



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
 SOCIETY OF CARILLON ALUMNI AND
 FRIENDS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2009

SENIOR DIETHETICS MAJOR TAKES CARILLON
 LESSONS BEFORE GRADUATION
 JENNA REINERS

It's hard to miss the sounds of the carillon on the walk to class. There's something comforting about those bells and sometimes I find myself lingering around central campus a little longer than usual in the hopes that I will catch the 20-minute afternoon concert. The thought of actually being the one to *play* such a concert had never crossed my mind until WinterFest 2008. I was fortunate enough to get a tour of the campanile during this holiday festival, and while Dr. Tam was explaining the carillon she mentioned that ISU offered an introductory

course to **PLAY** it. "That sounds like fun!" I thought. I immediately registered for Music 118 and set my sights on a grand central campus performance... I had no idea how complicated it was to make the bells ring harmony! Now, as I approach my final week of class and prepare for my concert, I am thankful that I've mastered enough of the music to not sound like a total novice. However, I know that my one-semester training hardly scratches the surface of this amazing instrument. My respect has grown im-



First semester carillon students Jenna & Emily at their final concert.

mensely for the talented carilloners who have the ability to make the bells ring beautifully across this campus and I can think of no better way to end my ISU experience than with a final farewell tribute to [and on] the Bells of Iowa State.

SEMESTER END
 POINTS OF
 INTEREST

In Spring 2009...

4 students took
 carillon lessons

2 student concerts were
 held

1 field trip was taken

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ENJOY THE NOON
 CONCERTS EVERY
 WEEKDAY 11:50-12:10
 ON THE WEB

<http://www.music.iastate.edu/feeds/carillon/>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Celebrate the end of the summer at the Carillon Festival

September 5, 2009

10:00-4:00

Additional information to follow.

<http://www.music.iastate.edu/carillon/festival2009/FESTIVAL/festival.php>

HIGHLIGHT FOR SPRING STUDENTS: VISIT TO UNI CAMPANILE

EMILY GAMM

At the end of April, three current Iowa State carillon students trekked to University of Northern Iowa with Dr. Tin-Shi Tam, ISU University Carillonneur to explore the differences between the ISU and UNI carillons in how they play, sound, and look. Each student had the opportunity to not only play the UNI carillon, but also venture up to the belfry. The general consensus was that the batons were easier to strike, though they felt shorter in length. It was the first time for two students to see, much less play, a carillon other than the one at Iowa State.

The UNI carillon had quite a long road to completion. Planning for the campanile began in June 1914, but it wasn't until November 18, 1924 that groundbreaking for the project would occur, taking a long twelve years to plan. It took workers two years to build the campanile, and Meneely & Co. installed the first fifteen bells. The first concert transpired on September 19, 1926. Andrew Meneely, from the manufacturing company, played a wide variety of music for the opening event. Over 12,000 people turned out for the momentous occasion. Interestingly, when the clock struck the original fifteen bells during the Westminster change on the quarter hours, the bells dedicated to the President, the Schoolchildren of Iowa, the Faculty, and Students & Alumni would be played. Professor Irving Willis Wolfe was the first carillonneur at UNI. However, it was rather difficult to find a variety of songs that contained only fifteen notes. So in February 1968, thirty-five new bells (thirty-two new, and three replace-

ment for the originals) were ordered to be made by the Petit and Fritsen Bell Foundry in the Netherlands. (Meneely & Co. had gone out of business in 1951.) The renovation project included not only adding bells, but also steel framing for remounting all the bells, a new playing console, and a practice keyboard, which cost a grand total of \$27,000. Renovation was again required in 1984, when a new playing console, transmission system, clapper mountings, and a new roof were needed. Two more renovation periods have occurred since then. Once to reset the granite base, redo the exterior brickwork, and add a brick patio around the base, and later to replace the clock motor. One of the most notable carillonneurs at UNI was Robert Byrnes who played from 1972 until his death in 2004. The current carillonneur is Professor Kui-Im Lee, who actually took lessons from Dr. Tam.

Some differences between the UNI and ISU's carillons are that the UNI carillon has only forty-seven bells, while ISU has fifty. Secondly, the heaviest bell at UNI is C with two missing bass semitones C# and D#, while at ISU it is B-flat in the bass octave. Lastly, after the fiftieth bell was added in 1967, the ISU carillon and campanile did not require renovation until 1992.

This has been my first semester taking carillon lessons. Before lessons began, I had never seen a playing console, had no idea what one looked like or even how it was played. So I especially had no clue that carillons could be different from one another besides the number



Emily and Rhaechel in the UNI Campanile belfry.

of bells it contained. I was quite amazed at the differences. The tones of the bells sounded different to me and the batons were much easier to strike. It was rather surprising how light they were. I was also interested in the mechanics of the transmission system. Again, I did not know how they could vary between carillons, but I found it fascinating. Lastly, I was surprised at how the bells were organized in the belfry with the larger bells suspended at the top and the smaller ones at the bottom. Since I have had no previous exposure to other carillons, I assumed that all belfries were organized as the Iowa State carillon, with the large bells hanging at the bottom and small bells at the top. Personally, I prefer the larger bells lower so I can hear them while I play; I much prefer the deep tones over the high-pitched ones.

