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## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2020–2021**

October 1 marked the beginning of the new OGEHR membership year. We encourage all choirs and ringers to renew, to help keep YOUR guild healthy and active during COVID-19.

In view of the unprecedented events in the past 6 months, we are making the following changes to the fees for the 2020-2021 year:

Organisations – \$90

Affiliates – fee waived, provided that your choir has renewed its membership

Individual – reduced to \$20

Even though the affiliate fee is waived, we ask that all affiliates go through the renewal process to check and fill in any gaps in their profile, particularly if you have not told us which bell choir you ring with. This helps us provide appropriate membership services, and will be necessary if you wish to take advantage of the online tutorials.

### **How to renew your membership**

Go to [ogeHR.ca](http://ogeHR.ca). If you are already an OGEHR member, go to the upper right corner of the screen and click Log in. Your log in credentials are your email address and your password. If you have forgotten your password, please contact Helen at [membership@OGEHR.ca](mailto:membership@OGEHR.ca) and she will send you a temporary one. Then click on Membership—Join OGEHR, which takes you to a page listing the three types of membership. Below that is a coloured bar. Clicking on it takes you to your profile and allows you to renew as indicated below.

If you are the person renewing for a bell choir, please add the names and email addresses of any affiliates whose membership is also paid by the organisation (there's no fee for them this year, but it keeps the records straight).

If you are an affiliate whose membership is paid by your choir, you only need to update your profile.

If you are an affiliate paying their own fee, please review your profile and click on Renew (again, there is no fee payable this year, but it keeps our records straight.)

If you are an individual ringer or supporter, the process is as usual—only the fee has changed.

Payment by credit card is quick and easy for you and for us, but if you need to pay by cheque, please make it payable to OGEHR and send to Helen Coxon, OGEHR Membership Secretary, 61 Wheatfield Road, Etobicoke, ON M8V 2P5.

Please direct any questions to Helen Coxon at [membership@OGEHR.ca](mailto:membership@OGEHR.ca)

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- **2021 Festival Update, pg. 4**
- **Handbell Tutorials, pg. 6**
- **Honorary Member Series: Vera Diamond, pg. 13**

## PUBLICATION INFORMATION

### SUBMISSIONS

Clapper Chatter welcomes your submissions. All submissions must be received by the following deadlines: September 30 (October issue), January 31 (February issue), May 31 (June issue).

### FORMAT

Text in Microsoft Word and high resolution colour photos in .jpg format are preferred.

### REPRINT PERMISSION

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### DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in Clapper Chatter are not necessarily those of the Ontario Guild of English Handbell Ringers, nor does the appearance of products or services in advertisements constitute an endorsement by OGEHR.

### ADVERTISING

Ad sizes and rates are available on request. Advertising must be submitted by the submission deadlines listed above. All final ad artwork must be saved in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. When preparing ads, use high resolution images and fonts, and set the Acrobat Preferences to embed the fonts and images at their original high resolution quality.

### CLAPPER CHATTER EDITOR

Please send all submissions to:  
Simon Spencer —Clapper Chatter Editor  
simon.spencer1993@gmail.com  
416-702-5661

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### MORE ON SUBMISSIONS

A newsletter thrives or dies based on its content, so we need your input! Do you have a concert coming up, a review of a performance just accomplished, a significant event in the life of your bell choir, or a favourite piece of music that you would like to recommend to others? Send it in! Anything is fair game (subject to editorial review). Accompanying photographs are encouraged, as they really liven things up.

We want your feedback. Let us know what you like, or don't like, or would like to see, by emailing Simon at [simon.spencer1993@gmail.com](mailto:simon.spencer1993@gmail.com).

Submission deadline for the next issue: Jan. 31, for publication Feb. 15



## President's Message

*"Let's hope that we can all be back playing by the time September school bells are ringing,"* is how I signed off my message in the June Clapper Chatter. That hope seemed realistic especially as the number of COVID-19 cases decreased throughout the summer. As September has set in and the number of COVID-19 cases has increased, we now understand that that hope was based on false optimism.

While some choirs have found creative and innovative ways to continue their music programs, either in small groups or virtually, many choirs have not been given the go ahead to use their practice space. This is a hard reality to accept and leaves us with more questions than answers.

The OGEHR Board is aware of these new constraints and challenges, and has made three decisions we hope will keep and build member engagement.

- Affiliate membership dues will not be charged this year—only the choir fee (See article on Membership on page...1)
- The 2021 Festival will be postponed until May 2022 (see article on 2021 Festival on page...5)
- The Program Committee has developed a series of Handbell Tutorial and Q&A sessions free to all members who update their member profiles. (See article on Handbell Tutorials on page...7)

Communication is not a one-way channel—we ask that you actively communicate with us by contacting any Board member when you have comments, questions or concerns. We would love to hear from you—let us know how we are doing, and what we can continue to do to support you during this time of uncertainty and change. It is critical that we keep connected—and find ways to "Keep calm and Ring on"!

Thank you for your interest in helping OGEHR to be the "the voice of the handbell community in Ontario".

Margaret Merkley  
OGEHR, President



We are pleased to be starting off the 2020-2021 year with a great slate of Directors and members at large. (See back page). However, if you have some time to volunteer, there are several opportunities still to be filled. As well as members at large, we would love to have two more Board Directors and an Area Rep for South. Please contact Janis at [jlcowie@rogers.com](mailto:jlcowie@rogers.com) if you are interested in more details.

# 2021 Festival Announcement



With the current uncertainty in the health crisis and not knowing when a vaccine will be available to the general public, the Festival Committee and OGEHR Board have decided to postpone the OGEHR May 2021 Festival "It's About Time".

We want our members to remain healthy and wait until safer times to get together. We intend to use our current plans for whatever date the festival is held. If you have purchased the music, please keep it for your future practices. We have contacted Kath Wissinger and Lisa Kyriakides to confirm their availability for May 2022. At this time, we are hoping to hold the Festival in May 2022 at St. Lawrence College in Kingston as originally planned. We will keep you informed as time moves forward and let you know the Festival status by September 2021.

