

“THE SOONER TUNER”

*“Happy Thanksgiving”*

Official Newsletter, Oklahoma Chapter 731  
The Piano Technicians Guild, Inc.  
November '97

NEXT MEETING

DATE:

November 20th, Thursday

TIME:

8:30AM

LOCATION:

David Bonham's home

10717 North Eastlake Circle, Oklahoma City, 405-721-0566

DIRECTIONS:

From Helner & MacArthur intersection go south to 1st right,  
then take next right

• • • TECHNICAL • • •

*“Use of the Renner Action Replacement Parts Kit”*

By David Bonham, RPT

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**LAST MEETING**

A perfect day for getting together and learning more about how other people work on pianos. Recycling Old Upright Parts by Ross Trawick, RPT and Norman Cantrell, RPT proved to show invaluable methods to reducing parts costs in the repair of older pianos. Great fellowship!

**CONCERNS**

Ross Trawick's mother, Carolyn Hope Trawick, passed away Sunday, October 12, 1997. A memorial service was held the following Friday.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Oklahoma Chapter has a new Associate member, Peter Krauss. Although new to this chapter's membership, Peter is no stranger to pianos. His accomplishments might read like a who's who in piano circles. Welcome aboard, Peter!

**1997 SCHEDULED MEETINGS**

Christmas Gathering, December 9th, (time?) → 6:30 PM  
 Kodiak Bar and Grill (Loft area), 2801 West Memorial, OKC,  
 748-5900

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

This has been an interesting week in my life. On Monday I had oral surgery to remove a wisdom tooth that was causing problems. Thanks to the wonders of modern medicine, I have recovered. I have one remaining wisdom tooth in my mouth, so I am not a complete idiot yet!

Another event that has made this week interesting has been preparing for administering a couple of technical exams. This required completion of a jig for the repair section of the test as well as coordinating exam location, flight times for Jack Wyatt, SCRVP to arrive in OKC, and final preparation for the examinees. I want to congratulate Ben Davis for successfully passing the exam and achieving the RPT (Registered Piano Technician) title. Ben studied hard and applied himself towards this goal. The other Associate who also passed the exams and is now a RPT is Herman Jenkins of the Tulsa Chapter.

Since we have offered testing this fall there have been questions about just what is involved in the examination process. Currently there are three tests required to bear the title of RPT. The first is a written exam consisting of 100 questions in both a true/false and multiple choice format. There is no fee for taking this exam. However, it must be successfully completed with at least a score of 80% before either of the two remaining tests can be attempted. The other tests include a tuning exam and a technical exam. Commencing January 1, 1998 the current fee of \$60.00 to administer each of these tests which will be increased to \$90.00. Next month I will discuss in more detail the nature of these exams.

If you get a chance, be sure to congratulate Ben Davis on this milestone in his life. I am looking forward to seeing all of you on the 20th of this month at David Bonham's home at 8:30AM, and again at the Kodiak restaurant for our Christmas banquet on December 9th.

Norman Cantrell, RPT

**PIANOTECH (Internet) STUFF**  
*"Squeaks from high gloss piano benches"*

Sometimes, tightening the nuts on the bench legs isn't enough to eliminate squeaks coming from those high gloss piano benches. Here are three tech tips to remedy those persistent sounds:

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Date: Sun, 7 Sep 1997  
From: Terry Beckingham, Associate  
Terry\_Beckingham@mbnet.mb.ca

...Years ago, when I worked with a Young Chang dealer, we used to put masking tape in the joints before assembling the benches. It worked. I have a 16 year old Young Chang and the bench still does not squeak. The piano never did squeak when it moved.

=====

Date: Sat, 6 Sep 1997  
From: Susan Kline, RPT  
skline@proaxis.com

...All you do is look for the contact areas, distinguished by a very fine white powder sometimes, and put a tiny smear of VJ lube on them. Works like a charm. Also check for contact with the underside of the bench top, but most of the trouble comes from the sides of the legs.

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Date: Sun, 7 Sep 1997 13:02:39 -0400 (EDT)  
From: Lisa Weller, RPT  
Lwellerpt@aol.com

Take the legs off, cut pieces of self-stick craft felt, stick it on the legs where it won't be seen and reassemble

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**PIANOTECH (Internet) STUFF**  
*"Concerning customers wanting to tune their own pianos"*

Date: Sat, 27 September 1997

Many years ago some technicians refused to sell basic tuning books and tools to "amateurs", but we didn't. We actually had a small "kit" including a basic book, tuning hammer, tuning fork, a few mutes, a temperament strip, etc., but I actually sold very few of them. The conversations usually went something like:

Customer: "Hello. Do you sell tuning tools?"

Delwin: "Yes, we do. What would you like?"

C: "Well, I want a good book on the subject and whatever tools I'll need. I'd like to try tuning my own piano."

D: "OK. We actually have a basic kit put together just for that purpose. It costs \$\_\_\_\_\_."

C: "Gee, thanks. Say, why are you willing to sell this stuff when no one else is? They won't even talk to me about it."

