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# Ringers' Roundtable

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*The Newsletter of  
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Handbell Ringers  
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## INTERNATIONAL PEACE GARDENS HANDBELL CAMP

The International Peace Gardens lie between North Dakota to the south and Manitoba to the north and was established July 14, 1932 as a symbol of the peaceful relationship of the two nations. The International Music Camp has welcomed students from 74 countries over the past 62 years. The handbell camp was established in 1980 by Fred A. Merrett of Manitoba who served as Director until 2004. Monica McGowan, of Lakeville, Minnesota has been Director of the handbell camp for the past 13 years.

This year's summer session ran from July 9-15 and was designed for students from Grades 5-12 and adults who are at the early to intermediate levels of experience with handbell ringing. The week-long session includes learning a great variety of handbell techniques, the care of handbells, sight reading and repertoire reading. This year there were 16 adult handbell enthusiasts with a great variety of ringing experience, including one lady who had never rung before!

Director Monica McGowan was engaged to do a seminar in Anaheim, California for the Handbell Musicians of America and had to leave early. The rest of the camp was handled by two Manitobans, Patsy Andrews-Vert from Starbuck and Stuart Sladden, currently pursuing his Doctorate of Choral Studies in Edmonton. I had the privilege of driving down to the Peace Gardens very early on Saturday, July 15<sup>th</sup> to enjoy the handbell concert which began at 10:00 a.m. at the Alme International Arts Centre. The two benches outside the building were placed there by the Manitoba Guild of English Handbell Ringers, in honour of Fred Merrett for directing the handbell program for 25 years.



Placed in honour of Fred Merrett  
for his dedicated support as  
Director of the handbell ringing  
program at IMC 1980 - 2004

Placed here by the Manitoba  
Guild of English Handbell  
Ringers.....please sit awhile!

It has become a tradition that the handbell concert begin with *O Canada* (Calixa Lavallée) and *The Star Spangled Banner* attributed to John Stafford Smith arranged by Bill Ingram in 2004.



Because 2017 marks the sesquicentennial anniversary of Canadian Confederation (July 1, 1867) it was understandable that a variety of Canadian compositions were featured. Alberta composer Betty B. Radford's unpublished work, *A Canadian Vista*, was a delightful medley arrangement of three Canadian folk songs, *She's Like the Swallow*, *Land of the Silver Birch* and *Ah! Si Mon Moine Voulait Danser!* Edmonton composer, Dr. John Hooper's unpublished work *Fanfare* was the recipient of the Alberta Handbell Guild's Fred Merrett Composition Award. This was a challenging work as it included mixed meters like 5/4 time, tower swings, martellatos and gyro rings.

Charles H. Gabriel's five octave *His Eye is on the Sparrow* arranged by John Atteberry was a lovely peaceful composition for handbell choir with Patsy Andrews-Vert on flute.



This was followed by another Betty B. Radford five octave unpublished work entitled *Song Birds*. In fact this was the world premiere of this work directed by Stuart Sladden. Several techniques were used and of course the bird sounds featured the upper 5<sup>th</sup> octave bells quite prominently.



Klaus Froese from Winnipeg and Ron Vert from Starbuck

The Walt Disney *Colors of the Wind* arranged by Paul A. McKlveen and Sue A. McKlveen was a flowing, undulating woven texture using five octaves which also included mallet work. This was followed by the late Ontario composer Winnagene Hatch's *Winter Meditation* which was the Handbell Guilds of Canada Canadian Composition winner at the 2014 International Handbell Symposium in Korea. Suspended bells, chimes and mallet work were all included in this lovely soundscape of a Canadian winter.



Joan Bolam from London, Ontario and Susan Stevenson from Winnipeg



Dr. John Hooper's unpublished work *Introspection* was the 2016 Alberta Guild's Fred Merrett Composition Award and featured grace notes, echoes, trills and 32<sup>nd</sup> notes!



Far left back row is Susan Stevenson and far right front row is Marlon Goolcharan both from Winnipeg

*Spirit of Freedom* is based on a traditional Scottish tune "*Hey Tuttie Tatie*", which, according to tradition, was played by King Robert the Bruce's army at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Robert Burns (1759-1796) penned lyrics to the melody in the song "*Scots Wha Hae*" published in 1793. Robert Burns said in a note to his publisher that he was inspired by Bruce's "*glorious struggle for Freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient.*" This is seen as a reference to the French Revolutionary Wars and the American War of Independence. It was wonderful to hear this composition again by Scottish composer Malcolm C. Wilson as I had played this rousing piece last July in Vancouver during the 2016 International Handbell Symposium with the composer conducting. The exciting, driving handbell music was accompanied with Richard Adams on trumpet.



Trumpeter Richard Adams, four-in-hand ringer Ron Vert between the two ladies



Marlon Goolcharan malleting the driving bass

Kevin McChesney's *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* featured mallets on the 5<sup>th</sup> octave bass bells, as well as contrasting hand chimes. The concert ended with a Christmas selection, *All is Well*, written for David Weck's Agape Ringers by Michael W. Smith and Wayne Kirkpatrick and arranged by Joel Raney for handbell choir, piano (played by Loren Hiebert) and synthesizer (played by Stuart Sladden). Low chimes, tower swings, wonderful crescendos and a final vibrato on the chimes made for a very uplifting conclusion. Needless to say, the five Canadians (Joan Bolam from London, ON, Victoria Wynn from Edmonton AB, Klaus Froese, Marlon Goolcharan and Susan Stevenson from Winnipeg, MB) and 11 Americans and the two conductors, Patsy Andrews-Vert and Stuart Sladden received a standing ovation from the small audience.



