

# Cornell University The Cornell Chimes

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Newsletter of the Cornell Chimesmasters and McGraw Tower

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## Two International Bell Ringers Share Expertise with Chimesmasters Jennifer Lory Moran, Chimes Advisor '96, '97

This year, our chimesmasters had two wonderful opportunities to develop our skills with the help of experts from the carillon community. In the fall, Gordon Slater returned to Cornell to give his second master class for our group; this spring, we had the chance to work with Geert D'hollander on refining our playing techniques.

On November 3, 2007, Gordon Slater, Dominion Carillonneur at the Canadian Houses of Parliament in Ottawa, led a master class with a focus on writing arrangements for bells. Gordon last visited us two years ago, and the effects of that visit were so positive and long lasting that we were able to return. Gordon focused primarily on arranging this time conversations and were thrilled he would be able to return. In Gordon's last visit, he focused primarily on performance; the focus on inspired a whole new set of debates!

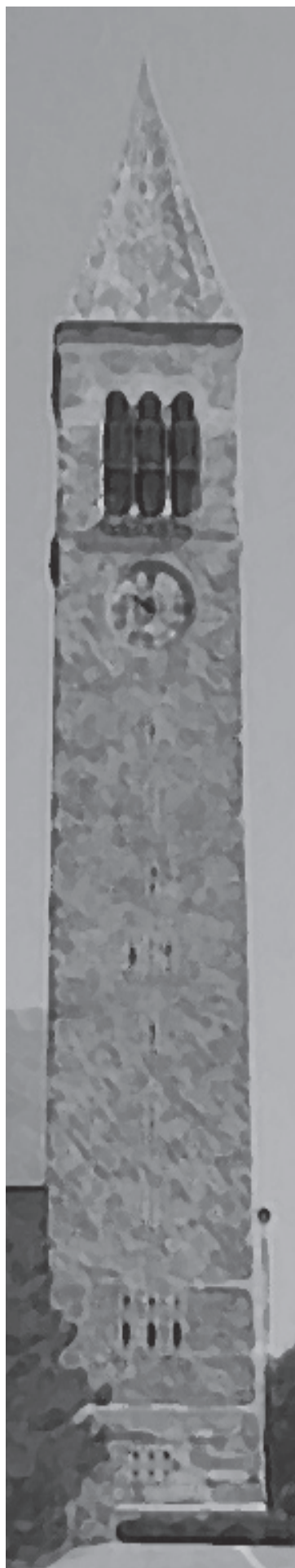


Ryan Fan '10, SiYi Wang '08, and Scott Silverstein '08 try some new techniques during the April 12 master class.

Prior to his arrival, each chimesmaster in preparation for requirements, these no more than two to keep the melody was present. These challenges for many these can be useful that take advantage of bells (like their size differences), but this of our arrangements Mater"! that it used to. Most of our around learning ways of writing arrangements that are easily understood by listeners, using techniques to make the melodies and rhythms clear within the piece.

Gordon requested that write a short arrangement the class. Among other arrangements were to use notes at a time and were in the lowest voice when it requirements were certainly of us! Using methods like in creating arrangements the natural properties of the and corresponding volume is so different from many (oh, for example the "Alma certainly takes some getting work that day revolved

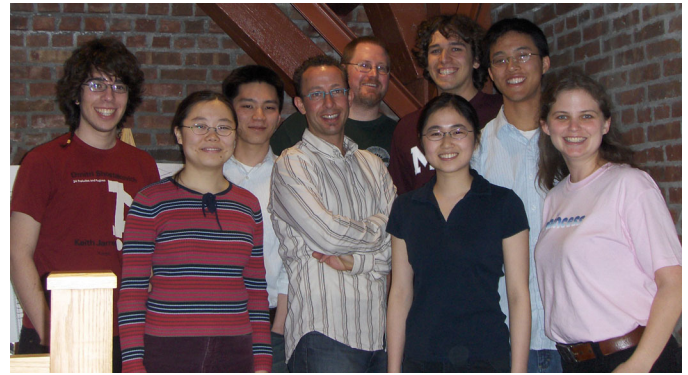
For our second master class this year, the chimesmasters were excited to meet and work with Geert D'hollander, a Belgian carillonneur. Geert is the City Carillonneur of four carillons in Belgium (Antwerp, Liege, Ghent, and St-Niklaas); he also teaches at the Royal Carillon School in Mechelen, Belgium and at Roosevelt Academy in The Netherlands. Geert led his master class on April 12, 2008. As this was his first visit to our (or any!) chime, he spent a lot of his visit understanding how we play and giving advice on ways to refine our playing techniques



and musicality. Many techniques that are used regularly in carillon playing were useful to see and consider in terms of how we can transfer them to our chime stand.