In all, I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to the UNI carillon and learned quite a bit about its history. In my short exposure to carillons, I have been fortunate to now see and play two different ones. I have had a wonderful experience with the carillon and hope to continue playing in the future.

Reference: Gerald L. Peterson ed., "The UNI Campanile," *Rod Library Special Collections and University Archives*.
<http://www.library.uni.edu/speccoll/bh/bhcampan.html>

EXCERPTS FROM THE PAST

For the 2nd installation of Excerpts From the Past, I have chosen a letter from D.C. Thomas, describing the bell installation. I hope you find the letter as interesting as I did when I found it in the University Archives. Amy Brandau *Special Collections Department—Parks Library*

5610 Taliaferro Ave.
Tampa 4, Florida
February 13, 1944

Mr. Seaman A. Knapp
Masonic Building
Ames, Iowa

Dear Mr. Knapp,

It is a long time to remember the details of the erection of the bells and clock, but I will do the best I can.

I am not a story writer so I will only try to give you the facts and let you re-write it into a story.

The Bell Tower was completed before I started to college so I can tell you nothing about its erection, but I worked on the erection of the clock and bells. The man the Seth Thomas Clock Company sent to do the job got cold feet when he saw the bells and finally got Mr. Lennox, instructor in the machine shop at the time, to get the bells and clock up into place.

The loft the bells are in is about 13 square feet inside and 90 feet from the ground, and it did seem like quite an undertaking to get the 10 bells and the massive wood frame on which they were hung into such a small space.

The large bell (3600 pounds) was the last to be raised and Mr. Lennox made quit a ceremony of it. The college faculty was invited to see it go up. Mr. Lennox rode the bell about half way up and had his picture taken on the bell. Several men were needed on the rope to help the horses with this big bell. The man who made the clock faces was a local carpenter, and when it came to spacing the figures he was completely stumped. I finally told him the radius would divide the circumference into six equal parts; the rest was easy. I made a life-long friend right then.

This work was all done in the middle of winter and the weather was very cold most of the time. I remember one day the thermometer was 10 degrees below zero. We wore so many clothes I still don't see how we could work. There were four of us all the time and sometimes five in that cramped space and it was a miracle that no one was hurt. We did have two near accidents. One of the men slipped and started head first over the side. Two of us grabbed his feet and pulled him back. When we got him up he said it looked like an awful long way to the ground. The other was when we were lowering the timber we used for raising the bells. This timber consisted of six pieces of 2x12 hard wood 22 feet long. We let each 2x12 down separately with a man on the ground holding a rope attached to the timber to keep it from hitting the fancy work on the sides of the tower. The timbers were icy and the ropes stiff from the cold and just as we got the last one started over the side the timber slipped out of the rope and started down right at the man below. Now this man was not built for foot racing but in spite of that and the many heavy clothes he wore he was well over towards Professor Ressler's house before the timber hit the ground. It took us some time to coax him back but he finally quieted down and came back to work. This man was Dave Ives.

When we got the installation nearly completed I began to pick out a few simple airs and finally played "Home Sweet Home". Professor Stanton heard it and while he said he could not tell one tune from another it sounded good and he would like to have me play for the college, which I did until I graduated in 1904. I played "Lead Kindly Light" for President Beardshear's funeral, and was often called on to play for visitors.

The bells were played by ropes attached to the bell clapper. These ropes came over pulleys and through holes in the floor to the floor below the bells and were assembled in a rack. It required considerable agility to play anything but very slow pieces.

Mr. Lennox made one or two recordings and later Charlie Mundhenk made several very good records.

I hope you will be able to re-write this into something useable.

Very truly yours,
D.C. Thomas

GENERATIONS OF CARILLONNEURS AT IOWA STATE: 1920, 1988 -- AND 2021?

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ERIC WITTROCK

As I was preparing to attend Iowa State in 1987, my mother told me about the Campanile, and referred to my grandfather Alfred Mahany's memoirs. In it are these words regarding the fall of 1920: "I arrived a few weeks ahead of my first school semester. Going to the Post Office for my mail, I read a notice "Wanted: Student to play chimes in the Campanile." At Once I saw a solution to my fiscal problems and hied me up to the Registrar's Office; here I met the Registrar, Mr. Sage personally and explaining my prospects, applied for the position. He said that it had been the custom to have two men, one for the morning and one in the evening program, but one had graduated and the other had joined a Fraternity. The latter was on the Campus and I was sent up with him that afternoon to "learn the ropes." Blessing my Board School training in "tonic solfa," I had no difficulty with any tune I knew, and commenced playing right away, waiting till the end of the week before again visiting the office. Mr. Sage asked if I thought I could learn it, and was surprised to hear that I had been playing all week. The job had an appendage – the winding of the big four faced clock in the Campanile tower. Altogether the salary would amount to approximately \$30 monthly."

During my grandfather's tenure there were 10 bells attached with ropes.

