

Notes from NEW HAMPSHIRE



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Happy New Year to all our Handbell Peeps!!

We hope that you all had a Wonderful Holiday! This year was one for the history books, for sure. We heard and saw from family and friends that everyone made their own adaptations to make celebrations work. And who knows? Some of these adaptations may turn into traditions!

Being able to see so many groups perform virtually online this Christmas Season was wonderful – whether it was a previous concert or a medley of small groups put together. We are usually all out running around frantic without our heads worrying about our own performances that we do not have the time to exhale and enjoy performances from other groups. Having no choice but to pause gave us opportunities we normally would not have. Technology has certainly been a blessing for so many of us to stay connected. On the flip side, we now all need to help each other navigate the rules and guidelines regarding recording and live-streaming, because this will help our community of handbell-lovers reach so many more people!!!

For myself, working with different venues to try to do some small group outdoor ringing during the month of December gave me some purpose during all of this mess and confusion. While I was disappointed that out of the six I had planned for GSR, only one materialized, the one that did lifted my spirits in ways I cannot even put onto paper for y'all.

GSR has some members who belong to Brookside Congregational Church in Manchester, NH. Their handbell director is a member of MVR in MA! Each December, they have an event called "Brookside Holiday Lights" where for a couple of Saturdays in December, the property is all beautifully lit up, food is sold, and there is a live nativity and live music! The Brookside Church Choir played there one (rainy) Saturday night, and GSR broke up into 2 small groups and played on different ends of the property another (very cold) Saturday. I'm not sure if we brought more joy to those who listened or just to ourselves with the ability to just PLAY!

I'm also now very interested in pursuing more of these small group events as well as full choir events. I'm personally going to need a lot of playing in the future to offset the deficit of 2020. (Hilary: Me too!)

While Spring and Easter are still up in the air for many, and who knows whether or not church services will be held in person, I am hopeful that Holiday 2021 will be much closer to normal and that we will be able to share our love of Handbells LIVE! For those of you who are planning Handbells for Easter, send us your information so we can get it out to everyone to enjoy! Until then, stay connected and safe... we're on the uphill swing!

~Heidi

(Hilary: Miss you all!)