



Newsletter

May 2024

Vol. 47 No. 3

Message From Our President

May, 2024

Dear RSLI Members and Friends,

RSLI's 50th Anniversary is a BIG DEAL, but it's not the only one this year! This year also marks 30 years of leadership by RSLI's multi-talented music director, Rachel Begley. We will be celebrating this milestone on May 11th, as well as holding our annual Membership Meeting and Election of Officers for the coming 2024/25 year. You will find the Proposed Slate of Officers for 2024-25 elsewhere in this newsletter.

Coming up:

Saturday, June 8th - We are delighted to be resuming our June Matinee (which sadly fell victim to COVID concerns the last 2 years). It will once again be hosted by our Workshop Coordinator, Kara Kvilekval, at her lovely home in Old Field. We'll perform for each other, socialize, laugh and eat. It doesn't get much better! We ask that potential performers please help us plan ahead by listing their "act" on the sign-up sheet we'll have available at the May meeting. Keep an eye on your email for additional details.

Saturday, November 23rd - A full-day intermediate/advanced workshop is planned for this date. Specifics will be available closer to time, but "save the date" now on your calendars. You won't want to miss this event.

Please email our treasurer, Bev O'Connor (beverley.oconnor@stonybrookmedicine.edu) to register for meetings and tell her how you will submit the meeting fee (PayPal, Venmo, check etc.). If the **only** option you have is cash, be sure to bring the exact amount (\$15 member/\$20 non-member), as we are not prepared to make change.

Happy 50th to RSLI! ... and it ain't over yet!

Diana Foster, President RSLI

Board of Directors 2023/20234

Rachel Begley, Music Director	Kara Kvilekval, Workshop Coordinator
Diana Foster, President	Karen Wexler, Librarian
Jean Johnston, Secretary	Margaret Brown, Newsletter Editor
Beverley O'Connor, Treasurer	Patricia Laurencot, Web Manager
Larry Long, ARS Representative	Barbara Zotz, Member-at-Large

Meeting Dates for 2023/24

September 9	January 13
October 14	February 10
November 11	March 9
December 9	April 13
	May 11

Meetings:

The Recorder Society of Long Island, Inc. regularly meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month (September through May) from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Place: In-person at St. Luke Lutheran Church.

Finding Us:

Directions to St. Luke Lutheran Church:

Deer Park Ave. south from Northern State Pkwy. (Exit 42) or north from the L.I.E. (Exit 51).

Turn east onto Vanderbilt Parkway and after a very short distance turn right onto Candlewood Path; St. Luke will be directly in front of you. Follow the driveway on the left of the church to the rear parking lot. Meetings are held in the education building, ground floor, rear of the church.

On the web at: RSLI.info

Publishing:

RSLI's newsletter is published in Sept., Jan. and April each year. Send news and announcements to: Margaret Brown, Editor maritbrown@optonline.net

Dear friends,

RSLI's fiftieth season has been a little different from those of recent years, and I'm thrilled that we've been able to celebrate our long and unique history together on multiple occasions.

Looking back over the decades, our playing meetings have run the gamut: from almost all being led by a different guest conductor (with only one or two appearances by our Music Director) to every meeting being led by yours truly; from playing meetings taking place in homes, churches, libraries and schools to meetings taking place entirely virtually; and of course we also enjoyed a year of hybrid meetings, where some met and played together in person while others joined us online. And over the years we've also had many workshops, giving both our members and our guests opportunities to work with different teachers in small, well-matched groups. These have included not only one-day events with classes catering to players of a variety of levels, but also 2- and 3-day weekends specifically for advanced players. In addition, we've had events when members have performed, first of all as part of our May playing meetings. More recently, performances by members have been part of a stand-alone social event in June (our "matinees"/"soirées") at the home of Kara Kvilekval, as well as the unique online opportunities of both 2020 and 2021. And we've been led by literally dozens of teachers; not only our longtime local favorites from the New York Tri-State area, but also from further afield too, including Pennsylvania, Eastern Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Virginia, and even Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands!



