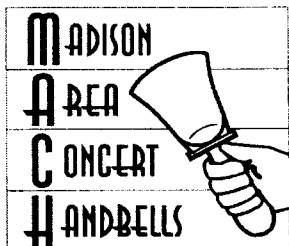


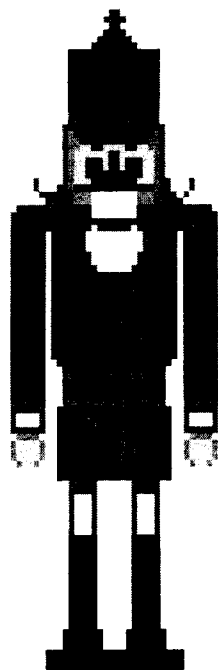
Madison Area Concert Handbells *Messenger*

Fall 2002



Look for us on these websites:

www.madisonhandbells.org
www.communities.madison.com
www.portalwisconsin.org
www.danecountycharities.org



Please post the enclosed poster

Sixth Annual Bells of Christmas Concerts

Each year MACH presents a new program of Christmas favorites in their *Bells of Christmas* concerts that showcase six octaves of handbells. This year's concert includes guest artists on harp and organ and will be presented:

- **Saturday, December 14 7:30 pm**, at Asbury United Methodist Church, 6101 University Avenue (near Allen Blvd.), Madison.
- **Sunday, December 15 3:00 pm** at Christ Presbyterian Church, 944 East Gorham Street, Madison.

Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for youth, 16 and under. Tickets are available at Borders Books in Madison or at the door.

This year's concert includes the following pieces.

✳️ A perennial favorite, Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, arranged by Kevin McChesney, with its familiar dances: Sugarplum Fairy, Trepak, the Chinese Dance and more, is a highlight of the concert. It features various handbell and handchime techniques to bring this fanciful ballet music to life. The Nutcracker is always a crowd pleaser!

✳️ *Mary Had a Baby* is a spirited arrangement of an old Christmas spiritual and is arranged for bells by Milwaukee's John A. Behnke. It features the tune in various rhythmic permutations accompanied by a rocking bass played on mallets on the lower bells. Look for some interesting ringing techniques in this piece.

✳️ *March of the Toys*, from Victor Herbert's children's operetta *Babes in Toyland*, and arranged for bells by Ardis Freeman, provides a real challenge with its rhythmic intricacies and rapid tempo. Remember Jack-be-Nimble from the story? Here the bells are "nimble"!

Guest artists include MACH's own harpist, Tricia Thorngate, joining MACH for *Ave Maria* and *Russian Carols*; and at the organ, Susan Klotzbach enriches arrangements of *O Tannenbaum* and *We Three Kings*.

MACH Ensemble Concerts

Some venues don't require, or have room for, the whole Madison Area Concert Handbell choir. So, MACH has a smaller ensemble to accommodate those occasions and locations. Six ringers volunteered their time and talents for this extra duty which requires learning new music and, of course, extra rehearsals. MACH has applied for a grant to help with the funding of concerts to be held at two elderly care places. What fun to bring a bit of Christmas cheer to these lovely folks! This year the Ensemble will be playing at Hometown Village in Verona, December 7th at 1:00 p.m. and at the Monona Senior Center December 12th at 1:00 p.m.

Additionally, the Ensemble will be playing Saturday, December 7th at 7:00 p.m. for *Higher Ground*, a live radio broadcast (WHA) with Jonathan Overby. Be sure to tune in!

MACH Hires an Executive Director

Over the summer MACH was fortunate to add the positions of Executive and Development Director to the organization. The individuals filling these positions will perform many of the duties previously assumed by the Music Director, Susan Udell, and bell ringers, allowing more time to concentrate on ringing. Kristi Menninga was hired as the Executive Director. Kristi is a current member of MACH, for a number of years served as MACH's treasurer, and has been a part of the choir since its inception in 1997. As Executive Director, Kristi's responsibilities include many of those she previously handled as treasurer. In addition, this position involves contacting advertisers and the media to support the group and publicize upcoming events. Working closely with the Development Director, the Executive Director determines financial estimates for grant proposals and in collaboration with the Music Director she helps with arrangements for concert locations. In addition to her ringing talents, MACH looks forward to the benefits Kristi's new role will bring the choir. Kristi and her husband, Alvin, have three sons. Prior to the birth of her third son, she was a computer programmer/database specialist with the Department of Workforce Development for nearly 10 years. In her spare time Kristi enjoys counted cross stitch, reading, and traveling with her family.

