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# Alphorn Association of North America

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

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*The Official  
Newsletter of the  
AANA*

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Welcome to our premiere issue of the AANA Newsletter. Our goal is to provide reporting and information about alphorn events and groups throughout North America, as well as resources for music, improvement of skills, purchase of alphorns and associated equipment; and connect the community together through shared experiences and resources. Thank you for reading, and if you have any suggestions for future issues, drop me a line!



*Bill Rose, Editor*

## “Windy City” Alphorn Workshop



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The third annual Windy City Alphorn Workshop was held May 15-18 at Lake Forest College on Chicago's north shore. Twenty-six alphorn players from across the United States, Canada, and Switzerland gathered for three days of rehearsals, classes, and social events, with a finale performance at the Chicago German Aid Society 100 Year Gala.

The curriculum included warmup and fundamentals sessions and both large ensemble and chamber ensemble rehearsals with faculty instructors Natalie Grana, Laura Nelson, and Brian Priebe. Each afternoon also included a solfege singing session lead by Dr. Grana, with singing games and multiple part songs to sing, buzz, and play on the alphorn. Thursday featured a German folk dancing session with guest instructor Tim John Semmerling of the D'Lustigen Holzackerer-Buam.

The Windy City Alphorns gave two public performances during the workshop. The first was a Friday night Maifest concert at the Lake Bluff Gazebo presenting chamber performances by ensembles attending the workshop as well as newly formed groups of workshop friends. The second concert was a feature at the German Aid Society's 100 Gala Jubiläum Celebration, with more than 300 attendees from across the nation. The concert included standard alphorn works as well as original compositions for the workshop by faculty member Laura Nelson. The evening concluded with food, drinks, dancing, and a live brass band!

All are welcome to join next year! Dates will be posted for the 2025 Windy City Alphorn Workshop next May on the [alphorninstitute.com](http://alphorninstitute.com) website.

*Natalie Grana, Chicago, IL*



## Northwest Alphorn Workshop



The Leavenworth Alphorn Association is so grateful to the participants, faculty and sponsors of its' 6th Northwest Alphorn Workshop and Festival, May 23 - 26, 2024. Our faculty brought their unique skills and talents to the workshop. Bill Rose led a beginner's group with 15 participants of all ages and musical backgrounds. Jim Hopson, Laura Nelson and Yannick Wey each led an all-hands warm-up, skill building session and master class. Special thanks to Yannick, a PhD Musicologist from Switzerland, for his contributions. Thanks, too, for the original pieces written by our talented faculty, including "Icicle Creek" and "O.B." by Jim Hopson and "Icicle Echo Trio" and "Blackbird Island" by Bill Rose. Yannick Wey and Gary



Martin presented Aregger's original multipart collection including 'Alphorn Choral' and "Uf Da Binklialp". Laura Nelson shared her "5 Pieces" published by [Reift.ch](http://Reift.ch), including a local favorite "Mountain Laurels".

The Bavarian alpine setting of Leavenworth provides a unique environment, with opportunities for ensembles to "street play". This informal format is ideal for answering audience questions, like "How do you get that in your Volkswagen?" in addition to fun photo opportunities. And it was quite the spectacle when we assembled in our "Trachten" to parade with cow bells, a horse carriage and a sea of alphorns to our performances in the town center's gazebo.

The NW Alphorn Workshop and Festival would not be possible without our generous sponsors, including local hotels and grants from the City of Leavenworth and the Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce.

*Janet Mano, Leavenworth Alphorns, Leavenworth WA*





## Alphorn Experience Hike with Composer Kurt Bestor

Early on the morning of June 4th, a group of hikers gathered at the Alpine Loop Summit in American Fork Canyon, Utah. Their mission? To embark on an unforgettable Alphorn Experience hike with the renowned composer Kurt Bestor.

### The Participants

- Kurt Bestor: The composer, with his Swiss heritage and interest in learning to play the Alphorn. ([www.kurtbestor.com](http://www.kurtbestor.com))<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- Sonja Reynolds: AlpenSong's Executive Director, passionate about the Alphorn's cultural significance. ([www.alpensong.com](http://www.alpensong.com))
- Erik Schaelling: AlpenSong's Retail Brand Manager, ensuring the experience would be memorable. ([www.alpensong.com](http://www.alpensong.com))
- Vincent Bates: A dedicated member of Wasatch Alphorns, committed to preserving tradition. ([www.wasatchalphorns.org](http://www.wasatchalphorns.org))
- David Roskelly: A mountain climber intrigued by the Alphorn's magic. ([www.davidroskelly.com](http://www.davidroskelly.com))

### The Journey

After fussing with backpack straps, we embarked on our hike to the Julie Andrews Meadow. The trail is moderately difficult, so we took a few short breaks along the way. Kurt and David (aka "Roscoe") had fun connecting over mountain hiking experiences at Mt. Kilimanjaro, among others.

Kurt and Sonja had been talking about getting together to play alphorn for many years, so this morning was especially important to them. Kurt shared many stories from his Swiss heritage; his grandfather Christian Indermuehle immigrated to Wisconsin from Amseldingen, Switzerland. He was a cheesemaker and made clocks as a hobby. Kurt's grandparent's even started a yodeling club, to "remember the Old Country".

As we unpacked our horns, Kurt began experimenting on the instrument. As a trumpet player, he noodled for a bit to find the tonic. Sonja guided him in some warmups, exercises, and tips (air-fingering!), then he was off. By the second piece (Chorale for Luzern), Kurt was already improvising, playing parts he was hearing in his composer-mind.

Sonja, Erik, and Vincent joined in, creating a symphony that resonated with nature. David played for a bit, but loved watching in awe—the Alphorn bridging music and nature.

Erik shared fun details about the history and culture of Alphorn bell painting, sharing details about local artists and their specific bell art.

Through discussion over title pronunciation, we discovered that both Vincent and Sonja speak Danish, even though they both have Swiss heritage.

#### A Melodic Conclusion

As the wind picked up and our faces wore down, we ended with Amazing Grace. The Alphorn Experience became an unforgettable memory—a testament to music, camaraderie, and the great outdoors. The alphorn world gained a newly converted Alphorn player, fan and composer. We hope to see some new compositions for alphorn soon!

*Sonja Reynolds, Salt Lake, UT*

### **For Submissions to the AANA Newsletter:**

please submit your article to Bill Rose [rosebone@icloud](mailto: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 [silverandbrassmusic@gmail.com](mailto:silverandbrassmusic@gmail.com)

**Google Calendar of events link:**

[Calendar](#)