This past season has had an unprecedented balance of leaders: by the end of the May meeting, I personally will have led five of them, with guest teachers leading the other four. I must say that this was not entirely by design! There have been an unusual number of cancellations due to either weather conditions or family circumstances, but luckily I was available more often than is usually the case, and I was very lucky to find a replacement at short notice for the one I could not cover. We welcomed Ruth Cunningham whose meeting included not just Renaissance music (on the page) but also some improvisation (off the page), and even music off the recorder (chanting and sound healing). We have also welcomed back Yale's Susan Thompson as well as one of our perennial favorites, New York's Larry Lipnik. And our April meeting, our official celebration of RSLI's fiftieth anniversary, featured a memorable session with none other than RSLI's founding Music Director, the inimitable Susan Ladone.

We also had a fabulous one-day workshop in February (a change from our usual Fall event) at which I was joined by Priscilla Herreid, the new director of Piffaro. RSLI members were divided into two groups, and were joined for the day by a number of guests from New York City and Connecticut, for a total attendance of 18 players! The day included music in a variety of moods, from dark desperation to joyful exuberance to sublime floating. The composers were also wide-ranging in style, from early Renaissance polyphonists to Monteverdi to Purcell and even to artists creating music for the large and small screen: Hans Zimmer and Carly Simon! For those who came, I hope this description brings back happy memories, and for those who were not with us, I suspect this will make you wish you had been able to be there.

We will wrap up this celebratory season with our May playing meeting, which has traditionally been led by RSLI's Music Director. This year will be no exception, and I am looking forward to sharing music with you again. I'm always amazed by how far you are able to take the music during our time together, not just in terms of mastery of the notes and the rhythms, but also in your listening, your application of technical skills and your musical expression. In case you don't already know (or need reminding), RSLI is the most highly regarded ARS chapter in the region by those who lead our meetings and workshops, and one of the finest in the country.

I'm so very proud of you all, and not just in terms of your playing. Over the years, RSLI's members have also cultivated an incredible community, dedicated to both

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recorder playing and to each other. Our support for one another and the friendships and camaraderie we enjoy together are second to none. And it is these in particular that we will celebrate at our annual “Matinee” in June. As per tradition, members will perform for each other, and this year I anticipate that we will enjoy listening to solos, duets, music for Renaissance recorders, music for baroque ensemble, a viola da gamba duet, and more. Some will have had lessons or coaching, of course, but others prepare on their own. I think it’s a wonderful opportunity to play for a really encouraging audience, no matter what your playing level is; you are unlikely to experience such unanimous applause and support anywhere else! Please consider sharing something you have been working on with us: it doesn’t have to be very long, and in any case shouldn’t be longer than five minutes. If you plan to play, please let me know in advance - though earlier is always better, it can be as late as the day before!

Additionally, there WILL be some group playing for everyone at the Matinee, though you’ll only need an alto recorder. The music won’t be especially challenging (famous last words!), and it will be available for download/printing in advance. Further instructions will follow by a separate email nearer the date. The afternoon is not just about the music though: it’s about having a relaxed time together for conversations, about our shared love of recorders and recorder music, about learning from each other’s experiences, and about getting to know one another better. Regardless of whether or not you will be performing, please plan to join us if you can.

Even as we have been celebrating RSLI’s 50th anniversary this year, I’ve also been enjoying my 30th year as RSLI’s Music Director. It’s remarkable that in its 50 years of existence, RSLI has had only THREE Music Directors: Susan Iadone (1974-1989), Ken Andresen (1989-1994) and myself (1994-2024). It’s also remarkable that both Susan and I were each so young (in our 20s) when we each took on this important role. I know that when I began as Music Director I was in graduate school, and I didn’t expect to hold the position for more than 3 years, 5 at the most.... As they say, life is what happens while you’re making other plans!

Some of these 30 years have been easy, some more challenging. It will be no surprise for you to learn that our music-making plans from March 2020 onwards have been particularly demanding to organize and execute. I’m very proud of the way our Chapter came together as a community during those dark and lonely days. We not only supported each other, but we also embraced new ways of making music together.

