

# THE SOONER TUNER



NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA CHAPTER  
OF THE PIANO TECHNICIANS GUILD, INC.

November 14, 1991

## President's Message

Greetings from Dunkin Donuts! I confess coffee and doughnuts are weaknesses of mine. I enjoyed sharing both with many of you at our last meeting. It was great to see some faces we hadn't seen recently, such as Robert Franks, Keith McGavern and Carol Bienneman. You have been missed!

Another name to welcome (and hopefully soon see a face to go with it) is Robert Moore of Ponca City. His sponsor, Travis Gordy, also of Ponca City, is one of our group although we rarely see him. He speaks very highly of Robert, and he suggested they would try to attend some upcoming meetings together. The Chapter voted to accept Robert's application to be our newest Associate member. Welcome!

I know we often speak of the way our chapter members support each other, but I want to share yet another example of that which happened to me the week after our last meeting. I drove to Shawnee to move a Mason & Hamlin 6' grand back to N.W. Oklahoma City. I found more steps than I had anticipated, and considerably more nervousness on the customer's part. I called Keith McGavern to see if he might be available to

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## President's (cont.)

help. He came to the rescue within about 15 minutes and brought his ramp. He assisted in the loading despite the fact that this made him late to a local auction and despite the windchill which was around 0°. Then he wouldn't even accept any payment for his help. I hope the opportunity to return such a favor, and again I am thankful for having become a part of this organization.

I came into the PTG through the Spring Seminar hosted by this chapter several years ago. Who do you know who might need to belong to this group who would likely respond to an invitation to this upcoming Spring Seminar which we are again hosting?

David Bonham, RTT  
President

P.S. Did you know Michael Yeager is back? He is the music director for First Presbyterian Church in OKC.

## An Interview With Lou Tasciotti

I was in Denton a few weeks ago visiting family and while there I telephoned Lou Tasciotti to talk with him about his part in our Spring Seminar. This spring Lou will present "The Fine Art of Aural Tuning."

You might guess from the title his approach to piano tuning does not include electronic devices or as we have called it "The Fox." Lou can trace his tuning roots back three generations. He learned from Stuart Cole who learned from Franz Moore who was taught by Bill Hupfer. This represents several decades of professional concert level tuning experience from which to draw.

For the last two years he has been the piano technician at the University of North Texas. He came from the University of New York at Pottsdam and has also worked for Baldwin. His duties include being the technical editor for the Piano Quarterly, a post he has held for the last 3 years.

I asked Lou how he liked the Southwest. He indicated that he liked Denton calling it a nice little city. He also commented on how nice it was to be so close to Dallas. I'm looking forward to meeting Lou face to face this March. I hope you are too!

### Piano Proverbs

Experience is a great teacher. Ironically the lessons we remember most come from bad experiences.

### It's a Boy!

Congratulations to Ross and Sherry Trawick for the arrival of Chad Michael. Born October 22, 1991 at 3:10 p.m. We must not forget 9lbs. and 10 oz. (a potential piano mover!)

## Upcoming Events

Our next meeting is this Thursday Nov. 21 at 7:00 p.m. at the O.U. piano shop. Norman Cantrell will present a technical on vertical hammer replacement and installation.

As of this writing the banquet is still planned for December 7th (Pearl Harbor Day). The banquet is to be held at the Hilton Inn Northwest on Northwest Highway just west of May Ave. We are planning a relaxation/coffee/dessert time at the Bonham residence following the banquet.

The January meeting is planned for the removal of a soundboard at Tim Hast's shop. This is in preparation for the Spring Seminar on soundboard replacement. Tim will advise us as to the time probably in the early part of January.

### Norm's Noncents

I apologize for the tardiness of the November newsletter. It seems the hurrier I go the behinder I get! I know many of you have expressed interest over the Sam Spinet mini-mystery which appeared in September. The article appeared anonymously. This was because the author was not sure of the response knowing the intellectual prowess of the readership of the Sooner Tuner. I will however, reveal the author since Sam Spinet was so well received. Drum roll please. . . I confess that I am the author. I know this really surprises most of you but it is true. I hope you will enjoy Sam's adventures and learn a little along the way. If you have suggestions for plot material I will be glad to help Sam give Chase.

