



Newsletter - Fall 2009

From The Director.....

Another Christmas season is upon us and although the fall colors haven't swung into full tilt yet, Bells In Motion is busy preparing for our November Christmas concerts. For those interested in how we prepare, I begin selecting Christmas music in early summer. (Talk about season shift...I think Christmas in summer and spring in winter!) I analyze and assign parts and create rehearsal notes during the summer and then send the music and parts to members in late July. We schedule 3 rehearsals and 2 practice sessions from late August through November. So it all works out eventually, but preparation begins very early. Some groups repeat a lot of music from year to year, but I try not to repeat more than 1 or 2 pieces in back-to-back years. That means many of our members are learning an all new concert each year.

The handbell world lost a great director, clinician, educator, and friend this past summer. David R. Davidson passed away in early September after a long battle with cancer. He was a great mentor and a good friend of Bells In Motion. We had the pleasure of working with him one-on-one several years ago when he came to Springfield for a weekend to work with us. Many of us also worked with him at numerous regional and national events over the past 15 years including Distinctly Bronze every year. He was also very heavily involved in the choral world and was the director for the Dallas Symphony Chorus. David was the ultimate authority in how to play musically on handbells and helped us shape and define the direction for Bells In Motion over the years. We will miss him greatly but are so very lucky to have had the chance to know and work with him.

Our group's membership continues to evolve and change this fall. David and Kathy Lamb (my son and daughter) are both attending college and so not

Holiday Concerts

"Ring in the Season" with Bells in Motion will be a great way for music lovers of all ages to begin their holiday celebrations! Please join us for our upcoming holiday concerts, presented Saturday, November 28 and Sunday, November 29, 2009. Our Saturday concert will take place at 7:00PM at Laurel United Methodist Church, 621 South Grand Avenue, Springfield, Illinois. Our Sunday concert will be at 4:00 at United Presbyterian Church, 2400 N. Northmoor Road, Peoria, Illinois. We are especially excited to be playing at this new venue in Peoria!

With additional instruments such as organ, keyboard, bass and percussion, one energetic director, and seventeen very dedicated ringers, Bells in Motion will present a wide variety of holiday music to suit every taste. Seasonal favorites such as "Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire", "Let it Snow", and "Silver Bells" will truly sparkle when played on the bells. Also, the group will amaze audiences with innovative arrangements of "Up on the Housetop", "We Three Kings" and "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen". Finally, a haunting treatment of "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" will contrast with the playful "Parade of the Tin Soldiers". These works (and more!) will create truly unique musical experience for all!

Admission is \$10 per person and is payable the door. We hope to see you there and that you will bring a friend to share this experience with. The more the merrier! Happy Holidays!

These concerts are sponsored by RW Troxell Insurance Agency and are partially funded by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council.

From The Director - continued

ringing with the group this year. In addition Brad and Denean are taking some time off. Melody Palm has moved from intern to full member and we have added a new intern in Julie Bennet. Jean Welch has also rejoined the group after an absence of a number of years. We are delighted to welcome our new and returning members and our new intern. We also wish David, Kathy, Brad, and Denean well and hope they can rejoin us soon.

Our fall concert is shaping up to be another fun concert with many traditional and a number of new pieces. Hope to see you in Springfield or Peoria in late November to help us 'Ring In The Season'!

"This project partially funded by...."

Earlier this year, Bells In Motion applied for a grant through the Illinois Arts Council. We are very excited to announce that we are one of the recipients of a Grant from the Illinois Art Council! As a first time applicant, and in a year when budget cuts were deep, we are very fortunate to have received this grant.

A BIG thank you to Pam, Mike, Helen, and Denean who worked to put the Grant proposal together.

Please show your appreciation to the Illinois Arts Council by continuing to support the Arts in your area.

Bells In Motion Annual Longaberger Basket Raffle

Win the 2009 Longaberger Hostess Snowflake Cookie Basket filled with goodies to help Celebrate the Season! (\$150 value). Raffle Tickets are \$10 each, or 3 for \$25 and will be available at both concerts. The raffle ticket winner will be drawn at the conclusion of the Peoria concert on November 29. You need not be present to win.

