

# FLUTE

*zine*

A MOM & POP PUBLICATION  
*just for the love of it*  
- a zine with sound - so turn it up!

## **Jon Norris**

The man behind some seriously good flutes.

## **Helen Yetman-Bellows**

Instructor, Performer, Purveyor, Oh My!!!!

## **Luke Edgard Encarnacion Alvira**

A flute player, a musician, a producer, a friend.

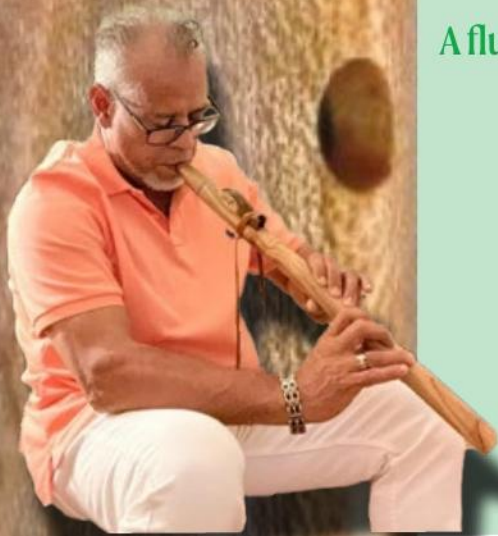
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INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

PHOTOS OF OUR AWESOME COMMUNITY

AND MORE!



# CONTENTS

## FEATURES

**The Late, Great Kevin Locke P4**

**Jon Norris P6**

**Helen Yetman-Bellows P8**

**Behind the Scenes with Jeff Burriss of Otter Lake Flutes P8-9**

**Luis Edgard Encarnacion Alvira - Our Featured Audio Guest P13**

## A HOW TO

**Some Basic Instructions on How to Play Your New Flute P14**

## DEPARTMENTS

**Letter From the Editors P3 and P23**

**You Ask, the Community Answers P12**

**Friends of the Flute Community P27**

**Where to Buy Really Nice Flutes, Music and Flute Products P28-30**

Image on the Cover: Flute made by Jeff Burriss of Otter Lake Flutes

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All art and design work by Tina Burriss unless otherwise noted

# EDITORIAL #1 - JEFF & TINA BURRIS



**G**reetings to all of you from the both of us! Thank you for taking the time out of your busy day to check out our Flutezine. It means the world to us! We truly hope you enjoy the quasi-quarterly issues we put out. We have

opted for the descriptive wording of "quasi quarterly", simply because we very well might not have every issue out right on time, like clockwork every 3 months. We want to keep this zine light-hearted and fun - the day it becomes stressful and seems too much like work is the day it will be done.

**W**e'll put this right up front

for the sake of this loving community: If you find any typos, grammatical errors, citation or copyright issues, please kindly just let us know. We have entered a new era - one in which these things, being online, can easily be fixed. This magazine is also free, which means we utilize our own time and money to create it, so your loving kindness and understanding about any mistakes you might find are so very appreciated. Just let us know at [Flutezine@gmail.com](mailto:Flutezine@gmail.com). Additionally, please understand that the very nature of a "zine" is to be the complete opposite of a commercial magazine. We do things a little differently around here.

**T**his publication came to fruition after being inspired by a recent Publication class that I, Tina, had recently completed by way of the Graphic Design program I am currently enrolled in. I needed a topic, so I chose The Native American Flute Community, being inspired by my husband's perseverance in making handcrafted flutes and because of the kindness and love that we both have received from the community. I felt this would be a three fold achievement - 1. it would give me another avenue for my graphic design endeavors and 2. it would provide another avenue for

our loving flute enthusiasts, players and makers alike, to be seen and to be heard and 3. this wil give my husband the opportunity to share the occasional story. He loves to write.

**M**uch love to all of you and again, a huge thank you

for checking us out! Please do not hesitate to reach out to us should you have any questions or concerns. Jeff and I are both homebodies, so it should not be too hard to get a hold of us!



# A LOVING WORD ABOUT THE LATE, GREAT KEVIN LOCKE

## ALL WE NEED IS LOVE

On September 30 of just this past year, 2022, this world lost one of many beautiful souls. When his Hunkpapa people pray (of the Lakota nation), they use the words “Mitakuye

oyasin,” which means “We are all related.” What a loving and joyous mindset. It is said that this is so that everyone and every thing will be included in their prayers, wishing nothing but blessings for them all. When one learns this of the tribe that Kevin Locke came from, it then comes as no surprise that he turned into such a loving and merciful soul. Our own Jon



Norris of Jon Norris Music and Arts has this to say about Mr. Locke “I met him in 2012 or 2014 at the World Flute Society Convention in Wisconsin. He was an amazing man, always happy and smiling, and always sharing what he knew. He was a wealth of knowledge, especially about old Indigenous flutes and music.” Kevin was obviously very thoughtful of others. We could hear him sharing this with his audiences, ““when people gather in a circle, everyone is equal and no one is left out.” He was a welcoming soul with a big beautiful smile and was truly concerned about the inclusiveness of everyone. His own site, [Kevinlocke.com](http://Kevinlocke.com), states this about the loving man: “Kevin’s goal is to empower today’s youth in culture and ‘raise awareness of the Oneness we share as human beings.’ His belief in the unity of humankind is expressed dramatically in

the traditional Hoop Dance which illustrates ‘the roles and responsibilities that all human beings have within the hoops (circles) of life.’”

## A POWER HOUSE

The hoop dance, which is one of the many talents that Kevin was known for, uses the oneness theme of the circle time and time again through all the hoops that harmoniously come together to form various images – sometimes of a bird or a butterfly or the sun and the moon. One does not often equate such serenity, balance, and love with a power house of energy, but

Kevin Locke, also known as Tokeya Inajin, which was his Lakota name (translates into Stands First or The First to Arise), was indeed a powerhouse of explosive energy. This sort of powerful energy is not easy to put into words, but it is recommended to witness his dancing first hand. Many videos can be found online of his performances. He was both a hoop dancer and a grass dancer and was extremely athletic. It is said that on days that he did not dance, Kevin ran a good number of miles just to keep in shape. The regalia that the dancers wear, it is said, can weigh up to 40-50 pounds sometimes and the dances can go on for a very long time. It is no wonder Mr. Locke would also run like he did to keep that edge. He carried this exuberance and intensity until the very end. For anyone that did not know this about him, it’s hard to imagine that he

accomplished all that he did under the oppression of asthma. For anyone that knows how miserable and how all consuming this disease is, a disease which ultimately took his young life, it is truly a wonder and a miracle that Kevin Locke achieved all that he did. What an amazing inspiration he was and still is and will always be.

