



Area 7

Clapper Chatter

Minnesota • North Dakota • South Dakota • Wisconsin • Manitoba

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Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA



Message from the Chair



by Paul McKenzie

Greetings, Handbell Friends.

By the time you read this, I will have been the chair of Area 7 for one month. And what a month it has been. I've been getting acquainted with our new board members, connecting with present and former board members, and brainstorming with handbell friends along the way. Thanks to everyone who has shared their wisdom.

I'm happy to announce that our Area has a new webmaster: Paul Weller. Paul is a music teacher in the Minneapolis area and was a member of Twin

Cities Bronze. Welcome, Paul.

I have been looking at the Area 7 website, as well as the websites from other areas. With the help of the board and all of you, we can update and expand on the information shown.

Thanks to our new *Clapper Chatter* editor, Jen Welch, and her enthusiasm to present the best possible newsletter. We hope to feature community handbell ensembles in our area and to highlight some handbells in the schools.

We are looking forward to Anthornis and conductor, Cathy Mokelbust. I will say that Cathy picks great, challenging music!

I look forward to meeting you all at some point. If you have suggestions or comments, don't hesitate to let me know. I'm new to this, so together let's make Area 7 a welcoming and happening place. You can reach me at chair.area7@handbellmusicians.org. 🎵

If you are interested in advertising in *Clapper Chatter*, we have a variety of plans that could fit your needs.

There is a 15% discount to advertisers who pay in advance for an entire year (four editions).

\$30 for business-card size per edition
\$55 for 1/4 page per edition
\$65 for 1/2 page per edition
\$80 for full page per edition

If you would like to know more, contact Jen Welch at

editor.area7@handbellmusicians.org

**Deadline for the next
issue of *Clapper Chatter*
is January 10, 2025**



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From the Past Chair



by Jennifer Cadwell

During the next two years of my term as Past Chair, it is my goal to help each sub area hold a local event. What would benefit your ringers the most — a workshop to increase ringing skills? A director focused class on choosing music, creating assignments, and conducting? Or would you love to host a ringing session to sightread new music? The possibilities are endless. Send me an email and we'll get some ideas together!

Looking ahead to next summer...do you have youth ringers? Make plans to join us in June for Young Ringer's Camp! I have taken my youth ringers in the past and they have loved YRC. Camp activities like swimming, ropes course, and the mud hole are a blast. However, what made the biggest difference for my ringers was having an end of season celebration; attending Young Ringer's Camp. Throughout the school year, ringers reminded one another that we were learning this piece of music to play at camp, and that helped them build excitement. One of my ringers asked about camp the first week of ringing in September, he was so excited because his sibling attended and now it's his turn. I hope your youth ringers can join us in June 2025! Area 7 also has a scholarship that covers the full registration fee for YRC for interested ringers. 🎵

Changes and a word of thanks

As the seasons change, so does our Area 7 Board. October 2024 marks the beginning of another season of leadership on the board. We welcome several new friends and welcome back others moving to new positions (shown in bold).

OCTOBER 2024-SEPTEMBER 2025 BOARD

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WI North: Denean Smith
WI South: Lisa Bourget
ND: TBD
SD: **Cheryl Ulmer**

We are also incredibly grateful to those who have completed their terms on the board. We give our heartfelt thanks for all their leadership: Anita Fraundorf (past chair), Sally Sterk (treasurer), Diane LaFontaine (secretary), Bill Alexander (editor), Karisa Templeton (ND SAC), and Cathy Moglebust (SD SAC). 🎵



Plan to attend Young Ringer's Camp

by Genevieve Cadwell

I've been to Area 7's Young Ringers Camp twice. Once as a 10-year-old, and the other time as a 14-year-old. One might say that my experiences at both ends of the spectrum could have been perceived as different, but handbell ringing is such a welcoming community, and anyone of any age can have a ton of fun at this event.

When I was one of the younger ringers at camp, I had a blast ringing music with other youth! This was an experience that I had never had before, and the feeling of accomplishment that would follow every rehearsal — upon realizing that we, children, were able to create such beautiful music has stuck with me.

Fast forward four years, and I was able to have this same experience, only as one of the leaders. It meant a lot to have some of the younger kids ask me for advice, and look up to me, because I remember watching the older kids so intently at my first Young Ringers Camp.



