

THE SOONER TUNER



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

June 12, 1992

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from the partly sunny shores of Ski Island lake! Our family has been moving this week, and our lives are rather disrupted by packing, organizing, hauling and searching. We are tired but very excited to be in this new home and meeting new people. We look forward to welcoming the Oklahoma Chapter PTG here for a party soon.

Be sure to attend our next meeting, June 20, when Gary Bruce will try out his mini-technical on string harmonics on us. It is quite an honor for him to be asked to present this at the Texas State convention this October. Gary we're proud of you! Also at this meeting we will be considering national officer elections and several issues being discussed by the PTG on the national level. Your voice counts.

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The Sooner Tuner

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MEETING IN REVIEW

Our May meeting was held at Hast Piano Shop on the 16th at 1:00 p.m. There were nine in attendance including Rex Lawrence of Guthrie a guest of Gary Bruce. In the absence of David Bonham, Tim Hast our vice president, chaired the meeting.

Gary Bruce gave a final report on the spring seminar and concluded the report by presenting a check in the amount of \$648.24. Gary also reported on the progress of the Nominating committee. A slate of officers has been finalized for presentation at the June meeting. It was stated that additional nominations will be taken from the floor before the vote. The minutes of the previous meeting were read by Nathan Sobel and approved. The treasurer's report was also given.

Following the business portion of the meeting Tim Hast presented a fine technical on replacing buckskin on Baldwin hammer butts and catchers. Tim included video footage of an actual replacement job he had performed earlier in the month.

Nathan Sobel, Secretary

PIANO PROVERBS

Piano location?

A piano is at its best in a room in which a healthy man is at his best.

Frank E. Morton

Oklahoma Chapter Officers
1991-92

President	David Bonham 721-0566
V. President	Tim Haast 359-0440
Secretary & Treasurer	Nathan Sobel 329-6971

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

In my piano tuning business I usually give my customers a phone call every six months or once a year to remind them that it is time to retune their piano. Once I called a lady here in town whose piano I had tuned several times, and she seemed genuinely puzzled that I had called.

"How did you get this telephone number?" she asked.

I replied, "It's right here on my record card. This is the same number I called six months ago when I tuned your piano."

"That's impossible!" she exclaimed. "I'm in a hotel in Las Vegas for my high school class reunion. There's no way you could have this telephone number."

Now I was genuinely puzzled. Had I dialed the local number and somehow managed to reach her in Las Vegas? Being a quick thinker I asked if she was having her calls forwarded from home to her hotel room in Las Vegas. "I don't even have call forwarding!", she screamed, and demanded to know how I had obtained her hotel number.

She was beginning to sound very angry so I apologized for whatever had happened. She said she would call me when she got back into town. I wasn't so sure I wanted her to.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday the 20th is the date for our June meeting. Earlybirds can take advantage of an optional 8:00 am breakfast at the Bakers Dozen doughnut shop at 524 E Memorial Rd. Those of you that require more beauty sleep (you know who you are) are encouraged to join us at 9:00 am in the music building of Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Arts at 2501 E. Memorial Rd. Gary Bruce will present a technical on the harmonic overtone series as it relates to tuning and tone building. Gary will present this same information at the Texas State Association this October. The important business at hand will be the election of chapter officers for 1992-93.

In July we will be meeting at David Bonham's new home on Ski Island. We are invited to a time of relaxation and fun on July 16th at 5:30 pm. The technical presentation will be on hot dog consumption with a mini-technical on picnic etiquette.

Watch for the August meeting. Norman Cantrell will present a technical on understanding and using hot glue.

Relations (cont.)

Well about a month later she did call. As it turns out, she had been in Las Vegas and had become ill while she was there. The doctor had put her on some heavy medication and she and her husband flew home. She was still under the influence of the medication when she received my call, sincerely thinking she was in Las Vegas as we spoke. She apologized for sounding like a crazy woman and we proceeded to have a good laugh over the whole situation.

Gary Bruce, RTT

HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE?

How many times in the course of a day or a week are you asked by a customer, "How long have you been servicing pianos?" The customer will find many different ways of asking the question, but inevitably what they are asking is, "How much experience do you have?" When you are confronted with this question (sometimes in the most blunt manner possible) what is your answer based on? Is it based on the number of years you have been servicing pianos? Do you include the year(s) you spent training before you started your business or position with a company or university? Let's examine the meaning of the word "experience" before you answer.

According to the Webster's dictionary the following meanings or definitions may apply: 1) the process or fact of learning by personally observing, encountering, testing, or undergoing something. 2) knowledge or skill gained by this process. 3) a particular instance of observing, encountering, etc.; an event in which one is involved.

Now consider these definitions in accordance with your activity with the PTC. Ask yourself these questions: How often have I found something useful to me and my customers when I attended chapter PTC meetings? How often have I found something helpful and informative in an issue of the PTC Journal? How long would it have taken me to learn or encounter the same or similar situation that require the tools, parts, etc. to do that certain job with-

out my participation in these meetings or conventions? Now how much experience do you have?