Each chimesmaster chose either a favorite piece or a new arrangement to play for Geert for his feedback. We received help in phrasing, dynamic control, handling (which some of us call "appendaging" or "choreography" - deciding which hands or feet to use when) and overall musicality. We learned to think much more about "preparing" notes ahead of time that need to be played softly. Geert also introduced some carillon-playing techniques that many of the chimesmasters hadn't seen before, giving us some new ideas to play with for future arrangements. It was wonderful to have Geert visit us and share with us his experience as both a performer and composer.

Given the unique nature of our instrument, the perspective of anyone who hasn't been a Cornell Chimesmaster always seems like an "outsider's view" at first. Yet there is so much we have learned and are continuing to learn from these generous members of the carillon community who are sharing their knowledge and experience with us. There are always lessons to be learned about how to make beautiful music, the qualities of good arrangements, the distinct considerations of playing and writing music for bells, and how to improve the experience for our listeners. And hearing new perspectives and the questions they ask helps us question the things we've always done. Why do we play with our shoes off? Why don't we memorize more of our music? Why do we always put the melody on the higher notes? Why do we always play the arrangements we have exactly as written? How do we give feedback within our group after people become chimesmasters? When questions like these come up in our master classes, we find ourselves discussing them as a group for weeks and months afterwards. They inspire us to decide which long-



Geert D'hollander (front, center), with some of the Cornell Chimesmasters, at the April 12 master class.

established practices we should keep and what we might like to change. They inspire us to work on finding ways to help each other create the best music we possibly can on this unique instrument we've all created for ourselves here at Cornell.

On a personal note, this year's competition marks my 15th anniversary as a chimesmaster. I feel that I have grown in my playing more in the last two years than I did in the ten before that, primarily because I've benefited so much from the classes we've had in that time and the conversations that have followed them. I haven't reflected on my playing so much since I was a compet! I hope we can continue offering opportunities like this for the chimesmasters so that they and the program can continue to grow and flourish. 

### **Chimesmasters visit Berkeley Carillon SiYi Wang '08 and Ryan Fan '10**

Chimesmasters Ryan Fan '10 and SiYi Wang '08 scaled Sather Tower, home of University of California (UC) Berkeley's sixty-one-bell carillon, on March 20, 2008. The 307 foot tall tower would have been a formidable climb, if not for the elevator that brought us straight to the top. Our host for the evening was carillon student Stanley Tang, who played a beautiful 10-minute concert that included "Gnossienne No. 1" by Satie. He even let us try a few bells at the end of the concert, at which point Ryan attempted the "Rag" but was soon baffled by the strange positions of the levers. Our host then took us on a tour of the tower, which included a working Seth Thomas clock that they still use, and the stairs, which they don't. We also stopped by two practice carillons on the way down and giddily tried playing as many Cornell pieces as we knew from memory. Many thanks to the carillonneurs at UC Berkeley for showing us their awesome carillon and tower.



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Please contact us with your comments and feedback or if you would like to be added to our mailing list.

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## Chimesmaster's Corner

Scott Silverstein '08, Head Chimesmaster

There is a certain compulsion that afflicts every chimesmaster, or at least every chimesmaster I have ever met - the urge, upon hearing Jennie McGraw's bells ringing, to dismiss all prior plans, run up the steps of the tower, and join in the fun. As an underclassman, I succumbed to this urge nearly every time, crashing concert after concert and relishing the thrill of being a chimesmaster. (I see the same trend, to an even greater extreme, among this year's sophomores!) Likewise, when I no longer live in Ithaca and return only to visit, I have no doubt that I will be drawn to the tower whenever the bells give tongue. It's no secret why we have this urge. We are active musicians, not satisfied simply to hear music but needing deeply to physically involve ourselves in its creation. Plus, everyone loves a duet.