At times I felt as if I was the blind leading the blind as we explored technological opportunities together, but I never felt that my efforts were in vain, and it was heartening to hear how much you got out of these new experiences. Not many ARS chapters were able to continue functioning during those periods of isolation, and to this day some chapters have not yet managed to meet again to make music together in person. Luckily for us, RSLI didn’t just function - we flourished! Kudos to you all for your part in our success.

Looking back on both the successes and the challenges over the years, I am happy to say that I have almost always managed to engage the teachers that I want to feature each season, though somehow there is always ONE meeting of the season for which I struggle to find a teacher! And there have been several stressful situations, not just in the planning stages but also on the day of the event. Even after teachers have been hired, we’ve had them cancel at just a couple of hours notice. For one workshop a teacher simply didn’t show up, mistakenly thinking the event was on the Sunday, not the Saturday, and at another, two teachers got lost while taking the short walk to our venue from the train station! (These were pre-cellphone days...) We even had one teacher traveling from Germany be detained by Homeland Security agents who prevented her from flying; though it was an administrative snafu, we had to weather the impact none-the-less. Apart from this occasional scrambling though, it’s been a very rewarding experience, and in particular getting to know you all has been a joy. Over the years I have continued to hone my list of guest teachers, ensuring we enjoy the talents of the best of the best for years to come. You all have very high standards these days! I’ve also had the pleasure of seeing the overall playing level increase considerably, even if our numbers have not. We may be an ARS chapter of only modest size, but we are certainly mighty in quality!

In these 30 years I’ve seen RSLI members young and old come and go; we’ve lost dear friends to illness, to old age, to relocation, to family, education and career obligations, and more. I’ve also had the pleasure of serving the RSLI Board with many of you, and I am grateful for your continued support as I cultivate our musical activities each season. As I look ahead to my 31st season, I can assure you that our monthly playing meetings will continue to be rewarding experiences for all, and, as you have come to expect, that the year will feature its usual wide variety of music and teaching styles. Right now, in addition to our playing meetings I’m considering the options for our Fall one-day workshop in November 2024 as well as for our proposed weekend

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workshop in Spring 2025. With all of our activities in mind, if there are any teachers you would like me to invite to be part of our 2024-2025 season or any kinds of music that you would like to have included, please let me know.

Though I've been pondering lately how on earth I've come to spend 30 years as Music Director, I look back fondly on our times together - those many occasions of making music, of enjoying delicious snacks, of developing friendships, of supporting each other, and much more. And I look forward to many more years in your delightful company, whether or not I am still RSLI's Music Director!

My very best wishes to you all,
--Rachel

Play-the-Recorder Day, March 16, 2024

Appropriately, on March 16, around 200 elementary school students from across Long Island participated in the 56th Annual SCMEA Eugene Reichenthal Recorder Festival. The culminating concert began with a performance by four members of RSLI: Diana Foster, Jean Johnston, Larry Long, and Karen Wexler. They performed "Mille Regretz" by Josquin Des Prez at both four foot and eight foot lengths. Then they demonstrated every size of recorder, from garkline through contrabass with a phrase from the melody of "America." They finished with "Song of Storms" from *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* by Koji Konda.

It was evident that a great deal of effort was put into coming up with a program that would appeal to all ages and it was very well received. One teacher told me that on the Monday following the festival, her students couldn't stop talking about all the different sizes of recorder. Thank you RSLI members for giving the audience a glimpse into the wonderful world of recorder playing!

Report by Donna Basile



News from ARS

The Spring issue of *American Recorder* has arrived. You are a member of ARS, right?! You definitely want to be because it is brimming with interesting stories, reviews of new music, old music in new hands, and CDs. It is a treasure trove of information. The Summer Workshops across the country and beyond are here and they all sound amazingly enticing and fun. From coastlines to cities, to countryside, and beyond, 25 workshops and two festivals are listed.

And then there are some other highlights: Congratulations to Frances Blaker and Letitia (Tish) Berlin who are, since April 1, the new co-directors of Amherst Early Music. They are well known and loved by all of us, and most of us know them from workshops, classes, or performances. The departing director, Marilyn Boenau, has earned a much deserved opportunity to relax after 24 years as director! Thank you Marilyn!

