

Area 7

Clapper Chatter

Minnesota • North Dakota • South Dakota • Wisconsin • Manitoba

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Handbell Musicians
OF AMERICA



Festival, coming right up!

Message from the Chair



by Paul McKenzie

Hello Area 7,

Our Area Festival, “Down by the Riverside,” is coming up soon — and it is going to be great.

Our conductors have chosen unique pieces to perform with you. The list of classes has never been more exciting.

The social opportunities will be top shelf, and the worship will be like no other. Whew!!!

Of note, I am seeking people to participate in the worship service as:

- 1) Singers
- 2) Language speakers (including sign language)
- 3) Native Flute

This will be an congregation-participation service where YOU are the ringers/singers.

Make beautiful music — make beautiful friends. 🎵

Keep in touch with Area 7 on Facebook



Sponsorship of Area 7 Festival Conference

Please consider becoming a sponsor of the Area 7 Festival in St. Cloud. A sponsorship can be in memory of, in appreciation of, or in honor of someone in your life or ringing ensemble. Donations received by June 1 will be acknowledged in the Festival Conference booklet and in the fall edition of Clapper Chatter.

Sponsorship levels range from \$25 as a supporter through Ringing Endorsement at \$500 and everything in between.

For more information, contact Jennifer Cadwell at pastchair.area7@handbellmusicians.org.

Follow [THIS LINK](#) or use the QR Code to make sponsorship donations. 🎵

Sponsorship of Area 7 Festival Conference



BELLS OF THE CASCADES
Bells In Paradise
CRUISE XVII
JANUARY 17-24, 2027
Greetings!
Announcing BOC Cruise XVII

Exciting News! BOC's next fun-filled handbell cruise is now available for registration. We'll be sailing from Fort Lauderdale, FL on a 7-day cruise of the beautiful Eastern Caribbean. We set sail on January 17th, 2027 with exploring ports of call in Nassau, Bahamas; Half Moon Cay; Grand Turks; and Amber Cove, Dominican Republic before returning to Fort Lauderdale.

For more information about the cruise, and to register, visit our cruise webpage.

Hope to see you on board in 2027!
Best wishes,
BOC Cruise Committee

For questions: cruise-info@bellsofthecascades.org

To view our website:
<https://www.bellsofthecascades.org/cruise/nextcruise>

Bells of the Cascades
P.O. Box 151
Tualatin, OR 97062

Cruise Clinician
Brenda Austin

SCAN ME FOR MORE INFORMATION

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit registered in the state of Oregon.
Member, Handbell Musicians of America

Area 7 Election Time

The Treasurer, Secretary, and Chair-Elect are voted upon by the membership, and the results are typically announced at the Area 7 festival. Information on the electronic ballot will be coming soon. The nominating committee has presented another excellent slate of nominees for these positions. You will receive information on this election from the National Handbell Musicians of America shortly. The election will run May 1-31, and results will be shared on June 26 at the festival in St. Cloud. Please take the time to read about these six fabulous candidates and make an informed decision about the Area 7 leadership for the next several years.

FOR THE OFFICE OF CHAIR-ELECT



Billy Brandt

William (Billy) Brandt is a music educator currently working as the Director of Choirs at Freedom High School, where he leads the vocal and handbell music programs. In addition, Brandt serves as the Director of Choirs for the United Church of Christ in New London, Wisconsin, where he leads the handbell program, including directing the Spirit Bells handbell ensemble. Lastly, he is the Instructor of Music Literacy and Instrumentalist Coordinator for the Badger State Girl Choir.

As an educator, Brandt has twice been nominated for the GRAMMY Award in the Music Educator category. Ensembles under Brandt's direction have performed on high profile stages across the world, including the Festival of Three in 2023 where Brandt made his international debut conducting concerts in Finland, Latvia, and Estonia. Moreover, Brandt's ensembles have premiered works with notable composers, produced recordings for television, and are regularly invited to perform at festivals. Brandt will also make his Carnegie Hall debut in 2027. Finally, in 2023 Brandt launched the Small School, Big Song festival, which invites rural schools from across Wisconsin to join together in singing with international performers.

As a composer, Brandt has works being performed on both national and international concert stages. His music is in print with publishing houses such as MorningStar, Alfred/Jubilate, From the Top Publishing, Paraboloid Press, and Meadowlark Melodies and has appeared on prestigious curated lists such as JW Pepper's Editor's Choice list. Moreover, Brandt has been honored to commission works for a variety of ensembles and events. Brandt holds a master's degree in Music Education from Boston University and a Bachelor's of Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, with a certification in PK-12 Choral/General.



Dorisa Nelson

Dorisa Nelson has nearly thirty years of ringing experience in various community and church choirs throughout Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. She doesn't remember ever choosing to ring handbells; with her mother in charge of the youth handbell choirs at the church, her participation was as obligatory as going to school. Fortunately, what started as just another thing to do on Wednesday nights grew into a passion, a source of serenity in an increasingly chaotic world and a medium through which many lifelong friendships have been formed.

Despite her extensive training provided by the best instructors around, her track record is not without error. During Anthornis in 2014, she famously cracked a G3 by

swinging it into the end of a chime that was hanging over the edge of a table. The noise was terrifying and the repercussions of this event have followed her around to this day, but, you know what they say: Live, learn, and check your surroundings before swinging a bell.

Dorisa's previous involvement with the Area 7 Board includes serving as the editor from 2014-2017, event logo design, general schlepping assistance, and coordinating the Festival Conference ringing floor layouts since 2010.

Professionally, Dorisa is a licensed architect, project manager, and certified interior designer, currently employed by Hennepin County, with extensive experience in healthcare and judicial design.

In her free time, which there never seems to be enough of, Dorisa enjoys writing and fixing up her ancient house in Hopkins, MN that she shares with her husband and two children, both of whom spent their toddler years sitting on handbell tables during her rehearsals. She currently rings at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Eden Prairie, MN, where her husband is the senior pastor, and subs in choirs throughout the Twin Cities when the need arises.

