



Dear Texas Flutists,

December is upon us. Time seems to somehow be speeding up. It seems just yesterday that I walked into Sebastian River Middle School's blue and orange painted band hall to play my first notes on the flute. And now one week away from my 29th birthday, I look back over nearly 17 years of flute playing. What an incredible adventure.

Looking back through time, life has changed so much. Yet the one thing that has stayed the same is my love for the flute. I play to celebrate life. I play to express sadness. From our fantastical classical repertoire to times when I simply improvise my own melodies, music gives me strength and peace. Flute may be the glue that has held all of the pieces together for me. I know that whatever happens I can still pour breath and life into my flute. I can think of nothing else more wonderful.

To each of you I issue a December challenge. Think back through the years of when you first fell in love with music and the flute. Remember that feeling when you first opened your flute case and saw the shiny silver, bubbly keys. Let that memory give you joy as you practice and teach. Let the power of the multi-wonderful flute deepen your life and expand your dreams. In the business of the holidays, it is so easy to look past the things that are most important to us. I hope that this Christmas you find time for true celebration of the things most important in your life.

I send you my warmest and most musical holiday wishes. May your time this season be restful and rewarding. Do keep me posted if I can be helpful in your journey.....

With great joy,
Erich Tucker
Texas Flute Society President

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For more information, contact Jennifer Hunter at
flautenmusik@hotmail.com

Please Join Us at the Next Texas Flute Society Meeting!

Sunday, January 16th, 2pm
at Christine Cleary's house:
2022 Wedgewood Drive, Grapevine, TX.

Email Christine at stinejay@yahoo.com for
directions or more info.

Do you have submissions for the next TFS newsletter?
Please send any congratulatory notes, flute events, and other
newsworthy information to:

Jennifer Hunter
flautenmusik@hotmail.com
(Please place "TFS Newsletter" in subject line)

Submission Deadline for the Next Newsletter is:

FEBRUARY 15TH

Is your flute playing properly?

an article by Nancy Shinn

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As a flute repairperson, I find that many flutists are playing flutes, which, with a little work, would play much better. Here are a few things you can do to check your flute's physical condition.

The headcork in your headjoint should be making an airtight seal. To test it, cover the end of the headjoint opposite the cork (the end that goes into the body—it's called the "tenon"). Now, put your mouth completely over the embouchure hole and suck the air out of the headjoint until your mouth is kind of "stuck" on the embouchure hole by suction. Count to ten slowly. Your mouth should continue to be held onto the embouchure hole by suction, and when you pull away, make a little Pop! If, during counting to ten, your mouth comes unsealed from the embouchure hole, the headjoint cork is leaking and needs to be replaced. A professional flute technician is the person to do this.

Next, check the pads on the body. Don't try to take your flute apart! Just turn your flute over and visually check the pads. They may be dirty because they have picked up tarnish from the silver on the flute—this doesn't matter too much. What you are looking for is fraying, holes, and tears in the skin of the pads. I have seen pads that were chewed up by little mites!

Use a magnifying glass. Any tears or fraying will cause the flute to leak, and the pad will need to be replaced by a professional flute technician. (Let's say "PFT" from now on.)

Next, play down the scale from third space C down the octave to low C. Press the keys lightly, just enough to overcome the springs and seat the pads on the tone holes. Blow hard, but use a light touch. Your flute should play with a steady, clear sound all the way down to low C. If the sound starts to get fuzzy, or wobbles, or gets worse as you go down, you probably have leaks and you should have it repaired by a PFT. Once your flute is put in peak condition, it will play much better. It's easy to get in the habit of pressing keys harder to force pads to close and seat properly, but it will slow down your technique, tire your hands, and generally discourage you from playing.

If you have some cigarette paper (which of course you shouldn't, because you shouldn't be smoking!!) you can test for leaks, although this is more difficult to do. Cut a section of cigarette paper (not the part with the glue on it)—about two inches long, but only 1/8 inch wide. Insert about 1/2 inch of the paper (let's call it a "feeler gauge") into the space between the pad and the tone hole. Pressing the key LIGHTLY, and pulling the paper out, you should be able to feel that the pad is touching the tone hole by the friction on the paper. If there is no friction on the feeler gauge, then the pad is not seating properly and should be "shimmed" by a PFT.

Here's how a PFT shims a flute: The flute is disassembled and the pads are taken out of the pad cup. Little pieces of paper (shims) of a very particular thickness are put in the pad cup, trying to match what the PFT thinks is the size and placement of the leak. Then the pad is put back into the key, the flute reassembled, and the PFT checks with a feeler gauge whether the little shim was the right size so that there is no longer a leak. This is a time consuming and meticulous process that you shouldn't try to do yourself! Careful shimming is what makes the difference between a poorly padded flute, and a professionally padded flute. Commercial flutes do not have a profession pad job, but if you get your commercially made flute padded by a PFT, it will play much, much better.

Detecting leaks between pads and tone holes is harder to do than most people think. It takes a PFT a considerable amount of time to learn the technique, so don't be discouraged if you can't "feel" anything when you try using the gauge of cigarette paper.