### GRASS IN THE WIND

It is interesting but also very sad to note that the other form of dance that Locke performed, the grass dance, which is “a traditional Northern Plains dance that immitates the beautiful and life-giving tall buffalo grass of the prairie.” The sad part of this is that this buffalo grass was said at one point back in the 90s to be almost extinct. Supposedly, only a very few patches of this grass can still be seen in all of North America and so it is heavily protected. It is currently listed “as Threatened by regulation under Manitoba’s Endangered Species Act. It is also listed as Threatened under Canada’s Species at Risk Act.” ([https://www.gov.mb.ca/nrnd/fish-wildlife/pubs/fish\\_wildlife/sar/buffalograss.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/nrnd/fish-wildlife/pubs/fish_wildlife/sar/buffalograss.pdf)) The long fringe on the grass dancer’s regalia does its own independent dance, moving and flowing like the buffalo grass. Its quite a site to behold.

### THE FLUTE PLAYER

It would be negligent not to mention what a gifted flute player Kevin Locke was. “Since 1982, Kevin has recorded

twelve albums of music and stories, most recently The First Flute, Open Circle, Keepers of the Dream, and Dream Catcher (Kevinlocke.com).” Locke’s 1996 The Flash of the Mirror (from his album Flash of the Mirror) is just one example of what awaits his listeners on all the rest of his albums. What an incredibly haunting and moving melody. Locke does such a masterful job moving through the melody with skillful pitch bending, vibrato, and rhythmic chirping, and the melody itself, which he learned from Everett Kapayou, “a Meskwaki elder who devoted himself to upholding the honor and sacred tradition of his people,” hits the most beautiful minors at just the right times and then goes into a lovingly dash and tip toe of a bridge, making it all sound so effortless. One can tell right away that this man knew what he was doing and had a serious passion about doing it.

### BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

There is so much that can be written about Kevin Locke and there has been. He accomplished so much in his life time that most only dream about, in everything from his music to his dancing to his story telling to his Cultural Outreach programs that were aimed at spreading a message of “unity, peace, culture, and history of our country” to our youth. He will be terribly missed by so many and most definitely not forgotten.

# FEATURED MAKER - JON NORRIS

## IT'S ALL IN THE MINDSET

One cannot find a nicer guy in the Native American flute community than Jon Norris. Well, actually, the NA flute community has an overabundance of genuinely nice folk! But as far as nice folk go, Jon is right up there! As many can attest Jon believes in paying it forward by "passing the torch," through sharing his wealth of flute knowledge attained over the past 15-20 years. One can actually find a lot of this in the Native American flute community - kindness, generosity, and reciprocity, and Mr. Norris is definitely one of the ambassadors. Perhaps this is one of the reasons his flutes sound so good - because they're made by someone with a loving mindset.



ally seen his workshop, one might guess that he has a hundred tiny gnomes tied up somewhere helping him crank these beauties out. No, no gnomes! Just a serious stick-to-itiveness!

In response to a few questions we had for him concerning this article, he replies "Sorry for the delay. I'll try to circle back to this today. Just slammed trying to hit a deadline." I believe there is a saying "aim for the stars so you at least land of the



moon," or something like that. Well, Jon probably has landed not only on the moon, but on quite a few stars as well! He's a flutemaker that has deadlines and that sets goals. No doubt this is what he's done from day one to get to where he is today.

## AIM FOR THE STARS

There is the line of thought that there is absolutely no reason behind why something is the way it is - that things are just happen-chance, coincidence, luck, being at the right place at the right time. But when it comes to Jon Norris's flutes, this is far from the case.

No one can deny that his flutes are born from inspiration and creativity, but actually they come to fruition through a solid backing of hard work, dedication, perseverance, and attention to detail. And without ever having person-

**“Stick-to-itiveness”**

## SIGHT AND SOUND

His flutes are bored from a single piece of wood and are "voiced and tuned to be performance quality." I'm pretty sure that anyone who owns one of these flutes would rightly agree. Additionally, he is very select about the wood he chooses, using only choice cuts from, but not limited to, everything from Jobillo, Olive, Marblewood, Curly Cherry, Bocote, figured maple, walnut, cedar, sassafrass, redwood, mahogany, to East Indian Rosewood, and some of the design work he comes up with is breathtaking. Elegantly pairing up just the right types of color,

burl, grain, etc. to create a splendid visual sensation.

And with regards to both sound and visuals, he firmly believes that if a flute is not one that he would keep for his “own personal collection,” he “won’t sell it to you.”

## NEVER A MINUTE WASTED

Jon Norris, despite the tough world we live in, has managed to grow into a tremendously well-rounded individual, and it’s a blessing to learn about him. In addition to his know-how in the world of wood crafting, he has also made it a sincere

and passionate aim to learn as much about the history behind these Native American style flutes as he can.

We can see this in the replicas he has created as well as

in the plethora of knowledge he can disseminate whether in a casual one-on-one conversation or as evidenced in the teaching he has done over the years through both one-on-one mentoring and larger classroom type settings.

To add to all of this, Jon also has experience in making various types of string and percussion

instruments, beautiful necklace pendants “made from a variety of woods with stone and metal inlay,” and he also has first hand experience in the Native American dancing realm.



He was first introduced to Native American Pow Wows through his time with the Boy Scouts. He continued to attend local powwows in the ‘80s, soon making friends with experienced grass dancers that would teach him what he needed to know. Through his display of respect and of showing that he truly wanted to learn the proper and traditional ways, he was able to dance at less restricted powwows, eventually learning different styles of dance – Traditional, Grass Dance, Chicken Dance, and Southern Straight Dance, the latter of the four being his favorite. According to Jon, he does not get the chance to attend pow-

wows much anymore these days, but he truly enjoys them when he does. No, this is definitely not a man that one would find complaining about being bored,

and all of this experience is beautifully evident in all of his handcrafted creations. To read more specifics on how his flutes are crafted and to see them first hand, feel free to visit Jon and his beautiful creations at [JonNorrisMusic.com](http://JonNorrisMusic.com).

“My mission is to create handcrafted, affordable, high quality instruments

that you can use to express the songs in your heart.”

- Jon Norris

[JonNorrisMusic.com](http://JonNorrisMusic.com)

# HELEN YETMAN-BELLOWS

## EFFORTLESSLY PIRQUETTING AWAY FROM COMMON PLACE

### Daring to Live the Dream

There are a good number of exceptional flute players and flute makers alike that can be written about (looking forward to putting them in future prints), but after a happenchance of watching a recent interview with Helen in a [Tommy Graven interview](#), it became immediately apparent that the achievements of this beautiful woman should grace a spread in this first publication. Reaching a height of 5'9", the beauty that is Helen Yetman Bellows is easy to spy. One could say that she excels at aesthetically coordinating because of her equally sky-reaching smile. Her charming demeanor and welcoming wit is also quite apparent and one cannot help but be taken in by all this. But wait!

