



The Twelfth Tone

The American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, Inc. - Area XII
California · ❖ Guam · ❖ Hawaii · v · Nevada

Claremont, CA

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A NOTE FROM THE ARM OF THE CHAIR

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Fifty for Fifty

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How are your plans for the year progressing? Our bell calendar is busier than it has been in years, and for that I'm excited. There is a choice of workshops in September and October, and several spring rings in March and April. And then there are our Golden JuBELLee Conferences next June and July. Several registrations have already arrived, including a group from Texas!

We have been fortunate to be able to attend events each summer, and when we get home we are faced with the challenge of incorporating new ideas into our routine. There have been times that we overwhelmed our ringers with great ideas that we had learned, and it has been politely suggested to us that the group had just mastered the new skills from the previous summer and maybe that was enough! However, we're still going to try many of the new ideas we gleaned this summer in our travels.

So, what's new for this year? After attending the High Challenge event in Anaheim in June and listening to Tim Waugh explain his rehearsal plan, we're going to spend more time on score study and preparation and finding creative ways to engage ringers' brains without actually ringing. I have some rhythm games to help adults with very little music training begin to internalize a steady beat.

From Caroline Mathis, I have more ideas on teaching music reading with our children's group. From Susan Berry, I learned more about proper technique and how it not only prevents injuries but equally important, improves the musical effect. I want to hear precise chords, not the slight raggedness that most of us accept. I want more dynamic contrast. I want more shaping of every phrase. I want each ringer to know the music so well that all eyes are on the director. I want...The list is endless, and that's the challenge for every director.

No matter what the skill level of your choir, there is always a next step on the path to musical excellence. No matter how extensive the musical training of an individual ringer, there is room for improvement, And for the absolute beginner, the sky is the limit for how much can be learned.

Events in Area XII are designed to help you and your ringers take the next step. Join with others to ring and share, especially in this year of celebration. Be a part of our **Fifty for Fifty** campaign - 50% of our membership participating in an event in our 50th anniversary year. -

Lee Waggener

NEW MEMBERS

New Members in July

Lyda Eddington
Los Angeles, CA

Cathleen Crone
Santa Monica, CA

Handbell Director
St John Lutheran Church
Covina, CA

Ronald Sims
Hope Lutheran Church
Palm Desert, CA

Cara and Paul Hartman
Green Valley Lake, CA

Darren Hoerner
Huntington Beach, CA

Emily Younger
Midway City, CA

Rebecca Younger
Midway City, CA

Julie Symington
Westminster, CA

Al Takeda
Westminster, CA

Tom Stinnett
Westminster, CA

Gary Bergstrom
Garden Grove, CA

Ann Rodriquez
Garden Grove, CA

Corinne Takeda
Garden Grove, CA

Doug Carr
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Santa Barbara, CA

Lynnelle Bilsey
Burlingame UMC
Burlingame, CA

Handbell Director
Crystal Springs School
Hillsborough, CA

Stephanie Bent
First Presbyterian Church
Petaluma, CA

Kevin Dornwell
Hilo, HI

New Members in August

Arthur Yeghikyan
International School of Music
Glendale, CA

Lisa Cooper
Monrovia, CA

Haroldo Alvarez
San Diego Academy
National City, CA

Joan Mekler
Oceanside, CA

Ken Herman
First Unitarian Universalist Church
San Diego, CA

David Medina
Hemet, CA

Laura Fonville
Moreno Valley, CA

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The Twelfth Tone
October - November, 2003

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ADVERTISING RATES

| | Single <u>Run</u> | Annual <u>(6 issues)</u> |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Full Page Ad <small>(Up to but not larger than 7.25"W x 9.75"H)</small> | \$75.00 | \$375.00 |
| Half Page Ad <small>(Up to but not larger than 7.25"W x 4.75"H or 3.5"W x 9.75"H)</small> | \$45.00 | \$225.00 |
| Quarter Page Ad <small>(Up to but not larger than 7.25"W x 2.25"H or 3.5"W x 4.75"H)</small> | \$22.50 | \$112.50 |

Camera-ready advertising copy is due on the tenth of each odd-numbered month for publication in the following even-numbered month (e. g., the deadline for the February issue is January 10).

OVERTONES REVISITED



In this series celebrating the 50th Anniversary of AGEHR, we are reprinting articles of historical interest from the early days of the organization's existence. The following article by Willard H. Markey appeared in the July-August, 1985 issue of **OVERTONES**. It has been retyped verbatim as it appeared in

that issue but without the four historic photos that also accompanied the text.

THE FIRST AMERICAN ENGLISH HANDBELLS

Historical records indicate that the first handbell was made by Robert Cor at Aldbourne, Wilts, England about 1694. He was joined by his brother William in 1696 and the craft was later passed on to other members of the family who carried it on until the mid-1700's. The work was later taken over by Robert Wells and his sons, whose bells were identified by the initials RW inside the casting.

As time went on, other foundries began producing handbells for a growing market. According to the late Frederick Sharpe, who had an extensive collection of early handbells, there were some 60 founder of handbells from the days of Robert Cor up to the mid 1960s. Some of the early handbells, which were used to practice change ringing, can still be found in churches in England and America where towers housed rings of bells, and in bell museums and among bell collectors. Although the leather handles may be cracked and worn from age and use, and the clappers may need repair, the bell castings are generally in good condition and provide fine examples of the early bellcraftsman's art.

It was not until the development of the modern machine lathe that handbells began to develop into musical instruments. By using the lathe to turn the bell castings down to pitch it was possible to raise the quality of tuning, increase the musical range and produce bells in the quantity to meet the growing demand. Handbells began to be identified with music and ringing teams were heard in performances in the towns and villages.

With the sound of handbells ringing throughout the concert halls in England, it was only natural that before long the sound would bridge the Atlantic and be heard in America.

Historians do not agree as to which was the first ringing band to perform before an American audience, or who was instrumental in bringing the first English handbell team to this country. One of the most colorful stories concerns the great showman, P. T. Barnum and the Lancashire Bell Ringers. In Barnum's autobiography, "The Life of P. T. Barnum", written by himself, we find this extract:

"Having heard, while in London in 1844, of a company of 'Campanalogians, or Lancashire Bell Ringers,' perform in Ireland, I induced them to meet me in Liverpool, and there engaged them for an American Tour. One of my stipulations was that they should suffer their moustaches to grow, assume a picturesque dress, and be known as the 'Swiss Bell Ringers'. They at first objected, in the broad and almost unintelligible dialect of Lancashire, because, as they said, they spoke only the English language and could not pass muster as Swiss people; but the objection was withdrawn when I assured them that if they continued to speak in America, as they had just spoken to me, they might safely claim to be Swiss or anything else and no one would be any the wiser."

"As in other cases, so in this, the deception as to the birthplace was of small account, and did no injury. Those seven men were really admirable performers, and by means of their numerous bells of various sizes, they produced the most delicious music. They attracted much attention in various parts of the United States, and in Cuba".

