

THE SWARM

Lee J. Afdahl is the Director of Music and Organist of First Presbyterian Church of Rochester, Minnesota, a position he has held since 1991. A graduate of Luther College, Decorah, IA, Lee is a church musician with forty years of experience in leading active programs of choral and handbell ensembles in Michigan and Minnesota. Currently he and his music associate, Jennifer Taylor, are responsible for leading four vocal and four handbell choirs, an elementary instrumental program, a church orchestra, and he advises the church's annual concert series.

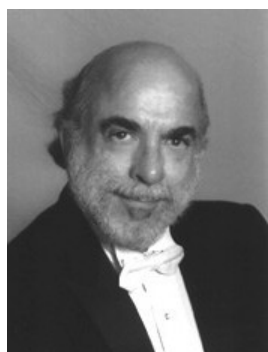


Lee Afdahl

Lee Afdahl is frequently a conductor and clinician for handbell conferences, choral workshops, and church music conferences internationally. He has conducted festival conferences for the Handbell Musicians of America at the local, area, and national levels, for handbell classes of American Guild of Organists events, and international handbell events in England and Australia. Mr. Afdahl has served the Handbell Musicians of America as Michigan Chair for Area V, Chair of Area VII, and currently holds the office of President on the national board of the organization.

He will again represent the organization as a conductor at the International Handbell Symposium in Liverpool, UK in 2012. Lee is an active organ recitalist and published composer and arranger of handbell and choral music with over sixty compositions and arrangements in print.

Doug Benton has been directing handbell choirs since 1973. He is a published composer/arranger of handbell, choral, organ, brass and orchestral music. Doug is a frequent contributor to *OVERTONES*, having written articles on various ringing techniques including Bass Bells and Multiple Bells, conducting, rhythm & counting and the first major research on repetitive strain injury and handbell ringing. He is an internationally respected Clinician and is in demand nationally as a Festival Conductor. Doug was appointed Bellmaster at Northern Arizona University, in 1989 where he founded the NAU Harter Memorial Handbell Ringers. He has served the Guild as Arizona State Chair, Area XI Chair and on the National Board of Directors of AGEHR as Area XI Chair and Chair of the Director Education Department. Currently, Mr. Benton is full-time Director of Music Ministries at Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, Gold Canyon, Arizona.



Douglas J. Benton

Shannon Casey is currently serving as the Artistic Director and Conductor of Sonoran Bells, Tucson's premier community handbell ensemble.



Shannon Casey

Shannon received a Master of Music in Conducting from the University of Arizona in 2001 and a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education in 1999.

Shannon's handbell background began around age 10 in ringing with a youth Handbell Ensemble at church in Cheyenne, WY. After an absence in ringing during high school and college, Shannon rediscovered bells in the fall of 2003. Shannon rang in Sonoran Bells from 2004 through 2009.

Ms. Casey also rang in Distinctly Bronze in 2004 and 2005. Shannon has served as a Local Liaison for the AGEHR National Conference in Tucson, AZ in 2009.



Sue Hahn

Sue Hahn is the Handbell Director for the Wellshire Presbyterian Church in Denver, CO. She also rings with the Denver Bronze, an auditioned community handbell ensemble. She has been ringing handbells for 20 years. Sue is the Chair-Elect for Area 11.

Susan Hedgpeth was born and raised in Illinois. Upon graduating from Joliet West H.S., Susan was awarded the music scholarship. In May 1996, Susan graduated from Southwest Baptist University, in Bolivar, Missouri with a B.A. in Music – emphasis in piano.

In June 1996, Susan married Anthony. They originally lived in Missouri, but in 2001 moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado. They have four children now – Rees (13), Rachel (10), Natalie (8), and Nicole(5). Susan’s three oldest now play handbells.



Susan Hedgpeth

While in Missouri, Susan accompanied the church choirs at Second Baptist Church in Springfield, MO. There she was introduced to handbell ringing by Cheryl Abney.

Soon after moving to Colorado, Susan auditioned for the Pike Peak Ringers under the direction of Kevin McChesney. She became a full-time ringer in January 2004 and the Assistant Director in May 2009.

