

Celebrate the Season with the Acadia Handbell Choir

SOUTHWEST HARBOR - Ring in the holiday season with a concert and sing along by the Acadia Handbell Choir at the Southwest Harbor Public Library, Monday evening, December 11, 7:00. The Library's home-school group, The Bookworms, will perform a special piece on the chimes.

The Acadia Handbell Choir was formed in the 1970s. They began with two octaves of English handbells. Later, two more octaves of bells and three octaves of hand chimes were added. English hand bells come in various sizes, the smaller ones having the higher pitch tones and the larger bells having the lower base tones. The bells are made of copper and tin, cast and pitched in a factory so that heat and cold will not affect the tone. The clappers only move up and down and have special springs to prevent the clapper from resting on the bell. Each bell is marked with the musical note on its handle.

Handbell choirs are carefully choreographed so that the entire group acts as a single instrument. The bells are quite expensive so few ringers own their own bell making group practices very important. This is the only ringing rehearsal time the performers get. Also, each person needs to be at the performance. If someone is missing a whole tonal section is missing.

Historically bells have rung out messages. They have rung in the community about citizenship and celebration as well as in the military. Here is an example of "bell language."

When we lament a parted soul, WE TOLL
When joy and mirth are on the wing, WE SING
To call the fold to church in time, WE CHIME

After the performance, anyone interested is invited to try the bells for themselves. For more information, call the Library at 244-7065.