Barnum's billing of this group as the "Swiss Bell Ringers" appears to be the source of the historical misnomer that handbells started in Switzerland and that bell choirs are Swiss in origin.

During the height of the vaudeville era many professional handbell groups were active in North America. Such names as the Peak Family Bell Ringers, the Spauldings, the Sawyers, the Shipp Brothers, the Royal English Bell Ringers and other groups of "Swiss Bell Ringers" appeared on billboards across the land. It was the increased demand for handbells for the vaudeville trade that brought American foundries into the business of producing them.

In 1866, the Mayland Company in Brooklyn, N. Y., which produced organ chimes, also

OVERTONES REVISITED, continued

entered the field. Using castings supplied by Bevin Brother of East Hampton, Connecticut, Mayland offered sets of up to five full octaves. The Mayland bell was unique in that, unlike bells made in England, the clapper was recessed so that the bell could be set upright on a table without being tilted by a protruding clapper. Their bell was also provided with a metal strip to reinforce the leather handle and make it more rigid. Another distinguishing mark of the Mayland bell was its nickel-plated finish. Scott Parry, in his book "The Story of Handbells" published by Whittmore, states that the nickel-plating was part of the tuning process - that the bells were turned flat on the lather and then plated to bring them up to pitch. In this way, they were able to control the pitch by the thickness of the nickel-plating. Several years ago I had the opportunity of talking with Mr. Stan Mayland who was associated with that firm, and I questioned him about that procedure. He could not confirm that plating was part of their tuning process. Although the concept of tuning by plating appears to be valid, apparently it was not used for that purpose.

Another firm entering the handbell field about that time was the J. C. Deagan Company in Chicago, Illinois, which offered not only sets of Deagan "Swiss Hand Bells" ranging from 15 to 61 bells, but they were also available in low pitch (A-435), or high pitch (A-440) to conform with the new standard being adopted by other musical instrument manufacturers. The Deagan catalog of the early 1900s listed a full set of five octaves (61 bells) C to C, at a price of \$350.00. The Deagan handbell was quite similar to that being produced in England and had leather handles, handguards, clappers, etc. The handles had metal reinforcing strips and the bells were nickel-plated. J. C. Deagan obtained an American patent on the clapper mechanism in

spite of the fact it was almost identical to its English predecessor.

In addition, Deagan offered Four-In-Hand bells, Top Bells, Arch Bells, and a line of Electrically Operated Musical Bells, all primarily designed for the vaudeville trade.

Deagan's main thrust after World War I was the Mallet Percussions which were very big in vaudeville in those days. Organ Percussions and the new Tabular Tower Bells - and away from the large assortment of "novelty instruments, which included handbells and other types of instrument having vaudeville application.

The Street Company of Hartford, Connecticut was also a producer of handbells during the pre-World War I era. Little information on their bells is available and few, if any, examples of their work remain.

With the advent of the radio, the talkies and TV, and the demise of vaudeville, the "Swiss Bell Ringers" and their handbells faded from the entertainment scene. The first era of handbell ringing and the first American-made English handbells became history.

It was not until Margaret Shurcliffe (*sic*) started the Christmas Eve tradition of ringing carols on Beacon Hill in 1926 that the first small spark of revival was lit. Her Beacon Hill Ringers were the first of a new generation of ringers which helped fire a new surge of interest in handbell ringing which has continued to burn brighter each succeeding year.

The above article appears in **OVERTONES 1955-1986**, an anthology of the first 32 years of its publication which was created and printed in 1987. Copies are still available from the National Office in Dayton.

REGIONAL REPORTS



San Francisco Bay Area Report

Tammy Raetz bay_area@areaxii.org

The fall handbell season started at Valley Church in Cupertino, with the annual Directors' and Advancing Ringers' Seminar on September 20, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Special clinicians this year included Missy and Jukka Vainio of Sonos, with classes in Fixing the Holes (techniques for

making runs smooth and much more) and Ensemble Ringing; Lesley Schneider, who taught an African rhythm class; plus popular clinicians Dave and Dian Ruder and Larry Sue, who taught classes in change-ringing, solo ringing, and bass bells. West Coast Handbell Supply was on hand for shopping needs. This event just gets better and better every year!

Over the summer, performances in the Bay Area

REGIONAL REPORTS, continued

included Michèle Sharik's solo handbell recitals (accompanied by a variety of instrumentalists), Canto Bello in Lafayette, Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church's annual concert, and Sonos at the St. Luke's Sunset Series and Old First Concert Series.

Outside our borders, it was a busy summer for many Bay Area handbell folks...Canto Bello took their bells on a mission trip to Bosnia, Velocity took their Inspirations multimedia show on tour to the Midwest, where they were enthusiastically received, Dave and Dian Ruder attended the Loire Valley Handbell Festival (the first ever handbell festival in France!), Ruben Mendoza went to Scotland for the Ringing Week in Dunblane, William Kyle, Jeannine Schwartz of Bay Bells and several others rang at Zephyr (Tahoe), Jason and Diane Tiller performed solos and duets at a concert series in Southern California, Sonosians Erin Downey, Melissa Rossi and Michèle Sharik attended the Solo to Ensemble Extravaganza in Colorado Springs, and several local ringers including Norma Rose, P.L. Grove and yours truly cruised with Tim Waugh and the Bells of the Cascades to Alaskan ports of call. This just goes to show that we can combine our love of bells with any kind of vacation, just about anywhere!

Whenever ringers go to outside events, they bring back two things of value to our local handbell community: new or improved skills and perspective. Nothing will help the art grow faster than for us to rub shoulders with ringers from other choirs and areas, exchanging ideas, solutions, and new techniques. At the local level this takes place at our annual festivals in February (Oakland) and March (Cupertino), and these offer excellent networking and planning opportunities for ringers as well as directors.

But it's a well-known fact that handbell events are like potato chips...just a taste leads to a craving for more! Now is the time to plan for the upcoming must-attend events on this year's AGEHR calendar: Pinnacle (January 15-18, Dallas, TX) for advanced, community, and professional ensembles; the June 2004 Area XII Festivals in Ontario and Hawaii with David Davidson conducting; and the AGEHR's 50th Anniversary Celebration in Norfolk, VA in July, 2004. The rewards are worth the effort, especially the dividends of friendship, fellowship, musicality, and growth. Have bells? Will travel!

Los Angeles Metro Report

Shirley Heckman la_metro@areaxii.org



It's not too late to sign up for the October 11th, 9am-3pm, Directors' Workshop at Mid Cities Baptist Church in Westminster in Orange

County. Led by Bill and Lee Waggener, this Workshop will show new and experienced handbell directors "Simple Ways to Improve Your Bell Choir." For the cost of \$25 in advance, or \$28 at the door, participants will learn from the morning workshop and the afternoon reading session. Lunch will be on your own in nearby restaurants. Send your check made out to "AGEHR Area XII" and your registration form, following in this TWELFTH TONE, to me at PO Box 527, La Verne, CA 91750. This will definitely be worth your time!