In the past few months, however, I have drawn back, choosing more often than not to listen to concerts from below as I walk to my next destination, as though I were any other Cornell student. As our recent guests, carillonners Gordon Slater and Geert D'hollander, have taught us, you can learn a lot by listening. Is the melody more effective in the higher bells or the lower bells? Does the third note of a chord enhance the piece or muddy it? How well do our attempts at dynamic expression come through? (Please read Jennifer Lory-Moran's article for a full account of our two master classes this year). By taking mental notes, I can later provide advice to others and also improve the quality of my own playing. After all, the majority of our audience listens casually from ground level, so it is to this experience - not the ever-so-familiar experience at playing-stand level - that we must cater. The exercise of listening to other chimesmasters from below also helped prepare me to judge competes from the same perspective, to know what idiosyncrasies to listen for and what standards to hold as we put them to the ultimate test.

As I write, the latest round of judged concerts has just finished, capping our annual ten-week Chimes Competition. From an initial field of thirty-five applicants, representing undergraduates as well as graduate students and staff members, we narrowed the competition down to six very talented competes for the second round. We chose for this year's required pieces "Lament" from *The Bellman's Suite* by Richard H. Lee '41, a Chimes Competition mainstay with wonderful potential for expression, and Bach's "Prelude from English Suite #6 in D Minor", an Erwin Chan '00 arrangement that offers a variety of technical challenges. We actually had to reconsider several would-be required pieces because some competes played them in their second or third out-loud concerts ever! In addition, many competes this year performed visitor requests, even during their


judged concerts. Although we encourage competes to politely decline any request, we do not forbid them from accepting such a challenge, and they have wowed us with sight-reading skills that some of us take months or even years to develop. The gusto shown by new chimes players never ceases to amaze me.

I am proud to announce Cornell's newly selected chimesmasters: Katie Hamren '11, Kathy Houg '10, and Lisa Passmore '10. We are excited to have them aboard and we look forward to getting to know our newest duet partners!

***"They have wowed us with sight-reading skills that some of us take months or even years to develop."***

Our new recruits are not the only changes that have come to the chimes of late. Keith Jenkins '93 has recently completed an overhaul of our online music library database. Now it is possible to tell at a glance which songs get played most often, by which chimesmasters, whether they were requests, and whether they are currently available to play. The database also tracks each chimesmaster's complete repertoire (songs played since the launch of online playsheets two years ago) and allows us to easily select music that we have played before or, if we prefer, music that we haven't. It retains the searching capabilities of the old database, enabling us to browse by composer, arranger, genre, meter, key signature, or any word in the title. Planning a concert, especially a themed one as I like to do, has never been easier.

But as we pass into a generation where only alumni chimesmasters remember having to climb to the top of the tower to find out what songs were available, I present here one "lament" for our pre-computerized playsheets. Three years ago, I would inevitably see all the songs other chimesmasters had recently played every time I checked the three-week rule. I didn't need to boot up a computer, click on the right link, and scroll down a webpage; I could simply read what who played when. Now the three-week check is done automatically, and I feel a bit out of touch with my colleagues just when I yearn more than ever to know every detail of what happens in McGraw Tower. Thus, in my waning weeks at Cornell, I find myself with one more reason to listen to as many concerts as I can. I always take the long way home to West Campus during afternoon concerts; I stroll through Ho Plaza and saunter down Libe Slope and, should no criticism come to mind, simply enjoy the music.

I have immensely enjoyed this opportunity to play the Cornell Chimes and I will surely return to McGraw Tower often. Happy trails, and always keep your ears open! 



## Alumni Notes

We have just a few notes for this newsletter, and the long, gray Ithaca winter is not typically a time when we receive many out of town visitors. However, now that spring is here, if you are planning a visit to campus in the future, email [chimes@cornell.edu](mailto:chimes@cornell.edu).

We received joyful news that there are two new chimes fans in the world!

**Elizabeth (Wallis) Grethen '02** and her husband Dustin welcomed their first child into the world on February 6. Marcus weighed in at 7 pounds, 10 ounces and was 20.5 inches long. Liz writes, "Being a parent is tiring but fun."

Classmate **Melody (Hung) Wong '03** also had good news to share! She and her husband Raymond happily announce the arrival of their daughter Ruth. "She was born on March 20 at 1:55 p.m. weighing 7 pounds, 14 ounces with a full head of hair! Our little gift came just in time to celebrate mommy's birthday five days later." Congratulations to all!