Although I could not find the exact Journal issue and its accompanying article to more precisely quote, the general message in the article I once read before becoming an actual PTC member has stayed with me all these years. It was written in a parable form like in the Bible. The article spoke of a tuner-technician who, in his yellow pages ad, advertised "25 years experience." He had never participated in PTC chapter meetings nor had he attended any regional or national seminars or conventions. He had never taken on an apprentice or student to whom to teach his trade, nor did he experiment with new methods or products in his work. Yet he insisted that he had "25 years of experience." The fact of the matter is that this man only had one year of experience twenty four times over rather than the 25 years he spoke of having.

Another similar example to consider would be a parable from the Bible in Matthew 25: 14-30. This is the parable about the three servants who were given "talents" by their master, talents being a form of money in this case. If you are familiar with this story, you probably recall the first two servants went into the marketplace, made the necessary exchanges and tradings and returned to their master twice the amount of "talents" as they were sent to the marketplace with. They were

How much experience? (cont.)

praised and rewarded for their efforts. The third servant became afraid however, and chose to hide his "talent." For this he gained nothing. His master considered him a failure and he was punished by being made an outcast.

We as tuner-technicians also have been given "talents." "Talents" in this case represent our knowledge and specialized skills, from rebuilding and refinishing to concert preparation. Our "marketplace" is best represented by chapter meetings, seminars, and conventions. When we as technicians choose not to take our "talents" to the "marketplace" and trade or exchange our knowledge, problems we encounter, and solutions we have found, our "talents" will not increase! Our punishment would be to lose business or a job to someone who did invest their "talents" in the marketplace and developed such a reputation for being more experienced.

When I was once asked the question by a customer, "How much experience do you have?" without meaning to boast or brag, I simply answered, "I have more years of experience than I can accurately account for." I then explained my answer by telling the customer about the PTC and how I have accumulated knowledge of many different situations involving piano service that would have taken me no telling how long to experience without being able to associate with other technicians. So the next time a customer asks you, "How much experience do you have?" what will your answer be? Hope to see you at the next meeting.

Ross Trawick, RTT

AVAILABLE & WANTED

1981 Winter spinet \$1050.00
 1938 Cable Nelson spinet \$650.00
 1982 Kimball Artist con. \$1150.00
 1925 Strohber studio \$550.00
 1984 Wurlitzer vertical grand \$2250.00
 tax not included for additional information contact Keith McGavern 275-8600

Srambach 4' 10" grand medium walnut finish, duet size bench \$1100.00
 contact Gary Bruce 348-3213

DID'JA HEAR ABOUT...

A little boy was being tucked into bed by his grandfather. The boy asked his grandfather, "Grandad, do all fairy tales begin with, 'Once upon a time...?'"
 "No," came the reply,
 "Many of them begin with, 'When I'm elected...!'"

TECHNICAL TIP

We all know the importance of strings being seated on the bridges for maximum tone quality. The next time you are tuning a spinet with a lot of false beats in the top end, try tapping the strings down onto the bridge. You can access them just past the dampers with a long screwdriver or rod. Tap them gently down and you will be surprised at how clear the top gets.

Norman Cantrell, ED

NORM'S NONCENTS

Well June basketball madness is upon us. As of today the playoffs are tied at two games apiece. I'm often amazed at the moves some of those guys make. I'm also amazed when I compare their salaries with mine and wish I were two feet taller, more coordinated, and had an agent. It is also interesting to watch the fans as they cheer and chew their fingernails in the final minutes of a close game. Basketball is a true spectator sport.

I was thinking about this today while tuning, first in a church then in a retirement center. I became convinced that piano tuning if properly marketed could compete with the NBA as a spectator sport. OK maybe we should start by going head to head with the chess playoffs or perhaps the IWDP (International Watchers of Drying Paint). But seriously piano tuning is occasionally a spectator sport.

I am an aural tuner and people constantly ask, "Do you tune with just your ear?" I often want to respond, "Actually I use my hands and these nifty tools too!" but I usually control myself in the name of professionalism. I also hear comments like, "Do you know any other songs?" or "When are you going to take lessons?" I usually tell people I'm learning to play the piano one note at a time and I can't play the next one until I have mastered the note I am presently playing.

I call this the "Tuning song" and each of us has his or her own rendition. It is amazing to me how many people request I play the "Tuning Song" and yet go into the other room during the performance. Despite it being unlikely to ever be heard on American

President's (cont.)

Plan also to check in with the group about your summer business to help us increase our networking. A couple of tuners have indicated time available to do more tunings; others have shown interest in narrowing or specializing their business. One of our best refinishers has decided he doesn't want to do ebony finishes any more and another one recently told me he dislikes the colormatching hassle of doing clear finishes. So by referring jobs to each other they can both be happier! (Personally I'm looking for someone who wants to specialize in tuning spinets with loose pins and false beats in homes without airconditioning.)

The Steinway M grand in which Nick Cravagne installed the new soundboard at our regional seminar is slowly coming together. Ross Trawick is stripping the case, Norman Cantrell is replacing part of the fire damaged lid, Tim Hast is fitting a new pinblock, and I am borrowing money to pay for it all and trying to figure out how much I can salvage of the keyframe and action. I'm sure glad to be part of such a good team. I hope to see you on the 20th.

David Bonham, President

Noncents (cont.)

Bandstand or this weeks Top 40 Countdown it is the song I get the most requests for. When you consider I get around half a "C" note a pop it is worth knowing how to play.

Norman Cantrell, ED