Each month, Area XII members in the LA Metro area receive by e-mail a Newsletter with up-to-date information with a Calendar of Events. It is easy to get--just send a note to <la_metro@areaxii.org>. All directors and ringers are invited to subscribe. When you change your e-mail address, be sure to send in your new address to continue receiving the Newsletter.

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

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Area XII-Sponsored Fall Workshops

Santa Clarita, CA
 September 20, 2003
Grace Baptist Church
 Santa Clarita, CA

Cupertino, CA
 September 20, 2003
Valley Church
 Cupertino, CA

Reno NV
 October 4, 2003
South Reno UMC
 Reno, NV

Garden Grove, CA
 October 11, 2003
Garden Grove UMC
 Garden Grove, CA

with clinicians:

Lee and Bill Waggener

*Lesley Schneider,
 Larry Sue,
 David and Dian Ruder,
 Missy Vainio, and
 Jukka Vainio*

Mary Balkow

Lee and Bill Waggener

Cost:
 \$25 in advance,
 \$28 at the door

Cost:
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Cost:
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 \$28 at the door

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RUDY'S ROOST

The Care and Feeding of Ringers Part 6: *Are you conducting? Or teaching? Or just waving your arms?*

Many moons ago when the giant sequoias were just saplings and the City of Angels was still just a mission, I started conducting handbells. Shortly after taking responsibility for leading my precocious musical minions, I realized that I needed some additional training in conducting to this unique musical machine. So I attended every handbell director seminar and workshop within pony express distance of my house and even a couple farther away.

In that quest for the golden fleece of handbell knowledge, I had the good fortune of meeting and learning from two very different clinicians. One, who really needs no introduction to anyone who has ever pick-up a handbell in their lives, we'll just call him Mr. Don, was an exacting conductor but also a consummate teacher. The other individual, we'll call him Mr. T, was also an excellent conductor and directed a very large bell program of several choirs in his church.

At Mr. Don's seminar, we started with hours and hours of handbell technique drills. He would carefully and slowly describe the "Technique of the Hour." He would demonstrate the technique. Then he would have us practice the technique, and practice the technique and practice the technique still more until even us slow learners actually learned it. Then Mr. Don would move on to the next handbell technique. When we finally got around to ringing from sheet music, Mr. Don would demonstrate yet another handbell technique and show us in the music where we would need that particular technique to properly ring a certain problem (or challenging) passage. Then we would practice that passage of music with our newly mastered technique until we could hear the music come out.

At Mr. T's seminar, we rang and banged bells trying to make music while trying to keep up with Mr. T's baton. Since most of us in attendance were handbell **directors** and not handbell **ringers**, our feeble attempts at sight reading at tempo left something to be desired. Actually, it left a lot to be desired including music. Mr. T was not satisfied with our bell banging (no surprise there) so he had us ring it starting at Bar 1 again, and again, and again. Trouble was, Mr. T didn't tell us how to fix the problems which we all could readily hear. "Just ring it again, and get it right this time" was his only admonition.

At the end of each seminar we gave a final concert. Have you ever noticed how we "give a concert" as if it

were a gift being presented to the audience? Anyway, the seminars ended in concerts. We had very different reactions to our performance at the closing concerts. In one concert, we felt satisfied with our results even though it was not "note perfect." In the other concert, we felt unsatisfied with our effort and even frustrated. Both men conducted their concerts equally well, but both men did not prepare their choirs for the concerts equally well.

Most of us conduct church choirs or community choirs which means that our ringers are volunteers. That is to say, they are not "professional musicians" with degrees from the likes of the New York School of Music. This is not necessarily bad, but it does present special challenges to you, Master Conductor, to prepare these hearty volunteers to make music with handbells. True, your intrepid, novice ringer may have played the tuba in high school, but that is not quite the training needed to ring "Passacaglia" with 6 octaves of bells. So who is going to prepare and teach your young "Padawan Learners" how to control the Force of the Bell, if not you? Who is standing in front of the class/choir, but you? Who do the ringers look up for leadership and answers, if not you?

Like it or not, with the baton of the conductor also comes the chalk stick of the teacher. Can you wield both with equal dexterity? This is why in my last column I suggested that you join a bell choir across town so that you could gain that invaluable teaching asset of "hands-on" experience of ringing bells. There is no better foundation from which to build your teaching syllabus than that of intimate, first-hand experience with the subject matter. In this case: handbell **ringing**.

My learning experience under Mr. Don's baton was much more rewarding, productive and satisfying than my experience under Mr. T's baton. I believe that you will find that your ringers will respond better to lesson plans than lectures on incorrectness. Your ringers *want* to learn and *want* to ring better. So give them the lessons, Master Conductor/Teacher, by which they can improve. Teach first, conduct later.

Next time, we will talk tackle the question: "How do ringers learn?" Answer that question and you will be better equipped in "**The Care and Feeding of Ringers.**" - *Rudy Rodriguez, Conductor/Teacher*

Pithy saying for the day:

*"Success comes before work only in the dictionary."
Anonymous*

IMHO: ARE HANDBELL CONCERTS TOO LONG?

I have a good friend, Mike, who is a terrific musician and one who has auditioned for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. As a fellow teacher he has had many opportunities to hear my school handbell ensembles. After each concert he would hang around to give me some excellent feedback on our performance which included student presentation, skill growth and musicality of the ringing.

One day, Mike's review included a statement I have never forgotten. It went something like this: "Dave, your handbell groups play very well, with enthusiasm, good technique and excellent musicality. But for some reason, I quickly grow tired of the handbell sound and lose interest." That was a shock and got me to thinking. Why should a fine musician like Mike find our handbell playing boring?

As a lover of handbells and intensely involved in the art, I examined my own reactions to some handbell concerts. I too found myself suffering from TOS, the Tuned Out Syndrome. During concerts my mind would start to wander towards other thoughts. At times I began to wish the concert was over, yet there were still five or six pieces left on the program. Then, invariably, there would be an encore added to the program "by demand".

"Why was my mind tuning out?" I reflected. "Had I grown tired of hearing handbells or was there some more intrinsic problem with the concerts themselves?"

IMHO here are some of my conclusions.

*Handbells, like many other instruments, have a limited tone color. Symphony orchestras or bands have many tone color possibilities. Each different instrument or combination of instruments produces a different hue. The combination of a flute and oboe, for example, produces a timbre that is different than the combination of a flute and clarinet or flute and bassoon and so forth. The combination of a flute, oboe and clarinet produces still another tone shade. In the hands of a master orchestrator like Ravel, Rimsky-Korsakoff or Stravinsky the variety of combinations is enormous. This palette of colors builds enormous interest in the music.

