

From the President



Dear Texas Flutists,

Spring 2006

I found insight and inspiration this morning as I ran my very first half marathon this morning in the cold and icy winds around White Rock Lake in Dallas. My thoughts were soaring across the waters as I ran with the intention to complete the longest race I has ever set out to finish.

I thought about all the work that I had done to prepare for the race: months of practice running; eating the right foods the week before; buying the right shoes and clothes; going to sleep early the night before and paying the race fees. Before I even took the first real step of the race, I had already spent countless hours preparing for the race.

My thoughts turned toward the people who had helped get to the race. My trainers at TCU invested their time in making sure I was properly conditioned. My friend Christine Cleary believed in me and constantly encouraged me go for it. (Who by the way also had to actually drag me to the lake kicking and screaming the morning of the race because it was about fifty-five thousand degrees below zero outside!) My mom gave me an I-Pod Nano for Christmas so I could listen to music when I ran. I listened to recordings by James Galway, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Rhonda Larson, the Beach Boys, Cher, Abba, Chicago, Destiny's Child, and even a little Willie Nelson. I thought about the endless hours of work they did to learn their music and record it, all so that I could hear it though headphones during the race. Their tempos encouraged me to run faster and keep going.

I noticed that there were bunch of runners in front of me and a bunch behind me. I noticed that the people who started out fast didn't always finish first. I saw some people who ran with us who were not even in the race and others who were running in the opposite direction. Better yet, there were even people sitting on benches who were not running at all!

This morning I was reminded that you have to keep going no matter what. You can't give up. We are all in this race of life and of flute and you just can't stop. The music has to go on. Maybe you will finish first, maybe last, or perhaps right in the middle with me, but either way there is room for improvement and preparation. We may not all even have the same goals, but we are in the journey together and there is room for everyone to grow.

I hope you will begin now to prepare to attend our Texas Flute Festival May 18th-20th at UNT. Clara, Tara, Marilyn, Velma, Marilyn, Jennifer, Larry, Ellen, Cami, and many, many others have started getting the festival ready to go! Our guest artists are excited to be coming to play for you and to teach workshops and masterclasses. It's going to be a grand event, and I hope you won't miss out! I hope you will come play for one of our specialists and send your students to do the same! There is so much good music that needs to be played.

As I crossed the finish line and received my first blue running medallion, my next thought completely caught me off guard: I wanted to keep going! After one hour and fifty-three minutes of running, I could have gone further. I had been so focused on just finishing that I had not even considered what to do after I finished! So I hope that as you attend our festival this May, you will learn many things and experience new sounds and then.....after you've finished and gone back to your studios, your orchestras, your bands or your practice rooms that you will want to keep going too.....

With great joy,
Erich Tucker,
Texas Flute Society, President

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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:

APRIL 1ST



TFS Member Spotlight Interview with Mary Karen Clardy



Why did you choose to play the flute?

You could say it was out of my hands because before I was born, my mom said she knew I would be a girl and that I would play flute.

Tell us about any musical influence in your family.

Raised in a musical family, my father was Principal Horn in Lubbock Symphony and Band Director in the Public Schools. My mother is an organist, soprano and piano teacher.

What brand of flute/piccolo do you play?

I own various instruments, including a Haynes flute, Hammig Piccolo, Sankyo Alto Flute, Albert Cooper and John Lehner Headjoints, and two Yamaha gold flutes. I currently play the 14K Gold with C# trill, split E, and two footjoint rollers.

Tell us about your first flute.

Gemeinhardt, Closed hole, Off-set G key, Silver plated, C-foot joint.

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

I was first a pianist (from age 4) and a singer (voice lessons from age 12), and I began flute at age 10. My first teacher was Eddie Burkhalter, profiled in Flutist Quarterly following her sudden death in 2000, and my other teachers were Gary Garner, Wallace Mann, Britton Johnson and George Morey.

Where are you currently playing or teaching? Why?

Professor of Flute at the University of North Texas, together with regular solo touring, chamber music performance, and orchestral work with Dallas and Ft. Worth Symphony Orchestras, because I enjoy the diversity of a career involving performance, teaching, and orchestral work.

What are your plans/goals for the future?

Continuing to record, write, perform and teach the flute.