There's more! More, you say? When many of us are still trying to figure out how to

get there, Helen makes it seem like it has always been effortless. It is apparently in her blood – creativity, drive, and the zest for life, and as she puts it, "One of the things I like to get across to folks, who tend to assume I am just a creative person, is I am a business woman first...I love business and my creativity is my product." And what a dream

come true this is. So many of us dream of

being able to pay our bills by simply doing some thing we love. Well, Helen has actually made this a reality. Wait, is this an episode of Dr Quinn or is this a Flutezine spread on Helen?

This amazing woman is actually "the largest purveyor of NAS flutes in New England," one of which is High Spirits, "the largest maker of concert level flutes in

the world." Early on in her flute sales, they chose Helen as "Retail Partner of the Month." This would turn out to be a huge help in her future endeavors. In addition,



"...creativity is my product."

one can also find in Helen's delightfully charming artisans shop, established

in 1995, Squirrel-Eze and Friends in Townsend MA, handcrafted works of art by Woodsounds Flutes, Spirit Dancer Flutes, Carl Young Flutes, Northern Spir- its Flutes, and Danna Ross of Falcon Flutes. She also carries select, curated vintage flutes – quite the top-notch collection!





## C'est La Vie!

She plays flute. She teaches. She writes. She paints fine art. She's a Silversmith. She teaches yoga. She was a professional equestrian for over four decades. She owns her own brick and mortar, which has recently expanded allowing all of her passions to be under one roof! She has also won awards for her flute instruction and for her charity work. Some of us feel blessed for simply being able to get out the door on



time in the morning! Could being the youngest of five siblings have anything to do with all this achievement? And we're not talking about an ordinary family. She grew up in a family of five musically gifted humans, and it did not take long for her to move up from the family's tambourine wielding "fan club," to the cowbell playing front girl! She also "came of age" in the 1960s-70s, a time when music was still mysterious and alluring. This sort of upbringing and cultural influence obviously stuck to her ribs and helped her grow into whom she is today. It also does not hurt to have the sort of "C'est La Vie" spirit that helps



turn lemons into giant lemon gumdrops! An example of this mindset can be seen during a brief moment in time when Helen worked for the Boston Mounted Police Unit, which is now sadly a thing of the past. But this

charming story of Helen's, along with the BMPU, will never be forgotten! "The Pope is coming! The Pope is coming! The Pope is coming!" With this

proclamation, Helen is given a huge responsibility to oversee the care of the Boston Police horses, and to be there to help with anything that might arise with regards to the horses. She is specifically given the responsibility of overseeing Boylston Street – the main street for which the papal caravan will progress. Helen needs to get from one

end of Boylston Street to the other end, where the Pope's progression will come to a halt. Unfortunately, there are no police units available to help get here there, so her husband, having been through a formal security process, was able to drive her there. The throngs of people are already pressed up against barricades on either side of

Boylston and they can be seen from rooftops and from windows. They are everywhere! This was the single biggest event that Boston has ever seen and Helen and Jim were smack dab in the middle of it, just trying to get this job fulfilled. Helen notices that the dense mass of humanity

is pressing in heavier on both sides and getting louder and more frantic with their screaming. She begins to worry that her and Jim have "messed up," thinking that they are in front of the Pope, but to her relief and amuse-

ment, she remembers that they are in a large tan Chevy Impala and that the people obviously think that they are the Pope! There's no way for the police to let the crowd know otherwise. Here comes those large lemon gumdrops! In Helen's own words "Jim straightens his hat, sits up a little taller and I sit in the back seat like this (gesturing the royal wave to the crowds on both sides of the street) all the way down Boylston Street." A long time after this, the Mounties would refer to Helen as "your heiness."

### A Fresh Perspective

The dynamics of Helen Yetman Bellows is as grand as the universe is infinite! She is continually seeing things with fresh eyes and is deeply appreciative of unique forms of art, such as what influenced her into the flute world, which was a Michael Telapary's blues jam that she happened to catch in which the Native American flute was lead. In her own words, it was a "light bulb moment," and one that compelled her to buy her very first NAS flute the very next day. This appreciation she

has for life's unique avenues can also be clearly seen in one of her Helen's Willow Wind flute programs, Destination Fluting™. Instead of always utilizing the same classroom setting day in and day out, where



conditions are always the same, this program gives the flute students varying environmental conditions and settings, allowing the sounds of waterfalls, ocean waves, and rivers to become one with the music, and this method affords the students the opportunity to adjust their playing to varying atmospheric conditions. It is truly a brilliant method of NAS flute instruction. It's no surprise that she won the 2021 Global Native American Style Flute Awards Instructor of the Year! Congratulations, Helen!

### The Artistry

How shoddy would it be not to include the fabulous details of Helen's jewelry business, which came to fruition in 1995 upon obtaining a US patent on a innovative jewelry stand, called Squirrel-Eze, that allows women "to squirrel their jewelry away with ease - A nutty idea that works." The beautiful landscape art that Helen paints is artfully and skillfully integrated into the Chasing and Repousse she creates with hand tools, and she is additionally blessed having her husband, Jim, join her in this venture as a business partner as well as by offering his beautiful chainmaille creations. They make quite a team and are an inspiration to many! We wish Helen and her husband the absolute best in their current and future endeavors, and we all look forward to seeing what new things will be coming up over the horizon at their new location!



THANK YOU, HELEN, FOR BEING AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL! 



To find out more about Helen and see more of her artisans boutique, please visit:

[Helenswillowwind.com](http://Helenswillowwind.com)

Also, do yourself a favor and check out her informative and extensive channel on YouTube, which includes a terrific video presentation of her new store's location.

<https://www.youtube.com/@HelensWillowWind>

# YOU ASK, THE COMMUNITY ANSWERS:

KATHY B ASKS 'WHAT IF THIS HAPPENS?'

JOHN S ASKS 'WHY IS THIS?'

TONYA L ASKS 'WHY WHY WHY?'

Do you have a curiosity about something concerning the Native American flute but would prefer to remain anonymous? Or maybe you would like to see, and for others to see, your question in this zine answered by one of many experts in from our community? This page, going forward will be reserved for such questions or even comments. Send your inquiries to [flutezine@gmail.com](mailto:flutezine@gmail.com) and then be on the look out for your question or comment to appear and to be answered in one of our future issues. Feel free to send a photo in with your inquiry if it has something to do with your question or comment.



# Hark! From whence doest yond delightful music cometh?

## You're Listening to the Music of Luke Edgard Encarnacion Alvira

While perusing this zine, our readers have the blessed delight to hear intoxicating melodies played on the Native American and Native American Inspired flutes of some of our fellow flute community brothers and sisters. The audible music that graces this zine's first issue was produced by a very dear friend of ours, Luke Edgard Encarnación Alvira, which he recorded at his Frog Frets Music studio in Pennsylvania. We hope you enjoy listening to it as you browse through our Flute-zine. I know we do!