Campfires and other memories from Genevieve Cadwell at Young Ringers Camp. Genevieve attended camp in 2019 (top left, shown front left) and again in 2023 (bottom left).

I had so much fun both of these years doing completely different activities! At one camp location, I got to do a ropes course, play nine-square, try a bobsled track, and play a lot of Bop It! At a different location, I got to play in a mud pit, axe-throw, swim, and watch a movie! Of course, we made s'mores at both of these camps, and we partook in a service project!

I really enjoyed attending with my friends from church and had a lot of fun getting to meet other bell ringers around my same age who were as excited as I was to play! Attending Young Ringers Camp was such a fun experience that I am lucky enough to have had twice, both just as fun as the other! 🎵



Paddling and ringing through the camp weekend.

Bells of the Hills Workshop Summary

by Cathy Moglebust and Monica McGowan

On Saturday, September 21, 2024, the Bells of the Hills workshop was held at First Congregational Church in Rapid City, South Dakota. Registration began at 8:00am and the workshop commenced at 9:00am. The cost was \$35 per person, which included coffee, snacks, and lunch. There were 19 registered participants from Wyoming (Buffalo and Sundance) and South Dakota (Brookings, Custer, Hill City, Rapid City, and Black Hawk).

After a welcome and a session on healthy ringing, four session topics were offered (each was offered four times) by Monica McGowan and members of the Bells of the Hills ensemble:

- Treble Bells – Shelley and 4-in-Hand
- Bass Bells – Ringing technique and strategies
- Battery Bells – Weaving and other strategies
- Coordination Conundrums – Rhythm drills using Valerie Stephenson's resource

After the classes, the full group sight-read through Michael Helman's composition "A Joyous Rondo" (Lorenz Publications # 20-1098L, 3-5 octaves, level 2+), employing score study and proper ringing

technique. The whole day was very well planned and executed, and the participants had a wonderful time.

Bells of the Hills will continue to offer workshops to ringers and choirs in western South Dakota, Wyoming, and western Nebraska. In Spring 2025, Bells of the Hills will host a repertoire reading session and, in even numbered years, will offer a handbell workshop in September. 🎵



From the South Dakota Sub-Chair



by Cheryl Ulmer

Greetings!

My story: I first became familiar with handbells in 1972 as a freshman at Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD, when Dr. Wilmer

Kirschenmann introduced us to his church bell choir. At the time it was one of the only handbell groups in northeastern South Dakota, which played an impressive five octaves.

A decade later my hometown church in Hosmer, SD started a two-octave choir, and the rest is history. I was teaching in Mobridge at the time and became the director of a new three-octave choir at Trinity Lutheran in 1986. (We raised the funds almost exclusively by selling chocolates and collecting aluminum cans.) Nine years later, I moved to Aberdeen where Good Shepherd Lutheran Church had recently purchased bells. That was 29 years ago! The Exultation Bells now have five octaves of bells and five octaves of chimes. We actively ring once or twice a month. I (semi)-retired last year after teaching Elementary Music for 40+ years.

As your new South Dakota Sub-Area Chair (and also North Dakota, until that position can be filled), my mind has been racing deciding what words of meaningful handbell wisdom I could share with you. Cathy Moglebust did an incredible job compiling a database of all the bell choirs and ensembles within our state. Going forward, I see my role as that of an ambassador and/or communicator to motivate Dakota-area ringers and directors in any way that I can, especially if they've become less active.

Recently, I made several follow-up calls regarding the invitations we sent for our Joyfully Ring! Fall Handbell Workshop, which will be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Aberdeen on Saturday, November 2nd. I experienced a lot of enthusiasm from those conversations, which is awesome!

(Cathy Moglebust will be the clinician and anyone is welcome to attend.) I also heard from more than one church group whose bells have become dormant "in the closet" and haven't been used in quite a while. That really evokes a lot of emotion, but it also presents a beacon of hope to aggressively promote or create bell events at a local level.

Therefore, I encourage active folks within the handbell world to 'adopt-a-choir' in your area. It could help to rekindle the same love and drive they had when their bells or chimes were brand new! That might mean filling a substitute ringing position from time to time, reviewing some bell techniques at a joint rehearsal, being available to present a mini workshop, or sharing some great handbell titles which have worked well for your group. I truly feel we cannot expect attendance to increase at our Area 7 events unless we build a strong foundation from the ground up.