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

The enjoyment of music is a lifelong pursuit, and the flute connects each of us directly to the art of music.

Who is your favorite composer?

Difficult question!....Debussy on flute, Brahms on piano, Mahler in orchestra, but at the top of the list would have to be Bach for the perfection and beauty of his music.

Tell us what is in your CD player right now?

Diana Krall - Live in Paris!

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

Faure's Fantaisie

Interview with Mary Karen Clardy con't

What is your favorite recording?

Leon Fleisher's recording of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto with George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra

What time did you go to bed last night?

Midnight.

Which musicians have most influenced your playing?

My parents...because I listened constantly to their practice and teaching from my earliest days.

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

A particularly memorable performance was the Young Artist Competition in 1978 in Washington, D.C., with the audience full of the most notable members of the profession.

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

Openness, honesty, daily practice and flexibility.

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

Daily work is the secret to success in any endeavor.

What color is your toothbrush?

A white Sonicare with a gray stripe.

What is your dream vacation?

Traveling to see any new place in the world.

What was the last book you read?

John Adams by David McCullough

What is the first thing you think of when you wake up in the morning?

It's time to make coffee....

If you were to discover a truly magic flute and when polishing it a genie appears to grant you three wishes, what would you wish for?

Health, happiness, and a long life.



Rhonda Larson's Brief Philosophy of Flute Practice

In working with student flutists, whether adult, college, or high school age, I have come to realize I have specific expectations. It turns out that these expectations come from my own work ethic and style—philosophy, if you will---so I thought it might be useful to briefly outline some of these details. I hope they might be found useful not only for playing the flute, but in the process of living life as well.

Number one: no matter your age, you must be teachable if you hope to evolve in life or in playing the flute. Being teachable means that you are willing to make yourself vulnerable, which requires courage. This means opening yourself completely, by acknowledging that you do not already know everything you could know (no matter your age and experience), and every opportunity offers new lessons to learn. This is what has been referred to as being a “Life Student”, because an internal open-ness to all lessons life offers is the most alive approach you can receive from. Perhaps that is a better way to put it: open your mind and heart to receive, if you wish to evolve. Open your mind and heart to evolve, if you wish to receive.

Having innate curiosity follows from a willingness to learn, and by this I mean questioning/ examining everything. As Socrates put it, “the unexamined life is not worth living”. This, too, requires courage, because it might make us different from our neighbor, and our human tendency is to congregate in herds so we feel we belong and are accepted. Questioning also requires special effort, and effort is also something we would rather avoid---whether examining traits in our own psychology, personality, work habits, or our overall approach to life. We tend to frequent the well-worn paths of least resistance (least effort) because we won't have to stick out and be different, where more might be required of us, or where others might “judge” us for being different. I am a firm believer that one way is NOT the only way, no matter the topic. So expending this effort in questioning everything you have been told means you will ultimately find your own truths and methods, and this is the sure path of truly knowing anything—by knowing it internally.

It is interesting to note that most of our schooling---grade school through high school---more consistently taught us a method of learning by taking in a horde of information. It most often did not teach us to question. Look at the word education. It is derived from the Latin word educare, which means “to draw out, lead out”. Notice that it does not mean “to put in, to stuff full of”. Drawing out means that something magnificent is already inside you, and a teachers' job is to bring it out of you and get you to think for yourself. In the end, you must be your own best teacher, and you cannot come to this if you have merely accepted everything an authority figure or person you admire says. After being “taught” something, why not ask yourself questions about it, so you can go to a deeper level of understanding? For example, how about the actual sound you wish to produce on the flute? Do you just produce it as you are told, or do you ask yourself questions about what kind of sound you want? If you ask yourself what kind of sound you want, you will need to make yourself familiar with as many different flute sounds as possible, to determine what might be possible, what you like best and why (or don't like, and why), and then try to accomplish it for yourself.

One of the many magical things about honing ones craft on an instrument is that it is a perfect Teacher toward life itself. We get to work on the large to microscopic philosophical, intellectual, and psychological aspects of our own being within the perimeters of music. Everything that needs work in learning to play both the flute and music itself will be a perfect analogy and insight into your own being. I say both flute and music separately, because learning flute is primarily technical, and learning music is a sublime act originating from ones soul.

