

THE SOONER TUNER  
Newsletter of The Oklahoma Chapter 731 of the Piano Technicians Guild, Inc.  
OCTOBER 2003

COMING EVENTS:

The next meeting of the Oklahoma PTG will be held Thursday, October 16, 2003 at 8:30 AM at Keith McGavern's home in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Keith's address is 824 Union Avenue. His phone number is 405-275-8600. The technical is Caster Repair/Replacement (for home, church or school) and will be presented by Keith. The presentation will cover when to repair and/or when to replace casters and their sockets. (Grand Trucks will not be included). If you have an unusual old type caster, please bring it for show. Refreshments will be provided.

Harmonica Bob's Caster Tip: DON'T USE CASTOR OIL FOR LUBRICATION!

Directions to Keith's: From I-40 & Exit 186, go 3 miles south to Wallace Street (stoplight/Sonic), then west to first stop sign (Union Avenue), turn right, go to small white house in the first block on left side, pull in driveway – no street parking allowed.

NOVEMBER: November 20 – 8:30 AM

Barbara & David Bonham Cleaning Grand Soundboards and Plates, Polishing Strings, Cleaning Tuning Pin Area

DECEMBER: December 5 – 7:00 PM - Christmas Party at David & Barbara Bonham's

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TSA CONVENTION 2004

It was a warm spring afternoon and there was an air of anticipation. Hundreds of people were gathered along the line waiting for the starting gun to sound. A man sat on a tired old mare, a tiny bead of sweat running down his forehead. 11:45 AM was what his pocket watch told him. It was April 22, 1889 in what was soon to be known as Oklahoma Territory. At exactly noon the gun did sound and thousands of people like this old man raced across the prairie in search of a claim to stake for a homestead. In just a few short hours, thousands of people laid claim to land in Oklahoma.

On the other side of the line ahead of the gun were a few people who happened to get a head start. These became known as "Sooners". Even though they jumped the gun, their claims to land were honored simply because there was so much confusion, no one could tell their claims from the others. These folks made their way into the history books and were even adopted by the state of Oklahoma which is known as the "Sooner State".

WHAT DOES THIS BIT OF OKLAHOMA HISTORY HAVE TO DO WITH YOU? In March of 2004 in Oklahoma City, TSA will hold its annual seminar. This year it will be known as TSA's Sooner Spring Seminar. You have the opportunity to stand on the sidelines waiting for life to happen or you can get a jump on your competition and attend. The dates are March 11-14, 2004. It will be held at the Holiday Inn Airport in Oklahoma City. The room rate for this event is \$69 plus tax. There will be an All Day Thursday class with John Patton of Steinway and Sons. The registration for the seminar is \$155 and the all day Steinway class is an additional \$55, which includes lunch. If you need more information about TSA's Sooner Spring Seminar you can contact Bob Scheer, Seminar Director at 405-341-8668 or email at [HarmonicaBob@AOL.com](mailto:HarmonicaBob@AOL.com). You can also contact Norman Cantrell, TSA President at 580-355-5003 or [nvlhgcan@brightok.net](mailto:nvlhgcan@brightok.net). We are looking forward to a great seminar. YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS IT!

Now is your chance to voice an opinion or request a class to be offered at TSA. Come to the next PTG meeting to discuss your ideas. Norman Cantrell, TSA President  
TECH TIP:

When doing tunings on vertical pianos, make a quick check to insure the bass hammers aren't clipping their neighbors. Reason: when the sustain pedal is in use, your excellent tuning will not sound so nice.

To fix, either space the hammers correctly, or for a quick fix, use a sandpaper file to remove the edge of the hammer face striking the neighbor. The quick fix only takes a few moments and can save you some embarrassment.

Keith McGavern, Shawnee

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## HOW DID YOU BECOME A PIANO TECHNICIAN?

How often have we each been asked that question? Here is Gene Black's story.

I will make it as short as possible. I was born and grew up on a farm in Iowa. My grandfather Barney (my mother's dad) was a mail carrier for the county, but he also repaired violins and played several instruments in the local city band. When he was older he lived with us on the farm. He showed me how to play an old guitar we had. On cold winter night, Mother would play our old piano, I played the guitar and Grandpa Barney played the violin to entertain ourselves. When the piano began to sound really bad, Grandpa Barney would show me how to "make it sound better." I use that term because thinking back I wonder how it really sounded. I tuned for friends off and on all my life and although I worked for Kerr McGee I had planned to tune pianos after retirement. In the early 1970's I took a course from Niles Bryant and became certified in 1979. In 1985 I retired as Manager of Technology Licensing for Kerr-McGee and began tuning pianos more or less full time. I have enjoyed the profession and the people I have met, both clients and associates.

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## PIANOS FOR SALE

I have a customer with a Steinway M, serial #396893 (which is about a 1967 model, I think) natural finish all in good condition. She's wanting to sell. She bought it in 1986 or so. Any interested customers? Price?? She paid about \$19,000 for it from Sherman Clay. For more info, contact Gary Bruce 348-3213.

KG2 – great condition, antique white. \$10,000. Will split commission. Contact Tim Hast 359-0440

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## ONLY IN THE LIFE OF A PIANO TUNER...

I was repinning some flanges on a Kimball console. My pin case was on the bench to my left with the #20 hole open. My overhead door was open and a bee came in, circled my head a couple times, then sat down next to the open pin case hole. Naturally, I stopped working to see what he had in mind. Without much hesitation he crawled part way into the #20 hole. I had three pins still in the hole. He went all the way in, then his rear end came part way out and from underneath his body a pin came scooting out onto the table. Soon another pin was pushed out, then the last pin came out and I could see that he was pushing it with his front legs toward his rear until it fell completely out of the hole. He stayed for a few seconds, then flew away.

## CHAPTER TWO:

The next day, I was again working on the Kimball action when a bee came in. He didn't bother to circle this time, but went straight to the #20 hole. It had to be the same bee because he knew exactly where to go. I

watched as the bee (I had to stop referring to it as a “he”) laid an egg in the now empty #20 hole and flew away.

Taught me something about bees, now maybe I need to learn a little about the birds. This is a true story! I have witnesses.

Gene Black

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“I CAN HEAR JUST FINE!”

Three retired piano technicians, each with a slight hearing loss, were playing golf one fine March day. One remarked to the other “Windy, isn’t it?” “No,” the second man replied, “it’s Thursday.” And the third man chimed in, “So am I. Let’s go have a beer!”

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REMEMBER TO ALWAYS REACH FOR THE BEST THAT IS WITHIN YOU.

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HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL ON OCTOBER 16 AT KEITH MCGAVERN’S

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President – Bob Scheer  
Vice President – Ben Davis  
Secretary – Keith McGavern  
Treasurer – Gary Bruce  
Newsletter Editor – Barbara Bonham

Have you marked your calendars for the 2004 TSA Convention? If not, stop whatever you are doing right this minute and RESERVE THOSE DATES NOW – MARCH 11-14, 2004!

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Do you know that the part number for ordering (from Schaff) a universal/adjustable grand hammer shank suitable for an emergency is 911?

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