In the meantime, we hope everyone stays safe and finds some bell music to enjoy if you can!

Janis Cowie

2021 Festival Chair

Ontario Guild of English Handbell Ringers (OGEHR)

[jlcowie@rogers.com](mailto:jlcowie@rogers.com)

905-891-1650

# Terry Head Memorial Fund



On November 17th, 2020 it will have been one year since Terry Head suddenly passed away. It was a great loss to his family, his church, and to our OGEHR community. In recognition of the contributions that Terry made to handbells, OGEHR is establishing a memorial fund dedicated to his memory. In our February Clapper Chatter, our president, Marg Merkley, wrote the following:

“Terry had been a member of OGEHR for many years, but he wasn’t just a member who rang and directed. He sat on several Festival Committees tasked with organizing provincial festivals. Terry was an exceptional committee member, as he was so willing to step up and help out wherever the need might be. As part of his duties on the 2015 Festival committee, he travelled across the country side picking up and then setting up sets of bells for workshops. He also presented workshops, conducted choirs, and most recently was the Music Coordinator for the 2019 Festival held in June at Fanshawe College, here in London. This was a multi-faceted responsibility that required him to find a guest conductor, select all the music played at the festival, and facilitate mini-ring performances throughout the event.

In addition to sitting on Festival Committees, Terry also sat on the Board of Directors for OGEHR, primarily as Program Chair. However, this past year he accepted the role of Vice-President for which I was truly thankful. Terry and I were in constant communication about OGEHR. He was the ideal person to bounce ideas off; a person who could be counted on to provide positive constructive input.

While Terry was a true professional who did all of the above with grace and poise, he also did it with humility and gentle humour.”

We would like to honour Terry with the establishment of this fund which will be used to award opportunities for handbell musicians to further their knowledge as a director, conductor, clinician, educator, or performer.

Information on how to donate and full details about the fund are available at the following link:

<https://ogehr.ca/Terry-Head-Memorial-Fund/>

**Please Consider Donating to this Fund**

# OGEHR Handbell Tutorials



The Program Committee has had a busy summer organizing and arranging a range of handbell tutorials for the upcoming year. We extend sincere appreciation to the clinicians who have stepped forward to create tutorials and host Q&A sessions. We also thank members who have attended the first three tutorials on Practicing Handbells at Home (Without Handbells), produced and hosted by Rob Cairns. They have been entertaining, engaging and educational.

The tutorials range in content from *Getting Started with a New Piece of Music* to two tutorials on *Notation Software*. We hope there are several topics each of you are interested in learning about, and encourage you to be part of the premier showing of these tutorials and to join in the live Q&A sessions, moderated by Rob Cairns, Man-Yee Sun, and Margaret Merkley.

Until the tutorials are premiered, they remain in the private domain and are available to members only. After the Q&A session, tutorials are then available in the public.

Date	Short Bio	Descriptor
Sat., Sept. 12 <sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Rob Cairns is a music and drama teacher at Lester B. Pearson School for the Arts in London, Ontario. He directs the Jubilate Bells at Metropolitan United Church and is currently the Vice-President of OGEHR.	<b>Practicing Handbells at Home (Without Handbells!) - Weaving</b>  How do you practice at home when you don't have your handbells? This short series of video tutorials looks at how to have some fun rehearsing with everyday items in your home!
Sun., Sept. 20 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.	Rob Cairns	<b>Practicing Handbells at Home (Without Handbells!) - Mallets</b>  How do you practice at home when you don't have your handbells? This short series of video tutorials looks at how to have some fun rehearsing with everyday items in your home!
Sun., Sept. 27 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.	Rob Cairns	<b>Practicing Handbells at Home (Without Handbells!) - How to Rehearse</b>  How do you practice at home when you don't have your handbells? This short series of video tutorials looks at how to have some fun rehearsing with everyday items in your home!

Sat., Oct. 17 <sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Brittany McCorriston has been playing handbells for over ten years and is working towards a Bachelors of Music in Contemporary Writing and Production from Berklee College of Music. Brittany specializes in music notation and editing and is currently an assistant editor for Berklee Press where she has worked on over 15 different publications. Brittany has a passion for teaching and believes that fluency in music technology is beneficial to all music learners.	<b>Intro to Notation Software</b>  In this workshop we'll be learning about the different notation software currently on the market, what you can do with one, and then cover some basics in using MuseScore, a free program available for download. Get the ideas in your head onto 'paper' and be able to hear back and make changes in real-time. In the span of approximately 10 minutes, we'll re-create an 8 bar handbell work whilst also learning score set-up, basic input techniques of notes and articulations, handbell specific notation, and some helpful resources of where to go when you run into trouble using the software.
Sun., Oct. 25 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.	Lisa Kyriakides enjoys a busy and varied career as a conductor, clinician, performer and musical director. She directs two 3-octave choirs at Aurora United Church, as well as performs in the church's quintet <i>EmBellished</i> . Lisa is a member of <i>The Bronze Foundation</i> and is currently the	<b>Getting Started with a New Piece of Music (Tips to Make You a Handbell Champion!)</b>  Your conductor hands out a new piece of music. Now what? This tutorial will look at all the ways you can analyze and mark your music before you ever start to ring. Being prepared is the key!