D: "Well, we've found it to be good business. People often want to try tuning their own pianos to save money. They generally don't realize how much skill, experience and knowledge is required to do the job well. By the time they've worked on their own piano for a while, they usually realize that they're way in over their heads, and they'll call back to the only piano shop that was willing to help them. That would be me. And believe me, I'll make a lot more correcting damage from your mistakes than I'll ever make by just tuning your piano. Like I said, it's just good business."

C: "Oh. Well, uh, how much would you charge to tune my piano?"

D: "I charge \$\_\_\_\_\_."

C: "OK. When could you come out..."

D: "Well, let's see, my next opening is..."

Delwin D Fandrich  
pianobuilders@olynet.com



**PIANOTECH (Internet) STUFF**  
*"The Sound is Profound"*

Date: Tue, 12 August 1997

Alas, yes. I too have heard THE SOUND my friend. I was in the depths of the dungeons of a local dealership castle on a grand piano that was a might bit low. I pitch raised it, and fine tuned it with hastened detail. Whilst I was fastly approaching the final moments of the task, dreaming of fresh éclairs, smoked salmon wrapped sweet pickles, concentrating deeply on tuning and my next ambition for the day, there came this loud report from the piano, unsettling and disturbing, unnerving and uncalled for. I reported back at the top of my lungs instantly without delay or thought, and with all disregard of religion or deep personal beliefs of anybody within earshot. I took a deep breath, put my glass eye back in, retrieved and dusted off my favorite set of teeth that had fallen prey to the dusty shelves across the room, and found a suitable putty knife to clean out my (well, you know...). I inspected the plate closely.

At the junction of the struts at the tenor break just in front of the tuning pin area there was a faintly rough area in the paint. Making a small scratch with my knife I found the colours pink and black under the gold paint. The pink was Bondo and the black was the plate primer, undercoat, or sealer (whatever it's called). Someone had put a mask over the break with body putty and painted over it. Skillfully done, butt ugly it was. Additional searching found an additional crack at approximately the same place in the next strut north, in the middle of the treble section. This crack anew was most likely the reason for my ruined ambiance and attitude for the day.

This piano caused me to look at pianos that are a half step low with a whole new eye (since the one I brought with me now looked like it was kinda bloodshot, really made people leave me alone eh??). From that time forward, I started telling people about the possibility of plate breakage with every pitch raise. The reason the piano was a half step low was because of the broken plate. It broke again whilst being tuned, BY ME!! The dealer sold it as furniture, a true PSO, to someone in a town far far away for \$500.

The story goes, "every career tuner experiences at least one broken plate. The odds are against experiencing any more than that". I don't wish this experience on anyone but someone who tunes steam calliopes daily. They could handle THE SOUND.

Larry Fisher, RPT  
larryf@pacifier.com

≤ PIANO TECHNICIAN JOURNAL ≥  
Blast from the Past

the Lyons Roar, No 56  
by Jesse Lyons, RPT  
Oklahoma Chapter 731  
Guild Sustaining

*"Unwanted Loot"*

(PT Journal, April 1974, page 13)

After all these years, I wish I had kept a record of the various things and objects I have found hidden away in pianos I have serviced. Besides the usual accumulation of coins, pins, buttons, pencils, crayons, letters, pictures, cards, chicken bones, etc., I have found more lucrative prizes.

One time I rescued a diamond ring under the plate of a grand. Another time I removed a silver dollar from behind the treble strings (it was causing another type of music all its own)...Another time I found the available space in the bottom of the piano stacked with cigar boxes of coins...

...Back in the days of Prohibition, I had my biggest surprise. A pedal needed adjustment. I quickly removed the kickboard, although the customer was saying that it wasn't that important to fix the pedal. What did I see? A gallon jug of home brew! I guess he was making his own cough medicine. I acted as though I didn't see it. The only relief I think the customer had was the fact that he believed I was a blind man. I am sure glad he didn't know that I know.

Other things I've found which I can't mention openly, especially those pianos in clubs and dance halls: You know, some of those pianos are real sick, even to the point of being anemic.

More recently, I was called to service a piano in a school. Part of the front boards were missing, but not enough to reveal some hidden objects. Upon removal of the remaining boards I found a lady's nearly new white shoe, and a tennis shoe stuffed in between the fallboard and the action. Do you suppose someone got scared out of their shoes, or what happened? Your guess is as good as mine. I took them down to the principal's office, and you can imagine the look of surprise on his face. He might have had another surprise if he had seen my bills to the board of education for removing foreign objects from piano...

## Recommended Reading

### *"Is Your Business Running You?"*

by Gary A. Neie, RPT  
Chairman, Economic Affairs Committee  
(Piano Technicians Journal, October, 1997, page 41)

### **The "Kick" Zone**

(closely related to after touch)  
from  
Keith McGavern, RPT

"If you're young and not a liberal, you have no heart.  
If you're old and not a conservative, you have no brains."  
(Winston Churchill)

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"Before you jump to a conclusion, make sure there's a safe place to land."  
(author unknown)

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"Patience is the ability to let your light shine after your fuse is blown."  
(author unknown)

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"Not everything that counts can be counted,  
and not everything that can be counted counts."  
(Albert Einstein)

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"Arguing with (insert name here) is like wrestling with a  
pig in mud...after awhile you realize the pig enjoys it."  
(author unknown)