And then there is a bit of amazingness. Tom Prescott, of the Prescott recorder world, has made a Renaissance bass recorder in G out of Kauri wood. This is the world's oldest known workable wood and was excavated from a swamp in New Zealand. It was dated to be 30,000 to 50,000 years old! The results are beautiful, and if we're lucky, sometime we may even be able to hear it played. Its picture is in the Spring issue of *American Recorder*.

There is also a wonderful tribute to Frans Bruggen (1934-2014) written by Clea Galhano and several others who knew him, studied with him, and played with him, and lots of great pictures. This year he would have been 90. These are just a few tidbits from this wonderful resource of a magazine. It is a very good reason to join the American Recorder Society!



A Brief History of Us!!



50 years is a long time, and lots has happened to make us who we are today. Here are some thoughts on the beginnings of RSLI, from Susan Iadone (written April, 2024)

In 1973 I transferred my studies from the Hartt College of Music to Queens College, in order to participate in their unique Bachelor of Music program as an early music major. While playing in the weekly Collegium Musicum, under the direction of Paul Maynard, I met and became friendly with Jackie and Bob Wiggins; the three of us were playing recorders in the group and we all lived on Long Island, they in Northport (I seem to recall) and me in Hicksville. Over the course of many amiable conversations, we became intrigued at the idea of starting a recorder society and I invited them to my parents' home to discuss the possibility. Odd, the things one remembers: I made a lasagna. This meal was the genesis of the Long Island Recorder Society. (After some years, the name was changed to RSLI so it would not be confused with Eugene Reichenthal's Long Island Recorder Festival.)

Jackie and Bob took on the roles of president and treasurer, and I was the music director. It took us a while to find a regular base of operations; I would cold-call churches and libraries and plead with them to let us use a space in their buildings once a month. The concept of liability insurance for small groups like ours had not yet become firmly entrenched in society; these institutions very kindly gave us space at no charge...looking back, it is hard to believe. There were, as well, numerous mishaps; etched in my mind is a church in Westbury that had given us permission to use a room but neglected to have anyone on site to let us in. A coach had come out from the city, people were starting to arrive and we were all outside. A quick walk around the building revealed an open window (what??!!) and I had someone hoist me up so I could jump in and unlock a door (this hardly bears thinking about now). We had our meeting, cleaned up and left with, apparently, no one the wiser that we had been there.

After a couple of years, Jackie and Bob got busier and, although they continued coming to the meetings to play, we needed a new president. Into the breach stepped...who else? Elise Jaeger, who I first met when I was 15. And around the same time, my dear friend, Betty Towner, offered us the use of the church in Levittown where she was running a nursery school. This church became our home for almost a dozen years. How different things were then...we were paying coaches what we imagined to be the princely sum of \$40.00, and were able to get leaders for at least half of the sessions. I conducted any remaining meetings.

The most memorable event of my tenure (1974-1989) was when Gene Reichenthal came to one of our meetings, early on, not to coach but simply to play and support the group. During the break, he heard Elise's voice, recognized her accent and went over to speak with her. In the course of their conversation they discovered that Gene had been with the Allied troops that liberated her town in the Netherlands, where she and her sister had been in hiding. It was an emotional reunion. And while Gene was certainly a controversial figure in the recorder world on Long Island, Elise would not countenance anyone speaking ill of him in her presence.

Susan Iadone leads RSLI April 13, 2024

To bring Susan's story full circle, she led our meeting on Saturday, April 13. As usual, she was impeccably organized, with beautifully prepared music (pieces two and three page long were even taped together!). The music was approachable, challenging and beautiful under her leadership. It was a great morning, topped off with a colorful springy Anniversary Cake at the coffee break and Anniversary party favors of RSLI note pads and pencils for everyone.

At our next meeting, May 11, the celebration continues as we honor Rachel Begley's 30 years as our Music Director! She has seen us through thick and thin, and we applaud her patience, inspiration, and incredible stamina as she has cajoled the best out of us and guided us into an ever-improving ensemble. Thanks Rachel!