FOR THE OFFICE OF TREASURER



Eric Kvasnicka

Eric has been mesmerized by handbells since he was a child watching the bell choir at church. When he was a freshman at St. Olaf College, he jumped at the chance to learn the art of handbell ringing. He joined the bell program and rang for four years there. After graduating, he joined Bells of the Lakes in the Twin Cities, where he has rung for the past five years. In his day job, he is an attorney at a law firm in Minneapolis. Outside of work and handbells, he enjoys cross-country skiing in the winter, running in the summer, and reading all year round.



Michelle Finlon

Michelle Finlon began ringing handbells at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in Eagan, MN in middle school, and returned there to ring again starting in 2010 after a hiatus for college and graduate school. Since handbells and handbell ringers are so much fun, she joined Twin Cities Bronze in 2018.

She has been the CHIME Representative on the Area 7 Board since 2020, the Festival equipment wrangler since 2022, and also served as the Youth Events Planner from 2014-2017.

Michelle spends her days solving problems, building automations, and digging into the details as a Business Systems Manager for a company of over 500 employees. She has spent over 10 years working in business systems supporting the finance, accounting, and operations teams with data integrity and process improvements. She loves data, spreadsheets, color coordination, and making sure everything is correct!

FOR THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY



Cynthia Clanton

A lifelong musician, Cynthia Clanton was introduced to chimes in worship about 15 years ago and quickly fell head over heels for all things handbells. She joined Bells of the Bluffs, based in Red Wing, Minnesota, 12 years ago and added Bells of the Lakes to her handbell obsession eight years ago. Playing with both groups fills her calendar and her heart. Cynthia has participated in local, regional and national handbell events from Anthornis and Area 7 festivals to the HMA national seminar. When not ringing, Cynthia works in corporate communications in the Twin Cities, helps manage her family's farm, and enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren. She is from Hampton, Minnesota.



Lesley Gommels

Lesley currently works as the Administrative Assistant at her church, St. John's Lutheran Church in Stewartville, MN. She first started playing handbells in the early 90s at Rochester Central Lutheran School (RCLS) and took many years off from playing but started ringing again at her church in 2017 or so. Musically, she is also part of the Rochester Community Band and play the clarinet and alto clarinet. When not ringing, Lesley enjoys watching sports — mostly baseball, but she like football and basketball too. She spends time on many crafts, but mostly cross stitching, basic knitting, and patchwork quilts. She also enjoys cooking and baking and spending time with her family and fiancé.

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



RINGIN' SPRING HANDBELL CONCERT

Ringin' Badgers

Dr. Mark Bloedow, Director



SUNDAY | JUNE 7 | 3:00PM

**MADISON CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
7118 OLD SAUK ROAD, MADISON**

~ TICKETS ~

www.maestroproductions.org

Handbell Workshop

Handbell Concert

Ringling Badgers Handbell Ensemble

(Madison, Wisconsin)

Dr. Mark Bloedow, Artistic Director



Saturday, June 6, 2026

9:00am to 3:30pm

Mass Ringing, Break-Out Sessions

Lunch and Concert

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
2450 W. 9th Street, Oshkosh, WI

Workshop Music

Please purchase your music in advance, thank you!

- Be Thou My Vision, Arr. Cathy Moklebust
Choristers Guild, Level 2, CGB286
- Glorious Celebration, Cynthia Dobrinski
Hope Publishing, Level 2+, 2678
- Jubilant Celebration, Joel Raney
Hope Publishing, Level 2+, 2837

Workshop Schedule

8:30am	Arrival
8:50am	Welcome & Warm-up
9:00am	Mass Rehearsal
9:45am	Break Out Sessions*
10:30am	Break
10:45am	Break Out Sessions*
11:30	Mass Rehearsal
12:15	Lunch (included with registration)
2:00pm	Concert with Ringing Badgers

**Choose and sign-up for a variety of classes for ringers and directors. You will receive an e-mail with class descriptions prior to the event.*

Registration Information

Please register online at www.maestroproductions.org by Saturday, May 23. Pre-registration is required. A \$20 per person registration fee (including workshop, lunch, and concert) is appreciated and can be paid in advance by check to Maestro Productions, 2358 Quartz Lane, Madison, WI, 53719 or upon arrival at the workshop. The workshop is designed for ringers and directors of all experience levels, all are welcome!

Ringling Positions

Partial groups and individual ringers will receive a ringing position assignment in advance of the workshop via e-mail. Please note your preferences on the registration form. Full groups, please email your ringing positions to: musicdirectormeb@gmail.com.

Music, Instruments, Equipment

Workshop participants provide their own music/music binders and if desired a music riser and floor mat. Handbells, chimes, mallets, tables and foam are provided—if you have any of these items to bring if needed, please let us know, thanks!

Concert

The concert will feature the Ringing Badger's Ringin' Spring Handbell Concert and the workshop music rung in mass with all workshop participants. There is no concert dress requirement.

Questions?

Please contact Mark Bloedow, musicdirectormeb@gmail.com, or Camala Bedroske, cbedroske@sbcglobal.net.

From the Area 7 Historian



by Jordan Goodwater

Hello, Area 7 friends! I am beyond excited to step into the role of your new Area 7 Historian, and I want to start by doing what any good historian does first: giving credit where credit is due.

A heartfelt thank you to “Conductor” Dan Ahlman for his dedicated service as historian since 2009 and for keeping our story so carefully preserved. And to the historians who came before him — thank you. Because of your work, we have a story worth telling.

Share the Past. Celebrate the Present. Inspire the Future.

That’s the motto I’ve chosen for this role, and I think it fits Area 7 perfectly. We are a community with deep roots and so much ahead of us — and I can’t wait to help tell that story.

Speaking of celebrating the present: we are heading back to St. Cloud! That’s right — for the first time since 2006, St. Cloud will host our Area 7 Festival, and we are marking the occasion in style. As part of the festivities, we’ll be unveiling a brand-new History Corner filled with the people, memories, and milestones that have made Area 7 what it is today.

Think photos, old programs, vintage t-shirts, pins, and festival information stretching all the way back to our very first festival in Winona, MN in 1972. Over five decades of handbell history, right there in one corner — and we want it to be as complete as possible.

