

American Guild of English Handbell Ringers
Uniting People Through A Musical Art

Area XI Newsletter

Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming

INTERESTING PEOPLE - *There are many interesting people working for you on the AGEHR Area XI board. In March you met our Chair, Dr. Michael Mazzatenta and in this issue we are introducing you to our hard-working Area XI Secretary/Treasurer, Sharon Sparlin.*

FROM COWGIRL TO SOLO HANDBELL ARTIST - By Bob Tucker

How on earth did someone who grew up competing in the Junior Rodeo circuit and racing go-carts eventually become a prolific solo ringer and then highly successful two-term Secretary/Treasurer for AGEHR's Area XI? Sharon Sparlin's story sounds amazing, but if you could get to know her, you wouldn't be surprised at any of it.

Sharon Sparlin grew up on a ranch in Central Point, Oregon, which meant growing up with horses. As an early participant in junior rodeos, she traveled extensively in the eleven western states, competing in every event offered for girls, plus team roping with her brother. After accumulating numerous trophies, belt buckles, saddles, and awards, she competed at the National Finals, claiming top honors in three of the five events.

Sharon Sparlin's life as a musician and ringer began in 1980, when she joined a handbell ensemble. After watching a solo handbell performance at a local conference, the fascination with the art of solo ringing quickly overtook her and she has been ringing as a soloist and in groups ever since.



Sharon and her brother team roping in 1967 at the Montague Jr. Rodeo where she won the All-around Cowgirl title.

Perhaps it was inevitable that someone as energetic, outgoing, and people-oriented as Sharon would not only become involved in Area XI events but also make a name for herself among those most active in the handbell world. In any event, according to Sharon, at Pinnacle in Dallas, Texas, in February 2004, "Linda Maloney asked if she could put my name on the ballot [for Secretary/Treasurer] because they needed two names to hold an election." Sharon's name was not well known in Area XI, so the chances of her being elected to office were slim – so Sharon took the leap! Surprise! Sharon started her first term of office September 2004.

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MEET SHARON SPARLIN (cont.)

What can Sharon say about the experience? "The first months were the hardest," says Sharon: "not only understanding the duties and function of the job, but having to set up accounting guidelines, policies, and procedures." Nonetheless, she found her service thoroughly satisfying. "Because I am an A-type personality and want to get everything organized," explains Sharon, "it has been a very rewarding experience working behind the scenes on all of the essential administrative tasks and even rewriting Bylaws and Rules of Procedure. And, as co-chair of the Denver 2006 and Albuquerque 2008 Area XI Festivals, I have had the opportunity to work very closely with Linda Maloney in developing Festival Planning guidelines."

"I would adhere to strict qualifications before a person's name could be placed on a ballot."

Sharon has also welcomed the ability to network within the AGEHR national handbell community and work with some of its most interesting personalities, such as AGEHR President Debbie Rice, conductor David Davidson, clinician Monica McGowan, director Jason Wells, and composers Fred Gramann, Michael Helman, & Cathy Mokolbust, just to name a few.

Knowing what she does about the job now, Sharon has several recommendations for the selection of future candidates for Secretary/Treasurer: "I would adhere to strict qualifications before a person's name could be placed on a ballot. This position requires

organization and structure and also needs to have someone who has a head for numbers and good computer skills." A mentor program is now in place for the incoming officers.



Besides solo ringing, Sharon is one of the original members of Sonoran Bells, Tucson's professional ensemble, formed in 1999. There, you generally see her with four treble bells in her hands and a big smile on her face. Now retired from the computer technology industry, although still working part-time from her home office for American Airlines, Sharon has the luxury of being able to volunteer for numerous activities in her church and community, finding fulfillment in life by making herself available to others when needed. You may find her driving a patient to the cancer center for chemo treatment, helping with a grocery purchase, mentoring, or visiting a shut-in.

Sharon's term as Area XI Secretary/Treasurer ends in August. She is grateful to have been able to serve with such dedicated musicians these past four years. "My special thanks to my now close friend Linda Maloney," says Sharon fondly, "who has single-handedly guided me through the last four years."

Results of National AGEHR Election

Ballots needed to be postmarked by March 15 and now the results have been announced by Debbie Rice outgoing AGEHR President.