Annual Meeting of RSLI
May 11, 2024

We will have our Annual Meeting and election of officers as part of our May meeting. In addition to the Proposed Slate of Officers, listed to the right, nominations from the floor are welcome. Just be sure that the person you are nominating knows (and agrees!) ahead of time. Surprises are fun, but maybe not so much in this case. Be sure to let Diana know if you are planning to nominate someone.

Report from the Treasurer: May 24, 2024

Greetings to all. I'm sure you join me in welcoming the spring and thankful for the warmer weather.

Our combined bank accounts are \$12,000.00

The fees from our monthly playing meetings have averaged out to be \$237 a month, ranging from \$210 to \$270.

Many thanks go out to everyone that so generously donated this season. We received \$1585 in donations.

We broke even with our winter workshop expenses.

Expenses - \$1380

Registration fees - \$1480

Thanks to everyone, as we near the end of the RSLI season we can celebrate a very successful year.

Respectfully submitted

Beverley O'Connor, Treasurer

RSLI Proposed Slate of Officers

2024/25

Diana Foster

President

Rachel Begley

Music Director

Beverley O'Connor

Treasurer

Jean Johnston

Secretary

Karen Wexler

Librarian

Larry Long

ARS Representative

Margaret Brown

Newsletter Editor

Kara Kvilekval

Workshop Coordinator

Patricia Laurencot

Web Manager

Donna Basile

Member-at-Large

David Hahn

Member-at-Large

From the RSLI Library



If you need music to practice at home or play with a group, look at the library listings at RSLI.info, to find something you would like to borrow. Librarian Karen can bring it to our meeting. Instruments are also available. If you have borrowed instruments and are considering purchasing them, let Karen know. And please return loaners if you're no longer using them. Happy playing!
(631-751-5969) or email her - krwexler@gmail.com.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS



Early Music is Thriving!!

NYRG News

The New York Recorder Guild is going strong and finishes the season in style.

May 18 - David Hurd

Meetings are from 1:30 - 3:30, doors open at 1pm
They meet at Church of Saint Mary the Virgin on 145 W. 46th Street. Bring a stand light!

Go to the NYRG website for member info & playing fees.

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### NAVRS

Play all summer! NAVRS meets the 3rd or 4th Saturday of each month. It's \$15/session for members. Zoom link opens at 1:30 Eastern time and playing begins at 2pm. Go to [www.navrs.org](http://www.navrs.org) for tons more info.

### And more music:

ARTEK [www.artekearlymusic.org](http://www.artekearlymusic.org)

Parthenia [parthenia.org](http://parthenia.org)

Alkemie [alkemie.org](http://alkemie.org)

Midtown Concerts [www.midtownconcerts.org](http://www.midtownconcerts.org)

Music Mondays [musicmondays.org](http://musicmondays.org)

## *More places to play and hear music:*

### Amherst Early Music!!

Memorial Day Weekend Workshop  
May 24-27, Wisdom House, Litchfield, CT

The Amherst Early Music Festival  
June 30 - July 14, 2024, Union College,  
Schenectady, NY

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GEMS

Check their listings, and don't forget the Thursday mid-town concerts. Every Thursday at 1:15, there is a concert. Check GEMS for locations, venues, and performers. There are some real treats awaiting those lucky enough to be nearby on Thursdays!! gemsny.org

2023-24 RSLI MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Telephone (include area code): _____

email: _____

Membership: \$40/yr. _____

Monthly Playing Fee \$15/month or \$135 for all 9 sessions _____

Additional tax-deductible contribution: \$ _____

\$ _____ Total enclosed (checks payable to RSLI)

Please fill out and submit at the next meeting or mail to:

Beverley O'Connor, 77 Washington Hgts. Ave, Hampton Bays, NY 11946

Payments can also be made through your PayPal or Venmo account to: treasurer@rslinfo

I want to help RSLI:

Coffee setup _____

Refreshments _____

Publicity _____

Fundraising _____

RSLI Board of Directors _____