That’s where you come in. As you’re digging through closets and tackling your spring cleaning, please keep Area 7 in mind. That old program tucked in a box, the pin rattling around in a drawer, the t-shirt you forgot you had — it might be the exact missing piece in our history puzzle.

Donations, loans, and tips about what you’ve got are all welcome. I’d love to hear from you! Reach out anytime – historian.area7@handbellmusicians.org 🎵



**Heitz Handbells
and Music**

Carol Scheel
7209 Morgan Ave S Richfield MN 55423
612-208-1741 877-426-3235
www.heizhandbells.com heizhandbells@yahoo.com

**Deadline for the next
issue of *Clapper Chatter*
is July 10, 2026**

Got an old event shirt?
A photo? A concert
program? A pin?

Your Memories Make Our History

Help us build out the Area 7 History Display
to be debuted at the 2026 St. Cloud Festival

Scan the QR code
or send an email to
Jordan Goodwater, Area 7 Historian
historian.area7@handbellmusicians.org



Share the Past. Celebrate the Present. Inspire the Future.

Bells of the Lakes SEMINAR FOR RINGERS & DIRECTORS

Join us for our annual seminar
to encourage and educate handbell ringers and directors.

REGISTRATION OPEN!

REGISTER BY JUNE 1
EARLY \$40 REGISTRATION FEE
STUDENTS: \$20
(LUNCH INCLUDED IN REGISTRATION)



bellsofthelakes.org

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

9:00 AM-4:00 PM
HENNEPIN AVE UMC
511 GROVELAND AVE
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55403

AUDITIONS

**BELLS OF THE LAKES
2026-2027 SEASON**

AUG 24TH | 6-8 PM
HENNEPIN AVE UMC

Seeking individuals with experience and
interest in promoting the art, skill,
performance, and educational aspects
of handbell ringing.

Interested? Contact us
manager@bellsofthelakes.org

Summer Handbell Camp

Workshop for Musicians Who Love to Ring!

Monday, July 27 to Thursday, July 30, 2026

St. John's Lutheran Church

20275 Davidson Road, Brookfield, WI 53045

Summer Handbell Camp is a 4-day workshop focused on handbell technique and musicianship. Daily rehearsals and individual practice emphasize hands-on learning and group performance. Selections will range in difficulty from Level 2+ to Level 4+ of both sacred and secular music for use throughout the year. **Clinician Sandra Eithun** will direct the mass choirs in a fast-paced group setting to make this workshop enjoyable for musicians interested in improving their handbell performance.

There will be a concert on Thursday, July 30 at 7:00 pm featuring the handbell selections from the workshop. All are welcome!

Space is Limited * * * **Workshop Fee: \$300.00** per person includes:

- 10-12 pieces of handbell music
- Morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack each day
- Dinner Thursday prior to the concert

Deadline to register is June 22, 2026. No refunds given after this date.

For additional information, please contact Carolyn or Heidi. We look forward to welcoming you to Summer Handbell Camp 2026!

Carolyn Masterson

262.366.4357

cmasterson2012@gmail.com

Heidi Bischmann

414.305.7812

hbischmann@gmail.com



Additional information will be available with the confirmation of your registration and email updates closer to the workshop date.

TAKE
ADVANTAGE
OF THE EARLY BIRD
DISCOUNT

\$275.00 per person
with non-refundable
deposit of \$75.00
by May 15, 2026.



Workshop Clinician **Sandra Eithun**

SANDRA EITHUN, M.M.Ed – is a graduate of Silver Lake College in Manitowoc, WI, with an emphasis in the Kodály teaching method, keyboard, and flute. She is the Director of Fox Valley Bronze and is currently on the faculty of Valley Troubadours, both in Appleton, WI. She served as Director of Music Ministry, handbell director, children's choir director, organist and choral accompanist at First Congregational United Church of Christ in New London, WI, from 1992-2021. She directed the Silver Lake College Handbell Ensemble from 2009-2020 and directed the handbell program at Holy Family Conservatory of Music (Manitowoc, WI) from 2021-2025. Sandra is an active member of the Handbell Musicians of America and has served on their Area VII Board of Directors.

She has been commissioned to write music for many events and for numerous individual handbell ensembles. Most recently, she received the honor of being given the esteemed Donald E. Allured Original Composition Award for the 2020 Week of Handbells in Bay View, MI. She has over 650 pieces for handbells in publication as well as several sacred keyboard books and teaching collections for the incorporation of handbells in the music classroom. In 2013, Sandra had the honor of working alongside Doc Severinsen and the Fox Valley Symphony to include handbells in his holiday show, Jingle Bell Doc, at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center in Appleton, WI. Sandra's compositions have been recently featured on the PBS Christmas special, Holiday Handbells, as well as concerts by noted groups across the country including The Raleigh Ringers and The Bells on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. She continues to work as a handbell clinician and conductor at numerous festivals and workshops throughout the United States. She is married to Scott, has four grown children, four grandchildren and currently resides in Appleton, WI.

Summer Handbell Camp 2026 Registration Form

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Email _____
 Church/School _____ City _____ State _____

Workshop Fee: Monday, July 27 – Thursday, July 30, 2026

\$300.00 per person (Includes music, snacks, lunches and dinner Thursday prior to the concert)

EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT: \$275.00 per person with non-refundable deposit of \$75.00 by May 15, 2026.

Full payment in advance of the workshop is required. Send complete registration form with a check payable to **Gardensong Arts** to: **Summer Handbell Camp**
c/o Heidi Bischmann
205 Woodlands Court, Hartland, WI 53029

Handbell Assignment Request

Ring positions will be assigned in advance of the workshop. Please indicate your 1st, 2nd AND 3rd choice positions (select ONLY 3 by indicating 1, 2 AND 3 below).

Low Bass	C4-D4	E4-F4	G4-A4	B4-C5	D5-E5	F5-G5	A5-B5	C6-D6 D7	E6-F6 E7-F7	G6-A6 G7-A7	B6-C7 B7-C8

Every attempt will be made to honor your request above. In the event that is not possible, please check below all positions you are willing and able to ring for the entire week (select ALL that apply).