Sat., Nov. 7 <sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Dominique Moreau is a percussionist and music teacher in Ottawa. He plays with Ottawa Symphony Orchestra and teaches at Gisèle-Lalonde High School and the Ottawa Youth Orchestra. Dominique plays with the St. Andrew's Ringers.	<b>Playing with Heavy Bells</b> Bigger bells are heavier and harder to play—but that doesn't mean you can't play them! This workshop gives you tips and tricks to allow you to play larger bells musically without hurting yourself.
Sat., Nov. 14 <sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Lisa Kyriakides	<b>Conducting - The Basics</b>  Have you ever wanted to know what your conductor was doing with their hands? This tutorial is for conductors and non-conductors alike! Learn basic beat patterns, usage of the left hand, starting and stopping the music, and how to conduct musically. All you need are your hands!
Sat., Nov. 21 <sup>st</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Brittany McCorriston	<b>Virtual Handbell Project - Find Out How to Get Involved:</b>  Looking for an opportunity to play? Attend this session to learn how to be a part of the virtual handbell project. This session is for the directors and individual ringers who want to learn about how to get involved. This project will involve ringers recording their individual part whilst playing along to the selected piece that will then be combined to form a virtual choir. This session will outline the timeline for the project how to record at home (For FREE!), how to sign up and more!

Sat., Dec. 5 <sup>th</sup> 2:00 p.m.	Dominique Moreau	<b>Active Listening:</b> learn the music without lifting a finger!
Sun., Dec. 13 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.	Lisa Kyriakides	<b>How to Mark Your Score Efficiently</b>  Have you ever come to a bell change in the music and realized you didn't have the correct bell? Avoid this and other common mistakes by learning some of the tricks of the trade on how to mark your score. You will be amazed at how a little preparation work can make you a much better ringer!



Sun., Jan. 10 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.	Dominique Moreau	<b>How to use a Metronome:</b> your best friend when you're practicing!
Sun., Jan. 17 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.	Lisa Kyriakides	<b>Rehearsal Techniques for Conductors</b> You have one hour per week to rehearse with your ringers and a variety of performances looming. How do you make the most of your time with your ensemble? In this tutorial, we will talk about the ways to run an efficient rehearsal so your ringers are more confident during performances.
Sat., Jan. 23 <sup>rd</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Brittany McCorriston	<b>Writing for Bells, How to Get Your Ideas on Paper</b> Using one of her arrangements as an example, Brittany will walk participants through her own arranging process, from start to finish. Brittany will discuss her own process of arranging from idea to finished work and some of the challenges she's faced while completing various projects. Brittany will discuss arranging and composition as a whole and how to hone your skills as well as talk about specific writing considerations when it comes to handbell music.

Sat., Feb. 6 <sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Dominique Moreau	<b>Meters:</b> What are they and what do they tell you about the music?
Sat., Feb. 20 <sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Lisa Kyriakides	<b>How to Recover from a Train Wreck</b> Despite hours of rehearsal, there is always the potential for errors in performance. That's one of the things that makes live performance so exciting (and a bit scary). The sign of an experienced ringer is one who can recover from a big error with the audience none the wiser. Come learn how to be that ringer!
Sat., Feb. 27 <sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Brittany McCorriston	<b>Notation Software Part 2</b> So, you've had a bit of time to play around in MuseScore, and you want to bring your skills to the next level? In this workshop we'll cover some more advanced techniques including working from templates, customizing a score, and discuss some general workflow tips that can speed up the process. Have you been working in MuseScore and had some specific questions on how to do something? You're not alone, submit your questions to <a href="mailto:brittany mccorriston@gmail.com">brittany mccorriston@gmail.com</a> and with your permission she'll include the question in the video.

Sat., March 6 <sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Dominique Moreau	<b>Malleting Bells:</b> Malleting technique and tricks to make your life easier!
Sun., March 14 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.	Lisa Kyriakides	<b>Choosing Music for Your Ensemble</b> You have 4 performances this term, 11 ringers with different skill levels, and a limited amount of rehearsal time. How do you keep ringers and audience members enthusiastic about your music choices? This tutorial will cover criteria you should consider each time you choose your music.

Sun., April 18 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.	Lisa Kyriakides	<b>Finding the Melody in Your Score</b> Have you ever had your conductor tell you to "bring out" the melody notes? As a conductor, have you ever said those words and been presented with blank faces? In this tutorial we will discuss what a melody is, why we need to know where the melody is, and how composers often indicate the location of
Sat., April 24 <sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.	Debi Sproule began ringing handbells in 2005. She is now involved with several different handbell groups and is OGEHR's Coordinator of the Music Lending Library.	<b>How can the Music Lending Library help you as a director or ringer?</b> This video will look at ways the MLL can assist both directors and ringers. It will also discuss the process of borrowing music.

If you are a clinician and would like to produce and host a tutorial, please contact Marg at [president@ogher.ca](mailto:president@ogher.ca). If you have feedback for us and/or have a topic you would like to see a tutorial on, please contact Debi at [debisproule@gmail.com](mailto:debisproule@gmail.com).

Please continue to check the Event page in the OGEHR website for updates.



## Virtual Handbell Project

Starting to feel disconnected at home and looking for a way to get involved, learn new skills, and be a part of a province-wide initiative? The Virtual Handbell Project will be starting up soon and is a way for ringers and their choirs to connect and make music together. Similar to the “Virtual Choir/Orchestra” projects that have been popping up all over the internet, OGEHR is excited to announce the creation of a Virtual Handbell Choir.

Participants of the Virtual Handbell Choir will be recording their individual bell part to *How Can I Keep from Singing* arranged by Arnold B. Sherman. Information on how to learn your part and record at home will be covered in the upcoming tutorial on **Saturday November 22 at 2 p.m.** There is **no** cost to participate and recordings can be done easily using a smartphone, tablet, computer, video camera, etc. More information, sign-ups, the timeline for this project, and other details will be posted soon on the OGEHR website.

Sign-ups will begin after the tutorial, and more information about how to sign-up will be available in the coming weeks. Currently, the Virtual Handbell Project is looking to gauge interest from choir directors and gain insight as to what the potential barriers to participation may be so that we can be sure to cover these topics during the tutorial.

Questions and feedback can be sent to **virtualhandbellproject@gmail.com**. We understand that accessing and using technology may be a barrier to some, and we want to do everything possible to ensure that anyone who wishes to participate can do so. Please plan to attend the tutorial on **Saturday November 22** and submit any questions to the email listed.

