

THE SOONER TUNER
Newsletter of The Oklahoma Chapter 731 of the Piano Technicians Guild, Inc.
JANUARY 2005

COMING EVENTS:

JANUARY – The January meeting will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2005 at 8:30 AM at Larsen's/Brook Mays located at 4001 NW 63rd in Oklahoma City. Ben Davis will present the technical. The topic is "Troubleshooting Sticking Keys – the Bobbles and the Buzzes", followed by a general discussion on research into the Science of Psychological Piano Work or "A Day In The Life of Ben Davis".

FEBRUARY - The February meeting will be held on Thursday, February 17, 2005 at 8:30 AM.

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I've learned that the less time I have to work with, the more things I get done.

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PRESIDENT'S PEARLS OF WISDOM:

Happy New Year to all! This is the time of year to make New Year's resolutions. Mine seem to be the same every year: to "lose weight" and "get more organized". The weight loss resolution usually lasts until I get hungry and the organizational thing seems equally hopeless. I am considering taking some computer courses, but only if they have big simple words and a lot of pictures. Since our work is basically 18th Century Technology, it is hard for me to come up to the 21st century. Running a more efficient business really does make good sense (so I've been told). January is a good time to think about better time management, better record keeping, evaluating pricing versus cost of living and a good time to take a good look at where things are heading and where you want to go. Whatever your resolutions may be, I hope you have a great year in 2005.

Bob Scheer, RPT
President – Edmond, OK

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REMEMBER THAT MOST OF THE ANSWERS YOU NEED ARE WITHIN YOU.

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TECH TIP – THOUGHTS ON TREATING PINBLOCKS

If a pinblock becomes repaired as a result of tapping pins and/or using tuning pin solution/CA glue and allows the piano to hold a tune indefinitely, why not? Theoretically, a new pinblock is required only when the old pinblock is not longer salvageable.

Keith McGavern, RPT
Shawnee, OK

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT:

I would like to request that all RPT's volunteer to teach a class during the next few months. Also, I invite any Associate members to teach a class on a subject that you are interested in pursuing. Thank you for your cooperation in this task of furthering all of our skill levels.

Ben Davis, RPT
Luther, OK

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REMEMBER THAT YOUR LIFE CAN BE WHAT YOU WANT IT TO BE.

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NUDITY

A man was driving with three young children one warm summer evening when a woman in the convertible ahead of them stood up and waved. She was stark naked! As the man was reeling from the shock, he heard his 5-year-old shout from the back seat, "Dad! That lady isn't wearing a seat belt!"

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

At the beginning of a new year, I tend to look back over the past year and think about the blessings in my life. Throughout the years, no matter whether business has been prosperous or lean, no matter whether times have been good or bad, the one constant in my life has always been my friends. I cherish the friendships that I have – both old and new. As I begin the new year I look forward to the times spent with friends during this year. I am thankful for all of my friends and for the kindnesses they have shown to me throughout the years. Too often we all take our friendships for granted. When was the last time you took a friend to a movie that for an instant relieved them of burdens they carried? When was the last time you made them see another side and they realized that things weren't so bad after all? When was the last time you inspired them to do better and to feel better? When was the last time you told a joke that made your friends eyes water from the laughter? When was the last time you did one of those things for a friend? I challenge each of you to do something special for a friend this year to let them know how much they are appreciated and how much you care. Friends are far more precious than jewels. I wish you all a year of good health, happiness and above all, good friends.

Barbara Bonham, Editor

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CAN YOU TUNE A PIANO WITH A GAS KEY?

Are you familiar with those gas valve keys like you see by gas fireplaces? They fit over square valve stems about the size of piano tuning pins. Well...I have a client who recently purchased a Cable spinet piano and he would answer the above question this way: "Yes, but you have to spray a lot of WD-40 around the tuning pins first." I swear I'm not making this up!

Early last month I went to tune this piano for a man who had considered buying a piano from us several months earlier. He had made us a low offer, which we had turned down, and apparently he had kept looking

until he found this spinet at his desired price. He paid us to move it, but decided to save the cost of tuning by doing it himself. How hard could it be, anyway? His wrenches and sockets wouldn't fit the square tuning pin shape so he decided to use the one tool he could find to fit: his fireplace gas key. Only one problem, though: for some reason, the pins were too tight to turn. Solution? You guessed it! It works on tight nuts and bolts, so why not?

Here's how the story unfolded. On first inspection I noticed a section of about ten notes in the high treble that were horribly out of tune. Some notes were very high, others very low. The rest of the piano sounded evenly low in pitch, as one might expect from a piano neglected for several years. Upon closer inspection, I noticed a darker color and a shinier look to the tuning pins in this section. I asked the wife who had welcomed me at the door if she knew anything about this. She gave me an awkward smile. "Did your husband by any chance spray WD-40 on this piano?" I asked. "Yes, I think so." "But why?" "Because the pins were so tight he couldn't turn them." "What kind of tool was he using?" I asked. "You're not going to believe this," she said, and she returned from their den with the gas fireplace key.

I explained to her why tuning pins were designed to be very tight and described the damage done. She shook her head and told me that this was just one more example of her well-meaning do-it-yourselfer husband's blunder into something he knew nothing about in an attempt to save money.

Fortunately, only about two dozen tuning pins are affected in the vicinity of C7 (about an octave down from the top). The rest of the piano tuned well. The affected pins are quite loose and ratchety; impossible to set where I want them. I'm open to advice here. Should I take the piano out to a remote cliff somewhere, or just the guy who "fixed" it?

David Bonham, RPT
Oklahoma City, OK

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President – Bob Scheer
Vice President – Ben Davis
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