The Pikes Peak Ringers tour throughout the United States. In 2007, they were the featured choir at the National Handbell Director’s Conference in Orlando, Florida. In 2009, the PPRs were selected as the featured choir to make a recording with famed cellist, Yo Yo Ma.

Susan directed the adult handbell choir at her former church for several years. She has been directing two beginning handbell choirs at a local elementary school in Colorado Springs for the past 8 years, and has been a teacher/director at a youth handbell camp for the past four years. In August 2009, Susan started the youth organization of the Pikes Peak Ringers: the Pinnacle Ringers (9th – 12th grades), and the Ascent Ringers (5th – 8th grades).

Susan loves teaching youth the art of handbell ringing and says, “It’s the only ‘team’ instrument I know of.” She also loves spending time with her family, ‘girls night out’, and the Chicago Bears.

Michael Kastner has been involved with handbells for more than 40 years, ringing, composing and arranging, conducting and leading workshops nation-wide and internationally.

Michael and Kevin McChesney started STEP, the Solo To Ensemble Project, publishers of music for solo, duet, trio, and small ensemble handbell ringers, in 1998. Michael is coauthor of a solo ringing techniques workbook called Solo Ringing! Musically (available from Jeffers Handbell Supply). Michael is also half-owner of Sonology Music, a close associate with STEP and distributor of STEP music. Michael is the organizer of SEE, Solo/Ensemble Extravaganza, a workshop sponsored by STEP, for solo, duet, trio, and small ensemble ringers, with world-wide attendance and acclamation.



Michael E. Kastner

Michael is an accomplished handbell soloist, as well as a conductor and clinician. He has conducted church choirs and three advanced community handbell ensembles. He has published handbell arrangements from solo to full choir 7-octave works. Michael has served the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers (now, Handbell Musicians of America) as area board member and in various volunteer positions.

Michael works for Avago Technologies in Ft. Collins, Colorado, designing integrated circuits. He lives in Broomfield, Colorado, with his wife Nancy who is an excellent handbell ringer herself and with their sons Michael Lee and Nicholas.



Monica McGowan

Monica S. McGowan took her music education background and found her life's passion in handbells. More than a quarter century later, she is a ringer, director, clinician and conductor. Whether it's for the Handbell Musicians of America, the International Music Camp, festivals, conferences or workshops, founding Artistic and Music Director of Twin Cities Bronze or as the Master Bell Technician at Ringing Restorations, McGowan brings her extensive training, experience and enthusiasm for handbells and handchimes to every forum and venue.

Linda Maloney is "well-traveled!" She resided in Iceland, the Portuguese Azores, and West Germany before returning to the States. While overseas, Linda directed children's choirs and served as organist, pianist, and resident accompanist for the annual European Church Music Conference. Linda received her Orff Schulwerk Credential when she attended the Orff Institute in Salzburg, Austria.



Linda Maloney

Linda enjoys handbells as a ringer and director. She is a member of the Handbell Musicians of America (AGEHR) having served as the New Mexico Chair (2000-2004) and Area XI Chair (2004-2006) and clinician in Areas 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10. Linda is Area 11 Board Advisor and has been the appointed Festival/Conference Chair since 2004. Linda also serves as a Twin Cities Bronze board member.

Linda resides in Hickory Flat, Georgia. She rings at First Presbyterian in Marietta. When not having fun with handbells, Linda enjoys her 'downsized' home and time with family – especially with her "A-Z grandchildren" – Audrey and Zachary.

Libbie Randels has been involved with handbells since 1987 and has directed adult and youth church groups in Texas, Alabama, Illinois, and Arizona.

She graduated from Southwest Missouri State University with a BS in Music Education, K-12, vocal and instrumental and has taught music in public and private schools at all levels.

Currently Libbie directs the Handbell Ringers of Sun City (Arizona), a 5 octave double community choir that performs two major concerts a year. Libbie also directs the handbell choir and small ensemble, from Christ Presbyterian Church in Goodyear, AZ. Last year Libbie had the honor of ringing with Distinctly Bronze West.

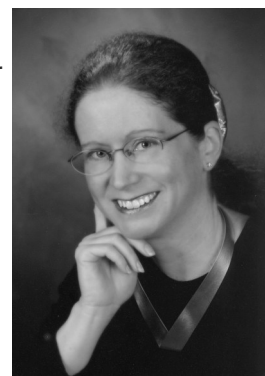
In her spare time she works at the World Wildlife Zoo and Aquarium and plays with her two dogs, two cats, and three grandpuppies.