This active process of learning ones craft also requires courage, because it is actually an act of constant self-confrontation in seeking your own truth. Your heart will be confronted, as if you are being questioned by an external Examiner. Only if you can respond with an open, inner yes, show me, can you start to work at “fixing” or honing the perceived problem. (Again, becoming teachable). You will soon be confronted with so many of life’s personal challenges, and you will get to work on them directly: impatience into patience; frustration into persistence; sloth into diligence; self-critic into compassion; stagnate and un-flowing into passion; emptiness into soulful-ness. Look at your self-critic, for example. Make note of how you speak to yourself internally while you are working. Are the words harsh, cutting, and somewhat self-punishing? If so, is that making you a better player? Is that the best way for you to be taught? Of course not. After you catch your own internal dialogue that is busy criticizing your playing, try turning it around to compassion toward yourself. Think how you might speak to a young, innocent child if they were playing in the way you would have just described yourself. You would speak to them lovingly and with encouragement as to how to progress—you wouldn’t dare be chastising them. It would be good for us to learn how to be this way toward ourselves, then. Thus, what we truly practice is how to become a better human being, not just a better player of the flute.

While you work on your Human Condition, you will become more unique and authentic both in your playing and personally. It is the opposite of being an imitator. It’s good to imitate in order to learn something, but then one must grow beyond imitation into authenticity. You don’t really want to sound like so-and-so, because you are not them, and they are not YOU. Learn from them to expand yourself, and then return to center, as it were. Only you alone have been given your particular makeup as a human being—it was Given to you. Dedicate yourself to honing what has been given, and look for the paths that allow all of this to flourish. As you do so, you will then be giving back your gifts to others, as life seems to work in this circular way. It is like breathing in, and then breathing out. You open yourself to learning, examine

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everything possible and grow to greater understanding and depth (honing your craft), and then you give it all back to the world in a new and alive way.

Finally, give your music-making purpose in life. Try to find deeper meanings of why you play the flute (remember joy?), and what it is you want to do for your audience or anyone listening to you. Personally, I think it's great that music is "entertaining". We are said to be in the entertainment industry. But that description falls far short of how I view it for myself. As I mentioned earlier, music is matter of the soul. It first touches my own soul, and then my job is to simply give it away in performance and hope that it can touch any other souls. I hone my craft as much as possible, and the moment I walk out onto the stage I am no longer in "honing" mode, I am walking out there to literally offer up everything I've been given, no holes barred, and allow the great Mystery that is music to do its own work. After all, when you have finished your practicing and move into performance mode, the only thing TO do is to let go and let it fly, because you are doing what you love, and that is why you are there in the first place. Keep sight of that in all your participations with music, whether practicing, listening, or performing. It is the greatest of privileges—loving what you do.


10 recapitulating suggestions:


1. Be Teach-able. Through everyone and everything you encounter.
2. Question everything. Be curious, so that your own unique way and methods will evolve.
3. Practice viewing the world through learning the flute. (View the "Bigger Picture"). It is a perfect analogy and insight into your own being, in all the complexities of soul, personality tendencies, and intellect, with positive goals.
4. Your most essential work in practicing the flute is to become a better (happier) human being, not just to become a better flute player.
5. Practicing is an ACTIVE process, and it is largely based upon REPETITION. Be happy to work hard with your mind alert to all details. Repeat, repeat, repeat. (That is, your phrases you are practicing to learn, as well as this sentence).
6. Be unique and authentic, not just an imitator. Breakthroughs and discoveries will sprout from within all that you alone have been Given. (That is why some will call you "Gifted").
7. Be kind to yourself. You are a Life Student, not just a once-for-all-time learner. Dis-empower the self-critic by learning to diagnose a problem and simply work the solution with compassion toward yourself.
8. If you want to save yourself time, practice SLOWLY. One thing at a time, all the time it needs. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
9. Blow your Soul wide open. Blow the flute from your soul, not just your lungs.
10. Be bold. Create a purpose for yourself: think about what you want your music to be for YOU, and what you would like it to be for your LISTENERS.

An edited version of this article appeared in The Flutist Quarterly, member magazine of the National Flute Association, Summer 2005.