## Repaired for Naught

### A Sam Spinet Minimystery

The Autumn leaves were changing colors into a vivid display of contrasts and there was a slight chill in the air in the early mornings. As the weather grew cooler day by day my phone rang more and more steadily. It is amazing what turning on the heating system will do for business. Last week had had its share of variety including one Halloween special; the kind of piano that comes back to haunt you.

I was in my office trying to keep afloat in the never ending sea of paperwork. I make it a habit to try to do at least ten minutes of paper work a week to keep the piles manageable. My secretary, Miss Chase Baker buzzed me on the intercom.

"Sam, there's a lawyer on the line, says his name is John Perry and he insists on talking to you."

"I'll take it in here, Chase." as I paused to pick up the phone I couldn't help but feel my heart change rhythm. If my stomach were any indication the leaves weren't the only things turning.

I had heard of John Perry. His reputation as a formidable legal force was quite well known. He was the senior partner of the law firm of Perry, Mason, & Hamlin and rarely lost a case. I couldn't imagine what John Perry wanted with me.

I picked up the phone, "This is Spinet." Mr. John Perry proceeded to ask if I had tuned a piano for a Mrs. Gladys Naught. I told him that I had but I couldn't remember anything out of the

## Repaired cont.

ordinary about the situation. He told me that as soon as I left Mrs Naught noticed a terrible vibration in a certain note on the piano. She insisted that I had in some way sabotaged the instrument and was threatening legal action, thus Perry's involvement. I assured Perry that I would make every effort to remedy the situation.

I hung up the phone and buzzed Chase on the intercom.

"Chase, I need the customer file on Mrs. Gladys Naught. I tuned for her last week."

"I'll get it right away, Sam."

Chase had the most unique system for filing that was sheer poetry to see but that is another story. Chase brought in the file. Mrs. Naught was a first time customer. My notes indicated that her piano hadn't been serviced very often in the last few years. I began to remember that her children had just started music lessons prompting my service call. I telephoned Mrs. Naught to schedule a return engagement.

A couple of days later I drove to Mrs. Naught's residence. My windshield wipers were getting a workout as rain fell dampening both the ground and my spirits. Gladys Naught lived in one of those new but elegant subdivisions. The house had room for a concert grand but she had invested only in a small vertical.

Mrs. Naught met me at the door with a fairly curt greeting. She led me once

Repaired kont.)

again to the piano where she played the offending note; the G below middle C and almost appeared tearful with her face painfully contorted.

"Don't you hear that awful buzz?" Mrs. Naught asked. I wasn't quite sure I did and I wanted to be on the same wavelength.

"Describe the problem you hear with the note," I replied. "Is it metallic or woody, or does it buzz in a particular way?"

She was unimpressed with my answer. "It is just awful and piercing. It wasn't that way till you tuned the piano and I expect you to fix it."

I played the note over and over till I was sure I was hearing the same potential problem she was agonizing over. I removed all of the objects from the lid including the lamp. The buzz was still there. Next I checked the casters and turned each of them in their sockets. No luck. I checked the music rack and the lid catches to see if they were loose.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Naught left the room claiming the buzz was giving her a headache. I was glad because I was getting one too but not entirely from the piano.

I checked the lower panel and tightened the retaining spring. My friend the buzz wouldn't leave. While I had the lower panel off I checked the soundboard.

Repaired (cont.)

The piano was about 10 years old and I could find no cracks or loose glue joints anywhere. I was beginning to run out of options.

I sat back and scratched my head. In my mind I could see Gladys Naught's scowl and hear John Perry's voice. I knew I'd better get this one or it would get me. I checked the string at the bridge, being a treble string there was no loose wrapping. The bridge and bridge pins were secure and the strings had adequate clearance from the notching.

I managed with the rubber mutes to eliminate two of the three strings of the unison. Over 230 strings in this piano and one was trying to cost me my shirt! I decided to get away for a few moments so I went to the car on the pretense of getting another tool from another tool box. As I walked down the sidewalk it hit me. Just as the sidewalk had two ends so too did my troublesome string. When I returned to the piano I moved the string over on the V bar just slightly and the buzz vanished. Evidently the string had worn a groove in the V bar just deep enough to buzz.

Did I sabotage the piano when I tuned it? No, but I knew I'd never convince Mrs. Gladys Naught of that. Even though I won two battles that day, one with the piano the other with Perry, I'd still probably lost the war to keep the customer. Some days the streets will eat you up.

Norman Cantrell