

VILLAGE RINGERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

Monday, January 23, 2023 – 3:30 pm
17652 SE 82nd Woodlawn Avenue, The Villages, Florida

I. MEMBERS ATTENDING

Bonnie Fisher, Amy Cornwall-Robinson, John Higbee, Ron Drozd, Emily Spann

II. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Bonnie Fisher, President, called the meeting to order at 3:34 pm, and welcomed board members to the meeting.

III. AGENDA CHANGES/APPROVAL

Bonnie emailed the agenda to board members for review before the meeting, but she additionally distributed copies at the meeting. Bonnie asked if there were any corrections or additions to the agenda. There being none, John made a motion to approve the agenda and Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Emily reminded board members that a copy of both the May 31, 2022 and the August 24, 2022 Board Meeting minutes were emailed to them a week after each of the respective board meetings. In addition, Emily provided copies of the minutes for board members to review. John moved to approve the minutes of both the May 31, 2022 and the August 24, 2022 board meetings. Ron seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The minutes will be filed for review.

V. REPORTS

1. President's Report

- a. Bonnie reported that the current Village Ringers seems to be working very well together. Bonnie said that unfortunately one of the newest ringers, Tracy Hofmeister, could not find a babysitter for practices and had to drop out. She will definitely be missed, but Kathy Batman has taken Tracy's place and is doing a very good job.
- b. Bonnie praised Cathy Bullock and Cary Robinson for their leadership during the time she was unable to be at practices. Bonnie regretted that illnesses caused her to miss four rehearsals, but is so thankful for the talented ringers willing to substitute for her.
- c. Two articles about the Village Ringers were recently featured in The Villages Magazine and the Villages Friends magazines. In addition, there were

several mentions of the Village Ringers activities in the Daily Sun newspaper. Bonnie was so pleased with the layout in the Villages Magazine article and several of the board members mentioned positive comments they received about the article. Bonnie told board members that The Villages Magazine even placed the Village Ringers performance dates into the regular Villages Performance Schedule. Bonnie further reported that the Daily Sun newspaper has been very responsive to Village Ringers advertising requests. She noted, however, that The Daily Sun advertising is not free, but any articles written about the Village Ringers are free.

- d. Bonnie expressed great appreciation to John Higbee for his leadership in developing and maintaining the Village Ringers website, even while traveling out of the country!
- e. Bonnie reported an increased following on the Village Ringers Facebook site. Bonnie explains that she receives new LIKES very often.
- f. Bonnie told the board members that working directly with the New Covenant United Methodist Church (NCUMC) has been so helpful and rewarding, especially in the areas of rehearsal space, sound, equipment storage, screens, advertising, and ticket sales. She explained to board members that the Christmas Concert ticket sales system is completely independent of the Villages Entertainment system, but seemed to work well. Bonnie noted that the church also provides free advertising of the concert during church services.
- g. The Christmas Concert was held on December 4, 2022, and Bonnie asked the board members for input regarding the following items:
 1. The Village Recorder Ensemble performed in the lobby of the church prior to the concert. Bonnie explained that Village Ringers member Donna Kagan arranged for the performance. The board members thought this ensemble was a great asset to the concert and hoped that this could be arranged again.
 2. Bonnie wondered if the number of volunteers for greeting, ticket sales, and ushering was sufficient. Board members told her that the number worked well. She expressed great appreciation to the board members, Village Ringers spouses, and friends who helped during the concert. Ron served as an usher and he said that the ticket-taking procedure worked well and the ushering was very orderly and calm.
 3. Bonnie expressed concern about whether the back row of ringers could be seen well during the concert. Bonnie told the board members that

the back row ringers were actually standing on upside tables. John acknowledged that he did not think the first few rows of the audience could see the back row ringers well. He suggested having the back row of ringers on the stage and the front row of ringers below the stage. Bonnie said that would not be possible because of the railing at the front of the auditorium. Bonnie told board members that another possibility could be purchasing risers. However, both she and Amy agreed that risers are very expensive and would require too much storage space. Amy mentioned the possibility of asking to borrow risers from a school for the concert. Amy provided the name of Linda Quinn from the Villages Charter School as a suggested contact for the school. Bonnie told the board members that former Village Ringers member, Dan Southworth, has a truck that could possibly be used to transport the risers.