Be sure to look in the spring newsletter as we introduce our new Development Director!

MACH Plays for Area Handbell Festival

Thursday, June 27, was an exciting day for MACH. We'd been invited to present the opening concert for the Area VII AGEHR* festival held in LaCrosse this year. Area VII covers Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Manitoba, and playing the opening concert is an honor. It was fun and challenging to perform for 700 experienced ringers and directors. We also found them gracious and enthusiastic.

Three of us also had the opportunity to stay for the entire weekend festival. We participated in classes, reading sessions, and plenty of rehearsals. Mealtimes were frequently capped by short concerts by other participating choirs. We appreciated the opportunities we had at meals and between classes and rehearsals to get to know other ringers. We were not surprised that the most frequent question was, "How much do you practice?" However, we were amazed that the choir next to us on the mass ringing floor said, "When we saw who it was who set up next to us, we wanted to move out!" We assured them that we are quite human and make our share of mistakes, but they seemed not to believe it. We were also happy to talk to members and directors of other community groups, and share notes on organization and funding.

The final event of the festival was a mass concert played by all participating ringers, and prepared and led by composer/conductor William Payne of Bucknell University, and Monica McGowan, Director of the Twin Cities Bronze handbell choir. Area festivals are fun and educational events every ringer should experience!

*American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, the national handbell group of which MACH is a member.

How Do I Do That?—Bass Bell Ringing

Bass bells present an interesting set of unique challenges. The bells themselves are big and heavy, and some quicker passages of music are difficult to execute. But, bass bells provide a rich, rounded sound that complements any piece of music and gives the whole choir an excellent foundation.

We can't change the fact that bass bells are 'big and heavy'. There are techniques, however, that can lessen the strain on the shoulders and arms. In an excerpt from the AGEHR website "Handbell and Handchimes FAQ," Douglas Benton, a recognized expert on bass bell techniques, writes of an ideal way to pick up these heavy bells: "push the handle into the pad with the fleshy part of the palm. At the same time, pull the bell upright on its handle (the handle becomes a pivot point), and keep the handle pushed into the pad so the bell finally rests on its handle upright sunk into the pad. Then it is very easy to lift the bell straight up into ringing position."

The problem of quick notes is a little more complicated. Tricia Seuss, one of MACH's bass ringers, enjoys solving these musical problems. She likes to begin every piece with "accidentals out." In this arrangement, all the 'white notes' are in the center and the 'black notes' outside. This setup makes ringing runs with accidentals easier because weaving is unnecessary. Some problems can also be solved by moving bells into different positions, outside of their usual chromatic setup. Sharing bells with a bass ringing partner and 'walking' with a bell to ring a partner's bell helps solve some reaching and logistical issues. Experimenting with different setups makes bass bell ringing fun and interesting and their mellow sound is soothing and exciting. You may need to lift weights to gain your strength for ringing bass bells, but they're worth the extra effort!

New MACH CDs For Purchase

MACH is pleased to announce a new CD – Dancing Bells, a unique compilation of dance styles ranging from a stately *Allemande* to an energetic *Bell Boogie*, a free-flowing *Pizzicato Polka* and a rousing *Sabre Dance!* These tunes were performed at our 2002 Spring Concerts and recorded in a special session. Several ringers – and audience members, too – have declared that this program was their favorite of all we've done.