Low Bass	C4-D4	E4-F4	G4-A4	B4-C5	D5-E5	F5-G5	A5-B5	C6-D6 D7	E6-F6 E7-F7	G6-A6 G7-A7	B6-C7 B7-C8

Equipment

Please indicate equipment you are willing to bring if it is needed:

- Handbells (_____ Octaves)
- Handchimes (_____ Octaves)
- Mallets (_____ Octaves)
- Foam Padding and Table Covers (_____ Feet)

All equipment needs will be confirmed in advance. Thank you for your help.

Registration Confirmation

Upon receipt of registration and full payment by mail, you will receive an email confirmation and receipt.

Deadline to register is June 22, 2026. No refunds given after this date.

Date Rec'd _____ Check # _____ Email Confirmation _____ Deposit Date _____
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Ensemble Spotlight: Rochester Area Handbells



by Jen Welch

When Paul Kingsbury moved to Rochester, Minnesota, and was looking for a place to ring, he was surprised to discover that the city lacked a community handbell group. Church groups abounded, but he longed to do something outside of the church. So, acknowledging the old credo that “If you want something done you have to do it yourself,” auditions were called in 2017 for the inaugural season of Rochester Area Handbells (RAH).

The group rings about anywhere opportunities present itself, and it lives up to its “Area” namesake by consciously bringing performances to smaller communities in southeastern Minnesota, including Stewartville, Byron, Winona, and an upcoming concert in Lake City. The group has played in

churches, retirement communities, public libraries, winter markets, and even a very cramped but so well received performance at the Rochester indoor farmer’s market at Christmastime.

And they don’t do it alone. RAH has played in collaboration with numerous groups, including the Rochester Symphony and Chorale, the Rochester Choral Arts Ensemble, Rochester Flute Choir, the St. Olaf College Handbells, and many of the wonderful Minnesota-based community handbell ensembles. Next winter season will include a pairing with the Rochester Pops Orchestra. A smaller ensemble group also forms around Christmas to perform in tight spaces and at tight times where gathering the whole ensemble just isn’t possible.



Learn more about Rochester Area Handbells and “Why we ring” at the St Cloud Festival in June.



Lighting up the night — our first marquee!

Now in its ninth season, RAH is excited to undertake a new challenge — as the showcase ensemble for the 2026 Area 7 festival in St. Cloud. And what an honor it is to look at the growth that’s paved the way to this new milestone.

Growing in challenge

With a predominantly medical community and the busy schedules that go with that, Rochester is no stranger to turnover — and that applies to handbell groups. While about half of RAH is still made up of founding members, that’s left a good deal roster changes over its short life and growing pains that go along with it. Still, it’s exciting that the group has now expanded to 16, allowing ringers to rotate out for a rest and providing built-in subs for both rehearsals and performances.

Newcomers to the group have sometimes faced a trial by fire. “At my first [sub] rehearsal, I quite simply thought I was going to die!” says Jackie Robie.” Paul took ‘Pat-a-Pan’ at a ripping pace. I didn’t have my pages turned up, had never heard the piece before, and I couldn’t catch my breath! I was shocked (and humbled) that he asked me back, but he wisely paired me with a mentor to double with me, and I soon relaxed and got the hang of it. That was until I had to deal with Paul’s penchant for mixed meters. What a learning curve it was — and sometimes still is!”

One thing the ensemble has become known for is changing ringing positions with each piece.



At the Rochester downtown winter market in 2023.

Although not everyone is up for slinging 2s, Paul takes the opportunities he can — such as an all-mallet bass part — to rotate ringers to positions outside of their comfort zone. While observing this originally scared Ann Okins away, she finally decided to embrace the challenge and audition. “I believe it has made me a better handbell musician,” she says.

Growing in fun

Handbells can be serious business. Handbell ringers — and especially directors — are all too familiar with the expression of serious concentration that often takes over when a group is working hard to deliver a piece. But that hasn’t stopped this group from finding opportunities to keep it light and engage with audiences.

From movie music to dance songs to pop hits through the decades, RAH has aimed its programming at repertoire that is not just challenging but also often just downright fun. Whether it’s “The Muppet Show Theme” banged out on Boomwhackers or “Puttin’ on the Ritz” finally coming together at a fire tempo with a boost from a drum kit, there’s joy to be found in a RAH concert for ringers and audiences alike.

And lest we forget the props. Lesley Gommels points to the fun had at concerts as some of her favorite RAH memories — teacups used to toast during a recent “Christmas in England”-themed concert series, poultry headbands that popped up mid “Chicken Dance” to a resounding chuckle from the

audience, to name a few. You truly never know what you're going to get at a RAH concert.

Growing in community

As the group has grown in skills together, another essential element in its special sauce is the establishment of community. You can't ring together for hours every week without becoming a bell family. Like a family we often tease, and frustrations do sometimes arise, but it's out of love and care for making the group the best it can be.

"The best part of RAH for me is how we challenge each other simply by example. Everyone does their best, and we learn by listening and observing others who are also trying their best," says Robie. "It fosters a friendly environment for making mistakes while also striving to improve. You can tell when the magic happens, and we all start truly making music together."

That togetherness is part of RAH's magic. These aren't just bell friends. These are for-life friends who invite a stray over for a holiday celebration. Who sit in solidarity at a tough medical appointment.

"I love the camaraderie of friends made through the years," says Kristy Giere. "I am grateful for the support from both Paul and other ringers as I all of a sudden faced a major medical concern this past year."

Why we ring

In St. Cloud, RAH's concert is based around the theme "Why We Ring." In addition to allowing the ringers to choose pieces that are personal favorites, the theme has allowed them to reflect on this unique art form and what it means in their lives. And many of these reflections will be shared at the festival event and throughout the upcoming concert season.

"Handbell choirs are the epitome of 'ensemble' and that's part of what I love about playing with RAH: every part is essential and singular, without being 'solo,'" says Pam Hammond. "Well, I have accidentally soloed on occasion, but that's beside the point!"