Perhaps a flute recording of yours or of someone you know will grace one of our future issues? Luke's journey with learning to play the Native American Flute started about thirteen years ago upon being amazed at hearing a dear

Cherokee friend and brother of his playing one and then even making one using only a knife. It was love from the start and as we can hear, Luke's passion for playing this beautiful instrument has only grown stronger ever since that first day. "Music has always been my passion. The connection between

the guitar and I was made the very first moment a guitar was placed in my hands, it is hard to explain what I experienced being just a kid. Music was placed in my family by God, it has spread throughout the generations of the Encarnacion family. I don't know how much longer I will be making music. I don't know how much longer I will be able to breathe into a Native American flute. I don't know how much longer I will be writing songs, producing music, or engineering a musical project. " He ends

by saying that he does not know what his future holds, but that his faith and hope remain strong. This dear man has been battling cancer now for many years with his loving wife, JudyAnn, lovingly and faithfully at his side. Just shortly after starting this zine, we received word that the can-

cer had grown some, so his chemo treatment has been changed to 100% from the previous 80%. We dedicate this first issue to him and his wife and are so truly grateful for their cherished friendship, with prayers going up every single day.





*A Few Pages On How To Play  
the Native American Flute*

# HOW TO PLAY YOUR NATIVE AMERICAN FLUTE OR NATIVE AMERICAN INSPIRED FLUTE!

- by Jeff Burris

## 2 Biggest Mistakes Getting Started

In getting started learning how to play Native American Style Flute, first, we must eliminate the two biggest (but easily-avoidable!) mistakes that will make the tone crackle, jump or misbehave. Great tutorials that have tremendous technical insight often skip these #1 “unboxing” essentials without which the rest can be useless. After the following, you can jump right into fantastic, free resources all about technique, or you may sound like a movie soundtrack today, even before anything but the following tips.

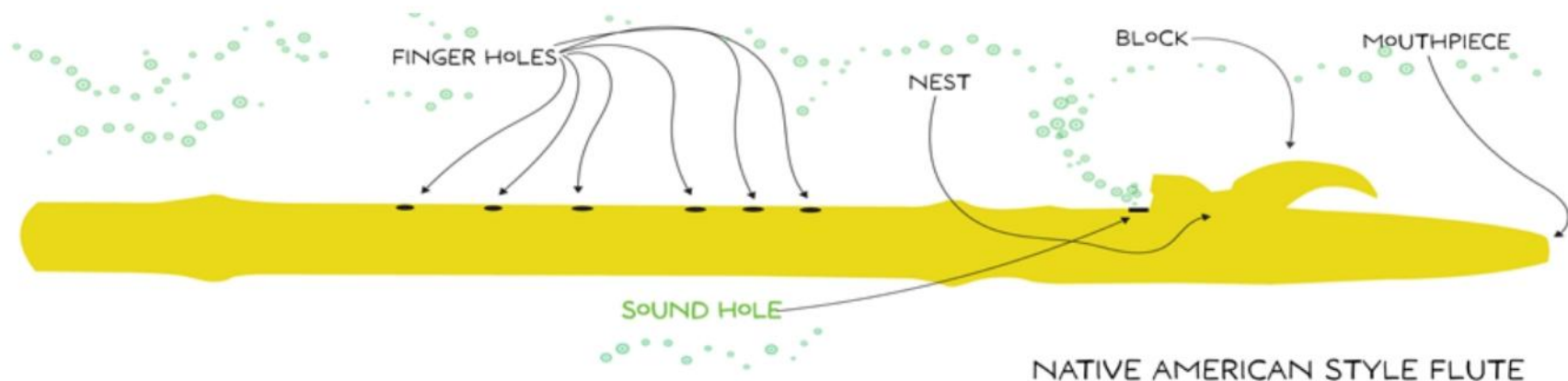
- 1) The adjustable, removable Block is set precisely = absolutely critical
- 2) Your fingers are truly, thoroughly sealing the

holes (they will fool you)

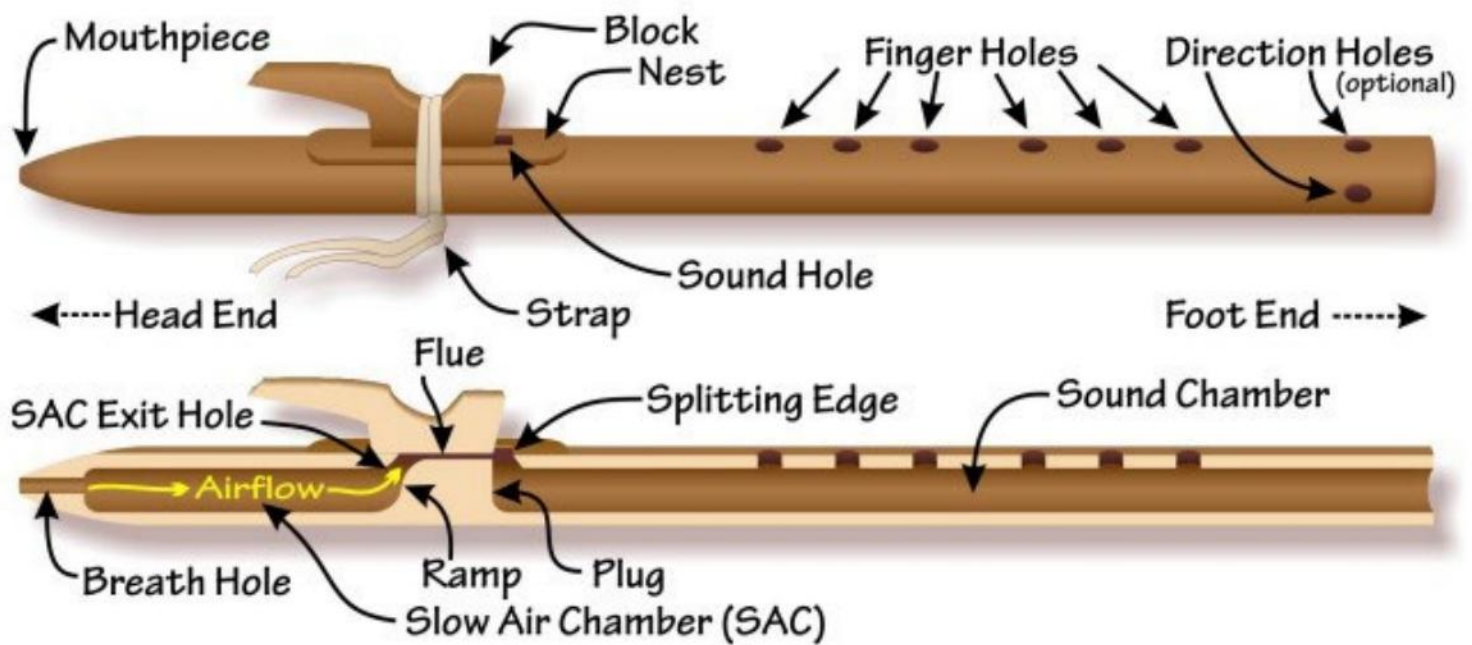
Additional, supportive tips are included, as well.