Extended handbell concerts that utilize the one tone color of bells can grow tiring. To help the listener avoid the TOS, handbell teams have integrated the color of handchimes. In addition, savvy directors have added voices, speech or other instruments in combination with the bells. The bells do not always have to be featured in a piece of music, just as the piano is not always featured in a piano concerto, but frequently takes an accompaniment role or tacit break.

*Wonderful concerts make use of a variety of techniques. A violinist, for example, can use the bow in many different ways to produce interesting sounds and effects. These are carefully designed to interpret and add to the musicality of the piece. Handbell musicians have several different techniques they can use to produce interesting sounds as well. Articulations like marts, mallets, and plucks must rarely be used just for effect. A good director and composer/arranger will use these various executions to interpret the music, rather than startle the audience. These limited techniques can add interest to the concert.

*Creative concerts develop a theme, provide a variety of music and have tension and release just as good music does. A concert of three to five minute pieces of similar character and style can grow tiresome. By similar character we mean, for example, many slower pieces (or faster pieces played too slow); one piece after another filled with arpeggios, or big fat chords, or major tonalities; a series of pieces that are under-rehearsed or too hard for the ensemble, whether played by one group or a number of groups. These are just a few of the possibilities that make for a dull concert program.

*Too much of the concert time devoted to non-musical events can prove deadly. Any concert where the director, or his/her surrogate, speaks longer than the music lasts is likely to create a TOS with the audience. Directors may be forgiven one or two extended talks where they introduce an unusual piece, the performers, or some special aspect of handbells, but the pardon is limited. There seems to be an unspoken rule that the director will speak until the handbell ensemble is ready for the next piece. It's far better to keep the program moving by intensely rehearsing the bell set-ups between pieces in advance. Sometimes the changes can be very interesting to the audience much like the fascinating quick set changes in a Broadway musical.

So, what's the conclusion? Many handbell concerts are too long, maybe most. It is far better to leave the audience wanting more than feeling they have endured a marathon. Those who suffer from TOS will likely lose their desire to attend another handbell concert. Handbell ensembles do not have to perform everything they have ever rehearsed. Choosing fewer pieces gives them an opportunity to prepare well, creates an interesting program and provides some fascinating color with a variety of attractive music and techniques. If the program seems too short, perform a joint concert with another group, but above all else, remember that your audience may not be made up of rabid handbell aficionados who would listen well into the night. Remember the first time you heard Bach? - *Dave Ruder*

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Area XII-Sponsored Spring Rings

Atascadero/SLO Spring Ring

March 20, 2004

Lee and Bill Waggener,
clinicians

TBA
Atascadero, CA

Contact: Shirley Werner
shiple712@charter.net

LA Metro Spring Ring

March 27, 2004

Lee and Bill Waggener,
clinicians

The Church of the Brethren
2175 Bonita, La Verne, CA

Contact: Shirley Heckman
a_metro@areaxii.org

Southern California Spring Ring

May 13, 2004

David and Dian Ruder,
clinicians

St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church
1945 Illion Street, San Diego, CA

Contact: Micki Mennet-Martin
Mennet@aol.com

Join other members of Area XII at one of these Spring Rings! E-mail the respective contact person for registration fees and deadlines, the music list, and any other relevant information.

AREA XII COMMUNITY CHOIRS

At the end of August, we emailed an invitation to all Area XII members whose data contains "community" to share their experiences with community choirs - an important facet of our organization which has not received a lot of attention. So far, two members have responded: Rima Greer of Campanile, Los Angeles, CA and Meridith Rosendahl, Director of the Lake Almanor Handbell Ensemble, Chester/Lake Almanor, CA. We would be delighted to add the responses of other Area XII community choirs in subsequent issues.
- wlw

(a) **Why does your community choir exist?**

RG: Because we wanted to see just how far we could go with bells into the mainstream music and theatre market. And because it's more fun than chocolate.

And because we see bells as a young art, as a challenge, an opportunity to invent something new every time we design a new show. As far as I know, we were the first to take the covers off our tables. We were the first to do rock 'n roll with bells and drums. We were the first to dance with our bells (REALLY dance, not just bop around.) We were the first to make a CD with all original music, with full orchestration, and the first to chart on an international airplay chart. Bells give us the creative outlet that we were all seeking. And we're not done yet! ;-D

MR: 1. Shared Vision: The Chester Community Chorus [including the Lake Almanor Bells] is a unique musical community that is significant to the cultural identity of the Lake Almanor Basin and surrounding area.

2. Mission Statement: The Chester Community Chorus offers:

- * musical enrichment for the Lake Almanor Basin and surrounding areas.
- * an avenue for individual and group musical expression and education.
- * An opportunity for social and emotional growth and support.

(b) **When, where, and how did your community choir get started?**

RG: Around 1986, at a late night reunion of a former bell choir called Freedom Rings. Kat, Roger, Kris, and Ron (who had all been with F.R. in high school) lamented how much they missed the bells and had dreams of doing much MUCH more.... Kris called me the next morning.... I had been a musician all my life, but I had never seen bells before. We borrowed some bells until we could buy our own and started hustling jobs. The rest is history. ;-D

MR: In 1991 the existing Community Chorus desired to have an instrumental group integrated into the chorus organization and director, Irene Burkey, instigated the purchase of 3 octaves of Schulmerich handbells. Since then the 4th octave, the F and F#3, and 2 octaves of chimes have been added.

(c) **Who are your current members (ringers and director), and how did they join your group?**

RG: Campanile has no "Director". It functions like workshop theatre. We all work together to create our show. However, within that structure, we each have

AREA XII COMMUNITY CHOIRS, continued

responsibilities where the buck stops. This is based on mutual respect for each person's unique abilities.

KatRyn Howell (Music Director, Tour Director), Roger Bowerman (Producer, Script Writer), Rima Greer (Composer/Arranger, Choreographer, Costume Designer), Kris Kennedy (Acting Coach, Wardrobe), Terry Halvorson (Instrumental Consultant, Equipment Maintenance).

Kat, Roger, Kris, and Rima are all founding partners and co-own the Company. Terry has just moved from being a longtime Swing Player to become First Team Player and is creating his own role in our new show. Campanile also employs various understudies who are ringers and backup musicians, who play other instruments. (Understudies are people who have learned the show and worked with us extensively, but cannot make the full time commitment. It is not possible to come in the day before and "sub" in our show.)

Everyone in the group must ring the entire set of bells and chimes, play 4 different 4IH techniques, backring, and weave. We have no set assignments, our bells are not set chromatically, and we change assignments between each piece - and even during pieces! In addition, everyone must be proficient in dance and perform spoken word. All of our music is memorized, so we're free to leave the tables and dance.