Eric Potratz, Behind the Bells

Eric Potratz is a software engineer who works on GPS systems for airplanes. He lives and works in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and travels 4 hours to ring with Bells In Motion. Eric started ringing handbells in his family's church in Cedar Falls around 5th grade. He continued to ring through college with a 5-octave choir and a four-in-hand quartet. In 2004 he moved to St. Louis for work and soon afterwards joined Prairie Bells. A semester later he was ringing with Bells In Motion! In 2006 he switched jobs and moved back to Iowa. His trip from Cedar Rapids to Springfield, Illinois was often challenging in the winter months. Eric recalls driving through dense fog, freezing rain, sleet, glazed ice, and snow to and from BIM rehearsals and concerts.

Eric's other musical venues have included singing tenor in church choirs, playing clarinet in community concert bands during summers, and ringing in Chancel Bell Choirs in both the St. Louis Area and Marion, Iowa. In his spare time, he enjoys bicycling and listening to classical music or orchestral film soundtracks.

Eric's most memorable time when playing with BIM was touring the United Kingdom in 2008. The sights of England and Scotland, as well as performing in the cathedrals and castles made for a unique experience that he wouldn't have otherwise imagined doing with a handbell group.

Concert Featured Selection-- Up on the Housetop

"Up on the Housetop" is one of the first entirely secular Christmas songs composed in the United States, and it may well have been the first song of importance which elaborated on the theme of Santa Claus. Written by little-known Benjamin R. Hanby (1833-1867), sometime in the 1850s or 1860s, this vivacious song could possibly predate the early secular classic, "Jingle Bells" (1857). Hanby most certainly got the inspiration for the lyrics to this song from Clement C. Moore's poem, "A Visit From St. Nicholas," written in 1822 and now more familiarly known by its first line, "'Twas the night before Christmas." This poem clarified for many children and their parents the exact fashion in which Santa Claus paid his visits – what he looked like, the names of his reindeer, and how he got himself down the chimney. No one before Moore had suggested that Santa's sleigh could land on a rooftop at all.

This arrangement of 'Housetop' by Arnold Sherman was written as a type of tone poem piece to reflect the text for the song. For example when Santa is filling the stocking of little Nell, the music takes on a musicbox feel. If you listen, you can even hear the music sound like a doll crying. But as fun as the piece is, it is also very challenging and one that keeps the ringers on their toes. It's been 10 years since we last played this piece and we think everyone will really enjoy it. Let your imagination go and picture the true night before Christmas with this wonderful arrangement.

BIM Newsletter Electronically

You are now receiving this newsletter, flyers and other announcements in 'pdf' format so you can see them in their entirety. You can download the free Acrobat Reader from the Adobe site. See the Bells in Motion site at www.bellsinmotion.org for the link. To encourage your friends to begin receiving this newsletter and other BIM updates electronically, send an e-mail to info@bellsinmotion.org.

To book Bells In Motion for a concert or as entertainment for an event, please contact

our

Concert Coordinator Helen Ely:

info@bellsinmotion.org

Auditions and Openings!!

Bells In Motion is currently looking for talented ringers to audition for our Spring 2010 season. Our Prairie Bells group also has openings for new members. This group does not audition but is asking ringers to have at least 3 years of ringing experience.

If you are interested in these ringing opportunities, please contact director Michael Lamb for more information.

Bells In Motion has been approved by the IRS as a Chapter 501(c) 3 Charitable Organization. As such, all contributions and donations to Bells In Motion are fully deductible for Federal tax purposes. We hope that YOU will consider making or increasing your tax-deductible donations in 2009 to continue supporting Bells In Motion.

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Calendar of Events

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
“Ringing In the Season!”	Saturday November 28, 2009 7:00 PM	Laurel United Methodist Church 631 S. Grand Ave. West Springfield, IL Tickets \$10 at the door
“Ringing In the Season!”	Sunday November 29, 2009 4:00 PM	United Presbyterian Church 2400 W. Northmoor Road Peoria, IL Tickets \$10 at the door

*Corporate Sponsor is RW Troxell Insurance Agency.
 These concerts are partially funded by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council.*