During a time of uncertainty and isolation, let's remind ourselves of the power music has to connect with one another and be a part of a project that brings music and song to those around us.

### Handchimes Needed

An Elementary Music teacher at Elsie MacGill Public School in Oshawa, is looking for a Suzuki Tone Handchime set to borrow. She wants the Arts to continue despite COVID-19 contact restrictions. Handchimes and handbells are a great way to teach music during this time as woodwind and vocal programs have been cancelled. If you know of someone with a set that is not in use, please contact Amanda at [Amanda.mohns@ddsb.ca](mailto:Amanda.mohns@ddsb.ca)

### Handbell Musicians of America National Seminar

#### Pre-Register and Save Now National Seminar 2021 in Phoenix, Arizona

Join us at the Renaissance Phoenix Glendale Hotel and Spa in Phoenix, Arizona, for National Seminar 2021. Event dates are Tuesday, July 13 through Saturday, July 17. Pre-register by October 1 and freeze registration fee at \$350. Also, those who opt for pre-registration will have the chance to register for the full event classes and tracks before everyone else. Full event registration will be available February 15, 2021.

Read More: <https://handbellmusicians.org/enotes/e-notes-august-2020>

## **Guidelines for Ringing Safely during COVID-19**

### **Caring for your Ringers Before Rehearsal**

- Try to limit the number of ringers present at rehearsal. Consider sectionals or rehearsing music for smaller ensembles.
- Encourage ringers to stay at home if they are feeling unwell.
- If possible, ringers should be tested for COVID-19 before resuming rehearsals.
- Monitor each ringer's temperature before rehearsal.
- Each ringer should wash their hands for 20 seconds. If soap is not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

### **During Rehearsal**

- Rehearse in a large space or outdoors, if possible.
- Everyone should wear a mask.
- Maintain a six-foot distance from each other. Assign one ringer per table.
- Ringers should wear gloves at all times.
- Each ringer should stay on the same position for the entire rehearsal.
- Select repertoire that does not require shared or borrowed handbells or handchimes.
- Sneeze and cough into elbows.
- Ringers should behave as though they all might be infected with the virus.
- Try to limit special techniques which require touching the casting or clapperhead.

### **After Rehearsal**

- Each ringer should wash their hands for 20 seconds. If soap is not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Disinfect all equipment and surfaces.
- Gloves should be removed and put into a sealed plastic bag to carry home to launder after each use.
- Once home, disinfect or discard masks.
- If someone at the rehearsal is later identified as a suspected COVID-19 case, the Director/Conductor should inform all ringers. They should all quarantine themselves for 14 days before rejoining the rehearsals.

### **Equipment Tables and Pads**

- Each ringer should be assigned to one table.
- Even if your foam is covered with fabric, it should be covered during rehearsal with additional fabric which can be laundered after each rehearsal (i.e., an old bed sheet) or a plastic table cover which will be disposed of after rehearsal. Fabric should be sealed in a plastic bag to carry home to launder.

### Binders, Risers and Music Scores

- Each ringer should be assigned to one binder and riser. The binder and riser should be disinfected with a disposable disinfectant wipe before and after rehearsal. If music must be shared, it should be covered with sheet protectors, which should be disinfected before and after rehearsal.
- Ringers should wear gloves at all times while touching music.

### Handbells and Handchimes

- Disinfect instruments before and after rehearsal. Handchime tubes, aluminum handbell castings and handbell handles should be wiped with disposable disinfectant wipes. The outside of bronze handbell castings may be wiped with disposable disinfectant wipes and then dried with a clean, soft cloth like an old t-shirt or a microfiber cloth. These cloths should be sealed in a plastic bag to carry home to launder after each use. If bronze castings begin to stain or discolor, they should be polished immediately with handbell polish.
- Caution your ringers not to handle the clapperheads of the instruments if possible as they are difficult to disinfect.

### Mallets and Singing Bell Sticks

- Mallet shafts and singing bell sticks should be disinfected before and after rehearsal with disposable disinfectant wipes.
- Caution ringers not to touch the mallet head as the yarn will be difficult to sanitize.

Directors and ringers alike will be anxious to get back ringing in September but wondering when it will be safe to gather, and when we do, what safety practices should be followed. There is a myriad of dynamics at play for each choir that need to be respected:

- The regulations determined by your Public Health Unit based on updated and current information, e.g., Directors should keep attendance at each practice.
- The recommendations given to you by your church leaders and/or community landlords.
- The nature of the physical space where your choir practices, how often you practice, and how many choirs practice back to back.
- The comfort zone of your choir director and choir members based on personal concerns, vulnerabilities, and age.

OGEHR received guidelines from the American Handbell Industry Council that outlines excellent suggestions to consider on how to ring safely during the pandemic. Participants at an OGEHR Zoom meeting in June, and Directors at a Board meeting in June, looked at these guidelines and felt they provide an excellent overview. While OGEHR is not officially endorsing these guidelines, each choir, in addition to following protocols developed by addressing the above considerations, is encouraged to read the Handbell Industry Council Guidelines to help develop a set of safe practices.

Joan Bolam

## An Important Invitation from the HMC Interim Board

### A \$10 investment that's a sure-fire winner

What could the return possibly be on an investment of a mere \$10? In Canadian handbell circles, a lot! Consider — that by joining **Handbell Musicians of Canada**, the newly incorporated national handbell organization, you will be a 'builder' of the community of handbell musicians from all over Canada!

Handbell Guilds of Canada (HGC) has served Canadian handbell musicians well for decades but now a brand new organization, featuring a new model for membership and a modernized governance structure, has arrived — Handbell Musicians of Canada (HMC).

Your provincial guild is and remains your principal arena for the day-to-day activity and interaction of your handbell world. You should never feel you have to make a choice between joining OGEHR or joining HMC. HMC and the provincial guilds co-exist as complementary organizations, each with their role and value to support handbell musicians.