## Before Playing NAS Flute

If the “Block, “Bird” or “Totem” (same thing) is out of position at all it can leak air or misdirect air, and even tiny differences make or break performance. If you need reading glasses, you must use them here. You don’t want it sitting crooked nor slid too far forward or backward. You should understand how it works so that this and several related issues like water droplets in the flue are intuitive for you as a non-issue:



# HOW TO PLAY YOUR NATIVE AMERICAN FLUTE OR NATIVE AMERICAN INSPIRED FLUTE!



[Clint Gloss, CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

Your Block helps direct air flow through the flue, then across the top of the open Sound Hole and into the Splitting Edge. Important: The Plug forms a little “wall” inside the flute separating the chambers and also forming the Head End side of the Sound Hole.

The diagram above shows the bird slid up perfectly even or flush with this wall or Head

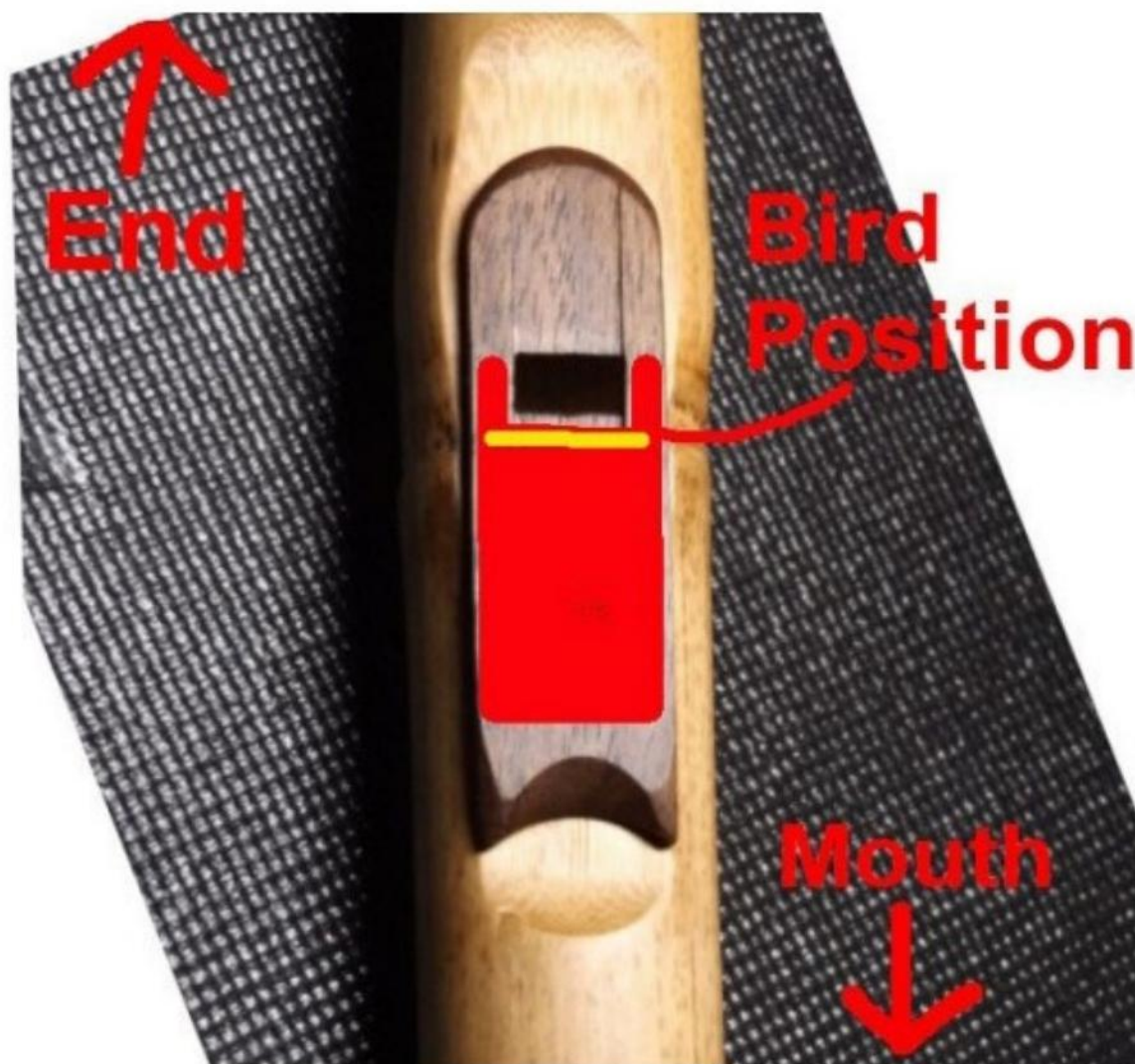
side of the Sound Hole (see Plug in the diagram and where the front of the bird is just above the plug). So: This is a decent starting point, many flutes put of “like” the bird here, but many flutes (like most of ours) also like the bird slid back toward your face a millimeter or so.



Here is a view looking down at an Otter Lake flute nest. As you can see the bird is slid back about a

millimeter and a half or so back away from this side of the Sound Hole and the inner wall the Plug forms:





*NOTE: Yours may be better even closer to flush (forward a bit more) depending on flute.*

You can try slightly forward or backward positions by a mm here and there, but with Otter Lake flutes, unless instructed otherwise for a certain model, please begin about 1 mm to 1.5 mm back from the aforementioned edge. Also, of course, the bird should be centered (not over to one side) and straight (not crooked).

Any debris or damage on or to the next can cause a tiny air leak that will cause malfunction. Another reason to fine tune this position for your playing style and maybe temperature is if your flute is a known warbler, position may affect this.

## 2) Proper Finger Hole Sealing (!)

Important: Even folks in person will try to gloss past this while accidentally violating it. That is: they have one or more fingers over holes they think (and insist) they are sealing closed properly, with the pad of their finger, but you can press their fingers down and the problem, goes away. We're not saying as a player you have to press really hard on the holes as a rule, but as an exercise and definitely in troubleshooting – when the flute misbehaves, press your finger pads down very hard in the center of all holes you're trying to cover. Maybe try looking at different angles on a mirror or have a friend look at you. I frequently see visible leaks (like black crescents!) around holes people are swearing they are covering.

## Congratulations!

That covers the two biggest mistakes that kill a Day 1 experience (or flute review)! Block misplacement after unboxing or travel, and a leaky finger hole. Seriously. From here the sky's the limit. We'll include how to hole and operate:

## How the Hands are Used:

Your left hand is closer to your face, your left hand covers the furthest, “Southmost” or “footmost” holes. The hole numbers of the flute in this tutorial are labeled as makers and some teachers label them: in the order they are normally released, furthest or Southmost hole is Hole #1, while the one closest to your face (usually the last hole or so uncovered) is Hole #6 (see illustration 20a).