Well done, Patsy Andrews-Vert





Well done, Stuart Sladden

During the course of the concert we were informed that 31 dozen cookies were consumed by the bell ringers during the previous five days. No doubt one needs a “sugar fix” to withstand the many hours of learning two anthems and ten other selections. Congratulations to everyone for a splendid morning concert!

After the concert I chatted with several of the bell ringers and after a final farewell, spent an hour walking through the International Peace Gardens capturing some features of the area.



Order of the Crossed Flags outside the Alme International Arts Centre created by John and Janice Christiansen in honor of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Music Camp



Peace Chapel with the Convention of 1818 indicating USA to the left and Canada to the right.

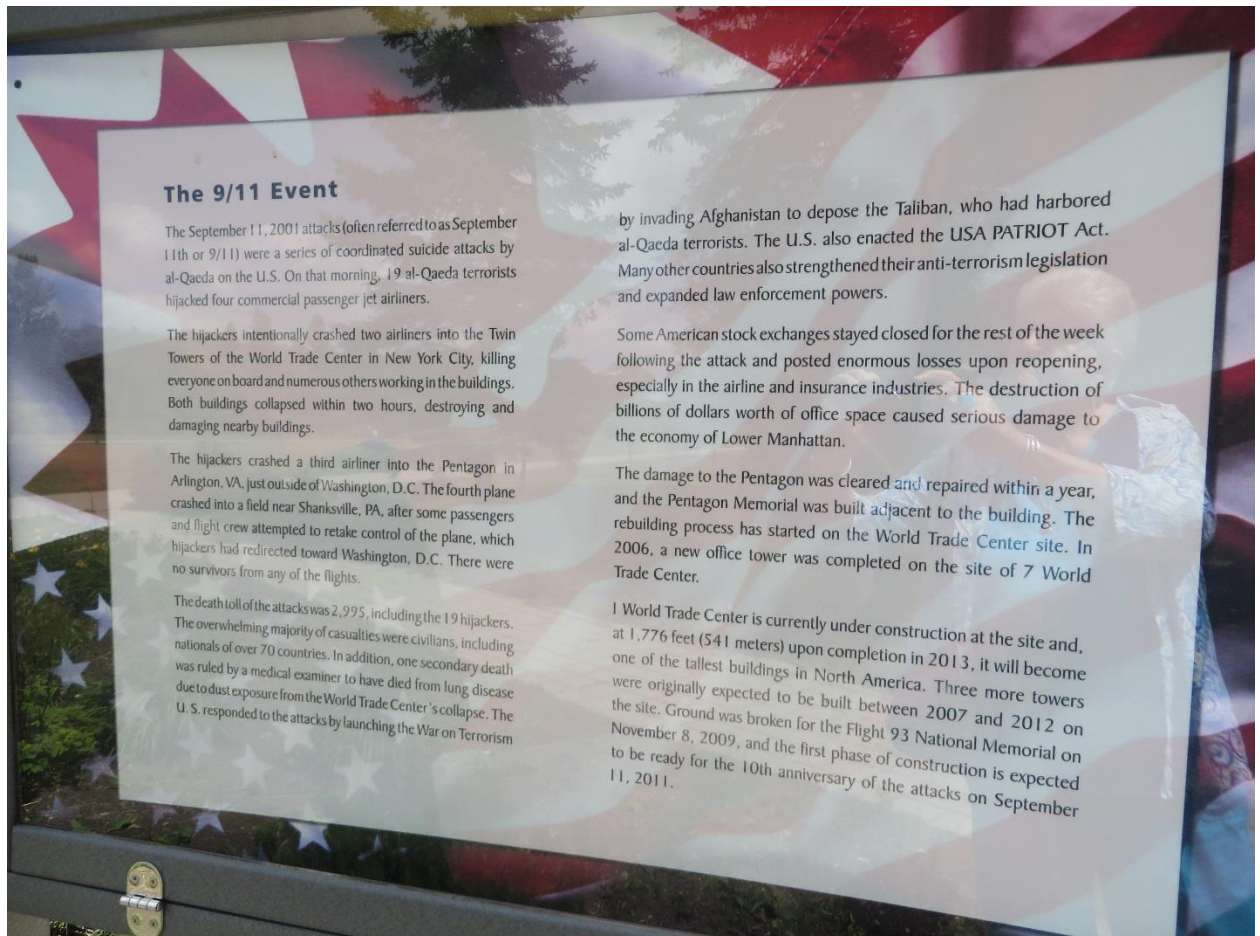


Organ and flags inside the Peace Chapel





Arma Sifton bells are a chime of 14 bells cast by Gillette & Johnston Bell Founders. The bells were a gift from Central United Church in Brandon, MB in 1972. The Carillon Bell Tower was supplied by North Dakota Veterans in 1976.



One of the information panels at the 9/11 Memorial site





Steel girders from the World Trade Center in New York City destroyed by terrorists on September 11, 2001



Promise of Peace Sculpture and Fountains dedicated July 2016  
A pair of hands holds a symbolic dove of peace.





Because whitetail deer feed off the flowers planted in the gardens, the formal garden now lies within iron gates



Petunias in the Sunken Garden area

After a most pleasant walk through the Formal Gardens on the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, that left time to drive around the Canadian side with Lake Stormon and its various picnic areas, including the Errick F. Willis Pavilion, named after a former Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba. Back to the Floral Clock near the front entrance, then pass through Canadian Customs on the drive back north on Manitoba Highway 10.

Article and photographs by Morna-June Morrow, Editor of *Ringers' Roundtable*