*Handbell Musicians of Canada  
unites the Canadian handbell community  
by educating, developing, promoting and  
supporting handbell musicians and the art of  
handbell/handchime ringing.*

HMC is open to ALL Canadian handbell musicians — ringers, conductors, clinicians, composers, even equipment schleppers — whether or not you are a member of a provincial guild. This new organization offers true national representation. Saskatchewan ringers have not had a provincial guild for many years; Quebec, the Maritime provinces and the northern Territories have never had one. Did you know that there is a large and robust community of ringers throughout Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, PEI and Newfoundland & Labrador? Think of the new friends and new musical connections that await you through membership in HMC!

The HMC governance structure is modernized and simplified. You join HMC as an individual member as your national membership is no longer covered by your provincial guild. Membership will cost you less than one month of your Netflix subscription — only \$10/year or \$7 for students — and can be easily managed online at [www.handbellmusiciansofcanada.ca](http://www.handbellmusiciansofcanada.ca).

**The focus right now is elections for a new national Board of Directors that will take place October 15-21, 2020.** By joining right away you will have a voice and a vote in deciding how and by whom this organization will provide national leadership for handbell musicians across this country and at the international handbell table.

HMC will continue to connect Canadian handbell musicians from sea to sea to sea. It will still provide national handbell events, and represent Canada in the international handbell community. The same great people plus many new handbell friends across the country, the same great connections, the same opportunities HGC has offered, plus even more.

As a member of this new organization you will have a voice in its workings and have access to information about events, resources, handbell musicians and groups, and all sorts of other information about handbells across this country. This community is building through an online presence and joining is so easy. What a great return on your \$10 investment!

Please show your support for the future of our vibrant and enthusiastic Canadian handbell community and join HMC as we embark on a new national musical journey!

Visit [www.handbellmusiciansofcanada.ca](http://www.handbellmusiciansofcanada.ca) to learn more, to read about the history of both HGC and HMC, and to find out how you can get involved.

## OGEHR Honorary Member Series

### Article No. 2

By Mary Loree

OGEHR recognizes distinguished individuals who make extraordinary contributions to the advancement of handbells in Ontario, through outstanding personal participation or exceptional leadership. In the early years of the Guild, members achieving this recognition were designated 'Honorary President'.

Vera Evelyn Diamond (1909-1994) was the first OGEHR Honorary President. Vera kept meticulous records of the years she spent building the handbell community in Ontario. Her records from 1961–1970 now reside in the OGEHR archives and formed the basis of information for this article. Anyone who knew Vera is asked to please contact Mary Loree (mary@loree.mygbiz.com) so that we can learn more about this impressive woman.

### Vera Evelyn Diamond

(1909–1994)

The Ontario Guild of English Handbell Ringers elected Vera Evelyn Diamond as Honorary President on May 4, 1985 at the very first OGEHR Members Meeting. The honour recognized Vera's passion for handbells and her tireless efforts in laying the groundwork upon which OGEHR would later be built.

Vera was a church musician throughout her career, including positions as organist and vocal choir director at Newtonbrook United Church (North York), Royce Presbyterian Church (Toronto) and Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church. Her passion for handbells began in July 1961 when she was introduced to bells at The Church Music Festival at Alfred University, NY. Vera immediately enrolled as the sole Canadian member of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers (AGEHR) and, within months, had ordered a two-octave set of White Chapel bells from England. These were later augmented into the three-octave set upon which Canadian handbell history was made.

Vera broadened her bell knowledge and skills at AGEHR Festivals in 1963. She used the experience and expertise gained in order to found one of the first Canadian handbell choirs, The Diamond Handbell Choir. Friends and family, including Vera's mother and aunt, responded to Vera's enthusiasm and travelled from across Toronto to practice every Tuesday at Vera's home in Willowdale. The choir held its inaugural concert on February 26, 1964 at Richmond Hill High School in support of York Central Hospital. The program lists this performance as a 'Sacred Concert' that included *Danny Boy*, *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring*, *Battle Hymn of the Republic* and, as was the practice at the time, *God Save the Queen* as the finale. The Diamond Handbell Choir went on to perform in many clubs, churches and organizations, including the Royal Canadian College of Organists.

The Diamond Handbell Choir sponsored the First Canadian Handbell Festival at Yorkminster United Church in Toronto on April 30, 1966. News coverage, arranged by Vera, included radio, television and print. Choirs from Willowdale, Galt, Picton, Wingham, Hamilton, Niagara Falls and Alfred, NY attended the one-day event that included one workshop and a Festival Concert. Vera directed the massed choir.

Vera and her choir enriched the 1966 Festival experience for attendees by arranging for a replica of the 'Council Bell' from the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962) to be on display throughout the Festival.

A lunch-time Director's Forum at the 1966 Festival resulted in two major decisions aimed at the creation of a Canadian handbell entity. The first was 'that a Canadian group of Handbell Ringers be formed'. The official name and Terms of Reference were tabled until later. The second decision was a proposal to AGEHR that Canada become AGEHR Area 10,



with Vera as Chair. In this position, Vera served on the AGEHR 'National Committee of Areas' and carried the Canadian flag in the AGEHR National Festival procession in Washington that year.

A highlight of the Second Canadian Festival concert, on April 22, 1967, was the playing of the *Centennial Hymn* to celebrate Canada's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The festival, at Alhambra United Church, Toronto, was again sponsored by Vera and the Diamond Handbell Choir and followed much the same format as the first. Unlike the previous festival, however, all participant choirs were Canadian.

The 1967 Director's Forum formalized the proposal of the Canadian group being known as AGEHR Area 10. Vera was reappointed as chair and June Somerville was elected Secretary-Treasurer. A letter of congratulations from the AGEHR president indicated the sincerity and optimism of AGEHR in their support of the proposal. The proposal was expected to be ratified by AGEHR in June 1967.

The Third Canadian Festival, at Royal York Road United Church, Toronto on June 1, 1968 was also called the First Area X (10) Festival. The Directors' Forum at this festival agreed to hold the Canadian/Area 10 Festivals in odd years, a practice maintained to this day. Vera was re-appointed as chair of Area 10 and June Somerville as vice-chair.

