



THE KLAPPER KAT



Dear Klapper Kat,

I see notices for registration for the Area 1 Festival Conference popping up in my inbox and on Facebook. This week one of my ringers asked if our choir was planning to attend. Frankly, I dread the amount of work I have to do to prepare them musically, get them registered, work out the logistics of getting equipment transported and set up, helping my ringers take appropriate classes, and, of course, sorting out how we all pay for this event. What do I do? My ringers really seem interested this time because of the massed directors, but I don't think I have the energy to pull this together.

Signed: Distressed Director

Dear Distressed Director:

The **Klapper Kat** agrees with you completely! Taking a Handbell Choir to an area Festival is a huge undertaking and the **Klapper Kat** understands your concern. The problem, as I see it, is that you have made it totally *your* concern. Let's try to break preparation for the event down into manageable bits, a few for you, and several for your ringers. First, your's:

Musical Preparation: This is your sole responsibility. Your ringers should know their massed and divisional music so well that they can respond easily to the massed directors. You don't need to work too much on interpretation because that's the massed directors' job - and both Mr. McChesney and Ms. Moklebust are masters of their craft. Your work on the repertoire should be no different than rehearsing any other piece of music; focus on technique, dynamics, changes in tempo, accurate rhythms, and critical understanding of every marking in the score. Have you ever asked yourself why the Festival repertoire is published so far in advance? Most choirs need to prepare seven massed/divisional selections. Spread that preparation out over months, not weeks. And remember that many New England state sponsored Spring Rings focus on Festival Conference repertoire.

Finances: This is your second principle task. Organizers always try to be certain that attendees get their money's worth. If your choir is going to raise funds through bakes sales, seeking donations, applying for scholarship money (available from Area 1), or use ringers' personal contributions, you need to *spearhead* and *organize* those efforts.

Class Selection: This is the last, and most time consuming task. If you take time to sit down with each of your ringers, listen to their class preferences, and then advise them on what you think they will best benefit from, every ringer will have a class schedule that will help them personally, technically and musically. Encourage your ringers to try classes that may be slightly more advanced; try to spread the ringers throughout the curriculum to gain maximum knowledge for your ensemble. Don't send everyone to the same class at once! Maximize the opportunities to explore new and challenging topics.

For all your other concerns, delegate! Seriously, ask for ringer volunteers to organize equipment, figure out the transportation, get the registration process completed on line, enable decisions about all those other details. Trust them to do the job; get them involved. You'll be a much happier and relaxed director!

See you in West Hartford!



Klapper Kat

All Area 1 handbell musicians and directors are invited to contribute handbell related questions or issues about techniques, repertoire selection, conducting and rehearsing, maintenance, choir management and assignments, or most anything else.

The Fundamental Tone editor and **The Klapper Kat** reserve the right to combine questions and edit submissions for content.

Address questions to **The Klapper Kat** and email them at any time to the:

Fundamental Tone Editor: editor.area1@handbellmusicians.org