RAH can't wait to see you in St. Cloud. Come share why you ring with us! 🎵



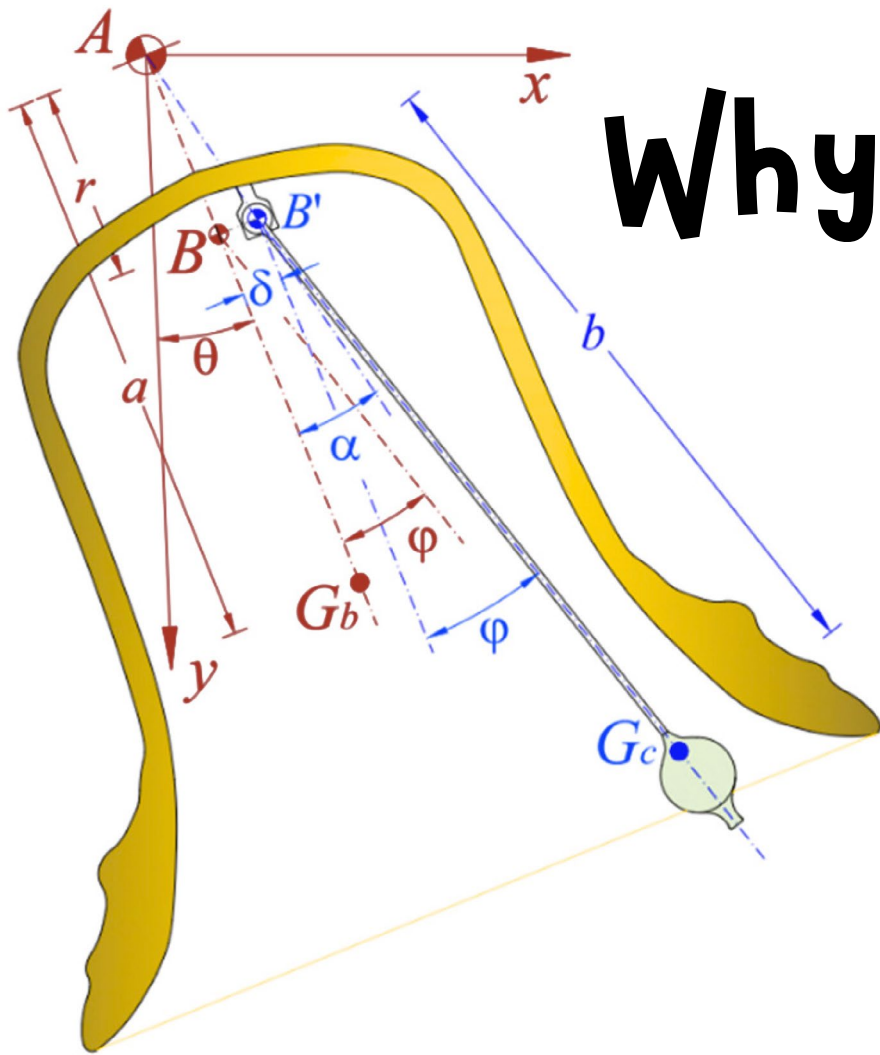
Sharing handbell love at a workshop with the St. Olaf College Handbell Choir.



Early-days RAH enjoying a season-opening retreat hayride with family.



Just a typical RAH rehearsal.



Why We Ring

Music and Motivations

May 9, 7pm
 Central Lutheran Church
 259 W Wabasha St
 Winona, MN 55987

June 13, 7pm
 First Lutheran Church
 100 Peace Ridge
 Lake City, MN 55041

June 14, 7pm
 Evangel United Methodist Church
 2645 N Broadway Ave
 Rochester, MN 55906

RAH ROCHESTER
 AREA HANDBELLS

rochesterareahandbells.org

Find a Nearby Area 7 Community Group

MINNESOTA

Bells of the Bluffs

Redwing, MN
bellsofthebluffs.org

Bells of the Lakes

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
www.bellofthelakes.org

Ding Dong Dollies

Twin Cities, MN

Great River Resonance

St. Cloud, MN
www.greatriverresonance.org

Joy BRingers

Fergus Falls, MN
maryjane41@aol.com

Northfield Handbell Ensemble

Northfield, MN
www.facebook.com/NorthfieldHandbells

Ring Out!

Minneapolis, MN
www.ringoutmn.org

Rochester Area Handbells

Rochester, MN
rochesterareahandbells.org

Strikepoint

Duluth, MN
www.strikepoint.com

Twin Cities Bronze

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
twincitiesbronze.org

wRight Ringers Community Handbell Ensemble

Buffalo, MN
www.facebook.com/wRightRingersHandbells

SOUTH DAKOTA

Bells of the Hills

Rapid City, SD
www.bellofthehills.com

Sioux Empire Handbells/Heartland Handbells

Sioux Falls, SD
www.facebook.com/HeartlandHandbells

WISCONSIN

Bell Crazy Handbell Ensemble

Lake Mills, WI
www.facebook.com/groups/378241232198/979

Encore! Handbell Ensemble

Oshkosh, WI
encorehandbellensemble.org

Fox Valley Bronze

Appleton, WI

Great River Ringers

La Crosse, WI
www.facebook.com/GreatRiverRingers

Madison Area Concert Handbells

Madison, WI
madisonhandbells.org

Maestro Productions Inc./Ringing Badgers

Madison, WI
www.maestroproductions.org/ringing-badgers.html

Milwaukee Handbell Ensemble

Milwaukee, WI
www.milwaukeehandbells.org

Milwaukee LGBTQ+ Handbell Ringers

Milwaukee, WI
sites.google.com/view/milwaukeeelgbtqringers

From the South Dakota Sub-Area Chair



by Cheryl Ulmer

Save the Bells!

Every time I've seen bells, chimes, cases,

tables, foam, and/or other handbell equipment for sale on national or state sites, it gives me pause. I cannot ignore this any longer! I'm not imagining that offers to sell complete sets of handbells have increased immensely all across the country, but especially in the Midwest and, unfortunately, in the Dakotas.

Just in the last year, I assisted one group to rejuvenate and restore their bell program. However, sadly, I also helped facilitate the sale of a church's 3-octave set of handchimes, since they hadn't been used in over 20 years. I truly believe that whenever we lose another handbell ensemble, it diminishes our handbell ministry overall. There are a whole host of reasons this happens, yet there's always hope to restart a program when bell cases are tucked away in the closet. After the bells and equipment are sold...not so much, so.

