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Alphorn Association of North America

<http://www.alphornassociation.org/>

*The Official
Newsletter of the
AANA*

Welcome to our 2nd issue of the 2025 year. In this issue you will see reports on Windy City Alphorn Workshop (Chicago, IL) and the Northwest Alphorn Workshop (Leavenworth, WA). There will be a special issue coming out shortly reporting on the International Horn Society Symposium 57 – “Heritage Horns” – and the exceptional participation of the alphorn community. Thank you for reading, and if you have any suggestions, short articles for future issues or updated event information, drop me a line at rosebone@icloud.com !



Bill Rose, Editor

Windy City Alphorn Workshop

2025 bodes to be a banner year for alphorn events and performances in North America, with growth both in the number of events and the number participating.

The fourth annual Windy City Workshop was held May 14-17, based at Lake Forest College on Chicago's north shore. Natalie Grana, Shawn Hagen, and Laura Nelson conducted warmup and fundamentals sessions and conducted groups from the twenty participants that gathered from across the US. Sessions also included ear training and singing with Natalie Grana as well as German folk dancing.



William Rose, editor
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The performance repertoire included new premieres written by Laura Nelson and Michel Fellman, traditional pieces, and a special performance of the Leopold Mozart *Sinfonia Pastorella* with Thomas Jöstlein and Shawn Hagen featured with chamber orchestra. The event concluded with a performance party at Dovetail Brewery on Chicago's iconic malt row, featuring alphorn karaoke and chamber performances in the brewery's barrel room. Please join us in May 2026!

Natalie Grana



The Northwest Alphorn Workshop

This year's Workshop took place Thursday through Sunday, May 22nd - 25th, in Leavenworth, Washington in conjunction with the International Alphorn Festival over the Memorial Day weekend. The event was held at a private river-front park on the Icicle River, with three concerts over Saturday and Sunday. This was the largest alphorn event to-date in North America with 70 registered attendees (at one point 90 players were counted with alphorns in their hands!). 67 players participated in the Saturday afternoon mass concert.

We were excited to welcome back Dr Yannick Wey, musicologist and alpine music expert from Luzern, Switzerland. Yannick returned to join the expert faculty: Jim Hopson, Natalie Grana, Peggy DeMers, Laura Nelson, and Bill Rose. We were also honored to have Bill Hopson, retired hornist of the Calgary Symphony and exceptional alphorn builder and performer attending. Multiple lectures, coaching sessions and rehearsals happened daily, including the return of the "Beginners' Circle" for new/newer players, taught in rotation by all the faculty.



In addition to the rehearsals, lectures, lessons, coaching sessions and incredible fellowship, participants had the opportunity to shop and try out instruments and mouthpieces from multiple vendors, including: *The Alphorn Institute* <https://www.alphorninstitute.com/>, *Alpensong* <https://www.alpensong.com/>, *Silver and Brass* <https://silverandbrassmusic.com/index.html> – all of whom also served as sponsors for events during the weekend. Other acknowledgements include: the Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce, the Leavenworth Winter Sports Club, and the Alphorn Association of North America.



Some of the lectures included: “Playing old alphorn manuscripts: how did 18th century cowherds sound their horns?” and “Johann Aregger and the development of multipart alphorn playing,” led by Yannick; “A Singing Approach to the Alphorn,” with Natalie Grana; “The Little Alphorn Book: Insight into the world of the old Alphorn Masters,” led by Peggy DeMers; “A Blossom in the Dark: Musically Envisioning the Poetry of Emily Dickinson,” led by Laura Nelson <http://alpenmuse.com/>; “the Joy of Yodeling,” led by Babe and Ruth; and a great evening lecture with Jim Hopson: “The Funky Shepherd;” as well as numerous other sessions.

This year, the Northwest Alphorn Workshop was honored to host the first annual gathering of the [Alphorn Association of North America](#) (AANA). This organization endeavors to connect players and organizations from throughout North America, and they have already demonstrated substantial support for our event. During the banquet on Friday night the AANA presented the Leavenworth Alphorn Association with the AANA first **Alphorn Association of the Year** award. “The Leavenworth Alphorn Association exemplifies the highest standards of artistic excellence and community engagement. AlpenSong and AANA have long admired the innovative programs and initiatives developed by your organization. Your work serves as an inspiring model for other organizations, illustrating the impact that a passionate organization can have in a region.” [Sean M. Slatter, AANA Board Chair, quoted from the letter to the Leavenworth Alphorn Association.]

The first concert, Saturday afternoon, included close to 70 performers. It opened with the alphorn and cowbell parade; and included for the first time an alphorn solo performed by Bill Rose with the Leavenworth Low Brass Ensemble, led by Jace Rowland, Leavenworth’s high school band director.