We also have some sad news to write, **Peter Burckmyer '56** passed away in January. Peter was a publishing executive at Reader's Digest for most of his working life, and spent his free time pursuing photography and numerous outdoor activities. Peter was also active in a leadership role with the Somers Land Trust, which included the purchase of more than 650 acres of land in 2006. In recent years, Peter made several trips back to Ithaca both to visit his Alma Mater (and the chimes), as well as to attend the reunion of his other Alma Mater – Ithaca High School. We were pleased to welcome Peter, most recently, at the Chimes Advisory Council meeting in September. The Cornell Chimesmasters will perform a concert honoring Peter later this summer when his family is in Ithaca.

Finally we wanted to extend – and share – some "thanks."

**Robert Feldman '66, '75** was in Ithaca during the winter holidays, and played two special concerts while in town! It's always lovely to hear the bells play, and we thank him for his assistance while the chimesmasters were home on break.

We also received recognition from some fellow bell ringers – of a lighter kind! The Sonos Handbell Ensemble was in Ithaca to perform and while in town, caught one of our concerts. One of the performers wrote, "I just wanted to write and say THANK YOU to **Sam (Birmaher '10)** for being so gracious to us at the noontime concert this past Sunday (April 6).

"I visited the McGraw Tower with 3 other members of Sonos Handbell Ensemble and not only did Sam play beautifully, but he was a wonderful host, too."

Perhaps the sunny weather is bringing out the best in everyone, the chimesmasters have received several compliments and "thanks" for their playing from the campus community as of late, including the following:

*Hello Chimesmasters,  
I'm not sure how often you folks get compliments, but today seemed to me to be as good as any other opportunity to commend you on a job well done. It isn't always possible for me to stop and appreciate the music... but today (Thursday) during your 1:10 performance, I did have the time...and I'm glad I did. Whoever played "Here Comes the Sun" (a clearly appropriate choice for today) played wonderfully. It was clean and rhythmically precise, and all-in-all was a great contribution to a beautiful day. Keep it up!  
Thanks,  
PhD Student  
CU Wind Ensemble section leader*

## Stay connected with Cornell Chimes alumni and friends throughout the year...

Join the chimes alumni email list-serve!

A list-serve is basically just a "list" of email addresses (in this case, chimesmasters' email addresses). When a message is sent to the list-serve address, [chimes-alum-l@cornell.edu](mailto:chimes-alum-l@cornell.edu), the message is sent to all of the people subscribed to the list.

This is a fun way to keep abreast of chimes and bell-related events and stories throughout the year. List volume is manageable and shouldn't overwhelm your inbox.

If you are interested in subscribing, your email address has changed, or you have additional questions about this list, please email [chimes@cornell.edu](mailto:chimes@cornell.edu).



**After ten weeks of practice, patience, and perseverance, we are proud to welcome the following students to the Cornell Chimesmaster ranks:**

**Katie Hamren '11  
Kathy Houg '10  
Lisa Passmore '10**

**Remember, once a chimesmaster, always a chimesmaster!**



## Student Spotlight Ryan Fan '10

Marisa LaFalce

*Hi Ryan. Thanks for taking the time to meet with me, especially with the judged concerts (for the competition) going on and the master class this weekend. How's the competition going?*

No problem. The competition is going well. It's a lot of waking up early – before 7 a.m. every day instead of eight or nine. But the time commitment - getting up early, and hearing concerts at night - forces me to be on campus and also get work done, so it's not too bad.

*Eight or nine? That's still pretty early by college student standards!*

Yes, some of us would like to sleep later, but our class schedule presents a conflict!

*After being a compet last spring, what's it like being on this side of the competition?*

It's weird! During the judged concerts, the chimesmasters evaluate the performances. I think, did they say the same things about me? It was just a year ago that I was a compet, so I'm not fully used to being on the other side.

*That makes sense. What drew you to the chimes?*

It's kind of a complicated story! I was trying to find my class (it was the beginning of the semester). I had gone to the room I thought it was in, but nobody was there. So I went to the library to check my email and see if the class was cancelled. I didn't have an email about the class, but I ran into a friend who was going to the chimes information session. I figured, since I couldn't find my class I'd join them.

Ah, I remember those early days of the competition, we spent a lot of time in that practice room. A lot of time! You'd just bring your food in and play and play. On the practice stand you could play out loud but nobody else could hear you. We'd try all kinds of music even if we knew we couldn't play it well! It's weird to be reminiscing about something that is so recent.

But now I'm in a new position. I wonder what people think when they see a group of us all together at 7:45 a.m. eating bagels outside in the rain (for the judged concerts)?