OK, enough of the gloom and doom about handbell programs that used to be active. Let's go for the adage, If you're not part of the solution, then you're part of the problem. What can any/all of us do to turn this around? Here are a few ideas:

1. Offer to help adjust and polish the bells. Chances are their bells are in need of some TLC if they haven't been used in a while.
2. Offer to present a mini-workshop just for the group, members of the congregation, or some potential new members.
3. Offer moral support to the present, former, or possible new director.

4. Offer to share some ringers and/or substitutes until the group gets going again.
5. Encourage the group to join (Area 7) HMA to connect with others from South Dakota.
6. Share some of your easier handbell pieces or dig out some of their old favorites.
7. Encourage youth to ring or incorporate bells with the Confirmation or Middle School classes.
8. Teach some fun, secular pieces to increase enthusiasm with youth and adults, alike.
9. Encourage youth to reach out and bring a friend to build/grow this music ministry.
10. Work to blend handbells with contemporary worship selections.

Of course, everyone loves to find a great bargain. But wouldn't it be wonderful if we no longer saw any advertisements selling handbells or chimes, other than to upgrade a current program? Let's work towards that goal! 🎵

STAY UP TO DATE WITH US!

 www.rr.org  [/RaleighRingers](https://www.facebook.com/RaleighRingers)

 [@RaleighRingers](https://twitter.com/RaleighRingers)  [@RaleighRingers](https://www.instagram.com/RaleighRingers)

From the Area 7 Events Coordinator



by Alanna Teragawa

Festival time is almost here! Below are some of the important final details and opportunities to keep in mind.

CLASSES:

Two days filled with 32 informative and fun class topics and 23 experts to share their knowledge. All registrants will receive their class schedule at check-in.



AREA 7 2026 FESTIVAL CONFERENCE



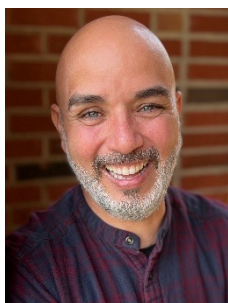
June (25) 26-28, 2026
River's Edge Convention Center
St. Cloud, Minnesota

FACULTY:



HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL SEE AT THE FESTIVAL

CLINICIANS:



Carlos
Rivera-Aponte



Jill
Mahr



Jennifer
Cadwell

HAPPY HOUR:

Attending the Handbell Happy Hour Thursday?

1. Pick up your tickets* at the check-in counter in the River's Edge Convention Center between 3:30 to 5:15PM Thursday June 25th. If you didn't get them during these times, pick them up at Iron Street Distillery after 6:00PM.

* Tickets: Admittance and two tickets for two beverages of your choice: cocktails or mocktails or soda. You may purchase additional beverages directly from the bar.

2. Two food trucks will start taking orders at 5:30 in the parking lot of the Iron Street Distillery, 539 East St. Germain Street. MAMA TACOS and BRICKSTONE PIZZA. You are welcome to eat your food in the Distillery. Food trucks will close at 7:30PM.

3. By 7:00PM, check in with the Area 7 staff at the Distillery to get your choice of handchimes to ring along with the frivolities. You are responsible for returning them to the correct case when you leave.

4. At 7:00PM, two leaders from the Twin Cities Beer Choir will lead us in a bunch of songs to start the Festival festivities, letting our hair down and having just plain fun.

5. Cathy Moglebust will lead us in her new composition 'HANDBELL HAPPY HOUR'

Brick Oven Pizza Bus



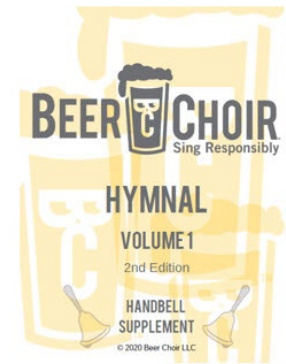
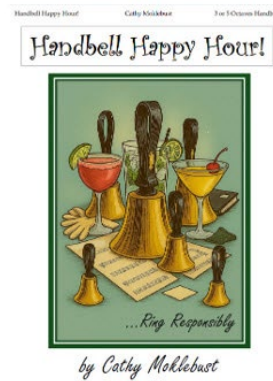
Mamas Taco Truck



Iron Street Distillery



Beer Choir Frivolity



CONCERTS:

Friday Showcase Concert

7:30-8:45PM Terry Haws Center B
Rochester Area Handbell Ensemble
featuring Paul Kingsbury, artistic director
The group is composed of ringers from communities throughout the Rochester Area.

Formed in 2017, Rochester Area Handbells has quickly become respected for their exciting musicality and engaging programming. Their 2026 program, "Why We Ring", features some of our favorite selections both new and old, as well as commentary from some of our ringers on their connections to the art of ringing.

The concert is free to Festival registrants. Tickets for non-Festival registrants can be purchased at the door for \$20.



Saturday Concert

4:30-5:30PM
Terry Haws Center B

The ringers from Bronze Plus, conducted by Carlos Rivera-Aponte and Conference Choir, conducted by

Jennifer Cadwell, will present their concert for all registrants. Non-registrants may attend at no charge. The Conference Choir ensemble will be performing the premier composition “From All That Dwell Below the Skies.” The piece was commissioned by Matthew Compton and dedicated to Jennifer Cadwell in appreciation for her 6-year term as the Area Chair-Elect, Chair and Past-Chair.

Sunday Concert

1:30-2:45pm

Terry Haws Center A

This is it. The culmination of all the preparatory rehearsals and those held during the Festival. Everyone wears their black Festival shirt. This is a free concert open to the public. However nonperishable food items or cash donations are encouraged to benefit a local food shelf. SPREAD THE WORD! Pictured at right is from the 2006 St. Cloud Festival.

Sunday Worship

8:00AM Terry Haws Center B

Enjoy a reflective time with singing, a homily, prayer, and much more. A popular event at all Area 7 Festivals to give thanks for each other, for the great music that is shared at Festival and in our church homes, for the blessings received and shared, and to the glory of God.