MR: We are a mutigenerational group composed of 9-14 ringers. Our youngest ringer is 12, the oldest 65+. We have 4 teenagers ringing, some 40+, the rest older. Several of the older ringers have been ringing since the beginning in 1991. One 15 year old boy joined when he was 12. The others, 12 and 14 year old girls, and a 15 year old boy, joined a year ago. Membership is by invitation. New ringers may express an interest - in the case of the kids it's "can I please ring?????" and members are given minimal instruction to get them started. It's on the job training in our short season. Presently our ringers number 11. Our youngest girl is so small she must stand on a box to ring.

The director has been ringing and directing since 1976 or 1977, beginning with ringing (as a short, 30+ year old adult) with a youth handbell choir at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Goleta, CA. In 1978, was invited to form an adult choir and directed and later rang with this group. Also directed adult choir at Trinity Lutheran Church, Santa Barbara. Began as director for Lake Almanor Bells (after retiring in Santa Barbara) in 1997).

(d) What sort of repertoire does your community choir present and where do you usually perform?

RG: Campanile performs all contemporary music from our own arrangements or from original scores that we write or have written for us. We make our choices based on several criteria: how much WE like the music, how much we think our audience will like the music, how the music will help us tell the story we are telling (more about this below). We try to do a nice mix of music that will be familiar to make our audiences comfortable, with music that will be new to their ears to make them stretch a little.

Campanile's shows are not just concerts, they are a complete theatrical experience that tell a story with a beginning, middle and end. They incorporate a LOT of dancing and spoken word. You'll notice that we have an 'instrumental consultant' - that's because we are in the process of incorporating many more instruments into our show. At the moment, we are touring Nocturnal Journeys until early 2004, and then we'll begin presenting our new show, Rites of Sound: A Mystic Vision.

We present our shows almost exclusively in theatres now, usually at colleges. And the new show that we're opening will be available only in theatres or at least in spaces where there is adequate lighting to present our theatrical experience. We will also have a smaller show available for small, midweek venues.

In addition to our big shows, we do about 100 educational shows a year through various arts outreach organizations like the Orange County Center for the Performing Arts. We have another show that's designed specifically for schools that we use for these performances. It's very rewarding to be able to bring live music to kids and teach them a thing or two as well!

MR: We recently became associated with Feather River College, Quincy, CA. We have 2 "semesters" per year composed of 11 weeks of rehearsals ending with 4 concerts the first full weekend in December and 3 concerts the 3rd full weekend of May. We rehearse twice a week for 1.5 hours. Our part of the concert (the rest being vocal) consists of 3 numbers consistent with the theme of the concert. December concert theme is Christmas/Hanukkah. May concert theme may be folk, Broadway (as it will be this coming spring), "love", Americana, "up in the air" (anything off the ground - we did the Theme from Batman, Sunrise, Sunset, and "Praise and Reflection" - a bit of a stretch there). We rehearse and perform in the Chester United Methodist Church, from whom we rent space, it being the only place in our small town large enough and willing to put up with us.

(e) Where do you rehearse, who owns the bells and equipment on which you perform, and how is your group supported financially?

AREA XII COMMUNITY CHOIRS, continued

RG: Heh. Campanile is supported solely by its performance fees and CD/DVD sales. We rehearse and store our equipment in the fellowship hall of a church where we pay rent (they're very kind there, and don't charge us much!) We own our own bells, tables, microphones, cargo van, V-drums, keyboards, mixer, speakers, sets, and costumes. We also have a storage space that we rent that holds our equipment that we don't use in rehearsal every day, like the V-drums, keyboards, and sound board.

We have this terrible habit of dreaming big dreams for our shows and CDs and are ridiculously in debt. We pay all our performers per show... but not close to what they're worth. It's about making art, not making money. Would be nice to pay down some of the credit cards someday though.... Not likely with this new show coming up. We have an art director to pay, and 5 more mics to buy....

MR: As stated, we rehearse in the Chester United Methodist Church. Our bells and all equipment is owned by the Chester Community Chorus. We are supported by donations from Patrons and from our association with Feather River College.

(f) **What advice would you offer to anyone (director or ringer) who would like to begin a community choir?**

RG: Find an Identity. Your bells are not who you are.

What makes you different from the church choir down the street? Why should someone who doesn't give a rat's patootie about bells come see you play? Until you can answer these questions, ringing will never move beyond being a novelty, and you'll have a hard time putting anything but hardcore bell-enthusiasts in your concert hall.

MR: In our community, there are many musically talented individuals not associated with any particular church, or who are associated with a church but who love to sing and/or ring and who welcome the opportunity to do this. We have singers/ringers who are churchd, unchurched, and some who are athiests. We welcome them all, and all have played a vital part in the growth of our Chester Community Chorus family. Not exactly advice, but as close as I can come since I've never started a community choir.

THE SPRING RING: FUTURE ISSUES

On April 5, 2003, the Sacramento area annual Spring Ring celebrated its 20th anniversary, which Lee and I were privileged to attend. Approximately 10 years ago, Paul Allen wrote three articles that appeared in The Twelfth Tone of that era which he has agreed to submit again. This series is presented in commemoration of this anniversary and in hope of encouraging others to establish similar, long-running events in Area XII. - whw

Our "Spring Ring" has been very successful. We anticipate that it will continue for many years to come.

This does not mean, however, that there are no issues facing us as we head into the future. There are crucial directorial issues, at least five.

Publicity is a major concern. With so many choirs interested in participating in the event and so many ringers whom we can accommodate, audiences increase also. More people show for our concerts, but attendance is not what we would wish. Our art is still a poorly-kept secret.

We need one person, possibly a paid associate or a dedicated committee, who will be in charge of publicizing the Spring Ring and the handbell choirs participating in it. Publicity releases, setting up interviews, contacting the local media, announcing our projects, and communicating our availability should be the object of this resource.

Second, we are concerned about *the education of our ringers*. During one Spring Ring, we tried to hold ringing workshops. The time and facility were inconvenient. We have not yet amplified this idea, even though we think it's a virtuous one. We have discussed extending the Spring Ring through Friday evening, thus affording us additional time to hold ringing classes.

Some of our ringers (and directors) are beginners. They need encouragement in a festival setting. Some of our ringers are advanced and experienced. They need alternate challenges set before them. Yet we have not been able to provide these special needs.

Third, we need *new works* commissioned for our event. This costs money. To pay for these new works would be prohibitive, but their presence annually would be a great draw. Heretofore, one of our directors every year has offered his arrangements or new compositions to the Spring Ring for free, and this has been a boon.

Fourth, we need to determine *our event range*. We have not resolved whether we are going to be a small event with 35 choirs at most or a larger event such as the regional festivals. This decision affects our concept of ourselves. Are we local in influence, or do we have a broader artistic witness to make? If we are

THE SPRING RING: FUTURE ISSUES, continued

a small affair, then we can limit our program offerings simply because of our size. If, however, we are a larger operation, then the range of choices must be expanded - and with that come consequences which involve the time and resources of the host directors.