Dancing Bells and other MACH CDs, Christmas Bells and All Creation Rings, can be purchased at MACH concerts, Border's Book Stores, Ward Brodt Music Mall, or from our website: www.madisonhandbells.org. They'll make great holiday gifts. (Please see our website for selections included on these CDs)

Some Spring Things

MACH's Spring Concerts entitled **SHOWTIME!** are scheduled for Friday, May 16th at 7:30 p.m. at First United Methodist and Saturday, May 17 at 7:30 p.m. at Asbury Methodist Church. You'll enjoy hearing favorite tunes from well-loved movies, musicals and operas.

As MACH's reputation spreads in the community, we receive more invitations to share our music. This Spring, MACH will be performing for a number of groups in addition to the ticketed Spring concerts.

MACH has been invited to perform for the business division of American Family Insurance on Tuesday, May 13th. This invitation came to us from our newest Board member, Nancy Johnson, who is hosting the meeting.

We hope to put on a youth concert in early May at the Barrymore Theater. The concert will be for school children who will receive free tickets from school music teachers. Madison Public School's Fine Arts Coordinator, Rick Neuenfeldt, is assisting MACH in applying for grant(s) to cover costs. This is a new venture for us and we are very excited about the possibility of reaching young people with our music.

Meet a New Ringer - Jackie Williams

Jackie began her bell ringing over 20 years ago with Lee Afdahl at Trinity Methodist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She was already studying organ with Lee at the time. Over the years, she rang with such groups as Quattr Bella, Embellish, and after relocating near Detroit, Classical Bells. She rang with two of these groups that were featured artists at the Bayview, Michigan, Week of Handbells under the direction of Don Allured. She's attended many bell workshops, clinics, area bell festivals, and toured Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia with her bell choir from Metropolitan United Methodist Church of Detroit. While at Metro, she continued her organ studies with Dr. Gale Kramer and served as interim children's choir director and substitute organist. Jackie is a Special Education Assistant with the Verona School District. She is looking forward to returning to the UW in the near future to finish her degree in Special Education. She has a daughter at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, a son at Western Michigan University, and a son and a daughter finishing high school. During the summers, Jackie cooks and drives with her sons' Drum Corps. She also enjoys hiking in Colorado, downhill skiing and taking advantage of all the great opportunities Madison has to offer.

Mission Being Made Possible—Thanks to you!

We are very grateful to all who have contributed toward making MACH's service to our community possible. Your monetary contributions and your enthusiastic support are outstanding!

We also want to thank and recognize the granting organizations who have funded special projects recently: Madison Community Foundation (Capacity Building Grant), Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission and the Overture Foundation (concerts for the elderly/hospitalized), Wisconsin Arts Board (Arts Challenge Initiative).

Holiday Cheer to you all!!

Future Concert Dates:

MACH's Spring Concerts, **SHOWTIME!**,
Friday, May 16; 7:30 p.m., First United
Methodist & Saturday, May 17; 7:30 p.m.,
Asbury Methodist Church.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

HOW TO CONTACT US

✉ Write to *P.O. Box 14658,*
Madison, WI 53714-0658

☎ Call our Director, Dr. Susan Udell, at
271-3514

We're on the Web!
www.madisonhandbells.org

How Can You Make A Difference?

As many of you already know, MACH's 2002 annual appeal drive is underway. MACH board members sent over 600 letters to music lovers in our community with the hope that these people will support MACH's good work.

Sending a letter to our fans and potential fans is only one way of cultivating contributions. MACH is certain to benefit from every effort you can make to develop new fans and contributors.

Here are seven things you can do this holiday season that will bring new fans to MACH and joy to those around you:

1. Attend MACH performances!
2. Bring a friend or two with you to MACH performances.
3. Buy a MACH holiday CD.
4. Give MACH holiday CDs as gifts to friends, neighbors, and family.
5. Play MACH's CDs at holiday parties and tell everyone about what they are hearing.
6. Make a contribution to MACH that is meaningful to you.
7. Pass along names and addresses to the MACH Board of people who might be interested in receiving MACH's newsletter and updates.

We hope you'll be able to fit a few of these suggestions into your holiday routine. Happy holidays!