Unfortunately, in early 1969, AGEHR decided that, because they were incorporated as a 'national' organization, they could not legally have a 'foreign' Area. Canadian groups were, however, welcome to become 'affiliated' AGEHR members.

The Canadian Directors' Forum, held during the Fourth Canadian Festival at Royal York Road United Church on May 10, 1969, responded by making several key decisions: to continue affiliation with AGEHR, because the their decision was not unfriendly and there were many advantages to continued association; 'to incorporate the Canadian group of handbell choirs as 'The Canadian Guild of English Handbell Ringers'—a decision that would be reversed later in the year; and to continue with a Canadian Festival. The 1969 Directors' Forum also generated a thoughtful, comprehensive list of purposes for a Canadian organization.

Fifth Canadian Festival held at Royal York Road United Church, on April 25, 1970, would be the last of the documented Vera Diamond/Diamond Choir festivals. Robust registration led to discussions about pre-registration and offering more than one workshop if more festivals were to be held.

Vera Diamond's story now skips to May 4, 1985, and to the first Festival and inaugural Members Meeting of the newly established Ontario Guild of English Handbell Ringers. The meeting, chaired by Barbara Plante, elected a slate of officers that included Vera Diamond as Honorary President. The honour was announced in the first edition of the OGEHR newsletter later in the year.

Vera Diamond passed in 1994 and rests at Union Cemetery, Grand Valley, Dufferin County, ON. Her headstone is adorned with three engraved handbells and carries the inscription, 'Her music will last forever'.



The Diamond Handbell Choir in their inaugural year, 1964



## References

1. *The ENTERPRISE*; Willowdale, Ontario; April 27, 1966; p.1;  
'1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Handbell Festival set for Saturday at Yorkminster' (OGEHR Archives)
2. 'Find a Grave' Website  
[www.findagrave.com/memorial/209471182/vera-evelyn-diamond](http://www.findagrave.com/memorial/209471182/vera-evelyn-diamond)
3. *The LIBERAL*; Richmond Hill, Ontario; Feb 20, 1964; p.3;  
'Area Group Only Bell Choir in Canada' (OGEHR Archives)
4. *OGEHR Board of Director's Meeting Minutes*;  
June 16, 1985; Nov 23, 1985; Jan 25, 1986; Nov 22, 1986; Jan 31, 1987 (OGEHR Archives)
5. *OGEHR Members' Meeting Minutes*; May 3, 1985 (OGEHR Archives)
6. *OGEHR Newsletter*; Number 1; Sept 1985 (OGEHR Archives)
7. *Vera Diamond; Canadian Handbell Festival Reports*; 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970 (OGEHR Archives)
8. *Vera Diamond; Personal Handbell Records*; 1964-1970 (OGEHR Archives)

## CORRECTION:

The Honorary Member article about **June Somerville** in *Clapper Chatter*, June 15, 2020 should have begun:  
'Records indicate that June Somerville began directing handbells in 1963. In 1978, June became the handbell director at Ryerson United Church in Hamilton. She held that position for twenty-five years, until she moved to Appleby United Church in Burlington 2003. June became the handbell director at Appleby after bells were purchased in 2005.'

## OF INTEREST:

Research into Vera Diamond revealed that June Somerville attended all five of Vera's 1966–1970 Canadian Festivals. June's choir, the Princess Elizabeth HS Handbell Choir from Hamilton, played at the festivals on bells brought to Canada in 1885 by Charles Wilkes. The bells were named the 'Finlayson Memorial Bells', after the teacher who introduced bells to the school after arranging their purchase from the Wilkes family in 1937.

## What We Did During COVID—Setting-up the Data Base

I think it was Rob Cairns who mentioned a Data Base during one of our Zoom meetings. It was suggested as a good Covid project. The Limestone Ringers has more than six hundred pieces of bell music in single, quartet, small groups, bell collections and Music tree copies. It was a good time to work on this project with me doing the filing and Kathy Baer doing the technical submissions. Kathy mentioned that she used Excel format. The cover of each piece was used because all of the pertinent information was on the first page. It was sometimes hard with older copies to read the cover page. Kathy also said that it took many hours to complete the project. We have finished the Data Base and we are all ready to rehearse in the near future. Fingers crossed that everyone will be ringing soon.

Submitted by Janet McDonald,  
Director of the Limestone Ringers  
Kingston, Ont.



## Playing Together During Quarantine

Following our bell rehearsal on March 12<sup>th</sup>, we were informed that our church was closing because of Covid-19, and in fact, all of our lives were put on hold as quarantine became a way of life. We were in the middle of practicing our commissioned choir/bell piece for our church's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May. Needless to say, the anniversary was low-key, and the choir and bells were not part of it.

By late April, it seemed that many choirs were ringing virtually and it looked like so much fun! I thought we should give this a try. We retrieved our bells from the church and each ringer took home their bells, mallets and music. I chose a couple of pieces we had played before as well as arrangements of a couple of well-known hymns.

And then the learning curve began! We started with *Peace* arranged by John F. Wilson. The first hurdle was to get permission from the Benedictine Monastery to broadcast via You Tube. Fortunately that permission was granted quickly. Now, many publishers provide permission when you purchase a piece, but you must check.

Next came finding a soloist to sing the beautiful words. One of our ringers is from a nearby Anglican Church, and we involved two of their singers. The Anglican Church eventually used this piece in their worship as well.

Now to learning and recording! For our first piece, I chose something that had a lot of half note chords and a few bars of quarter notes. This made it easier for ringers who may be nervous about playing by themselves and also made it easier for our audio tech to put together the final product.

As a reference, the piece was played on the piano and began with a bell strike for a full measure, one silent measure and then the piece began. This gave the audio tech a reference point to combine the recordings.