When my mother attended Iowa State from 1950 to 1953 there were 36 bells and a playing console. However, while she had learned piano and organ from my grandfather, she didn't even think of taking lessons to be a carillonneur. In the 1950's the only women that played instruments in the Iowa State marching band played the bell lyre, so she assumed the carillon would be off

limits to a woman. However, as I had learned piano from her, she thought I may be interested in the carillon and encouraged me to check into it.

I met Dr. von Grabow in 1987 and began taking lessons for credit in the fall of 1988. In 1990 through Spring 1992 I regularly played in the evenings and filled in for Dr. von Grabow for the lunch program. Coming down from the tower following evening practices were often interesting and sometimes strange. I usually practiced from 11:00pm until midnight. Knowing the central campus "tradition" under the campanile at midnight, I often played the hour chime (low B-flat) a few "extra" times to allow the co-eds more kissing... I would then begin playing the Bells of Iowa State before coming down. I wondered if anyone ever noticed the extra rings, until one night after ringing "20 – o'clock" or so, I received a nice round of applause as I opened the gate at the base of the tower.

During my years of late night practice, I found there are unique things that happen on central campus late at night. One such evening included a "tunnel" of swords between the Campanile and the Memorial Union. I didn't stop and ask any of the swordsmen what was going on – I thought it best to just keep going...

After graduating from Iowa State, I moved near Philadelphia and studied Carillon under Frank DellaPenna at the Washington Memorial Chapel. The Washington Memorial Chapel is a beautiful church in Valley Forge National Park. During the summer there were up to three weddings on a Saturday, and I would play the same pieces before and after each one every 2



Eric's children practicing at UNI to be future carillonneurs.

hours. Along the way I also played the Washington Cathedral in Washington, D.C., House of Hope Presbyterian in St. Paul, MN, and the Michigan Carillons at Christ Church Cranbrook, Kirk-in-the-Hills Presbyterian (both in Bloomfield Hills), and Burton Tower at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

I last touched a Carillon in about 1996, but returned to live within 45 minutes of Ames last year and have begun to feel the itch of playing again. I have young children and my six year old daughter should be starting at ISU in 2021 (I haven't told her about this destiny yet, but as children always comply with their parents wishes, I'm sure she'll do the right thing...) Maybe we'll span a century in our family with one more generation of Carillonneur at Iowa State.



click on the picture to watch a video of Eric played the "Bells of Iowa State" while Amy checked out the bell chamber at UNI.

ALUMNI AND CURRENT STUDENTS VISIT UNI CARILLON

On April 25th, University Carillonneur Dr. Tam, 3 current students, 2 Carillon alumni, and 3 family members traveled to the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, IA to tour the Campanile and play the carillon.



The Iowa State group met with Dr. Lee, UNI's present carillonneur.



Dr. Tam gave a short lecture on the differences of the transmission systems between the Iowa State and UNI carillon. Each student had a chance to play a piece on the instrument. The field trip ended with lunch and a history lesson on the UNI Campanile by carillon student Emily.



Despite a Notice to remain quiet, the group enjoyed visiting with each other during the visit.



Do you have an interest in Webpage Design?

The Carillon Society is looking for a Webmaster for a new Society Website.

Contact Amy abrandau@iastate.edu if you are interested.

ISU SOCIETY OF CARILLON ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

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 Michael Pawlovich, Vice-President
 Eric Wittrock, Secretary

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MEMBER LIST

The Alumni Association will no longer post member lists or contact information for Society groups on the Alumni Association website. Our group will use the newsletter instead. Contact Amy at abrandau@iastate.edu if you would like the contact information for a carillon alumni or friend.

2000s

Rhaechel Ohge '12
Emily Gamm '11
Jeremiah Evans '10
Matthew Markland '09
Jenna Reiners '09
Amy Bainum '08
Ashley Zappa '08
Megan Harvey '07
Erin (Borcherding) Kramer '05
Margaret Mathison '05
Robin Niehaus '05
Sarah Luko '04
Jeff Fuhrmeister '03
Chris Herman '03
John Dostart '02
Julie Hart '02
Nikki Westphal '02
Amy (Sponheim) Brandau '00

1990s

Erika Schmidt '99
Jeff Osterchill '98
Vanessa (Thompson) Pawlovich '98
Scott Bents '97 '99
Matthew Marland '94
Michael Pawlovich '94 '96 '03
Eric Wittrock '92

1980s

Alan Younkin
Margaret (Girton) Harding '81
Debra Schiel-Larson '81
Melanie Felton '80 '85
Joel Reitz '80
Denise (Reynolds) Koncelik

1970s

Karen (Meyer) Campbell '79
Edward Arp '78
Ervin Mussman '77 '83
Deanna Morse '72

1960s

Kay Runge '69

1950s

Mary Jean (Stoddard) Fowler '56 '57

Friends

Jan Breitman
Margaret (Kirschman) Doe
Katherine Fowler
Michael Golemo
Jennie (Pickford) Gromoll
Ellen (Fletcher) Hunt
Karen Knapp-Danielson
Tin-Shi Tam
Catherine (Hauser) Woodson