



Handbell Frustration!

By Daniel K. Moore

To my dear handbell friends and colleagues:

There is scarcely an emotion which has not been collectively or individually expressed regarding an important aspect of our lives - handbell ringing. Despair, frustration, uncertainty, disbelief, anger are but a few. Yet, in the midst of this challenge we continue to support and console each other, seek innovative solutions, and maintain a sense of grace and hope through this most awkward of times.

As uncertain as our handbell future may appear we must adapt to and adopt our own 'new normal' by educating our technological selves. How else can we hold meetings, rehearsals and performances? While the current situation is without precedent, we have always been able to look and rely on the rich history of our art to find clues and solutions for those most common handbell related tasks: assigning positions, teaching and learning technique, conducting, event organizing, recruiting and sustaining ringers, choosing repertoire, and continually improving our musical understanding. Our shared experiences and history have taught us how to navigate these issues. Today, however, we must increasingly rely on ingenuity, creativity, and imagination as we recognize that throughout the history of handbell ringing everything was once new.

Looking through a broader lens, we must also remember that Area 1 is, and must continue to be, recognized as the beginning of handbell ringing in this country. It is Area 1, a leader in so many ways, which must continue to inspire and energize handbell ringing across the country. Where we were once the host to the first handbell choirs, festivals and other performances in the United States; we now have an obligation to sustain that legacy by supporting the Area and each other. This is time to recall and celebrate our common bond. Handbell ringers share more than a unifying art. Consider the many ways you interact with our fellow ringers and directors; surely it goes beyond a weekly rehearsal. Performance is but one common goal, we also develop life-long friendships which transcend the art form. Think of the handbell ringers, directors, teachers and mentors who have impacted your life.

Although the timeline may be unclear, we cannot abandon the belief that this shall pass. To do so is an admission of defeat, and we're not ready for that. The future will again see the of Area Festivals, Spring Rings, Concerts, workshops, rehearsals and church services, Handbell Camp, and many less formal gatherings of ringers. We have those occasions to look forward to.

As suggested by the Editor of the *Fundamental Tone* (and others), sharing ideas is one immediate path forward; this pandemic impacts us all: publishers, manufacturers, vendors, individual church choirs, community choirs, soloists and everything in-between. If you follow social media platforms, you see handbell ringers and directors across the globe making music - often through trial and error - with and for each other. It can be done. It must be done. We cannot allow the art of handbell ringing to become a casualty of global indifference. I urge you to use the *Fundamental Tone* as a platform to share your current successes and disappointments. We *must* continue to grow and learn from each other.