The 2nd concert was also a new event for the workshop: a mass concert at the Leavenworth Ski Hill. This concert featured the three 25’ “bull moose” horns built by Brandi and Lindsey. The many of the regional groups in

attendance performed individual chamber pieces. The concert finished with a faculty “super-group” of Natalie Grana, Laura Nelson, Jim Hopson, Bill Hopson, Peggy DeMers, Yannick Wey, Tony Brazelton and Bill Rose, performing Jim Hopson’s “Fat Lip Blues,” followed by “Uf da Bänkialp,” performed by all the workshop participants and directed by Yannick Wey as the encore piece.



Sunday afternoon’s concert was a wrap-up of all the work that the participants and teachers did during the week. Congratulations to all the teachers and performers – for a fabulous weekend of fellowship, learning and performance.

editor *William G. “Bill” Rose*



Silver and Brass – North American Alphorn Builders

Silver and Brass opened its doors in spring 2013 as a musical instrument repair shop. Over the years the shop evolved and narrowed its focus to be a specialty brass shop. Repairs continued, but the main output of the shop became restoring vintage and antique brass instruments. Our primary focus became French horns, and we started building occasional custom horns as well as restoring them. In 2019 we and a couple of horn playing friends from the Reno-Carson area attended the North American Alphorn Retreat in Utah where we fell in love with the alphorn, purchasing alphorns and returning home to start a local group. Immediately we started experimenting with building our own alphorns. After several years of experimentation, trial and error we found a formula for making alphorns that we were satisfied with. Today we build a selection of alphorns and alphorn mouthpieces that fit a variety of players and styles. Other alphorn players have been playing our horns for several years and providing feedback. Most notably, our good friends Bill Hopson and Jim Hopson were able to test our alphorns and found them to have great sound, response and accuracy.



Our finest wooden alphorns are called our “Sonillere” model, meaning “the ones with the bells” in the Fribourg patois of the Gruyere region of Switzerland. They are made of California Redwood, finished in cane wrapping for a traditional look. These horns have patterns worked into the construction of the bell, and are also our largest traditional-length alphorns, having a larger internal diameter than our other horns. The wood has been permanently saturated with linseed oil to increase the horn's longevity, meaning that these horns require almost no ongoing maintenance, unlike most other wooden alphorns. They are 4-piece and play in both F and F#.



The next model of alphorn we build is called our “Moose” series. These have been through several years of different iterations and development, going back to the very first alphorns that we ever built. They are similar to our “Sonillere” model, being made from California Redwood using many of the same techniques. The difference with this model is that the outside is not wrapped in cane; instead, a very thin layer of translucent fiberglass is applied to the outside of the horn for protection. The earlier versions of this model were made as 3-piece horns, but we now make them as 4-piece horns in either F or F#.

The most accessible and least expensive alphorn that we build is a 3-piece horn made from carbon fiber. We build these horns with an internal skeleton of carbon fiber overlaid with composite carbon fiber-fiberglass for greater longevity. As standard we make these horns in F or F#, but other keys are available for an additional fee. Custom colors, rattan or wooden wrapping is also available for an additional cost. These horns are very lightweight at 3 pounds and are durable, making them great for hiking and other environments that can be harsh on a wooden instrument. We can also make these alphorns in a 6-piece form that fits into a backpack, bringing the overall weight up to 4.5 pounds.



Finally, is our category of “other”, which are strange and fun alphorns or alphorn-adjacent instruments. This includes Würzhorns, 25-foot contrabass alphorns, Büchels, and shepherd’s horns. “Würzhorns” are alphorns made from responsibly harvested trees or branches. These horns are built by collecting the tree, splitting it traditionally with wedges, hollowing both halves by hand, and then binding the two halves together. We leave the character of the tree as part of the final horn.



The 25-foot-long alphorns that we build are built like our Moose and Sonillere model horns out of redwood. We call them our “Bull Moose” model for a couple of reasons; the first is in homage to Theodore Roosevelt and the second is that they are a larger version of our “Moose” series horns. They play a full octave lower than a standard alphorn, meaning that the instrument can play regular alphorn music a full octave lower. It can also play 32 notes instead of the 16 notes that are possible on a standard alphorn.

The Büchels that we make are typically in C or Bb and are carbon fiber wrapped in birch and leather. We have also made our interpretation of Shepherd’s Horns based on old artwork and the images in alphorn literature. These are built in F alto, allowing the player to still play with a group of alphorn players if desired. If you would like more information, get in touch!



—*Brandi Jones*

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Musician & Service Coordinator -- Sierra Alphorn Players

