

"THE SOONER TUNER"



Official Newsletter, Oklahoma Chapter 731
The Piano Technicians Guild, Inc.
September '96



NEXT MEETING

September 19th, 9am, Thursday

Keith McGavern's place
824 North Union, Shawnee
405-275-8600

From I-40 & Hwy 16 (Exit 186) go south to Wallace Street (4th signal light, approximately 3 miles. Sonic Drive-In), go west to first stop sign (Union), then north 1/2 block, white siding house, west side, pull in driveway.

Introduction to the "Stringer Tool"
by Pianotek Piano Supply Company
&
Setting Tuning Pins in a Grand Piano
(necessary tools and procedure)

(plus Rubber Mute tip, Damp-Chaser tip, and
Grand action support tool tip)
by Keith McGavern, RPT

Norman Cantrell, President.....	405-525-7762
Ross Trawick, Vice President.....	405-427-6663
David Wallace, Secretary.....	405-755-4221
Gary Bruce, Treasurer.....	405-348-3213
Keith McGavern, Newsletter.....	405-275-8600

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LAST MEETING

Treasurer's report - \$1343.05 as of 7/31/96. Excellent meeting held at Albert Evans Store on MacArthur. Many things happened. An application for membership from Mrs. Jana Ketch, was received and accepted by the chapter. Welcome Aboard, Jana!

It was reported Bob Franks is recovering from eye surgery. Chapter membership dues was increased by five dollars per year. Guests included Nelson Ketch (Jana's husband) and Ed Chambers, who visited our group for the first time. Dearborn convention notes, new tools, and tips were shared.

Albert Evans, RPT and Greg Cochran, Electronic Sales Manager, gave presentations on the Market Perspective on Piano Sales, Electronic vs. Acoustics. Much learning, as always, took place before, during, and after the meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

Texas State Association Convention (TSA)
October 31-November 3, 1996
The Inn on Lake Travis, Lago Vista, Texas
Hosted by the Austin Chapter, PTG

NOTICE OF REQUEST

Jana Kelch, newest Associate Member of the Oklahoma Chapter, is in the market for piano tools and parts. If there is anyone who feels they have such items in your inventory that you no longer use, but still would prove of some benefit to a person learning the piano service trade, please contact her or her husband, Nelson at 405-390-1960, email ketchn@aol.com, and/or bring such items to the next chapter meeting.

--Editor

PIANOTECH (Internet) STUFF)
"Tuning in an Acoustically-Challenged Venue" #1
by Wm Blees, RPT, ST. Louis, MO Chapter

About 15 years ago I did a lot of work for the Mississippi River Festival, which featured a lot of the top groups, including The Grateful Dead, the BeeGees, etc. Tuning those pianos was always a challenge...

My biggest "thrill" was tuning for the Dead. I had 30 minutes between the sound check and the concert. I had the speaker next to me. When I got done, I got a loud response from the almost 10,000 spectators. The piano was miked not to just me, but also out to the audience. I don't know if they applauded because I did such a fantastic job, or because they were glad I was done.

William Blees, RPT

PIANOTECH (Internet) STUFF)
"Tuning in an Acoustically-Challenged Venue" #2
by Arnold Schmidt, Associate, Research Triangle, NC Chapter

I am not lucky enough to get to tune in concert venues, so my acoustic challenges come mostly from tuning in the music store. Such things as people playing on electronic keyboards, or electric guitars with fuzz tone in effect, or having them demonstrated, or people wanting to play in the exact key in which I am tuning are the usual for me.