Finally, there is the problem which lurks at the edges of *all* handbell events. It is an issue which bodes division within directors' associations and argument up and down the table. To my knowledge, it has not been addressed at the regional or national level, but it is real, and it is present in the minds and hearts of all those with a bell in their hand. We must address whether handbell ringing and the events which feature handbell ringing are or are not *religiously oriented*.

At the Spring Ring, twice we have had prayer. Once, this was a unilateral decision by the massed director before the first rehearsal. Another time, it was at the beginning of the concert and with the invitation of the President of HANDS in thanks to Pastor Glen Cole and Capital Christian Center.

That we have done this twice is neither boasting nor confession of a fault. It is a statement of fact without editorial. Some ringers complain that we should pray at the beginning of every Ring. They argue that the Spring Ring is a *Christian* celebration. I disagree, though it may feel primarily *religious*. Other ringers acknowledge that the Ring is principally a *musical* event, that demonstrated faith and adoration of the Godhead is peripheral to or permutes the event.

Both arguments are correct. Those participating from *church handbell choirs* feel that their participation is more significant than common. School participants - and there are increasing numbers of these - come *only* for the music. They should not have to be confronted with a religious attitude they don't share, didn't buy into when they registered for the event, and don't appreciate when they arrive at the Ring. Church participants come for the transcendent affirmation of Jesus as Lord and Savior which music lifts up, and unfortunately they, being in the majority, pressure others to have they same experience they do. I admit that these believers shouldn't be called on to quell what is important in their lives simply because of the religiously squeamish.

This is not a pleasant discussion. It does not quickly lead to resolution. The issues are too deeply felt to be argued rationally. They lead almost immediately to impasse. AGEHR and Area XII have not, to my knowledge, addressed the issue, probably because semi-consciously they realize the inflammability of

the sides. Rather, let us "let bygones be gone" and simply promote an event (musical or religious *in the minds of individuals*) which is meaningful by whatever standard.

That I have brought up this issue may bring out clicking of tongues. "If you had only kept quiet," some might argue, "no one would have been the wiser." I disagree with this attitude. Others may argue, however, that we are a mature musical community *and also* a believing congregation who make music. The two can coexist. They can happen at the same time. Lovingly. Here, there is paradox, and that is O.K.

I subscribe to the latter point-of-view. I am certain this perspective is not widespread, else why the silence? Maybe the Spring Ring, in its unique position as a successful *small* festival of handbell ringers can break ground toward meeting this issue head-on. Maybe not. - Paul Allen

are needed to see this picture.

CHORAL MUS

HOW CAN I SERVE AREA XII?

"How can I serve Area XII?" Surely, that's a question that has been burning in your heart since you joined the Guild many long years, or months, or weeks ago.

Actually there are several ways to answer that question, but the focus of this article is becoming part of the administrative leadership: the Area XII Board of Directors. Although the specific position responsibilities are delineated in much more detail in our By-Laws, the following should give you a general idea of what each officer does to make Area XII work.

Next spring, the biennial election of new officer must take place. Offices that become vacant each term are Chair-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. [The existing Chair-Elect becomes the current Chair, and the existing Chair assumes the position of Past-Chair, so those particular offices are filled by default.] One of the duties of the Past-Chair is to lead a committee to nominate two candidates for each of these three elective positions - candidates who have the time, expertise, and the ability to commit their talents to serving in these capacities.

Among other things, the Chair-Elect is responsible for securing faculty for educational events sponsored by Area XII including Directors' Workshops and Ringers' Conferences. The Chair's responsibilities include planning and leading Board meetings, overseeing the business of the Area, and generally keeping tabs on what's happening at the local, Area, and national levels. As Past-Chair, that person's duties include organizing the logistics for the Board meetings, overseeing the election, and serving as advisor as needed.

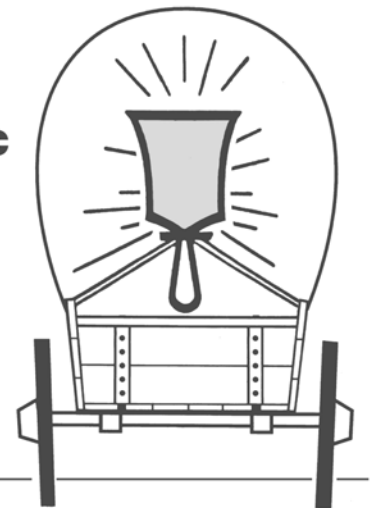
The Secretary is responsible for taking and disseminating official minutes of the Board meetings and keeping an accurate record of all business conducted in those meetings. In addition, a less formal summary of each meeting is prepared for publication in **The Twelfth Tone** so that the membership is kept well informed of the Board's activities. The Treasurer is responsible for all financial matters of the Area including maintaining the various bank and savings accounts and preparing and submitting the various state and federal reports necessary to maintain Area XII's non-profit status.

Beyond these elective offices are the Appointive Offices, which may change over time as the needs of Area XII may require. At present, the appointive offices include Membership Chair, **Twelfth Tone** Editor, Conference Chair(s), Bells in Education Chair, seven Regional Coordinators, a Special Groups Liaison, and an Electronic Liaison. Their duties are essentially reflected in their titles: the Membership Chair receives membership data from the national office regarding new and expired membership and disseminates that information to the Regional Coordinators. **The Twelfth Tone** Editor is responsible for soliciting meaningful contributions for publication in the Area's newsletter for the benefit of the membership and their handbell activities. Each Ringers' Conference Chair is

responsible for planning the framework for the next Ringers' Conference which may involve working on site selection, catering contracts, facilities arrangements, etc. The Bells in Education Chair is the caretaker of the several sets of bells and choirchimes owned by Area XII that are dedicated for loan to schools to encourage the use of handbells in music education. The Regional Coordinators are the heart and soul of communication between the Board and the membership because they are responsible, among

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other things, for organizing and hosting local handbell events such as Directors' Workshops and Spring Rings. Additionally, the Regional Coordinators assist the Membership Chair in contacting new members to invite them to Guild activities and contacting former members either to invite them back into the fold or perhaps to confirm

HOW CAN I SERVE AREA XII, continued?

that Guild membership is no longer appropriate for their current circumstances. The Special Groups Liaison serves mainly as a contact person for handbell directors working with ringers with unique physical and/or mental needs, and the Electronic Liaison's most important role is that of Webmaster for the Area XII internet site.

In addition to these appointive offices outlined in the By-Laws, liaisons with almost any role can be appointed at any time. These positions are not actually members of the Board but rather work to assist someone holding one of the Board positions. An excellent example would be someone living in a city within one of the regions helping that Regional Coordinator organize and host handbell events within that city.

Where do YOU fit in these various roles?

