more sophisticated queries posed by others. I sense that the rest of us recognized that we were once in her shoes and were eager to provide to her the assistance that we once received ourselves.

On the two-hour drive home, I thought of this "witticism" and mulled whether it could possibly apply to ringing. As you might surmise, my

answer was a resounding, “No!” I can’t imagine someone teaching four-in-hand, the weave, or conducting without being able (1) to demonstrate those techniques adeptly and competently and (2) to recognize the proficiency level of each class member in order to teach the appropriate skills necessary to reach his/her next stage of development.

I hope that, as an organization, we can thank our clinicians such as Ginny who *can do and can teach* and contribute their time and expertise to helping others learn more about our art. Without their generous gift of time and energy, our ability to “...unite people through a musical art...” would be severely compromised. Fortunately, with the Ginnys of our organization around, our future should be secure. Perhaps a better witticism is, “If you can read this, *thank a teacher!*” Make that “...*thank a workshop clinician!*”

William L. Waggener
Editor

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