*Do you have any favorite chimes pieces? Have you written any arrangements?*

I'd have to say H14 "Twilight" by Eric Hayes '05 and J11 "The Falling Green" by Keith Jenkins '93 are at the top. I've done a lot of arranging. I also do composition for other instruments. I feel it is very important to spend time with the music – transcribing, writing.

*What have you arranged?*

I've arranged a lot of popular songs, some Coldplay, "Apologize" by One Republic. Most of the songs are still in the proposed folder, we'll see if any get enough votes to make it into the permanent files.

*I am always impressed by the musical background of our chimesmasters, what is yours?*

Lots of piano. I am teaching piano lessons now to a couple of Cornell students. I also play guitar some, and handbells... I played handbells in middle school. I guess that appreciation of bells just carried over, the sound of the bells is just awesome!

*Did you go to the Sonos Handbell concert last week when they were in town?*

No, I wanted to, but I had a conflict. I was performing in a dance recital.

*What kind of recital?*

It's for an Israeli dance troupe.

*How did you get involved with that?*

Freshman year there was a girl down the hall that was part of the group. That fall I took International Folk Dance for my P.E. requirement, and her group – Beketsev - demonstrated in class. I liked it, and decided to audition. It's intense! Very physical. I spend a lot of time lifting women into the air.

*Wow, chimes, folk dance, what else do you do in your spare time?*

I'm in the World Music Choir. SiYi (Wang '08) is in it too. It's cool we sing Hawaiian, African music. You can take it as a music course or for fun.



Dogs, scooters, passers by... when the weather is nice, who knows what you will see as the chimesmasters convene on the McGraw Tower terrace to judge a compet concert!

Interview continued, from previous page...

*That does sound cool. You're very interesting. So what is a typical weekend for you? It's Friday, what are you doing tonight?*

Well, my friend is having a Salsa performance and so I may go to her Salsa party, then perhaps another party. Although I'm pretty tired too!

*Okay, lets switch gears. Tell me about your academics, what college are you in?*

That's another complicated story! I was in the College of Engineering as a Mechanical Engineering major, but I am in the process of transferring to the Arts College. I am going to major in Math, as well as Linguistics.

*What types of classes are you taking?*

Well, I decided to transfer three weeks into the semester, so I dropped three Engineering courses and added a Psych, Math, and Econ class. That was interesting, starting those up three weeks into the semester. Next semester I will probably take five or six classes - about eighteen credits. Probably two language classes.

*Wow, that's a lot of credits, why all the languages?*

I like languages. I am taking Arabic now. Next semester I will probably take German Literature or Akkadian (a dead language from the Middle East).

*Do you have a background in German? What's the fascination with all of these different languages?*

I took German in high school and so I can speak it some. I have always been interested in Linguistics and have a fascination with old languages. Freshman year I took Old Norse - it just sounded good. Perhaps I will pursue studies in Historical Linguistics.

*That's very cool. You're from the West Coast, right?*

Yes, how precise do you want to get? I'm from Lafayette, California; it's about twenty minutes from Berkeley.

*That's right, you visited the Berkeley Carillon during your spring break.*

Yes, it's an easy day trip. They have an elevator... that still strikes me... I wish we had an elevator! I've been to the Berkeley campus many times, but that was my first time to the carillon.

*With so many good schools around you, what made you choose Cornell?*

I didn't want to stay too close to home for college. Even Southern California seemed too close. I liked the idea of coming across the country.


Also, I was still planning to be an Engineer at that time, but

at Cornell, I knew I could still take language courses at my leisure. You know the motto, "any person, any study."

*Do you think you'll go back to California after graduation?*  
I enjoyed visiting California again over spring break. I was driving down the road thinking, "there's no snow here." It was nice. I am not sure if I want to live there or just keep visiting. I want to work abroad.

Unfortunately, with transferring to Arts, I don't have time to do a study abroad program, but maybe I can find a summer program for next summer. I've been looking into international internships for this summer, but it's a bit late, so we'll see.

*Any plans for after college, or is it still too early to tell?*  
I would love a job in Europe or the vicinity. If I can't find a job after graduation, I'd love to travel the world teaching English and learning other languages. I like the idea of that two-way education experience.

*Well thank you for your time Ryan. It has been delightful to speak with you. Enjoy the master class tomorrow.* 

## **Cornell Reunion Weekend is June 5-8, 2008 Will you be returning to "the Hill" this year?**

**If yes, we hope that you'll visit the tower!**

Chime Concerts

Friday at 6 p.m.