Some things to keep in mind when recording—turn off extraneous noise in the house (air conditioner/furnace, TV/radio) and ensure family members know you are recording and ask them to not move about. It's also disheartening when you've just recorded for the umpteenth time—got it right—and your cat makes an appearance! Other decisions have to do with placement of camera, background and dress. These are individual to each choir.

One of the advantages of making a virtual recording is that you can have several people play more than one position if you are short on ringers!

We did make a second recording, but have not, as yet, moved on to a third. We enjoyed the experience; it was good to ring bells again, and both churches appreciated the addition to worship.

Barbara Neal, Director

Bells of Praise

Lorne Park Baptist Church

## Ringling During COVID

September 25, 2020

by Randy Mills

*Attitude of gratitude.* **Not** my favourite saying, and who would associate *gratitude* with COVID?

But I have been thankful, repeatedly: that official green light for outdoor gatherings of ten or less, a new bell group for children in Peterborough and, eventually, my first rehearsal at Trinity College School!

Everyone has their own experiences of the pandemic and its influence. For me, the Early Lockdown Period prompted thoughts of how my bell and chime groups might potentially gather safely once health authorities announced new regulations. With low COVID numbers in Peterborough and Northumberland (more gratitude), some (not all) parents were more open to considering how regulations could permit a safe return to music-making.

Our mostly-teen Cantate Chimers at St Mark's, Port Hope has less than ten members (thankful for fewer members?), and the kids and I were excited to gather outdoors in early July for real music. Yes, there was distancing, and later masks. Yes, there were all the necessary precautions to keep them safe—no shared chimes, music, etc.—but the enjoyment of being together was clearly important to them and to their parents. I particularly appreciated the health warnings from our host—a grandmom who is a retired government veterinarian.

The first rehearsals, with children wearing masks, were surreal—something from a horror movie. The inability to point to music scores to help new ringers was a serious impediment. *Necessity is the mother of invention* (a new favourite saying)—how was I going to explain rhythm and score-reading, how to hold a bell, etc.? Of course, patience (perhaps more necessary from the children!) and calm thoughts usually produced a way around every issue. For years now I have marked bell music—red circle-right, blue circle-left—thanks to my first ringing experiences as a guest in Brantford's Queensway Baptist Ringers at the Brock University festival. This made things so much easier for the newest ringers. Young people seem to be especially responsive to all things rhythm, and this also pushed the rehearsals forward. With sanitizing before and after, the hour-long rehearsal period always passed quickly.

At time of writing, my TCS groups are just starting. I am grateful for the planning by so many authorities as Ontario schools reopen. Fortunately, our Chapel space at Trinity is big, with lots of height and doors and windows to open. There is plenty of space for every bell table to be 8 feet apart. Returning ringers might miss *Lion King* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* (since we can't share bells of course), but they have lots of music in simple keys. Their fondest wish has been granted: they now get to keep their gloves (we'll see how often they forget to bring them!). Masks don't seem such an imposition when we are able to enjoy music-making together.

These situations won't work for many groups, of course, but there are ideas out there in social media which can suggest paths forward. Trinity United, Cobourg met outdoors using intriguing stands for each ringer. Other groups have enjoyed distanced outdoor ringing while the weather cooperates.

COVID has its own trajectory, and as I write, there is no way to see the future. I return to gratitude, which has made the many hurdles of these past months somewhat easier to tolerate. It seems to me that young people are also grateful for the opportunity to be together, in a controlled environment. Their enjoyment, and their wonderful music, has made me thankful, even during COVID.



## **A Selection of Music Lending Library Titles Which Lend Themselves to Social Distancing**

Here is a selection of titles from the Lending Library that may be helpful to choirs wanting to start back up and are looking for suitable music. For each piece, there are at least enough copies for every position in the lowest octave range, so no ringer needs to share music. For 2–3 octave pieces there are 8 or more copies, enough for 7 positions plus conductor (assuming G6 is covered by 1 of the 7). For 3–5 octave music, there are at least 12 copies (11 positions plus conductor). In addition, bells are not shared between positions so social distancing is easier.

### **LEVEL 1 and 2**

Great is Thy Faithfulness, arranged Dobrinski, 3 to 5 oct., 17 copies  
Handel's Allegro from the Water Music, arranged Keller, 2 oct., 9 copies  
In Peace and Joy, Allured, 3 to 5 oct., 25 copies  
Let All Things Now Living, arranged Eithun, 2 to 3 oct., 8 copies

### **LEVEL 3 and 4**

Amazing Grace, arranged Wilson, 3 oct., 15 copies  
The Bells Heard 'Round the World, Stephenson, 3 to 5 oct. 12 copies  
Brother James' Air, arranged Wagner, 3 oct., 26 copies  
Canticle of Praise, arranged Sherman, 3 to 5 oct. 14 copies  
Daystar, Kinyon, 2 to 3 octaves, 8 copies  
Edelweiss, arranged Wilson, 3 oct., 12 copies  
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah, arranged Dobrinski, 3 to 5 oct., 23 copies  
It Is Well With My Soul, arranged Moglebust, 3 to 5, 14 copies  
Kum Ba Yah, arranged Krug, 3 to 6 octaves, 14 copies  
Largo, Handel, arranged Lorenz, 3 oct., 18 copies  
Liberty Fanfare, Allured, 3 to 6 oct., 25 copies  
Masterpiece for Handbells, arranged Kauffmann, 3 oct., 18 copies  
Nocturne No. 3 in C Minor, Dobrinski, 3 oct., 13 copies  
O God, Beneath Your Guiding Hand, Payn, 3 to 5 oct., 26 copies  
Procession of Praise, Sherman, 3 to 5 oct., 25 copies  
Song of Joy, Sherman, 3 to 4 oct., 15 copies  
Song of the Wind, Sherman, 3 to 5 oct., 12 copies  
Spirit in the Wind, Afdahl, 3 or 5 oct., 12 copies  
Trumpet Voluntary, transcribed by Garee, 3 to 5 oct., 19 copies  
w-w-w-WOW!, Merrett, 3 to 5 oct., 14 copies

### **CHRISTMAS**

Change Ring Prelude on Divinum Mysterium, Gramann, 3 to 6 oct., 13 copies  
Dormi, Sleep Sweet Babe While I Rock You, Waugh, 3 to 5 oct., 13 copies

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, arranged Dobrinski, 3 to 5 oct., 16 copies

Up On the Housetop, arranged Lowther, 2 oct., 9 copies

### **ENSEMBLE**

5 Christmas Quartets for 4-in-hand, arranged McChesney, 2 oct., 4 copies (There is no sharing of bells within each piece, but a few bells do move to different ringers from piece to piece.)