FESTIVAL 2026 LINKS & FAOS

[2026 Festival Registration link](#)

Need to EDIT your registration?
Follow the link that appeared in the email you received after you registered.

[Link to the Festival Documents, including clinician's rehearsal notes](#)

[General Festival Information website link](#)

Hotels with group discounts specific to the Festival (group codes connected to links)::

[Best Western Plus Kelly Inn](#)

[Courtyard Marriott](#)

TIMELINE FOR THE 2026 ST. CLOUD FESTIVAL CONFERENCE

- May 1 – \$140 full-Festival balance is due; or \$65 one-day-Festival balance is due.
- May 1 – Optional fees due: \$35 Handbell Happy Hour event.
- May 1 – Registration closes. Last day to register for classes by period.
- May 16 – Cancellation notifications can be made with the Registrar through June 20. No refunds. Please inform the registrar of your cancellation, so catering numbers can be adjusted.
- May 19 – Last day to make hotel reservations at the discounted rate.
- June 1 – Last day that HANDBELL HAPPY HOUR online cancellations will be accepted.
- June 1 – Sponsorship donations are due.
- June 15-21 – You will receive an email from the Registrar with last minute reminders.
- June 23 – Last day to adjust your hotel reservations, directly with the hotel.

10 THINGS TO BRING TO FESTIVAL

1. Festival music (only published scores-no copies). Music notebook. Pencils. Notepad. Gloves if you are ringing on borrowed equipment.
2. Ringing equipment: handbells, handchimes, mallets, foam pads, table coverings, tables (unless you're renting tables from the convention center). You might want to consider bringing foam floor mats for your standing comfort.
3. Non-perishable food items or cash donations for the local food shelf.
4. Creative items for the Silent Auction. Or bring your excitement to bid on items that pique your interest.
5. Comfortable shoes and clothing layers for a variety of temperatures indoors and out.
6. Spending money for use at one/all of the several exhibitors.
7. Snacks for your hotel room. All rooms have a small fridge and microwave.
8. Your appetite. The Green Mill restaurant is attached to the hotel. Hours 6:30AM to 11:00PM
9. Plans for your dinner on the free Saturday evening, after 5:30PM
10. Bringing a truck or a trailer? They can be parked in the back lot of the Best Western Kelly Inn.

WHO TO CONTACT:

Registrar: Trevor Lee

registrar.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Chair: Paul McKenzie

chair.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Events Coordinator: Alanna Teragawa

events.area7@handbellmusicians.org 612-819-5778

FESTIVAL CHECK IN TIMES

Thursday June 25: 3:30 to 5:15PM

Check-in location is inside the main entrance of the River's Edge Convention Center. Each registrant must come individually.

To give the all-volunteer Board staff time to prepare for your arrival, no unloading or setups in the massed ringing floor will be allowed before 3:30pm. Thank you for your understanding.

Your ticket to the HANDBELL HAPPY HOUR will be available during this time. Any remaining HAPPY HOUR tickets at 5:15PM will be taken to the Iron Street Distillery for pick up there after 6:00PM.

Friday June 26: 8:00AM to 3:30PM

Everyone must be in their places and ready to ring on the massed ringing floor by 3:30PM.

SILENT AUCTION

Are you a "crafty" person?

Do you have something you think a fellow ringer would like?

Bring and/or buy an item from the Festival Silent Auction. Almost anything can be offered up for auction. Some suggestions you may consider: Items (wine, cheese, snacks, etc.) that represent where you live, a handbell trinket, a painting, gently used music that you no longer need in your library, and many more. You are limited only by your imagination.

All proceeds will be used to start the Bill & Cindy Alexander Grant Fund. You'll hear more about this Grant at the Festival and beyond.

To help us prepare for the donations, please follow [THIS LINK](#) to submit the information about the item(s) you are donating.

Questions can be directed to Lisa Bourget at WisconsinNorth.area7@handbellmusicians.org

SPONSORSHIPS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORTING AREA 7 AND THE 2026 FESTIVAL CONFERENCE

The Area 7 Board of Directors is an all-volunteer entity, and the biannual Festival Conferences is its primary means of financial support for running the business of the Area. The Board prioritizes keeping event costs affordable for participants. Additional financial support to assist in that effort is always welcome! Here is how you can help:

1. Attend Area 7 events and encourage others to attend.
2. Donate items for the Festival Conference Silent Auction.
3. Consider a sponsorship in memory of, in appreciation of, or in honor of someone in your life.

Donations received by June 1st will be acknowledged in the Festival Conference booklet and in a future edition of the Clapper Chatter.

Sponsorship levels:

- Supporter: \$25-99
- Contributor: \$100-249
- Patron: \$250-499
- Ringing Endorsement: \$500 and above
- Major Sponsorships available (e.g. featured ensemble expense, Festival pins, "swag bag", etc.)

Contact Jennifer Cadwell with questions: pastchair.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Follow [THIS LINK](#) to make Sponsorship donations.



CAN'T ATTEND THE FESTIVAL? WE NEED LOTS OF EQUIPMENT!

LOAN US YOUR HANDBELLS / HANDCHIMES / FOAM

Here is what is needed:

- 01 6-octave set of handbells and handchimes
- 25 sets of 5-octave handbells
- 22 sets of 4-octave handbells
- 22 sets of 3-octave handbells
- 44 sets of 4- to 5-octave handchimes
- 22 sets of 3-octave handchimes
- 1,752 feet of table foam

Your loaned equipment is picked up and delivered back to you, and is fully insured while away from your building. In our decades of hosting Festivals, every handbell and handchime were returned safe and sound.