But, by far, the most challenging venue I have ever attempted to tune a piano was in 1989, when I was called to a person's house to tune an Acrosonic from the early 50's. Not only was this piano almost a whole step flat, but she had (no exaggeration) 60 birds of all kinds in that house. The majority were either in the room where the piano was located, or in the next room, and, I think, they were all within ear shot of me. I almost didn't do the job, but I decided that, if I had tuned in a music store,

(1)

I could do this. But this was very different; these bird chirpings and whistlings and screamings weren't musical, they were just plain noise. I did tune the piano to pitch, no strings broke, and it took a little over two hours. But maybe 15 or 20 minutes before I finished, one of those birds got tired of my being there and set up with one of the loudest piercing whistling screamings I think I have ever heard; it would do this every 3 or 4 minutes. I would have moved the piano, but quite honestly, there was nowhere to move it that there weren't birds. I told the owner that, whatever she did, not to tell a tuner about these birds before he came, otherwise, nobody would ever come. Hmm, I wonder why I have never called her back to tune that piano again. I do wonder what happened to it. I think I did a pretty good job considering the environment.

Arnold Schmidt, Associate

PIANOTECH (Internet) STUFF)
"Tuning in an Acoustically-Challenged Venue" #3
by Tom Seay, RPT, Austin, TX Chapter

Hi Arnold,

First of all, let me congratulate you for your perseverance. Tuning under those circumstances is surely "for the birds" and the fact that you completed your tuning (with your sanity intact) is quite a "feather in your cap" :-)

Seriously though, we technicians are really put to the test sometimes, aren't we? It's what our PTG Code of Ethics refers to when it says that we should always do the best job we can under the circumstances.

Regards,
Tom Seay, RPT

1996 SCHEDULED MEETINGS

October 15th, 9am, Tuesday, Gary Bruce's place
November 14th 9am, Thursday, Gilliam Music, Edmond (not confirmed)
December 6th, Christmas Banquet

Correspondencia del Presidente

Buenos días amigos. How's that for a little Spanish lingo as Rush Limbaugh would say. It is back to school time and it is never too late to learn something new. It was mentioned at the last chapter meeting there is an upcoming TSA seminar for which you should have received a mail out. If not and you are interested let me know and I can get you in touch with the appropriate points of contact. This would be an excellent and slightly less expensive alternative for those of you who missed the national convention in Dearborn. There is a wonderful slate of instructors along with a relaxed lake side approach.

On the subject of learning I heard a statement at Dearborn concerning the learning curve of piano technicians as it relates to the use of "the machine." It was stated that "the machine" has cut the time it takes to learn to tune well by several years. This is probably true in respect to tuning especially if one is using an Accu-Tuner.

The Accu-Tuner is really the only "machine" truly designed to be used specifically for piano tuning on virtually all makes of pianos. I currently do not own one but here are some of the benefits I can see from an outside perspective. Memory--being able to master tune an instrument and recall that tuning would be very beneficial in an institutional setting. Noisy situations--during sound checks at concerts is a less than ideal time to tune but inevitably it happens. Ergonomics--pounding octaves and other intervals stretches the hands and stresses the hands. Accu-Tuners do not require simultaneous intervals to be played.

So is the Accu-Tuner a replacement for learning to tune? Never! One thing "the machine" cannot do, is voice or give input into tonal color. It cannot diagnose improper regulation or slight variances in touch. Alas, these nuances of our craft must be learned by experience and over a period of years. Even today there are pianos I sent out of my shop as rebuilt that I would love the chance to really fix now that I "know what I am doing." We need always to be learning and improving our craft. See you in class at the next meeting.

Norman Cantrell, RPT

Recommended Reading

Editorial Perspective
"The Road to Mastery"
by Steve Brady, RPT, Journal Editor

Here's what I call "hitting the nail on the head."
What do you think?

The "Kick" Zone

(closely related to after touch)

from
Keith McGavern, RPT

"When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro."
(Hunter S. Thompson)

Aubrey Willis had a motto on his desk which
read: "It's what you learn after you know it all that counts".

"The best way to hear money jingle in your pocket is to shake a leg."
(unknown)

"Sorry looks back. Worry looks around. Faith looks up."
(Marque sign at Family Worship Church in Shawnee)

"Nothing is so potent as the silent influence of a good example."
(James Kent, from "A Hero in Every Heart")