

The Sooner Tuner

Official Newsletter of the Oklahoma Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild, Inc.

August 2006 Edition

President's Message

I'm guessing that most of us have, at one time or another, encountered the customer who is unhappy with their new piano purchase. It is difficult for many people to understand why the piano that they spent a great deal of money on is already out of tune, and notes are sticking etc.

The fact is, it is not possible for any manufacturer to keep every piano tuned for a year or so until the strings stabilize, nor is it possible to place every instrument in every imaginable temperature and humidity environment, and play them until the felts compact, etc. All pianos require a breaking in period which usually takes a year or two. So, clicks, rattles and buzzes occur in all pianos regardless of the brand, size, or quality. Most of the problems that occur take little time to fix. Our most important job is to MAKE THE CUSTOMER HAPPY! Pianos are very personal items for those who play. They are not comparable to a microwave oven or TV. It is important to listen attentively to the customers complaints, and even if we don't agree with their preference in voicing and touch, we must remember, it is THEIR piano and we should do everything possible to achieve the sound and feel that makes them happy. Many times the customers choice of instrument may not be the brand, size, or quality that we would have preferred or recommended, but nevertheless, it is never wise to criticize the manufacturer or the dealer that sold it to them. I believe that improvements can be made on any instrument regardless of the quality. See you at the Bonham's for boating, brotherhood, and barbeque!

Bob Scheer, RPT
Oklahoma Chapter President

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Norm's Noncents

This is the time of year when we are involved in back to school preparation of pianos. Whether you are servicing a university or just getting the kids pianos back in shape for piano lessons to start back up there seems to be a lot of tuning. This is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand you get into great tuning form. Your decision making processes are faster. Your anticipation of where the piano will go when you change the pitch is keen. You get into a rhythm that allows for maximum efficiency.

On the down side it is easy to be overwhelmed by the mass of work and to allow speed to dominate accuracy.

The scheduled next call to distract from finesse. The body is only capable of so much output in a given time period. The excessive heat of late only serves to detract from that capacity. The best advice is to pace yourself and aim for doing your best work in the time allotted. Do some warm up stretching exercises before you begin tuning and take a few breaks to work the kinks out of your neck and shoulder muscles as well.

Norman Cantrell, RPT

Upcoming Events

August Meeting will be Thursday August 17th at 6:00-8:30 p.m. at the home of David and Barbara Bonham; 10717 Eastlake Circle, OKC. This will be our summer picnic. Barbeque Bob will once again bring the main course prepared to a delectable T. Others are asked to bring a dish to share with the group.

~ The September meeting will be held at the shop of Ben Davis on September 21 at 8:30 a.m. Details to follow ~

Technical Tip

When you are tuning a grand piano in a noisy environment it can be quite distracting to hear all that is going on with the piano. Try using the lid to help focus the sound toward you. This can be accomplished in one of two ways. First fold the small half lid back into the closed position but keep the lid prop in place. This additional cover over you will force sound to focus where you are. A second option is to lower the entire lid to the closed position. Use a short lid prop or dowell to prop only the small lid open. This will also focus the sound toward you and still allow you access to the tuning pins and strings.

(This tip comes from the class by Mike Miccio from Rochester, NY entitled “Concert Prep Yourself”)

Oakie Doakie Piano Supply

We thought it was time to introduce some of the people here at the company that make Oakie Doakie Piano Supply the best in the business. Anyone can open a piano supply house but it is the people who develop the products and give their best in customer service who make the difference you have come to expect with Oakie Doakie.

We have mentioned Clem in R & D before. Clem Lester comes to us from a long line of piano professionals. The Lester family has its roots in the Philadelphia area where they produced a fine line of pianos endorsed by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. Clem disappointed his father by leaving Philadelphia and striking out on his own. The Lester family's loss was Oakie Doakie's gain. After leaving Pennsylvania Clem traveled to Oklahoma where took up residence in Gotebo. His talents as a piano technician were soon recognized and he became the head technician at the Gotebo Agricultural and Industrial School for the Arts and Sciences. Clem used his influence to make Gotebo A&ISAS the first all Lester School in America. This distinction is unique in America to this day.

Clem used his connections at the school to get a double associate's degree in Industrial Design and Agricultural Mechanics. These talents and skills have helped make Clem one of the most innovative engineers in our Research and Development department. The next time you call in an order and Clem happens to answer the phone, you will have a story to go with that friendly voice on the other line.

Oakie Doakie Supply: We care about technicians and the pianos they service!