Please contact Michelle Finlon ASAP if you are willing to loan any of your equipment: chime.area7@handbellmusicians.org 🎵



HANDBELL SERVICES, INC.
of Detroit, Michigan • since 1991

- 🎵 Quality supplies, including gloves, binders and table padding
- 🎵 Unique gifts for ringers and directors handmade in the USA

www.handbellservices.com

Area Events Calendar

May 23, 2026

Make Hotel Reservations for the Area 7 Festival

Use only these links to make your reservations for a discounted rate:

[Best Western Kelly Inn](#) or
[Marriott Courtyard](#)

June 25, 2026 (Thursday)

Handbell Happy Hour (pre-registration required)

7:00-9:00PM with food trucks at 5:30

Iron Street Distillery

St. Cloud, MN

June 26-28, 2026

Area 7 Festival

Rivers Edge Convention Center

St. Cloud, MN

June 26, 2026 Friday

7:30pm River's Edge Convention Center

St. Cloud, MN

Terry Haws Center B

Showcase Concert at the Festival

Conference featuring Rochester Area

Handbell Ensemble

Paul Kingsbury, artistic director

Free admittance to Festival registrants

\$20 Tickets sold at the door to

non-registrants

June 27, 2026 Saturday

4:30pm Concert of the Specialty Choirs

Bronze Plus Ensemble and Conference

Choir

Terry Haws Center B

No tickets needed

June 28, 2026 (Sunday)

1:30 Festival Closing Concert

River's Edge Convention Center

St. Cloud, MN

Terry Haws Center A

Open free to the public.

Donations to local food shelf encouraged

July 5-11, 2026

International Music Camp –

Handbells – Session 4

Clinician: Monica McGowan

Grades 5-Adult

[International Music Camp link](#)

July 14-18, 2026

National Seminar – Handbell Musicians of America

Cincinnati, OH

[National Handbell Seminar link](#)

July 25-28, 2026

International Music Camp –

Handbells – Session 7

Clinician: Monica McGowan

Ages 21+

July 25-28, 2026

International Music Camp – Handbells – Session 7

Clinician: Monica McGowan

Ages 21+

[International Music Camp link](#)

October 30-31, 2026

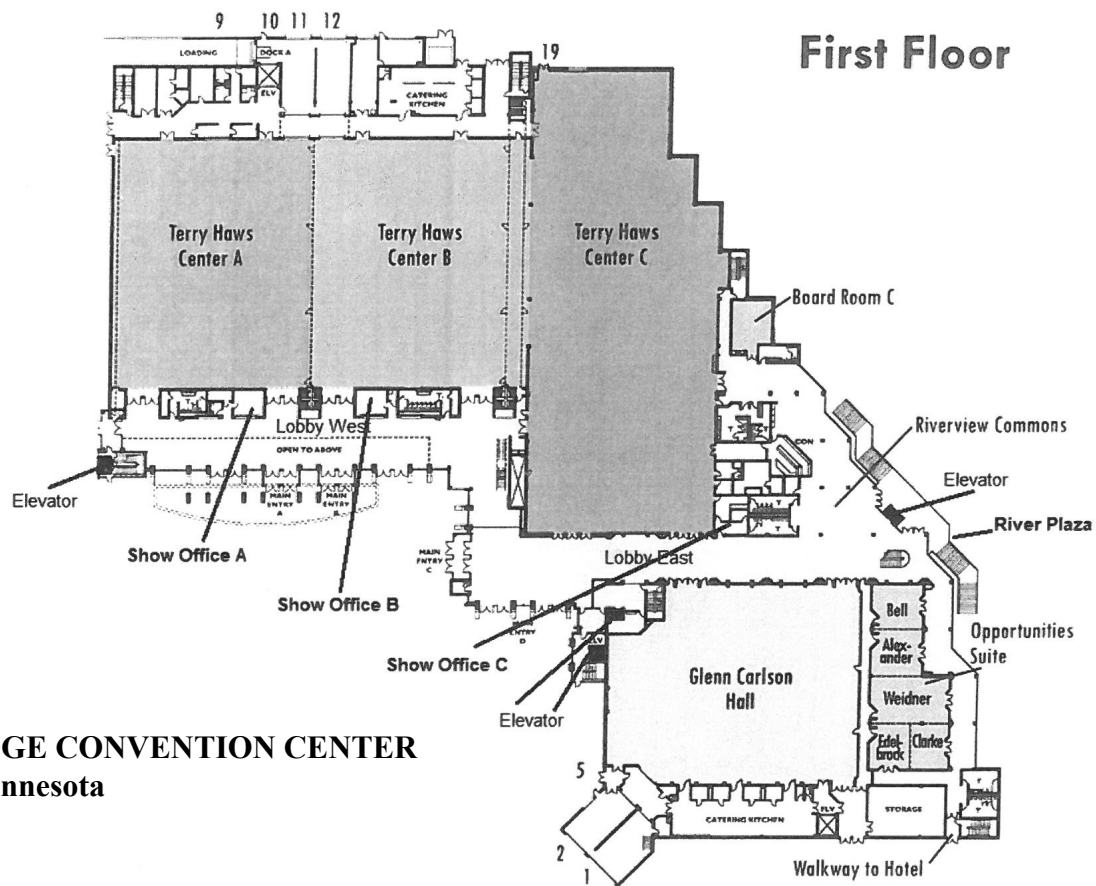
ANTHORNIS 2026

Clinician: Emily Li

Stl Louis Park, MN

[More Anthornis 2026 information](#)

For additional information, go to
area7.handbellmusicians.org/events



RIVER'S EDGE CONVENTION CENTER
St. Cloud, Minnesota

Area 7 Board

Chair: Paul McKenzie
chair.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Chair-Elect: Monica McGowan
chairelect.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Past Chair: Jennifer Cadwell
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Secretary: Deb Madel
secretary.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Treasurer: Theresa Jacobson
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C.H.I.M.E. Representative:
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Webmaster: Paul Weller

Events Coordinator: Alanna Teragawa
events.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Events Assistant: Dan Ahlman
event-assistant.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Youth Events Planner: Bonnie Tranby
youthevents.area7@handbellmusicians.org

**Historian and Media Library
 Coordinator:** Jordan Goodwater
historian.area7@handbellmusicians.org

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ndakota.area7@handbellmusicians.org

South Dakota Sub-Area Chair:
 Cheryl Ulmer
sdakota.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Northern Minnesota Sub-Area Chair:
 Derek Bromme
minnesotanorth.area7@handbellmusicians.org

Southern Minnesota Sub-Area Chair:
 Paul Kingsbury
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Twin Cities Metro Sub-Area Chair:
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Northern Wisconsin Sub-Area Chair:
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Registrar: Trevor Lee
registrar.area7@handbellmusicians.org