For more information, visit www.RhondaLarson.com

The Texas Flute Society invites you to attend the 2006 Flute Festival at the University of North Texas, May 18th-20th, 2006. Guest artists will include Liz Goodwin, Christina Jennings, Jean Larson, Nancy Clew, and Leah Arsenault! For additional information please consult our website! www.texasflutesociety.org

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Dear Piggolo



Dear Piggolo,

Sometimes I have trouble remembering what to bring to flute lessons. Like last week at flute lessons I forgot to bring my flute solo music. I can tell my flute teacher really wants me to bring my flute and music to lessons. What should I do? Tristen, age 13

Dear Tristen,

Sometimes I forget things too. Maybe you should make a list of all your music and supplies that you should bring to lessons. Lists have always helped me remember important things.

Dear Piggolo,

I would like to have a better flute tone. What should I do?
Toby, Age 16

Dear Toby,

The first step toward improving your flute sound is to know what the flute is supposed to sound like. Listen to recording of amazing flutists. Enjoy and absorb their musical sounds. I always tell my best friend Flutika the cat, "Listening to great music is the first step to playing great yourself."

If you or your students would like to ask Piggolo a question, please submit your inquiries to DearPiggolo@yahoo.com. Piggolo is an internationally known flute expert who has learned everything there is to know about the flute. A self-proclaimed flute and piccolo virtuoso, he has performed on 12 continents and in all major recital halls. He knows all of his scales and has taught flute lessons for over 3,000 years. Piggolo welcomes your questions.

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JEAN LARSON
2006 Guest Artist

Jean Weger Larson has been principle flute with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra since 1971. At one time the youngest principle player with the DSO, she is now considerably more experienced in the repertoire. One of her former students became the youngest DSO musician, testifying to Jean's accomplishments as adjunct professor of flute at Southern Methodist University, also since 1971.

Jean began her musical education with her parents, Floyd and Irene Weger, longtime music educators in Paris, Texas. The circle was completed recently, as she and her brother Steve have both been honored and have given performances in the music auditorium named for her parents. The journey in between included Jean's education at the University of Texas in Austin, where she received both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music performance, under the tutelage of John Hicks. She was a student at the Tanglewood Music Festival, where she studied with James Pappoutsakis of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. After several Master's classes from world-renowned flutist Jean Pierre Rampal, she accepted an invitation to study with him at the Conservatoire in Nice, France, before beginning her professional career.

Her career with the DSO has included several tours of Europe, Asia, and South America, several performances at Carnegie Hall. She can be heard on numerous recordings under the baton of Eduardo Mata and Andrew Litton, including Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*. She has performed at the "Bravo" Vail Music Festival for the last five years. As a soloist and chamber musician, Ms. Larson has performed with the Dallas Chamber Orchestra, the Fine Arts Chamber Players, at the Mainly Mozart Festival of San Diego, and many times with her own Dallas Symphony Orchestra. She is a founding member of the orchestra for the Music in the Mountains Festival in Durango, Colorado, where she has spent the last twenty summers. She has performed a work written for her by Simon Sargon at the Texas State Teacher's Association in Houston, and was a guest soloist at the National Flute Convention in August 2001. She has conducted Master classes at the University of Texas at Austin, Baylor University, University of North Texas, and the Royal Festival College of Music in London, England.

LEAH ARSENAULT
2006 Guest Artist



At the age of 18, Leah Arsenault made her professional debut as soloist with the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra. Leah has taken First Prizes in the Myrna Brown and Frank Bowen Flute Competitions, Second Prize in the William C. Byrd Young Artist Competition, and Third Prize in both the Fort Collins Young Artist Competition and the National Flute Association High School Soloist Competition. Leah has performed at the Tanglewood Music Festival, the Eastern Music Festival, the Colorado College Summer Music Festival, and the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. Leah is currently a student of Dr. Bradley Garner at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She received a High School Diploma from the North Carolina School of the Arts, where she studied with Philip Dunigan and Tadeu Coelho. Leah is from Wells, Maine.

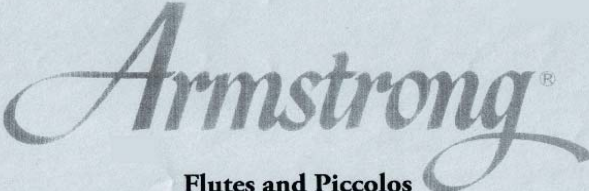


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