Libbie Randels

Debbie Rice, a resident of Winston-Salem, NC USA, has returned as a visiting professor at Concordia University College of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada for the 2011-2012 academic year. Her primary responsibilities are with JUBILOSO! Bells of Concordia (an auditioned community ensemble) and Concordia Ringers (a university student ensemble). She assists with other choral ensembles, course work and workshops.

In the US she is a popular clinician and conductor throughout the country. International handbell work as clinician and conductor have included Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan. Plans are underway for her to conduct the first handbell festival in Israel April 2013. Groups and individuals from the US and Canada may join Peimon, Israel Association of Handbell Ringers for concerts, touring and community outreach.



Debbie Rice

While working in Canada, Debbie is taking a sabbatical from serving as Director of the Handbell Ministry for Becks Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, NC. This ministry includes choir groups for all ages utilizing the largest set of handbells and handchimes commercially available. Her bronze group, Rejoice Ringers has released two compact discs and been featured in showcase concerts for denominational, regional, national and international events. She is also taking a break as a professional singer with Centenary United Methodist Church.

Her music degrees are in music education, opera and musical theatre. She has sung with US regional opera companies, a professional choir, studied early music and conducting.

With the Handbell Musicians of America, she has held elected offices on the National Board as Area Chair, Area Representative to the Executive Committee, National Secretary, and the National Presidential cycle.



Claudette Rothwell

Claudette Rothwell has a passion for handbells and has rung in church and community choirs, ensembles, as a soloist and has directed bell choirs for all ages. In 1997 she started the bell choir ministry at Community United Methodist Church in Ogden, Utah where she currently directs two adult bell choirs, a youth bell choir and a children's chime choir. She has travelled with her youth choir to the Area 11 Young Ringers Camps where she facilitated classes, conducted massed ringing, and served as camp director. Presently, she is on her church staff as Director of Adult Spiritual Growth and Director of Children's Ministry, positions she has held for 15 years.

Claudette has been a member of Handbell Musicians of America (AGEHR) for many years. She has held leadership positions in Utah as Secretary/Treasurer, Chair-Elect and Chair and is the current Area 11 Chair.



Sharon Sparlin

Sharon Sparlin joined her first handbell ensemble in 1980. After watching a solo handbell performance, a fascination with the art of solo ringing quickly engulfed her life and she has been a solo ringer ever since. Sharon is a founding member and ringer with the premier professional handbell ensemble *Sonoran Bells*, www.sonoranbells.org.

Now retired from the computer technology industry, Sharon has the luxury of being able to volunteer for numerous activities in her church and community, finding fulfillment 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 is the current Secretary/Treasurer for Area 11 and also the past Secretary/Treasurer, serving from 2004-2008. Oh yes, she also works part-time for American Airlines.

Born in Wilson, North Carolina, Sharon now resides in Tucson, Arizona. In February, 2012 Sharon will celebrate 40 years of marriage to husband, Mike, a retired educator. They have 3 grown children and 6 grandchildren. In addition to handbells, Sharon's hobbies include scuba diving, cycling, golf, and traveling. Her travels have taken her to more than 80 countries. Although several trips were for pleasure, Sharon & her husband served 7 years with Teen Missions International, sending them to various locations around the world. If she could, she would love to travel into space and even to the moon.



Terry W. Waite

Terry Waite has directed bell choirs in the Salt Lake City area, continuously, since 1980. While he has directed adult choirs, youth choirs have been the constant in his directing resume. Youth have provided the bulk of his directing experience and been the source of his greatest fulfillment.

Terry played in The Wesley Bell Ringers during high school, but focused on vocal and choral music during college. Directing bell choirs was never part of a plan. It just happened. Terry has started new bell choirs and been hired, twice, to replace very popular directors of established choirs.

Since 1996, he has directed The Wesley Bell Ringers at Christ United Methodist Church in Salt Lake City. The choir has thirty three current members, playing well over 200 bells. The choir spends two weeks each summer touring North America, demonstrating what a committed, dedicated and disciplined group of volunteer youth musicians can accomplish with handbells.