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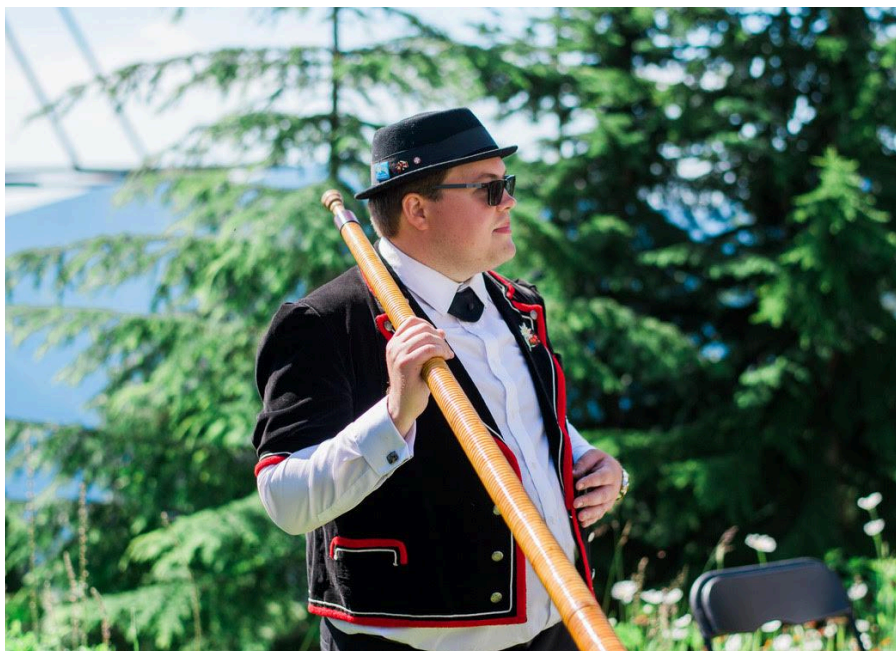
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A Review of Silver and Brass Alphorns and Mouthpieces



As a 2nd-generation Alphorn artist, and the son of a high-end Alphorn maker, I have very exacting criteria for evaluating horns. Sound, intonation, response, flexibility, projection, ergonomics, portability, durability, and aesthetics; in my opinion, truly artistic Alphorn makers cannot afford to compromise on any of these points. In my considered opinion, based on extensive playtesting of their instruments, Lindsey and Brandi Jones are building some of the finest Alphorns in the world. Their entry-level carbon fiber Alphorns are exceptionally responsive and resonant, offering the best value on the market — by far — for beginning players. This summer, they debuted two high-end wooden Alphorns at the Northwest Alphorn Retreat, which are comparable in playability/artistry to my father's Rocky Mountain Alphorns.

Lindsey and Brandi are also building some of the finest Alphorn mouthpieces on the market. As a low brass player who covers a 5+ octave range, I often find that large 23mm+ Alphorn mouthpiece designs compromise upper register response/intonation. My custom mouthpiece, designed by Lindsey, solves that problem with the added benefit of increased overall efficiency. Last, if you haven't tried their compact practice horns... do it soon! They play in tune through the entire overtone series, and sound very good on a mic! I use mine routinely on stage with the S-Bahn Band. Lindsey and Brandi are engaged in elevating the North American Alphorn scene with their commitments to tradition, innovation, artistic excellence, and community-building.

Jim Hopson

June 2025

Upcoming Summer 2025 Alphorn Events in North America

(All North American events require the use of an F alphorn. Generally, there is a small number of horns in F available for rent at these events. If there are questions, contact the organizers.)

MIDWEST ALPHORN RETREAT

July 23rd–July 27th, 2025 at the Franciscan Life Process Center, Lowell, MI (15 miles east of the Grand Rapids Airport). Dr. Peggy DeMers, Artistic Director and Educator/Instructor, and William Rose, Assistant Educator/Instructor. There are currently 2 rooms available for on-campus participants. Fees: \$975 all-inclusive fee for retreat (on-campus housing, meals, private & group lessons, all group activities); \$400 for non-performing family member (on-campus housing with spouse,

meals & all group activities); \$675 for retreat commuter (meals, private & group lessons, all group activities); \$200 for non-performing commuter family member (meals & all group activities). Registration:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc_cfu6TcMeLvG9GoJ69SsJpXQbA5vySyjaiU2mIzu87p33IQ/viewform?usp=header

NORTH AMERICAN ALPHORN RETREAT

August 6th–August 9th, 2025 in Salt Lake City, UT. The final concert will take place as part of Snowbird's Oktoberfest. The price for the North American Alphorn Retreat is \$375. This fee includes all group lessons. There is a discounted rate of \$275 for students enrolled in elementary school- post graduate. The retreat is taught using alphorns in the key of F. The price to rent a horn for the duration of the retreat is \$25. <https://www.alphorninstitute.com/north-american-alphorn-retreat>

TAHOE ALPHORN EXPERIENCE

Tentative dates for the Tahoe Alphorn Experience are Thurs. Oct. 2– Mon. Oct. 6, 2025. These may be extended to allow for more hiking! For more information, and updates on registration fees, etc. please contact Brandi Jones at sierrahorns@gmail.com . website: <https://sierrahorns.org/tahoe-alphorn-experience.html>

•for Submissions to the AANA Newsletter:

please submit your article to Bill Rose rosebone@icloud (submission guidelines – three to four paragraphs, and anywhere from two to four pictures of the event).

•for Submissions to the Google Calendar of events:

Contact Brandi Jones sierrahorns@gmail.com

•Google Calendar of events link: [Calendar](#)

Cheers, and Happy Blowing!

Bill Rose