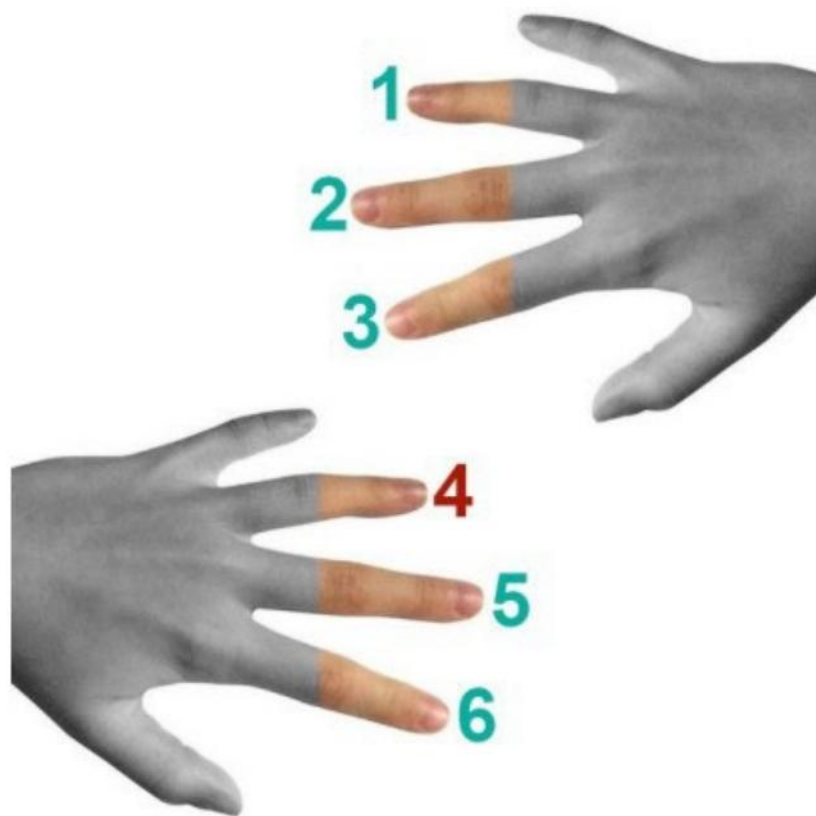
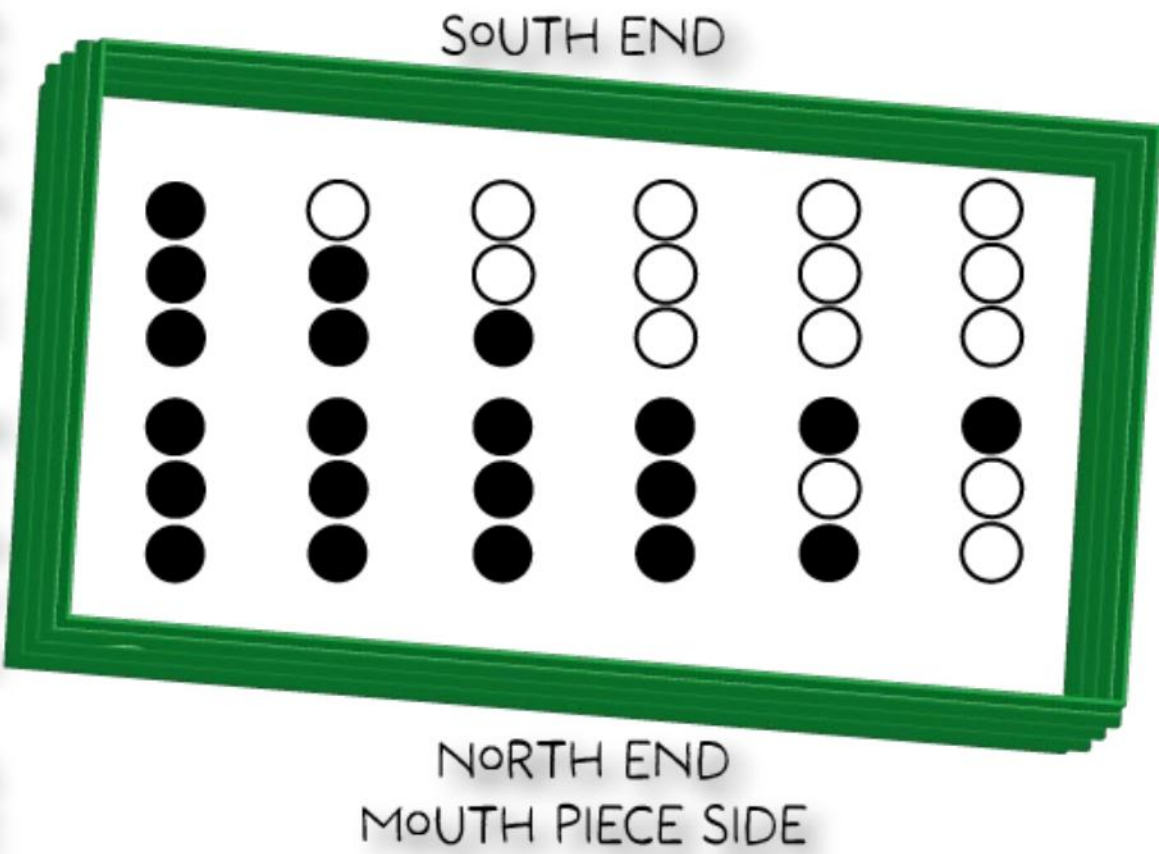


Illustration 20a

## MOUTH

You just use your thumbs to support the flute, and pinkies are a matter of preference, one here, one there. You may let both pinkies float like using fancy teacups, or use one or more to stabilize the flute wherever you like. Jon Norris and Jeff Burriss use both raised pinkies, double shot glass-style.

To play the standard pentatonic minor scale, here are the primary fingerings. After this, to reach extended scale notes or to play a full chromatic octave, cross-fingerings are used which is for a more advanced lesson. This gives you the 6 primary notes: pentatonic minor 5, plus the fundamental note repeated in the next octave (see illustration on next page).



**FYI: "Wet Out"**

Wet Out: this is when you play long enough for water droplets or beads to form in the Flue (see diagram for Flue) under the bird, due to breath moisture. Water beads will obstruct just enough air to create turbulence and crackling, jumping higher in tone (unintentional Over-blow into a higher note) and other issues. Fixing Wet Out: It is not necessary to remove the Block but a few times in years, often. You can simply blast the water out of the flue with a louder toot

(some- times intentionally worked into music). Others make a flinging motion but this is ill advised because it asks for an eventual acci- dental impact with a mic stand etc. Some have multiple flutes and let one dry after a song. Ask your flute friends how they deal with wet out. We seal and make slick the flue as much as pos- sible so droplets eject easily. Some add beeswax, flute wax, Odie's Oil, or Rain Guard for car windshields!