At our last rehearsal, several ringers expressed how much they are enjoying our many new pieces, which were acquired from the Area 7 Festival Conference in LaCrosse and my July trip to the National Handbell Seminar in Hartford, CT. This has served as a good reminder for me as the director to strive to always keep things fresh; yet continue playing the tried and true standbys in our files. Once that spark is ignited, I guarantee that your choir will become ambassadors as they spread this Music ministry throughout your church, community, and beyond! Contact me if I can help in any way. 🎵

The Raleigh Ringers

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Ensemble spotlight: Great River Resonance

by Jordan Goodwater



Great River Resonance (GRR) is the premier community handbell ensemble in the greater St. Cloud, Minnesota area. Established in 2021 under the direction of Jordan Goodwater, GRR plays on five octaves of Schulmerich Handbells and five-plus octaves of Malmark Choirchimes. The ensemble draws ringers from throughout Central Minnesota. GRR's repertoire ranges from secular to sacred, both cutting edge and classic.

Great River Resonance recently completed its concert series in collaboration with the St John's Boys' Choir (SJBC). These collaboration concerts featured multiple pieces showcasing multi-part harmonies from the boys supported by a wide variety of sounds from the bells.

In addition to our regular concert offerings GRR is proud to sponsor annual sight-reading sessions for those interested in new handbell music as well as handbell techniques classes offered several times a year. For more information, check out GRR's website, www.greatriverresonance.org. 🎵



Jordan Goodwater (top left) and the members of Great River Resonance

From the Northern Wisconsin Sub-Chair



by *Denean Smith*

It's time to get more creative with our instrument!

For so many of us ringers, handbells (and handchimes) are our instrument of choice. We enjoy attending performances, but often we love ringing even more.

Have you thought about the multiple performance opportunities we have with this instrument and different ways we can connect with an audience? Here are some ideas to consider:

- Ringing in church or community handbell ensembles (that's obvious).
- Ringing solo, as a duet, or as a small ensemble.
- Growing your ensemble beyond handbells. You might be featured with an orchestra or host a joint

concert with an orchestra. Or you might join forces with other solo instruments — with possibilities such as strings, woodwinds, brass, piano, or organ.

- Hosting a joint concert with other handbell ensembles or with vocal choirs. You might play selections featuring handbells and choir together or selections from each group individually.
- Attending Area or National events as an entire choir or as individual ringers.
- Adding extra instruments to enhance your concert selections. These extras might include percussion, string bass, or guitar.
- Including bell tree selections in your concert.
- Using a bell tree in a church praise band.
- Providing entertainment for public or private events. These opportunities might include conventions, corporate events, weddings, and other celebrations.
- Ringing the National Anthem at sporting events.
- Participating in parades, either marching while ringing or riding on a parade float.

Our goal is to raise awareness about handbells and chimes and to add followers and supporters as we educate others about our wonderful instrument.

Let's all get creative as we share our love of handbells with others. 🎵

Handbell Musicians of America Membership Levels

Individual Membership: \$95/year

Group Membership for your church, school,
organization: \$95/year

Retired Director Membership (65-plus, no longer
leading an ensemble): \$70/year

Student Membership (full-time college or high
school student): \$25/year

Sub Membership (individuals ringing with an
organization that has a group membership):
\$10/year

For more information, contact Christina Herold
membership.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Keep in touch with
Area 7 on Facebook



From the Southern Wisconsin Sub-Chair



by Lisa Bourget

Here are a couple upcoming handbell events in Southern Wisconsin that you won't want to miss.

BELL CRAZY HANDBELL ENSEMBLE

invites you to its 2024 Holiday Concert

Bringing Holiday Joy
Sunday, December 8th
2:00 pm

Grace Lutheran Church
501 Skogen Rd, Cambridge WI

Free admission, donations accepted.

THE MILWAUKEE HANDBELL ENSEMBLE

invites you to join its **Festival 2025** on **Sunday, March 16, 2025**, directed by Dr. John A. Behnke, at the Brookfield Conference Center in Brookfield, WI.

