

Notes from MASSACHUSETTS



Abigail Schoppe
Massachusetts State Chair
ma.area1@handbellmusicians.org

Greetings from Massachusetts!

I've never actually read Gabriel García Márquez's "Love in the Time of Cholera," but these days, I keep thinking of the phrase "Handbells in the Time of Coronavirus."

How can our bell choirs remain in community when we are all isolated at home, practicing "social distancing?"

Here are a few thoughts:

1. I've instituted a weekly email to the bell choir I direct. First, I just check in on them all. I also share an inspirational or fun handbell performance from YouTube (this week, I sent them "All I Want for Christmas is You," arranged by Massachusetts' own Greg Urban, which you can find at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT4oyxMrvYk>). Finally, I

share a video demonstrating some technique (weaving, shelley, 4-in-hand). Might as well use this downtime to learn something, right? Of course most of them don't have bells at home, but they can practice with soda bottles, wooden spoons, or any other creative, make-shift options they can come up with!

2. Watch the Distinctly Bronze East closing concert on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgPXvEkULpU>. Just two weeks ago, I was telling my choir, "Oh, I'm just watching it one piece at a time, because who has time to view an entire concert at once?" Well, NOW we have time!
3. Dial into the "Handbell Happy Hour," which the National Board is hosting every Tuesday and Thursday at 4 via RingCentral. The link is at: <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1488990472>.

What other ideas do you have? Please share them with me at: ma.area1@handbellmusicians.org.

It probably goes without saying at this point, but I do also have to share the sad news that the 2020 Massachusetts Spring Ring has been canceled. I hope that, when we're able to reconvene in 2021, we will have a huge attendance, reflecting our joy in being able to come together again! 2021 will be the 35th anniversary of the MA Spring Ring and will be co-conducted by MA Spring Ring founders Karen Leonard and Ed Henderson. Repertoire will be taken from the 2021 Festival Conference music. In 2022, Diane Burke will be our clinician, and the repertoire will be the music that we had originally scheduled for the 2020 Spring Ring. For all who were busy learning those pieces for this year, we will absolutely be revisiting them in two years, so please hang onto your scores.

Stay safe and healthy, and please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or requests for support. And, when this health crisis has passed, happy ringing!