Another thing that can cause your flute to play poorly is if the adjustments are off. Everybody has heard about adjustments, but what the heck are they anyway?

When you press the "F" key on your flute, you will notice that two other keys go down at the same time: the key above F (the F# key) and the key above A (the A# or Bb key). Notice that these two keys, the F# and the Bb key, are NEVER pressed directly by your fingers—they only close when you press another key. Notice that when you press the E and the D keys, that same F# key closes at the same time. Notice that when you press the G key, the key below it (called the "lower G key") closes at the same time. What must happen, in order for your flute to play correctly, is that when you press the F key (for example), the F# and the Bb keys must close exactly and precisely when the F closes, so that all those pads seat and seal at the exactly the same time. If the F key closes first, it will keep the F# and the Bb keys from closing properly. The term "adjustments" refers to adjusting these keys so that they in fact DO close at exactly the same time. You'll notice that when you press the A key on your flute, the A# (or Bb) key closes, so they must be adjusted to close at exactly the same time, and shimmed properly to do so.

Over time, the adjustments on a flute can become "off" and the flute will not play properly when this is the case. You can try to check these adjustments visually. Press the F key lightly and look carefully at the F, F# and A# keys. They should all be closing completely. If you see a little opening around any of these three pads you can say, "No wonder this isn't playing right!!" Visually check the E and F#, then the D and F#, the A and A# and the upper and lower G keys in the same way. More often, the adjustments need to be checked with another little piece of cigarette paper, because visually checking really just isn't enough. When you press the F key, the F# key should close completely at the same time. The fronts and backs of the pads being checked should all have about the same amount of pressure on the paper. If not, the adjustments are off and you should then take the flute to a PFT to fix. This is another process that is difficult to "feel" or see, so don't be discouraged if you can't tell if the adjustments are off. Your PFT will do this during a yearly "COA" (clean, oil and adjust).

Here are some other things that can be wrong with your flute. Pads can be sticking. Springs can be too tight, causing the key to require too much pressure to close the key. Springs can be too loose, causing the key to rise only sluggishly after the key is pressed. If your flute is "noisy"—sounding "clacky"—it probably needs oiling.

There may be "lost action." Lost action means you are pressing one key that should cause another key to close (remember the F and F# keys) but there is some motion "lost" before the non-pressed key (F# in this case) begins to actually go down. The two keys should start moving at the EXACT same time. If there is a "step" in the feeling, that should be fixed by a PFT. This is true for all of the keys talked about in the "adjustments" section.

If there is any side-to-side motion in your keys, the pads will not seat properly. To check this, carefully hold a key at its sides and try moving it left and right. It should not move at all from side to side.

If any pins are not in tightly, the pads will not seat properly. The pins are the little steel things that stick out of your flute—you may have scratched yourself on one or caught your sweater on it.

Ever wonder about the little rectangular thingie on the backside of your flute, to the right of the G# key? This is called the "clutch," or the "back connector." It is the point at which the right hand keys (D, E, F and F#) connect with the left hand keys (G, A, B and C). The back connector is what makes the A# key go down when you press the F key (another adjustment that needs to be perfect).

Ever wonder what those teeny weensy screws are? Not the ones at the ends of the rods, but the ones in the middle, near the D, E, F and A# keys? Those are adjustment screws. Don't touch them! They are used to make the adjustments perfect. When your PFT screws IN an adjustment screw, it makes the screw press more against a little plate, so that when you press the F, for example, the adjustment screw hits the plate sooner, and the F# key is pressed down further. So the PFT uses the adjustment screws to make the adjustments perfect. Handmade flutes usually don't have adjustment screws; instead, little pieces of shims are used to make the adjustments.

I was fifty years old before I learned flute repair. In fact, I never did anything to even look at my flute to see how it worked, I just stuck it in my face and blew and blamed myself whenever I couldn't play something. Now I know to check my flute first, blame myself later! You will be doing yourself and your flute playing a big favor if you have your flute cleaned, oiled and adjusted every year, and pads replaced as necessary. It can make a world of difference in your playing and self-confidence.

One more thing. There is a difference between a band instrument technician ("BIT") and a professional flute technician. Your local music store has BITs who know a little bit about a whole bunch of different instruments and so they are great for general instrument repair. But they are not trained to do the precise, meticulous work that a PFT will do. Plus if you find an experienced PFT who is also a flute player, you will have found the person who can make your flute play at its absolute best.

Nancy Shinn
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TFS Member Spotlight

Interview with Karen Adrian

Date: November 1, 2004

Why did you choose to play the flute?

I loved the sound, previously played recorder, and piano, and was encouraged by my band director (a violinist).

Tell us about any musical influence in your family?

My Mother played piano for her entertainment—but our piano at home was most suitable for pre-1900 western saloons; however she was fantastic at piano roll blues kinds of things. I did not realize until attending Music School at Indiana University that the Rachmaninov Preludes she also could play were extremely difficult.

What brand of flute/piccolo do you play? A newer Powell flute and a Burkart piccolo.