Are you willing to be nominated for an elective office on next spring's ballot? If so, *please let Cheryl Baker, Past-Chair, know of your interest and those special talents you might have to offer.*

If not an elective office, would you be interested in serving in an appointive capacity? If so, *please let either Lee Waggener, current Chair, or David Ruder, Chair-Elect, know of your interest and talents.*

Can you serve as a local liaison? If so, *please contact your Regional Coordinator or any other member of the Board.*

Although our elected officers have specific term limits, the appointive offices must be reassigned annually. We have been extremely fortunate to have some elective and appointive officers serve for long periods of time, but all good things must sooner or later come to an end, and periodically these great people must be replaced as their life's commitments change. Unfortunately, the Board isn't likely to be aware of your interest in serving unless YOU let someone know. In a volunteer organization such as ours, new blood is enthusiastically welcome, and there is *always* room for a new face in some capacity.

Don't wait to be asked! Offer whatever time, energy, and talent you might be able to give. Some of us began our Guild involvement in rather modest ways - hosting a workshop, assisting with some small event, or setting up tables for a minifestival.

The roster of the current Board is printed on the front page of every issue of ***The Twelfth Tone***. Consider this article a personal invitation to call any member of the Board to see what you might be able to do not only for the Area XII but for yourself, as well. - wlv

FROM SARA SMITH, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR, AGEHR

2003 SALARY SURVEY

AGEHR is compiling information for a handbell director salary survey. The results of this survey will be provided to AGEHR members via our website. If you are the director of a handbell/handchime choir, please help us by participating in this effort. The survey form, along with additional information, is available on our website at www.agehr.org/links/salsurvey.asp. Also, if you know of other handbell/handchime directors who may wish to participate, you may copy this survey and distribute it to them.

SHOP to BENEFIT AGEHR

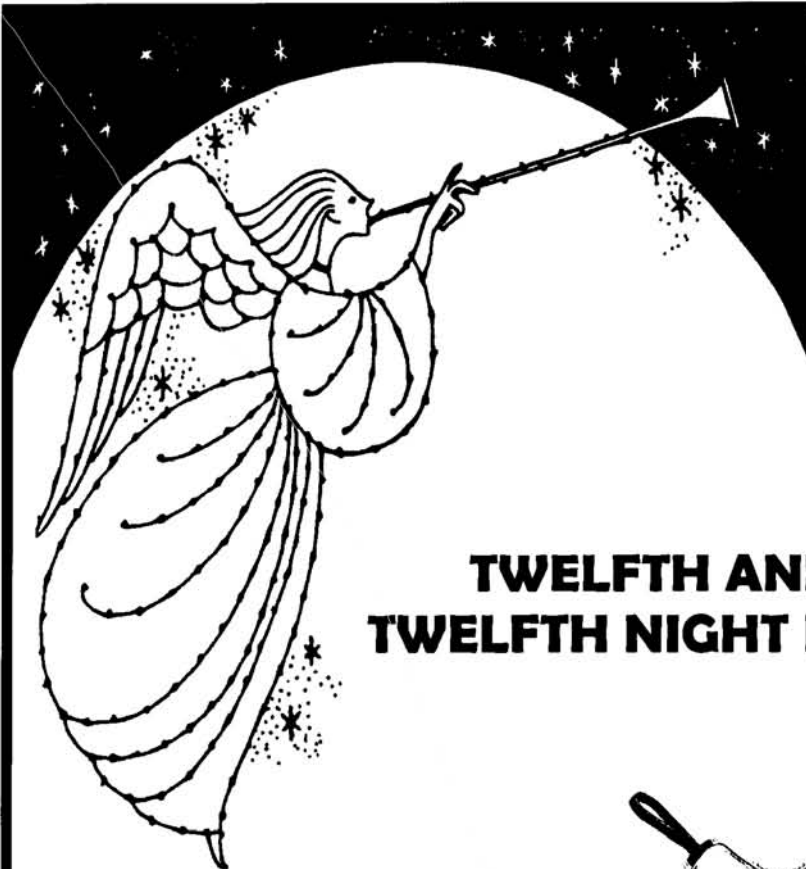
If you shop for books, music, clothing, gifts, or anything else online, a percentage of your purchases can be donated to AGEHR--and it doesn't cost you anything extra. It works like this: You shop at popular online retailers (such as Amazon, Drugstore.com, FTD, Lands End, Walmart, and many others), make the same purchases you would normally make, at the same price, and support AGEHR in the process. What a painless way to give! For links to the shopping websites or for additional information, see the AGEHR website at www.agehr.org/donations/donations.asp#mycause.

PINNACLE 2004

Pinnacle 2004, the Event for the Performing Ringer to be held January 15-18, 2004 at the Hotel Inter-Continental, Addison, TX, is designed to take handbell artistry and performance to a new level! With Pinnacle, the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers addresses the unique needs of the rapidly expanding sector of community and professional groups throughout the U.S. and beyond.

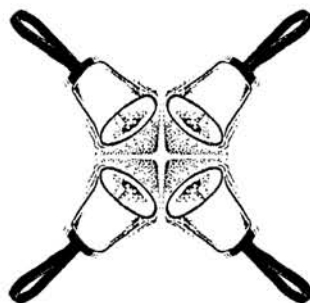
If you are a performing ringer who continually strives for excellence, who craves a greater musical and performing challenge, who wants to be inspired by the best in the business...then Pinnacle 2004 is for you!

For more information, contact the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers at: (800) 878-5459, office@agehr.org, or <http://www.agehr.org>.



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Fiftieth Anniversary
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TWELFTH NIGHT HANDBELL FESTIVAL**



When: January 10-11, 2004

Where: Las Vegas Academy of Performing Arts Gymnasium
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Festival Director: Jane Anderson, Topeka, Kansas

Cost: \$13.00 Per Ringer

Further Info: Janet Ty, (702) 363-7428
E-Mail, JYTY@aol.com
Dixie Bailey, (702) 431-9759
E-Mail, DXBAIL@earthlink.net