## Similar:

Similarly, a tiny glob of flute wax or debris on the flue, TSH, or a hole can make a NasF misbehave, whether causing micro-turbulence or a nodal phenomenon. This troubleshooting is best done with a little magnification & light.

## Amazing Journey

Three excellent tutors for the Native American Flute are Johnny Lipford, Clint, Helen Yetman-Bellows, and Tommy Graven, just to name a few. Johnny has fantastic music as well as online lessons, and Clint and Vera have an incredible site (to say the least) at [Flu-topedia.com](http://Flu-topedia.com) that pioneered bringing details of construction and many other subtopics to the

general public in a manner so comprehensive that, before it, you really needed to spend hundreds on very limited textbooks. I can't even get started naming quintessential native players to listen for, like Mary Youngblood. And of course you should now know where to check the amazing Helen out at, but here it is: [Helen's Willow Wind Youtube Channel](#). Tommy can be found at [Tommy Graven Official](#). He has years of passionate music videos, lessons, and a live podcast that he hosts. There are so many fellow flutists out there that give so much of themselves. We need to make sure to also mention the talented Brent Adams. He has a Youtube channel at [BrentAdams, which hosts an array of beautiful music, reviews, lessons, and tips.](#)

## Some Standardized Terms

(standardized by various makers, not necessarily original or indigenous names)

**North** = Head end of the flute (where your mouth goes)

**South** = Foot or furthest end from your face

**TSH** = True Sound Hole (sometimes just the Sound Hole)

**SAC** = Slow Air Chamber, the first chamber after the mouthpieces' Blow Hole

**Flue** = the passageway under the Block directing the air at the TSH and Splitting

**Edge**

**Splitting Edge** = South end of TSH: an upside-down wedge creating the whistle!

**Nest** = where the Bird (Block) sits!

**Block** = Bird or Totem. A removable flue ceiling often shaped decoratively or with nuances to direct air

**Hyper-Octo Quantum-Squeegitude** = just kidding

# Editorial #2 - Another Opportunity to Give Thanks!

by Jeff Burris

The last few years have gone by so quickly, yet, at the same time, it seems as though I've been making flutes longer than I have. It's because of the journey and all the milestones and detours along the way. This craft has been unique, in that very competent and/or prominent makers have been very open and helpful, right away, toward people they haven't even met. Other genres associated with potentially sell-able items are often filled with tight lips and arcane secrets difficult to pry out of folks who consider you a potential competitor. Here, I'd like to highlight some of the main people who have greatly assisted me through tough-to-solve issues or with amazing resources. These are people including Jon Norris, Mike Prairie, Edward Kort, Clint Goss, as well as hugely inspiring folks like Hawk Henries who post options and points of view that help keep me as well-rounded as possible. I'd also like to mention Charlie Mato-Toyela (aka Blue Bear) - a maker, seller, and educator, who has always been welcoming and kind hearted. Please forgive me if I have left anyone out. It is not intentional and please know that we can easily add you to this article - ah, the electronic age! Just give us a nudge.

Making flutes does not have to be complicated, especially if you're making them for pure enjoy-

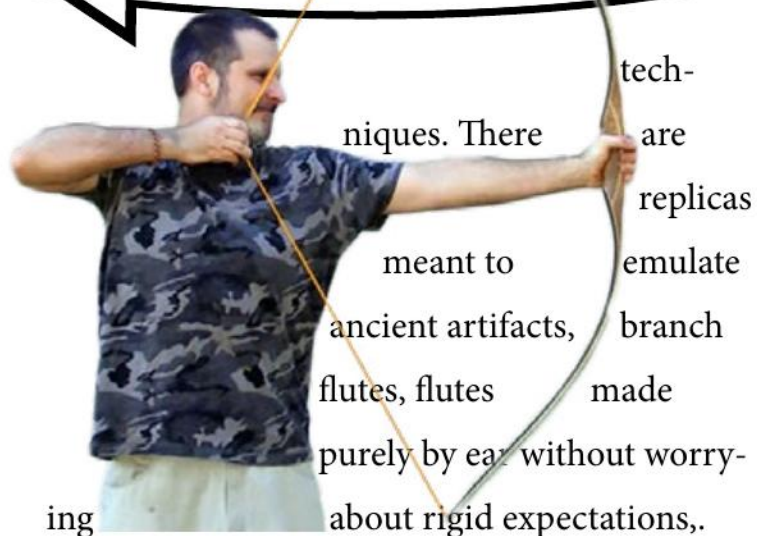
ment. I made my first flute out of PVC, overnight, and it was a lot of fun. If you are making for random buyers, however, and especially if you happen to fall into a niche of customers who really expect modern standards of concert tuning, with "extra notes" a.k.a. predictable cross fingerings and extended scales available, or even full-blown chromatic ability (every note in the octave available), meeting such expectations can demand extra skill and experience. For this, helpful friends who are already making such flutes are a blessing. For me, it made the difference between impractical and achievable. It did take me over a year before I was comfortable selling to strangers, and over two years until I felt a viable career forming. First there were many B-grade flutes, then (and even into today) there were certain things taking far, far too long to sell a flute for a couple hundred dollars and make it work.

Again, modern references, tools and methods are not for everyone. Indigenous people did fine without many of them, and I think it's valuable to remember and maintain older-style methods. In the end, I embrace all ways, and believe there is no need to erase or crowd out anything just by having modern tools. Just as there is in archery and knife-making and other genres,

there will always be those interested in more traditional methods, and there are more ways of saving and sharing information than ever before. I, personally, could never get by without modern methods, at least professionally, and have been blessed with very nurturing friends in the craft.

After finding an old souvenir flute in my childhood junk, I began researching how to make a decent one, fun to play as an adult. I soon found videos like those of Charile Mato-Toyela of Blue Bear that enthusiastically demonstrated how to make flutes from scratch. This is a fork at which I suspect many people take different sub-paths of points of view, goals, and

BE GONE WITH YOU, YOU HARRY BEAST!



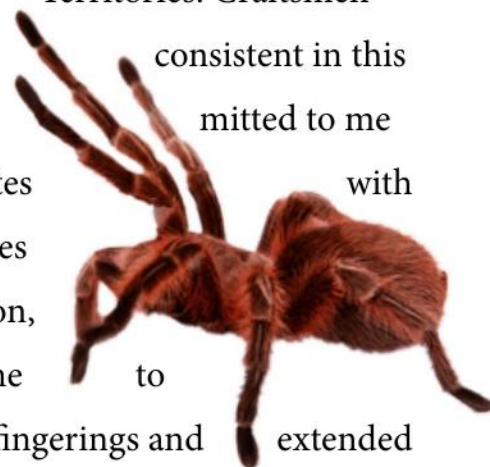
techniques. There are replicas meant to emulate ancient artifacts, branch flutes, flutes made purely by ear without worrying about rigid expectations.