Amy suggested lining the ringers up in a U-shape on the stage to allow all ringers to be seen by the audience. More discussion ensued regarding the U-shape design, and several issues were mentioned, such as the necessity of sharing bells and having the grand piano on the stage. Bonnie said that she would definitely consider this possibility.

4. Bonnie asked the board members about the content of the Christmas Concert. She wondered if there was enough variety in the program. Ron told the board that the additional singing and bell tree portion of the program provided variety and was very fun to watch. John thought the mix of music was very inspiring and definitely fit the season. He went on to tell the board that he felt this was the best Christmas concert done by the Village Ringers. He and Ron both expressed their opinion that not having solid bell ringing throughout the program provided just the right variety.
5. Bonnie asked the board members about the use of slides during the concert. Ron and John heartily agreed that the slides added so much to the program. John suggested that during the "Make Me An Instrument" piece, the poem narration be put up on a slide, instead of having someone read the poem. He felt that the reading of the poem during the song could be too distracting. John suggested having the narration timed on the slides. Bonnie thanked John for his suggestion and said she will try to make that happen.

6. In regard to lighting, Bonnie explained to the board that she likes to keep the audience dark and the stage light. She asked the opinion of board members. John asked if dimming of the lights in the center section of the ringers could be done to allow better videotaping of the concert and avoid too much light on the center section of the ringers. Bonnie said she would check on whether this dimming would be possible.
7. Bonnie asked if the final Silent Night piece with the harp and candle procession was effective. John told the board members that the Silent Night piece with the harp and candles was beautiful. He noted that unfortunately the harp and harpist were not able to be seen well. Bonnie said she would check on lighting of the harp and ask Donna, the harpist, to consider being on the stage during the piece.
8. Bonnie asked the board members about having the guest soloist Angie Rose. John and Ron expressed their opinion that Angie was spectacular and the duet with Angie and Amy was very nice.

Bonnie stated that she would like to have a color guard for the upcoming patriotic spring concert. There was discussion regarding possible organizations that could provide a color guard. Bonnie asked how she could let veteran organizations know to come to our patriotic spring concert. John suggested putting something in the Thursday Rec. News section of the Daily Sun newspaper. Bonnie agreed to contact various organizations and put a notice in the newspaper.

9. Bonnie reminded the board members that tickets to the Christmas Concert were \$20. She wondered if this amount was too high or should the tickets only be \$15. John said that he did not feel that the \$20 was too high and Ron agreed with John. They both felt that the number of people purchasing tickets indicated that \$20 was not too high.
10. Bonnie asked board members if there was anything further that she needed to be aware of concerning the concert. There being no further comments, Bonnie mentioned that she will be encouraging even more of the Village Ringers to take the bells down to the audience after concerts. Although some ringers already do this regularly, she feels that the audience becomes even more impressed with the Village Ringers when they are allowed to hold and “ring” the bells. In addition, there are

people in the audience who are unable to go up to the bell tables to ring the bells.

11. Bonnie reminded the board members that the Village Ringers played at the Sharon Morse Lobby before the Tommy James and the Shondells performance in December. Bonnie explained to the board members that people coming to see the concert were very noisy and the atmosphere of the venue just did not fit well with a Christmas handbell performance. John mentioned that the Village Ringers had performed at a “Lunch and Learn” previously in that venue, and he felt that might be a nice time to play the bells. Bonnie agreed and said that she will check to see if “Lunch and Learn” sessions are still being held at The Sharon.