Lee Afdahl has been elected President-Elect of AGEHR with Phil Roberts and Stephanie Wiltse being elected At-Large Board Members. They will begin their term of service on the National Board beginning October 1, 2008 and will serve through September 30, 2014. Lee Afdahl is the Director of Music and Organist of First Presbyterian Church of Rochester, Minnesota with over 35 years of experience in leading choral and handbell ensembles in Michigan and Minnesota. He has served the AGEHR as Michigan chair for Area V and chair of Area VII.

Phil Roberts is a 27 year member of AGEHR with over 30 years of experience conducting handbell choirs of all ages in several Protestant traditions. He also directs two community ensembles. He is the handbell editor for GIA as well as a publisher, composer and arranger of handbell music.

Stephanie Wiltse is the music director for the community group, Embellish. She also directs two church and two college handbell ensembles.

These newly elected officers will join incoming President, John Pfeiffer and ongoing At-Large Directors Reiff Lorenz, Mike McCrary and William Waggener.



Festival/Conference Opening Concert Features Enchantment-Albuquerque Handbell Ensemble



← Enchantment members

Row 3, l-r: Patti Roberts, Barb Baker, Gail Downey, Director, LeaAnn Hinde, Nancy Roberts-Small

Row 2: Leila Norris, Nancy Tecumseh, Holly Baker, Cindy Bothwell, Diane Lippitt

Row 1: Don Small, Cathy Anderson, Jill Kleven

Enchantment~Albuquerque Handbell Ensemble, directed by Gail Downey, was formed in September, 2000, by the members of an established church handbell choir. The members wished to enjoy a more varied repertoire along with the challenges of bringing the art of handbell ringing to the greater Albuquerque community. Many of the ringers were surprised at the increased responsibilities and commitment required of community group members and reluctantly withdrew from the group. Those who remained established auditions and reached out to ringers throughout Albuquerque. Gradually, Enchantment has evolved into an auditioned handbell ensemble whose diverse members come together to share their common love of ringing handbells.

One of the original goals of Enchantment was to educate people concerning the art of handbell ringing. An important part of their program has been presenting concerts and assemblies for public and private schools throughout central New Mexico. Another significant goal was to continue their own musical growth and ringing skills, both as individuals and as an ensemble. To achieve this goal, in addition to their regular rehearsal and performance schedule, they have traveled to Colorado, Arizona, Wyoming, Texas, Missouri, and throughout New Mexico to attend AGEHR conferences and workshops. In August, they will be traveling to Orlando to participate in the International Symposium. To read more about the group visit <http://www.enchantmenthandbells.org/MeetEnch.html>.

The members of Enchantment are particularly delighted to have the honor of presenting the opening concert for the AGEHR Area XI 2008 conference.

Selections for the opening concert will be made from the following:

Processional on an Opening Bell (Eb4) – by Michael Mazzatenta

Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens Adore Him – arr. by Fred Gramann

O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus – arr. by Derek Hakes

Moon Over Ruined Castle – arr. by Kazuko Okamoto

Resplendent Ringing – by Michael Mazzatenta

Mary Did You Know - Vocal Soloist - Peggy Murtagh

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God – arr. by Cathy Moglebust

An die Musik – Schubert; arr. by Valerie Stephenson

Vocal soloist – Peggy Murtagh

Handchime soloist – Barb Baker

Angels' Carol – Rutter; arr. by Sondra K. Tucker

Korobieniki – arr. by Matthew Prins

Good Vibrations - arr. by Matthew Prins

Handchime soloist – Diane Lippitt

American Tapestry Suite – by Arnold Sherman

I. March

II Jazz Rag

III Spiritual

O Du Mein Osterreich – von Suppe; arr. by Gail Downey

Several selections will feature percussionist Russell Beaumont.

“Rising to New Heights” Sunday Showcase Concert Performers Needed

Are you attending the Area XI Festival/Conference? A Showcase Concert is planned for Sunday Morning and we need participants. The concert is open to individuals, ensembles or choirs. Pieces should be no longer than 5 minutes - including setup and performance time. The application is available at:

<http://www.area11.org/aconf2008/shcapp.pdf>

It has all the info you need to apply. There are plenty of openings, but we need your application mailed to Trudy Pohawpatchoko (her address is on the application) ASAP or we won't be able to include you in the Conference Booklet.