Saturday at 9:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

Sunday at 12 p.m.

The Saturday morning concert features the songs of Cornell to honor those classes celebrating 60th, 65th, 70th, and 75th reunions.

McGraw Tower Concert and Open House

We will be hosting an open house at McGraw Tower on Saturday from 12-2 p.m. We invite you to climb all 161 steps, play the bells, and enjoy the views!

For additional information, contact the Cornell Chimes.

The Cornell Changes  
(The Jennie McGraw Rag)

Maximum 3 minutes, optimum 2-2¼ minutes

W. O. Fiske

**Found! The Lost Words to the "Rag"!**  
Scott Silverstein '08

*Editors note:* Last year Head Chimesmaster Crystal Cun '07 began using creative means to remind the chimesmasters that their Colts (payroll) was due. Her reminders started, simply, in haiku, and by graduation, morphed into a multi-week epic poem that included each current chimesmaster! This year, when Scott took over the reigns, he was equally inspired, and captured our attention with poems, trivia, and in March, "The Ballad of Jennie McGraw." And no, literary creativity is not required to become head chimesmaster!

**The Ballad of Jennie McGraw**

(best if sung along with the bells at <http://chimes.cornell.edu/sounds.html>)

Hi my name is Jen-nie Mc-Graw, I have ne-ver bro-ken the law, and I have a sto-ry to tell, it's a-bout Cor-nell. I am the daugh-ter of a weal-thy lum-ber-man named John Mc-Graw and he do-na-ted mo-ney so they named Mc-Graw Hall af-ter him, no not me!

Still I think it's pru-dent that we start from eigh-teen-six-ty-eight when An-drew Dick-son White had just come back from Eu-rope with some books; of course I was im-pressed and asked if I could make a gift, so he said, "Not a buil-ding, not a vil-la, not a bridge o'er Cas-ca-dil-la, not e-quip-ment, not en-dow-ment, I just want some bells, nine of them!"

I a-greed and so he quick-ly te-le-graphed Me-nee-ly Foun-dry where they cast the bells and shipped them from Me-nee-ly out to Au-burn then by barge down Lake Ca-yu-ga, up the slope and on-to cam-pus, all in just two weeks! I think he must have been in touch with the Me-nee-lys long be-fore I made my be-ne-fac-tion 'cuz that's real-ly fast.

Oh by the way there was-n't a-ny-where to put the bells so some-one built a tem-po-ra-ry struc-ture and they rang out for the first time at Cor-nell's o-pen-ing ce-re-mo-nies by a pro named Pete Mc-Gold-rick, but who cares, let's talk of Wil-lard Fiske, the first li-bra-ri-an, so both of us were fond of books; they say he si-lent-ly ad-mi-red me right from the first time that we met, 'twas eigh-teen-six-ty-nine and I liked him too; yet it took him more than ten years be-fore he pro-posed!

Oh well, he did! And I said yes! So we toured Ven-ice and Ber-lin! Then took a cruise u-pon the Nile for I felt ill and he sought a heal-thy en-vi-ron-ment for me, re-gard-less, my tu-ber-cu-lo-sis just got worse and worse so we re-turned to I-tha-ca in eigh-teen eigh-ty where I ne-ver lived to live in our new man-sion; here my sto-ry ends.

Oh wait I can't for-get the chimes and ev-'ry-one who plays them, for you know I was the ve-ry first chimes group-ie; ev-'ry time I went to vi-sit I re-ques-ted "Ro-bin Ad-dair", yet they did-n't laugh a-bout me 'cuz there was just one, re-mem-ber? Play-ing ev-'ry mor-ning, noon, and night, and what was he paid for his ef-forts? Of-ten next to no-thing!

So, chimes-mas-ters of the fu-ture, heed what dear old Jen-nie taught you: Please don't take your checks for gran-ted, A. D. White wants you to be paid, so al-ways be sure to do your COLTS!



## **You can provide the resources for tomorrow's melody...**

The Cornell Chimes receives support every year from bequests and life income agreements thanks to many forward thinking individuals who discovered gift planning.

With a little help - to balance your philanthropic wishes with life's many necessities - you might be able to do more than you think.

To learn more, contact the Cornell Chimes program at 607-255-2373 or the Cornell University Office of Trusts, Estates and Planned Giving at 1-800-481-1865. Information is also on the web at [www.alumni.cornell.edu/gift\\_planning](http://www.alumni.cornell.edu/gift_planning).



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