

# News from the Tower Bell Foundation

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Minneapolis, Minnesota

<http://www.towerbellfoundation.org>

Summer 2008

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## **Bell tribute marks 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of bridge collapse**

The bells of Minneapolis City Hall and Hennepin County Courthouse rang out at 6:06 p.m. on Friday, August 1, 2008, following a moment of silence commemorating the first anniversary of the collapse of the I-35W bridge across the Mississippi River, approximately 1 mile from our bell tower. The collapse killed 13 people, making it the largest disaster to befall our city in 125 years.

Volunteer chimes player Dan Wascoe played for about 30 minutes after the moment of silence. Among the numbers he played: "Bridge over Troubled Water," "You'll Never Walk Alone," "O! Man River," "We'll Meet Again," and "My Heart Will Go On." Organizers of the memorial service urged bell installations throughout Minnesota to ring at that moment.

It is unlikely anyone gathered at the memorial ceremony on the Stone Arch Bridge with Gov. Tim Pawlenty and Mayor R.T. Rybak heard the bells. "It might theoretically be possible to hear the bells from the west bank approach to the Stone Arch Bridge," explains Tony Hill, chair of the Tower Bell Foundation, "but with the number of attendees and the presence of rush hour traffic downtown, it might be a stretch for people even to be aware that the bells are playing."

Nevertheless, Wascoe was pleased to be able to contribute to the memorial hour. "Many people passed the building during the concert on their way to the Metrodome, and the solemn music perhaps made them remember the bridge memorial was in progress," he said.

A similar program of music was played at the regular Friday concert on August 3, 2007, in commemoration of the bridge disaster less than 30 hours earlier.

## **Tower Bell Foundation joins with Hennepin County to celebrate "Summer on the Plaza"**

The regular Friday concerts will be played on a split schedule most weeks from Memorial Day to Labor Day, beginning in 2008. Instead of bells from Noon to 1:00 p.m. on those days, the bells will play from 11:30 a.m. to Noon and from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. This serves to integrate the bells into Hennepin County's exciting Summer on the Plaza series. Various concerts and other special events take place on the North Plaza of the Hennepin County Government Center on most Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from Memorial Day to Labor Day. On bell concert days, the bells serve to provide an introduction and denouement to those events.

Beginning in 2009, the bells will serve as the headliner act for Summer on the Plaza about once a month.

The Tower Bell Foundation is pleased to serve the increased audience that Summer on the Plaza brings downtown, and we appreciate the efforts of Hennepin County to integrate our musical offerings with theirs.

Recently 87 school band members from Wayzata and their guests relaxed over lunch following their concert while listening to the bells. Some of the students were quite curious and interested about the bells, reports Jessica Martin of Hennepin County. "Thank you," says Martin to the Tower Bell Foundation, "for enriching the downtown plaza experience for this group and their families."

The rest of the bell concert schedule, including our many holiday concerts, is unaffected by this change and will go on from Noon to 1:00 p.m. as usual. So if you try to hear bells at noon and instead hear silence, that means a fun and exciting event is taking place at the Government Center.

## **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, Svenskarnas 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!

## **Become a volunteer chimes player!**

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](mailto: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.*

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## **Meet your chimes players**



**Jeanie Mellem in the belfry**

**Name:** Jeanie Mellem

**Occupation:** Computer programmer

**Years involved with TBF:** 3

**Other musical activities:** Besides playing the bells, I accompany the Lightshiners choir at my church and also accompany band competitions and auditions.

**Favorite musical acts:** Mozart, Rascals, old hymns, Pete Seeger, Fred Astaire, and Van Morrison

**Favorite songs to play on the bells:** "Mockingbird Hill," "Eternal Father Strong to Save," "I Ain't Down Yet"

**Why do you like to play bells:** Some of my best memories are of walking down the street and hearing the bells ring during the holidays or catching a familiar tune from a musical or an unexpected song that I recognize. Sometimes it takes a few moments to figure out what the song is and I love working out that puzzle. The bells have a unique quality -- they're just there, loud and plaintive. I've often exchanged a smile in passing other downtowners as I listen to them.