- Festival repertoire includes two Copper pieces (Level 2-3), two Bronze pieces (Level 3-4), and four Massed pieces (Level 2).
- You can register as a full choir, as a partial choir for others to join, or as an individual to be placed with a group.
- Rehearsals begin at 1:30pm; a concert open to the public begins at 7:00pm.
- Registration (\$69) closes November 30. A plated-dinner is included in the registration fee.



Dr. John Behnke

More information and registration can be found at www.milwaukeehandbells.org/festivals.html 🎵

BELLS OF THE LAKES BELLFEST! 2025

Early Bird Registration
\$35/person NOW until
December 20.
After December 20 \$45/person

—
Lunch \$14/person

bellsofthelakes.org

Saturday, March 8th, 2025
North Heights Lutheran Church
1700 Hwy 96 W, Arden Hills, MN 55112
Public Concert 3:00 pm
(doors will open at 2:35 pm)





One-day handbell ringing festival!
Community, church ensembles, and individuals are invited to participate!
Clinician: Bill Mathis

Taking on Solo Ringing

by Lisa Bourget

Handbells is typically a group effort, but not always. Whether prompted by opportunity or necessity, it's possible to play solo handbells.

Caitlin Ristow is a case in point. She performed a beautiful unaccompanied bell tree solo for a mini-concert during Area 7's Festival this past June in LaCrosse. Tackling an unaccompanied solo was impressive and inspiring (and maybe a bit nerve-wracking). A series of atypical circumstances led to it: attending festival was a way to connect with a fellow ringer on hiatus, one of the massed ringing pieces featured numerous bell tree ringers (of which Caitlin was one), and as long as she was lugging all that equipment all that way she figured she'd better make good use of it. An accompanist wasn't available, so ... unaccompanied bell tree solo!

Caitlin is more accustomed to accompanied bell tree ringing; it's more of a team effort and is used more in church settings. But she's not unaccustomed to solo ringing. Her church does not have a bell choir (it does have hand chimes), but she still plays bells there, typically descants to accompany the congregation.

"I originally played solo descants ringing from the table. That takes a lot of table space and it can be stressful if a bell rolls away while you're ringing. I tried a descant on a bell tree and found it was quicker to learn and that the bell tree's higher tones 'float' above the congregational singing better than table ringing did. People liked it and said I should do more of it."

Before trying it at church, Caitlin's first bell tree experience was in a duet setting with the Madison Area Concert Handbells (MACH) in Madison, Wisconsin, where she has been a member since 2010. "Ringing in a choir is fun; it's a team sport in music." Caitlin started ringing handbells in 7th grade and, with a one-year hiatus in college, has been ringing ever since. In addition to her full-time IT job and ringing with MACH, Caitlin also rings at her church (Our Redeemer) and as a sub for other churches. "I'm a church musician, and it's one of the ways I get to serve."



Caitlin Ristow ringing at a Madison Area Concert Handbells Christmas Concert (top) and performing a bell tree solo at the Area 7 festival (bottom).

Caitlin's advice for anyone considering bell tree ringing is to noodle around for a while with different ways to string the bell strands, find what works best for you personally, and then stick with it moving forward. Do you prefer having your high bells closer? Chromatic order? There are various approaches, each with their pros and cons. However you do it, sticking with one approach means you don't have to relearn where all the bells are for each new piece. You can change keys more easily, which makes it easier to play more than one piece in a row. You can also add in bells more readily. For example, Caitlin uses one strand for more unusual bells that don't typically play, keeping other strands more constant.

Do you have to memorize bell tree music? "No," she says, "but it makes it a lot easier if you do. Bell trees are more 3-dimensional space with their vertical aspect, as opposed to more horizontal table space, so it's easier to get lost going between music and bells. But the music is still there for reference."

Caitlin recommends that anyone learning to play bell tree music invest in some sort of hearing protection, even if it's just a pair of well-fitting earbuds. (That's good practice for choir ringers too, especially treble folks.) "Putting your ears right up against high-pitched noises is not at all good for your ears!"

she says. "And if you're crossing between high and low bell tree strands, you'll have your ears right next to the treble bells."

In another solo endeavor, Caitlin has also created and posted layered "choir of one" videos. "I was trapped in my apartment during COVID, I didn't want to lose my bell skills, and I didn't want to go insane. So I tried breaking pieces into solo parts and overlaying them." Caitlin says she found out really fast where her playing didn't line up to previous takes, and she's learned to correct rhythm errors. She uses a click track or MIDI recording to set the pace, and she records her own sessions, often on her phone. It's also given her a chance to improve her composing and arranging skills; she has one piece published and a second one coming.