COMING EVENTS

| Event | Date | Clinician | Location | Cost | Contact Information |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Directors' Workshop | September 20, 2003 | Lee and Bill Waggener | Grace Baptist Church 22833 Copper Hill Drive, Santa Clarita, CA | \$25 in advance, \$28 at the door | Shirley Heckman la_metro@areaxii.org |
| Beyond The Basics Directors and Advancing Ringers Seminar | September 20, 2003 Registrat'n and Goodies at 8:00 am Classes 9:00 am - 1:00 pm | Lesley Schneider Larry Sue Dian Ruder David Ruder Missy Vainio Jukka Vainio | Valley Church 10885 No. Stelling Road Cupertino, CA 95014 | \$20 | David Ruder (408) 732-0760 chairelect@area_xii.org |
| Ringers' Workshop | October 4, 2003 | Mary Balkow | South Reno United Methodist Church 200 Despain Lane Reno, NV | | Barb Walsh nevada@areaxii.org |
| Distinctly Bronze | October 9 - 13, 2003 | Fred Gramann | Springmaid Beach, South Carolina | | www.agehr.org |
| Directors' Workshop | October 11, 2003 | Lee and Bill Waggener | Mid-Cities Baptist Church 14391 Newland Street Westminster, CA 92683 | \$25 in advance \$28 at the door | Shirley Heckman la_metro@areaxii.org |
| Southern California Twelfth Night | January 04 or 11, 2004 | | Chula Vista United Methodist Church 915 Paseo Ranchero Chula Vista | | Jo Anne Hammond johwani@aol.com |
| Twelfth Annual Las Vegas Twelfth Night Festival | January 10-11, 2004 | Jane Anderson | Las Vegas Performing Arts Academy 315 S. Seventh Street Las Vegas, NV | \$13.00 per ringer | Janet Ty (702) 363-7428 jty@aol.com Dixie Bailey (702) 431-9759 dxbail@earthlink.net |
| Hershey Explo | January 8-11, 2004 | | Hershey, Pennsylvania | | (888) 553-9756 handbellexplo@earthlink.net www.handbellexploration.com |
| Pinnacle | January 15-19, 2004 | | Hotel Inter-Continental Addison, Texas | | www.agehr.org |
| Reading Ring Through | January 31, 2004 | | Presbyterian Church Los Gatos, CA | | Norma Rose gmrose1234@aol.com |
| Southern California Spring Ring | March 13, 2004 | David and Dian Ruder | St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church 1945 Illion Street San Diego | | Micki Mennet-Martin mennet@aol.com |
| Atascadero/San Luis Obispo Spring Ring | March 20, 2004 | Lee and Bill Waggener | TBA Atascadero, CA | \$20 | Shirley Werner shirley712@charter.net |
| Spring Ring at Valley Church | March 20, 2004 | Christine Anderson | Valley Church 10885 No. Stelling Road Cupertino, CA | | Dave Ruder daveruder@aol.com |
| 2004 High School Handbell Festival | March 22 at 7:30 pm | | The Nechita Center at Lutheran High School of Orange, CA | | Karen Fix Curry kvctinker@aol.com |

Boldfaced events are Area XII-Sponsored or -Endorsed.

COMING EVENTS, continued

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| LA Metro Spring Ring | March 27, 2004 | Lee and Bill Waggener | Church of the Brethren 2425 E Street La Verne, CA | | Shirley Heckman la_metro@areaxii.org |
| Kids' Fest | April 24, 2004 | | Los Gatos Presbyterian Church | | Dian Ruder dianruder@aol.com |
| Young Ringers' Conference | May 14, 2004 | Barb Walsh | Garden Grove United Methodist Church | | Rudy Rodriquez therudybell@aol.com |
| Young Ringers' Conference | May 15, 2004 | Barb Walsh | San Dieguito United Methodist Church | | Rudy Rodriquez therudybell@aol.com |
| Southern California Young Ringers Conference | June 05, 2004 | Nancy Jessup | Christ Presbyterian Church 7807 Centella Street, Carlsbad | | Ruth O'Niel ruthrings@hotmail.com |
| Area XII Ringers Conference | June 25 - 27, 2004 | David Davidson | Ontario Convention Center Ontario, California | \$180.00 | Lee Waggener chair@areaxii.org www.areaxii.org |
| Area XII Ringers Conference | July 1 - 4, 2004 | David Davidson | Renaissance Ilikai Waikiki 1777 Ala Moana Boulevard Honolulu, Hawaii | \$225.00 | Cheryl Baker pastchair@areaxii.org www.areaxii.org |
| Handbell Spectacular 2004 | July 24 - 27, 2004 | | Marriott Waterside Hotel Norfolk, Virginia | | Jane Mary Tenhover (800) 878-5459 executive@agehr.org |
| 11 th International Handbell Symposium | August 3-7, 2004 | | Westin Harbour Castle Hotel and Convention Center Toronto, Canada | | http://www.agehr.org |

Boldfaced events are Area XII-Sponsored or -Endorsed.

Area XII Workshop Registration Form

Event _____

Date and Location _____

Name of Director _____

Institution _____

Address _____

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Email _____ Phone _____

I/We are bringing _____ participants X \$ _____ /person = \$ _____ enclosed.

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Please photocopy this form as necessary and mail with your registration fees to the contact person listed for the event. You may have to communicate with the contact person to determine such details as the

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[For a web-based Registration Form, go to http://www.areaxii.org/Conf/04_conf/Reg200401.html]

Lee Waggener, Conference Chair
chair@areaxii.org

Cheryl Baker, Conference Chair
pastchair@areaxii.org

Bill Waggener, Registrar
twelfthtone@areaxii.org

The Young Ringers' Conferences 2004

Barb Walsh, conductor

Garden Grove

Garden Grove United Methodist Church
May 14, 2004

Encinitas

San Dieguito United Methodist Church
May 15, 2004

8:00 am set-up through 3:00 pm Final Concert
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For more information on all of these events, check the Area XII Website:

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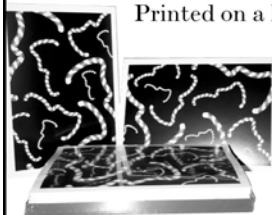
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A NOTE FROM THE KEYBOARD

Mountains and valleys. Not only on terra firma, but also in life, both are necessary - you can't have mountain tops without valleys in between, and sometimes it seems that the highest mountains are accompanied only by the deepest valleys.

Last month, we had a 17-day "mountain top" experience - 8 days in the Galapagos Islands followed by 9 days in Peru, including visits to Cuzco at 11,000', the Inca ruins at Machu Picchu at 8,000', and a bus trip between Machu Picchu and Cuzco to over 13,000'. We brought home enough indigenous instruments to start our own Peruvian band.

When we arrived home, we were greeted with a very deep valley: earlier in the week, one of our long-time ringers and a very dear friend had quite unexpectedly suffered a catastrophic heart attack which resulted in such brain damage that she never regained consciousness and died while we were in the air on our way home.

Heather was a wife, a mother to three of our former young ringers, a recent grandmother, and as her devastated colleagues have put it, a "teacher's teacher". She began ringing with us only when her three kids were going to go on one of our earlier tours, and parents *had* to come along. We convinced her that she might as well ring bells, too.

With absolutely no previous musical experience, Heather's sojourn into handbell ringing was an interesting challenge for both sides of the table. There were, in fact, times in which we thought she'd NEVER catch on, but there was always a glimmer of hope and enthusiasm that kept us both going.

Ultimately (some 10 years later), Heather turned out to be one of our most skilled ringers and sightreaders - a "mountainous" accomplishment for someone with her nonexistent musical background. In fact, Lee mentioned Heather in her Chair's message just two issues ago, for Heather had become the one bell ringer in our group whom we recently decided we really ought to clone!

Shortly, we'll be ringing for her memorial service. Her D5/E5 bells will be on the table with a bouquet, and one of her recent sixth graders will ring with us. Why is it that the deepest valleys seem to follow the highest mountains? Could it possibly be to make us aware of those lesser mountains that we might otherwise tend to overlook?

William L. Waggener
Editor