

# Notes from the CHAIR



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Greetings from St. Louis!

I'm thrilled to start my journey as your new Chair, and to build on the excitement and energy we have after attending not one, but TWO great Handbell conferences in the last month. I'm on my way home after a wonderful week of handbell concerts, classes, and collaboration at the 2019 National Seminar in St. Louis, Missouri. Area 1 was well represented with 13 members, including two first-time attendees. We attended lots of classes, and met with leaders from other areas. We shared best practices, new ideas, and lessons learned. We attended many concerts, ranging from the traditional to the high-tech, Avant Garde, and interactive. It is exciting to see Handbell musicians taking our artistry in so many new directions. To see a recap of the 2019 concerts and get notices about future live-streamed concerts, [subscribe](#) to the Handbell Musicians YouTube channel.

The BEST PART of National Seminar, however, was the constant buzz our **Area 1 Festival Conference** created. So many people were talking about what a great festival Area 1 puts on. Every class I attended, every hallway conversation, every meal, people were asking questions about what we did, how we did it, and what they could learn from us. Area 1 has a reputation across the country for putting on one of the best Festivals and this year's definitely topped the charts! We found ourselves asking "How can we keep this buzz going and what can we do to raise the bar in 2021 (and 2023)?" So, we're already hard at work planning Festival/ Conference 2021. I can't say where, or who our guest clinicians will be YET, but be sure to put **June 24-27, 2021** on your calendar now for an event you won't want to miss.

If you attended this year's Area 1 Festival/Conference, you recently received an online evaluation asking for your feedback. PLEASE send us your comments, suggestions, feedback, and most importantly, provide feedback on the courses and clinicians so that we can continuously improve how we as leaders can help you succeed and how we can make 2021 Festival/Conference even better! Whether you attended or not, you can click [here](#) to relive the experience through our Photo Gallery.

Since this is my first column as your Area 1 chair, I thought it would be fitting to highlight the many "firsts" we celebrated at the Area 1 Festival Conference this summer.

- **1<sup>st</sup> Festival Conference in Connecticut**
- **1st time attendees, 1<sup>st</sup> time at a Festival, 1<sup>st</sup> time as a Bronze ringer, 1<sup>st</sup> time as a Mini-concert performer, and/or a 1<sup>st</sup> visit to an Area 1 event.** Whatever your personal "1<sup>st</sup>" was, congratulations!
- **Two full Bronze Orphan choirs** filled by ringers from across Area 1, as well as Maryland, California, Utah, England, and France.
- **Our 1<sup>st</sup> Raffle** brought in **\$1880** to support Area 1 activities.
- **Forté Handbell Quartet** was the 1<sup>st</sup> small ensemble featured at an opening concert. They may be small in number, but they were a HUGE hit with the audience.

As we start this new year, it is time to say farewell to some and welcome to others. I'd like extend my gratitude on behalf of the entire Area 1 board to **Krishna Ersson**, who as Past-chair put on an excellent Area 1 Festival Conference as his departing gift; to **Jane Nolan**, who will be stepping down as our Area1 Membership Chair after 29 years; and to **Joan Fossum** for her 20+ years of service as a member of the Area 1 board in some capacity or another. As this new year starts, Joan will be stepping down as NH State Chair, and we welcome **Heidi Prior** and **Hilary Justice** as your New Hampshire State Co-Chairs. They will be the point of contact for all HMA members in New Hampshire. We're still on the lookout for a Membership Chair, so if you enjoy connecting with other handbell enthusiasts and

want to help bring the excellent benefits of membership to others, then please let me or another board member know!

Finally, don't forget about the [Area 1 handbell members map](#)! We want to show not just WHERE the handbells are, but also WHO is ringing them, so we've categorized the choirs by: Church, Community, Auditioned, Adult, Senior, Youth, and Multi-generational. If you are looking for nearby choirs to collaborate with, a new handbell program, or hosting an event, we hope you will find this map to be a great resource. If you can't find your group(s) on the map please add them at <https://tinyurl.com/WhereInArea1>. If you see errors in your data, please contact me at [chair.area1@handbellmusicians.org](mailto:chair.area1@handbellmusicians.org) and I'll get it fixed.

We have a great year in store for you, and I highly encourage you to check out all of the articles in this newsletter, and bookmark the [Area 1 website](#) to keep up with the news as it is announced. I'm looking forward to serving as your Area 1 chair over the next two years, and I can't wait to get started on implementing the goals we set out for ourselves during our visioning sessions over the last year. Please reach out to me if you want to chat or have any ideas, or just want to hear about all the great stuff we learned at National Seminar. I'd love to hear from you.

Until Next Time!

Lisa Arnold

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