There are flutes that attempt to comply with very specific expectations aligned with modern

standards in music, and there are values everywhere in between. I became obsessed with the modern standards, in part, after seeing a video claiming hand-made flutes were tuned poorly compared to factory-made flutes which, later, I found not to be true about all of them (to the contrary in some).

The revered Native American flute player R. Carlos Nakai was once asked how he expects extended-scale cross-fingerings to perform (fingerings outside of the primary ones) and he replied that he doesn't use them, because they are too unpredictable from flute to flute. This is not surprising, since a flute from Butch Hall, Jon Norris, or me may have different cross-fingerings for the same notes as flutes by High Spirits or Ancient Territories. Craftsmen making flutes

regard have admitted to me that they made flutes with lovely primary notes very swiftly, early on, but took a long time to develop the cross-fingerings and extended scales. Stellar's Tom Stewart makes no bones about the lengthy duration of his R&D phase in making flutes he was comfortable marketing to random musicians.






FlutePortal.com was the first group I approached, finding helpful advice and gleaned consensus on certain, opinion-based topics. Here, I learned about the Native American Flute Maker's Forum on Facebook, where I ran into dialogues between people using fairly technical means, and began asking questions. A big thanks to Mono Loco of the FlutePortal for everything and for being the first one to refer me to Jon Norris. I soon found that maker Jon Norris enjoys talking shop and even strives to deliberately "pass the torch" where able. His subsequent friendship and countless pages of replies and advice over the years has proven game-changing to me and, for this, I am deeply grateful. I have saved so much time learning to trust his experience.

Here, I also got to rub elbows with Mike Prairie, who has both capable hands and a contagious, in-depth approach at acoustics. He has always been open to questions and developed a tool or two out there for download, such as Nodal Interference Check dynamic spreadsheet that helps people not make a key mistake. I'll always remember him, because every month I still use custom-

ized equations he gave me. I wanted to be able to start with two knowns and derive a third figure when it came to the relationship between flute diameter, nest width, and how deep to plunge an endmill on the Z-axis. I wanted to get the missing one of those three dimensions when I had two in mind, but it was more complicated than I imagined (I'm no math major). I even approached a geometry forum that got it wrong. He jotted down all three equations I'd ever need, to this end, and messaged me a snapshot. It will remain a tool in my arsenal for designing flutes for the rest of my life, just because of the way my brain works.

Flutopedia.com by married couple Glint Goss and Vera Shanov is a large wiki with embedded information written by many people, including critical data taken from affordable texts costing hundreds of dollars. This can be a real wonderland for the new flute maker. It even has a live, running browser-based copy of NAFlutomat – a flute dimension calculator by Edward Kort.

As much as I want to, I cannot possibly begin to individually thank everyone who has helped me, knowingly or passively. I would, also, like to thank Bob Grealish, who wrote a key article in my flute making education that gave me my understanding of how to tune five out of six holes to more than one note, setting me on my path to reliable cross-fingerings. Hand-tuning holes involves enlarging them bit by bit. He gave examples of how to enlarge or undercut a half hole at a time, and how to determine which to side of the hole to address, depending on what's happening with more than one test note per hole. Known as the Grealish Method to many people, now, it was an essential weapon in my arsenal toward building my own technique.

Just as I gravitated toward certain methods for making flutes, there will be those who are eager to help people seeking different or older practices in lieu of excess tech. In the end, I'm sure seeking out these other methods and key players will show the Native American flute community is full of helpful, selfless benefactors, just as I've found on my own journey. I remember my days of tarantula breeding (causing spider hair-induced rashes), and trying to compete at making good archery bows (a lot of oozing epoxy and breaking of back bones). I'll never get rich hand-crafting flutes, but it feels right and it's gradually becoming more viable for me as a living. Thank God and thank you all for this! 

# FRIENDS OF THE FLUTE COMMUNITY



**BRENT ADAMS**

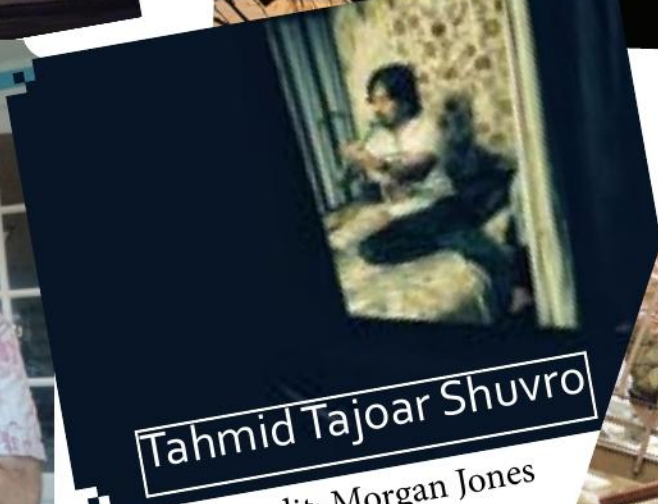
Photo Credit: Garland Coulson



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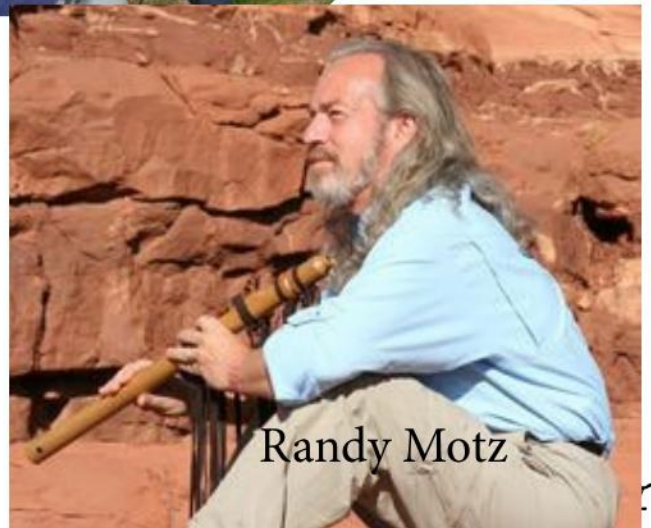


**Luke Edgard Encarnacion Alvira**

Photo Credit: JudyAnn Encarnacion



**Skip Waite**



**Randy Motz**

Photo Credit: Georgia L. Harris

Do you have a photo of yourself playing the flute, making a flute or maybe even just dancing around all happy-like with your flute that you would like to share with us? We'll put it smack dab on this page! Send it to [Flutezine@gmail.com](mailto:Flutezine@gmail.com)

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