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing, 4-in-hand, arranged Miller, 2 oct., 4 copies (There is no sharing of bells.)

If you have questions, please contact me, Debi Sproule, Music Lending Library Coordinator,  
debisproule@gmail.com



# Christmas Handbells



Virtual Massed Ring Event

Alex Guebert, Clinician

*Virtual  
Massed Ring*

Sat, Nov 21, 2020  
9:00 am – 1:00 pm  
Pacific Time

*Watch Party*

Sun, Dec 6, 2020  
5:00 pm – 5:30 pm  
Pacific Time

For more information, please visit  
<http://area12.handbellmusicians.org/christmas-handbells/>

This event is brought to you by Area 12's  
LA Metro Region and is sponsored by  
Handbell Musicians of America.

# OGEHR Board of Directors

As of August 2, 2020

**Directors (Year of Term Expiry\*)** \*Terms expire at the adjournment of the Annual Meeting

*Officer Position(s)*

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## President Directors

**Margaret Merkley ('21)**

*President ('21)*

*Chair: Board ('21); Chair Programs ('22); Chair Nominations ('21)*

*Honorary Membership*

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**<<vacant>>**

*Past President ('21)*

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## Officer Directors

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*Corresponding and Recording Secretary ('21)*

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*Chair: Governance ('21)*

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*Vice-Chair Nominations ('21)*

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**<<vacant>> ('21)**

**<<vacant>> ('22)**



# OGEHR Board Appointed Positions

As of Sept 26, 2020

No changes since Annual Meeting, May 23, 2020

## Name

Position (Year of Term Expiry\*, where applicable)

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### Area Representatives

#### Janet McDonald

East Representative ('23)

#### heather nicholson

Central East Representative ('22)

C (647) 230-2254 H (905) 686-5676  
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#### Lisa Kyriakides

Central Representative ('21)

#### Mark Matterson

Central West Representative ('23)

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<<vacant>>

South Representative ('22)

#### Rob Cairns

West Representative ('21)

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<<vacant>>

North West Representative ('21)

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56 Dutch Settlers Crt  
Holland Landing, On L9N 1L9

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### Festival Coordinators

#### Gail Bowes

2021 Festival Coordinator ('22)

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125 Blackburn Avenue

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### Programs

#### Barbara Peaker

Instrument Loan Program Coordinator ('22)

(519) 940-1862  
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#### Debi Sproule

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Burlington, ON L7S 2M2

## Standing Committees

(as of Sept 26, 2020)

Member Terms: Generally, one year, ending at first Board meeting after Annual Meeting

### **Area Representatives**

ToR: 110416-12; 180113-07

### **Joan Bolam (Chair)**

East AR

Central East AR

Central AR

Central West AR

South AR **Vacant**

West AR

North East AR

North West AR **Vacant**

President

### **Communications**

ToR: 110219-05; 110416-07; 120421-12

### **Kim Leitch (Chair)**

Newsletter Editor

Webmaster

Email Coordinator

Social Media Coordinator

Members-at-large:

1. Janis Cowie

2. Rob Cairns

3. Vacant

President

### **Development**

ToR: 170930-04

### **Vacant (Chair)**

Members-at-large:

1. Vacant

### **2. Vacant**

### **3. Vacant**

President

### **Education**

ToR: 111014-10; 130209-07; 160624-08

### **Rob Cairns (Chair)**

Members-at-large:

1. Matthew Boutda

2. Peggy David

3. Debbie McMackin

4. Randy Mills

5. Vacant

President

### **Governance**

ToR: 111014-12

### **Nancy Bell (Chair)**

Members-at-large:

1. Linda Wilson

2. Lloyd Winfield

3. Vacant

President

### **Honorary Membership**

ToR: 2007-02-17; 190622-08

Vice President (Chair)

Past President

President

### **Nominating**

ToR: 160409-11

### **Marg Merkley (Chair)**

Janis Cowie (Vice-Chair)

Central Area Rep.

West Area Rep.

President

### **Programs (2 year terms)**

ToR: 120421-05; 160624-08; 190622-10

### **Marg Merkley**

(Acting Chair)

Instrument Loan Program

Coordinator

Music Lending Library

Coordinator

Members-at-large:

1. Lloyd Winfield

2. Vacant

President

## Ad Hoc Committees

(as of Sept 26, 2020)

Member Terms: Generally, for the life of the Committee

### **2021 Festival**

ToR: 2019-06-22

Janis Cowie (Chair & Registrar) P  
2019 Festival Coordinator, Auction &  
Communications

(Gail Bowes)

Amy Baker (Facilities)  
Sue Buckingham (Marketplace)

Ruth Pettis (Mini Ring)

Judy King & Jan Haskins

(Music)

Kathy Baer (Publicity)

Janet McDonald (Publicity)

Bonnie Howse (Publicity)

Lynne Current (Social)

Marg Merkley (Workshops)

Kim Leitch (Secretary

& Website)

President

### **Terry Head Memorial Committee**

2020-04-18

Rob Cairns (Chair)

KC Cann

Susan Carscadden Mifsud

Janis Cowie

Judy McKnight

Barb Plante

President

### **Membership Review Committee**

2020-09-26

Helen Coxon (Chair)

Joan Bolam

Kim Leitch