Tell us about your first flute. Armstrong, \$100 variety

Tell us about where you studied flute and the teachers you studied under.

My band director coached me for years, then I connected with Mr. Fitzgerald of Indianapolis Sym (3 hr round trip for lessons) then later Albert Saurini also of ISO. At Indiana University I worked primarily with Harry Houdeshel, but had a semester private work and 4 years of “orchestral flute class” with James Pellerite. After graduation—Julius Baker a Summer plus-occasional study; Rampal in master classes/ Kenton Terry for a semester, several lessons with Walfrid Kujala, and John Krell. More recently I have attended workshops with Keith Underwood—and loved them. I am still in touch with Mr. Houdeshel and Mr. Pellerite (who helped me purchase a wonderful American Indiana flute).

Where are you currently playing or teaching? Why?

Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (including FW Opera and Ballet); Casa Manana Musicals. Teaching: Texas Christian University. Why? Because that’s what I want to do! (and have since the 7th grade). I didn’t spend all those years practicing 6 hours a day (+2 on piano) for nothing—fortunately.

What are your plans/goals for the future?

Perform with the orchestra as long as I like and/or love it (and am playing well); then perhaps to more recitals and more private students. Planning stages now for a second CD of UIL tunes to follow Flute Fantasies and Favorites.

What is the best advice you have to offer the rest of the flute community?

Define your goals early. If you want to be a professional performing flutist, commit yourself early on and be prepared to practice and study your art. Play the Piano! Understand there are 100s of flutists graduating from music schools in this country alone every year; know there is always someone as good or better than you; listen to music, listen to great flutists, attend live concerts, find a teacher who is incredible for you. Have fun with it.

Who is your favorite composer? JS Bach, today.

Interview with Karen Adrian con't

Tell us what is in your CD player right now?

It is silent in my home today, most recent, Bach Brandenburg No.5 (with modern instruments); Chant and R. Strauss opera Salome, which we are playing next week in Fort Worth.

What is your favorite piece to play from the flute repertoire?

This week: Prokofiev Flute Sonata. Liebermann is great fun, Bach is always stimulating and challenging.

What is your favorite recording?

A wide range: Carlos Nakai Earth Spirit or Nicolet (old, old, old phono) of Prokofiev or maybe NYPhil with Bernstein's Halil.

What time did you go to bed last night? 11:40

Which musicians have most influenced your playing?

Harry Houdeshel, Julius Baker, my first piano teacher, and school band director.

To date, what has been the highlight of your flute career?

First, a performance in Carnegie Hall, followed closely by a performance in a small canyon on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon.

What qualities do you think are most essential to flutistic excellence?

Diligence, correct practice, inherited and/or acquired musicality, desire.

Through the years, what is the most valuable lesson that the flute has taught you?

That it is always teaching me and I must consistently be aware and prepared to acquire and accept more challenges and knowledge.



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T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST

The Texas Flute Society would like to invite you to participate in our annual T-Shirt Design Contest. The design chosen will be featured on the 28th Annual Flute Festival T-Shirt, the cover of the program book, and our website, texasflutesociety.org. The winner will receive a one year membership in the Texas Flute Society and a \$25 gift certificate to spend at the Flute Festival exhibits. Creations can either be hand drawn or created on the computer and should be no larger than 8 1/2" X 11".

Please submit your entries by January 1st to:

Marilyn Arey

Texas Flute Society Festival Co-Chairperson

8050 Moss Meadows Dr.

Dallas, TX 75231

214-348-5047

or email your design to: m.Arey@sbcglobal.net



ATTENTION EXHIBITORS: IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Deadline for Exhibitor Reservation: **March 1, 2005**

Corporate/Industry Texas Flute Society Membership dues of \$50.00 should be current.

Business card size ads should be "camera ready."

Send Exhibitor Reservation Form, all fees, and ads to:

Velma Bogart, Exhibit Coordinator
9 Twin Lakes Court
Arlington, Tx 76016
817-467-0158
vlbogart@flash.net

A confirmation letter with further instructions and directions to the University of North Texas will be sent to you after April 1, 2005. Call Velma Bogart if you have questions. Be sure your email does not block vlbogart@flash.net. Thanks! Hope to see you at the Texas Flute Festival, May 21, 2005!

If you cannot be an exhibitor this year, consider advertising in the TFS Festival Program or the TFS Newsletter (5 issues).

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TFS Mission Statement

The Texas Flute Society is organized for the purpose and objectives as follows:

to further the activities and education of flutists in North Central Texas

to sponsor concerts, workshops, clinics, masterclasses, and festivals at which members and guest artists can perform and disseminate information, and

to direct our efforts toward cultural and educational values in and for the general community, striving for activities with a public interest wider than that of members and contributors.

The Texas Flute Society is organized exclusively for charitable, educational purposes.

The Texas Flute Society invites you to attend the 2005 Flute Festival at the University of North Texas, May 19th-21st, 2005.

Guest artists will include Christine Potter, Paul Edmund Davies, Laurel Ann Maurer and Clint Foreman!

For additional information please consult our website!
www.texasflutesociety.org