Go Bellistic! at the Saturday Night “Rising to New Heights” Concert



ANNE COTTER SHERYL BERTELSON

Anne Cotter and Sheryl Bertelson are a professional handbell duo known as “Go Bellistic!” They will present a concert on Saturday Evening at the Festival/Conference in Albuquerque.

Anne Cotter's musical background includes piano and cello, and she has been ringing handbells for 10 years. Sheryl Bertelson has a piano background and has been ringing bells for 8 years. They began duet handbell ringing together over five years ago. “Go Bellistic!” performs at churches, handbell festivals and seminars, and for special occasions all over the United States. They also perform for many local organizations for special events, and during the holiday season.

Anne is the Arizona State Chair and an Area XI Board member for the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers. Sheryl is the Northern Arizona State Representative and a State Board member for the organization. Both Anne and Sheryl teach handbell ringing.

The name “Go Bellistic!” is representative of the excitement and energy that goes into the concerts performed by Anne and Sheryl. Handbells can be FUN as well as beautiful!

Keepin' Up With Folks

Many of you may remember **George Cannon** whose energy and organizational skills made him invaluable as the local coordinator for two Area XI Festivals of the Guild held at the Casper Events Center in 1990 and 2000. George started the Koinonia Ringers at the First United Methodist Church of Casper, WY in 1974, and he made a difference in the lives of ringers of all ages. He assisted other handbell choirs in Casper and other Wyoming cities, both as an active worker in the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers and as a representative for Schulmerich Handbells. George is fighting pancreatic cancer. He and his wife, Claranne, who has been a loyal ringer in the handbell choirs, recently finished building a new house and are now at home at 3281 E. 18th, Casper, WY 82609.

Gail Downey, who will bring her community group - Enchantment/Albuquerque Handbell Ensemble - to play an opening concert for the 2008 Area XI Festival in Albuquerque, will soon be moving to Las Vegas. Gail says, “We are looking forward to being near our son, Brian, his wife, and our new grandson. We are looking forward to living this grandparenthood role to the fullest. It will also be terrific to be able to attend all of Brian's concerts. As the head director of bands and assistant director of the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra at the Las Vegas Academy of Fine Arts he has many performances all through the school year. (It is a public high school but the kids have to audition to get in.) In addition to all of these perks, it is also only a day's drive to visit our daughter, Erin, instead of the current 2 day drive.” Gail also says that her heart will probably remain with Area XI where she's been a member for over 30 years.

Speaking of moving, many of you may not be aware that our Past Chair, **Linda Maloney**, moved to Goddard, Kansas last year to be closer to elderly parents. Linda continues to fulfill the obligation of Past Chair by mentoring the Area XI board which has a new Chair, helping them work through the intricacies of running a Festival/Conference and finalize Rules of Procedure. Linda was one of the candidates for At-large Board Member in the recent National AGEHR Election. She is also currently providing much care and support to her husband, Jerry, who recently suffered a heart attack and has been hospitalized. Linda's continues to use newmexhandbells@msn.com for an email address. Her snail mail address is 2550 S. 222nd St. West, Goddard, KS 67052.

Our Area Chair, **Mike Mazzatenta**, is recovering at home from influenza B and pneumonia. (Didn't we all know there were some bad germs going around this winter?) Mike had originally entered the hospital for emergency surgery on a herniated disc which was causing extreme sciatic pain. (Not a good condition to have when you are in Mike's line of work!) After spending 4 days in the hospital, the herniated disc problem was reduced to a tolerable state and it was determined that the surgery was not necessary at the present time. Mike was sent home to recover from the flu and pneumonia. Aquatic therapy has been prescribed for the disc problem.

Check www.area11.org for the latest info on:

Festival Logo Items now available: (must be preordered):
T-Shirts, Polo Shirts and Tote Bags available. Order deadline 5/21/08
Colors, sizes, costs on Order form at -
<http://www.area11.org/aconf2008/logoorder.pdf>

Who's coming to the Festival

<http://www.area11.org/aconf2008/who08.html>

And ALL things Festival related. FAQ, Repertoire, Registration, etc.
<http://www.area11.org/aconf2008/aconf08.html>
is the “Rising to New Heights” Festival home page