Posting those solo videos to YouTube (@ChoirOfOne) lets Caitlin share the results with family and friends. "This is a hobby project; I'm not trying to monetize it. I originally tried Facebook, but my parents don't use it. YouTube gives me a place where I can send a link."

Caitlin would absolutely encourage others to pursue bell tree, solo, and small group ringing. "You play a solo, and you get more confident in performing, more practice with nerves. You get the opportunity to practice performing." 🎵



Area 7 ringers Lisa Gedker, Lynn Miller, Cathy Moglebust, Lori Oleson, Monica McGowan and Jen Welch at Distinctly Bronze West 2024, held in Vancouver Washington from October 10-13, 2024.

From the Area 7 Events Coordinator



by Alanna Teragawa

Here's a look at recently finished and upcoming Area 7 events to watch for.

Follow this livestream link to view the worship online at Westwood Lutheran:

www.westwood.church/watchworship

Watch upcoming issues of *Clapper Chatter* for information on the 2025 Anthornis event.

ANTHORNIS

As you read this, Anthornis 2024 will have already happened. It was held on **October 25-26th** at Westwood Lutheran Church in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. This included a closing concert at 3:30pm on the 26th. The clinician was **Cathy Moglebust**.

In addition to performing for the free public concert on Saturday, October 26th, two of the participating ensembles performed two of the event's songs during the following Sunday morning worship service at Westwood Lutheran Church.



Clinician Cathy Moglebust and the Anthornis 2024 participants.

YOUNG RINGERS CAMP 2025

June 20-22, 2025

(Friday through Sunday morning)

Camp Omega – Waterville, Minnesota

Clinician: Bonnie Tranby

Young Ringers Camp is for ringers in grades 3 to high school. Less-than-full choirs are welcome to attend.

Schedule:

Friday: Arrive by 1:00PM

Sunday: 11:00AM free closing concert (open to the public)

Costs:

\$225 per youth and director.

\$200 per chaperone.

Scholarships are available.



Registration fee includes five delicious meals, t-shirt, ringing and lots of fun: canoeing, tomahawk throwing, mud pit, swimming, gaga ball, 9-square, and much more.

Registration will open in February 2025.

For more information:

Contact Jessica Haeder, Youth Events Planner, for fundraising ideas or with questions:

YouthEvents.area7@handbellmusicians.org

More information, including a full schedule of activities can be found at

<https://area7.handbellmusicians.org/events/young-ringers-camp-2025>



Friendship and fun at Young Ringers Camp.



Young Ringers Camp Repertoire

Come with these three pieces well-rehearsed:

- Brother James' Aire – Kath Wissinger.
3-5 octave RE3018
- First Praise – Bill Ingram. 2, 3, 5 octave
CGB940
- Make Me a Channel of Your Peace – Jeffrey Honore. Two versions are available:
3 octave HP2787 or 3-5 octave HP2828

The FOURTH piece will be announced in Spring 2025. Directors, please purchase this score and mark it for your ringers, but do NOT rehearse it. This piece will be learned during Camp.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

At the latest Area 7 Board meeting, a two-year budget was passed which included additional funding for renewing two events:

KIDS RING: For young ringers of any age to come together for fun and ringing and confidence.

COPPER RING: For those ringing Level 1 to 2+ and one song to challenge them to a Level 3.

More details on these and other upcoming events will appear on the Area 7 website and in upcoming *Clapper Chatters*. 🎵

Area Events Calendar

January 31-February 2, 2025

VIRTUAL WINTER WORKSHOP

A National Event

<https://bit.ly/VWW25-Register>

June 20-22, 2025

YOUNG RINGERS CAMP

An Area 7 Event

Camp Omega – Waterville, Minnesota

<https://area7.handbellmusicians.org/events/young-ringers-camp-2025>

July 9-12, 2025

PINNACLE EVENT (includes National Seminar components, as well)

Wichita, KS

A National Event

<https://handbellmusicians.org/event/pinnacle-2025>



For additional information, go to the Area 7 Events page
area7.handbellmusicians.org/events

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