



News from the Tower Bell Foundation

Minneapolis, Minnesota

<http://www.towerbellfoundation.org>

Fall 2005

City Hall Carillon Committee changes name

The City Hall Carillon Committee is now the Tower Bell Foundation. The new name was chosen so the organization could have greater appeal to music fans and decisionmakers in suburban Hennepin County. "The building that the television stations describe as City Hall is in fact also known as Hennepin County Courthouse," explains Foundation Chair Tony Hill. "Officials of Hennepin County have sometimes felt left out when our name reflected only the ownership of the building by the city of Minneapolis."

The Foundation also hopes to signal its inclusiveness to suburban residents in terms of membership and attendance at bell concerts. "We have always had volunteers from the suburbs, board members from the suburbs, and listeners from the suburbs," Hill notes.

Also, the Foundation no longer refers to the instrument as a carillon. The Foundation's long-term plan for expansion of the instrument calls for it to remain a chime. "Once the instrument is expanded beyond 22 bells, some people will refer to it as a non-traditional carillon, but I think we will call it a large chime," Hill speculates. A traditional carillon needs at least 23 bells connected to a specific type of keyboard. According to knowledgeable people in the bell industry, the downtown Minneapolis location of this instrument would be a bad place for a traditional carillon, which has a delicate sound. Chime bells produce a bolder sound which is more compatible with the downtown environment.

The address and phone number of the organization remain unchanged. The new and expanding web site for the organization is www.towerbellfoundation.org.

New web page chronicles story of individual bells



The "A" bell (1500 pounds) was donated by the company that fireproofed the building.

A new web page on the Tower Bell Foundation web site provides a biography of each of the fifteen bells in the tower of Minneapolis City Hall & Hennepin County Courthouse. Along with a photo of each bell are facts about its history, including its physical dimensions, the year it was cast, and a transcript of its inscriptions.

Fourteen of the bells were cast by the Meneely Bell Co. of Troy, N.Y., the original ten in 1895. These were installed in the tower in March 1896. After Hank Auld became chimes player, he sought an expansion of the chime so it could play a greater range of music, including "The Star Spangled Banner." Auld led this effort in the 1920s, and one of the four bells added in 1924 is dedicated to him. The final bell, added after Meneely went out of business, was cast by Petit & Fritzen bell foundry in the Netherlands. It has a decidedly different shape and tone from the others.

The photos were taken by Dan Wascoe and Jean Mellem, two of the Foundation's dedicated volunteers. The Foundation would like to add an audio file for each bell so web visitors can hear the sound of the great bells and perhaps even simulate playing online. This new web page can be viewed at www.towerbellfoundation.org/bells.html.

Sponsorship opportunities for bell concerts

The Tower Bell Foundation has some opportunities available for corporate or organizational sponsorship of its bell concerts. For a tax-deductible contribution of \$100 or more, a business can sponsor a bell concert. These sponsorships are mentioned in press releases about the concerts and are noted in reports to our patrons and to the city and county officials who control the building.

Some concerts currently available for corporate sponsorship are Christmas (5 concerts), Jewish holidays (3 concerts), St. Patrick's Day, Syttende Mai, Svens-karnas Dag, Columbus Day, Reformation Day, Thanksgiving, and New Year's.

Please call Tony Hill at (612) 673-5311 if your business or organization is interested in cosponsoring one or more concerts. It's a positive way for your business to make a visible (and audible) difference in our community!

Tower Bell Foundation needs volunteer chimes players

The Tower Bell Foundation is always looking for volunteer chimes players to add to our roster. Playing the bells is fun and rewarding and an all-around good experience for people who like making music. Anyone who can read music and play melodies on a piano-type keyboard is welcome to apply. Most volunteers can be trained to play our bells on the spot. Simply express interest to concert producer Tony Hill via email (chair@towerbellfoundation.org) or call the Foundation at (612) 673-5311. It's easier than you think!

The Tower Bell Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation not affiliated with any government.

Tower Bell Foundation
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Meet your chimes players



Dan Wascoe poses with our biggest bell

Name: Dan Wascoe

Occupation: Education reporter, Star Tribune

Family: wife Joyce, 2 grown daughters

Years involved with TBF: 2

Favorite concert memory: When people come in off the street to say they recognize and appreciate a particular tune. One example was when I played "Galveston" as Hurricane Rita was bearing down on that city. A woman came in and said she thought that was a thoughtful gesture.

I enjoy preparing programs for the bells that include themes related to a holiday or the weather -- for example, a series of winter songs on a hot July day or some Spanish songs during a visit by the Mexican president.

It's frustrating, though, when the perfect song for an occasion can't be played because of the limits on the keyboard or the number of bells.

Other musical activities: Besides playing the bells, I am a pianist and songwriter. I have helped found two vocalist/piano duos, including, currently, Sharone & Co. with Sharone LeMieux. We perform in restaurants, at the Mall of America and at private events, such as anniversary parties, for which we customize songs and lyrics. We also have performed on Twin Cities radio and TV. Original tunes include "Bring Warm Clothes," "The State Fair Song" and "The Form 1040 Non-Tax Deductible Blues."