Amy suggested that the Village Ringers perform again at the Showcase at the Savannah Center. Bonnie explained that this year the Showcase is too early for ringers to know the pieces, as the dates are February 8 and 9, 2023, but the other Showcase will be in September. Amy and Emily discussed that the Village Ringers played their Spring Concert pieces at the September Showcase back in 2019. Bonnie told the board members that she will investigate the Showcase possibility.

12. Bonnie reminded the board members that the Village Ringers played outside (under a tented cover) at Lake Sumter Landing in December. She explained that the weather was rather chilly, but the Village Ringers wore Christmas sweaters and the ringers enjoyed performing at that venue. The relatively small audience of approximately 50-60 people was very appreciative and did not seem to mind that the ringers’ music pages were “blowing in the wind” periodically. Bonnie said that she would like to do this again next year, as the performance provides more exposure to the Village Ringers and the beauty of handbell ringing.
13. Bonnie announced to the board that the upcoming spring concert will be held on April 15, 2023 – TAX Day! The theme will be a “Patriotic Spectacular,” with tenor soloist, Mark Steven Schmidt, flutist, Linda TrueStromski, and drummer Kent Ingrum.

2. Treasurer’s Report

Amy reported to the board members that the current amount in the treasury is \$5,312.78. However, she noted that she has not yet deposited spring dues from the Ringers, so that amount could change. She provided handouts to

each of the board members with the current ledger amounts. She noted that the amount of the New Covenant United Methodist Church box office ticket sales appeared to be higher than the amount previously received from The Villages Entertainment. As a reminder, Bonnie told the board that New Covenant United Methodist Church (NCUMC) takes in 25% of the box office totals.

Total Concert Income \$4,640.00 (232 Tickets Sold)

NCUMC Daily Sun Ads – \$475.25

NCUMC Ticket Fee – \$213.00

Net Concert amount: \$3,950.75

25% went to NCUMC Missions \$987.69

Total Profit from the Concert: \$2,963.06

Amy suggested the possibility that the Village Ringers purchase the lower octave of chimes for the Village Ringers, as they are needed for various pieces. John mentioned that due to the sizable amount of money in the treasury, he suggested assisting other missions or charities. Amy mentioned that the Wildwood Middle/High School band program needs funds to clean and repair instruments, as there is currently no budget for that.

John reminded board members that the Bylaws provide the music director with the flexibility to purchase items needed for the Village Ringers. He said that major, large-cost items would need to be brought to the Board of Directors for a vote. John asked Bonnie if she would feel better with the development of an expenditure guideline and she agreed this would be very helpful to her. John then gave Bonnie the assignment of developing a guideline with ranges of expenditures to bring before the board members for approval. John further stated that Bonnie could email this guideline to board members for review and possible approval.

A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Amy and seconded by John Higbee. All voted in approval of the report.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

John asked that any pictures taken during the Lake Sumter Landing and The Sharon performances be sent to him via email. He was unable to attend those performances, but would like to feature pictures from the performances on the Village Ringers website.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Bonnie queried the board as to when to hold the 2023-2024 auditions (spring or early fall). Bonnie suggested having the auditions at the end of the spring concert timeframe. Ron felt that this would be a very good idea. Bonnie says that she has already received requests from two new people expressing an interest in auditioning.

After discussion, Bonnie suggested that the Monday after the Spring Concert would be a good time for the next audition. All of the board members checked calendars and approved the date of Monday, April 17, 2023, as the next audition date. Bonnie asked John to put that date on the website. In addition, Bonnie will ask Gary Powell to help judge and put the audition notice on the Facebook site.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

After discussion regarding the date, Bonnie announced that the next Village Ringers Board of Directors meeting will be held on Monday, May 3, 2023, at 10:00 am. A motion to adjourn was made by Amy and seconded by John. All voted in approval. Bonnie adjourned the meeting at 5:05 pm.