

THE SOONER TUNER

Newsletter of The Oklahoma Chapter 731 of the Piano Technicians Guild, Inc.
March 2008

COMING EVENTS

MARCH – This months meeting March 20th at 8:30 AM will be held at Jordan Bruce’s house. The Technical will be, “The Process of Piano Evaluation in the Field”. Jordan has several uprights there that we will go through and discuss how we would approach remedies and cost considerations.

Take the Broadway extension to Danforth and go west to Kelly. Turn right (north) and go past Waterloo to the next Stop. That will be Charteroak. Turn right and go to the first left which will be Hillcrest. Jordan’s is the 3rd house on the left. 314-2407, or 413-8863 if you need further assistance. See you then!

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We are entitled to our own opinion but not our own facts. Joe Biden

Facts are stubborn things. Ronald Reagan

You can keep your facts man, we stick with the truth here! Stephen Colbert

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Lubricants??!! Which one to use? Which one is best? Did you know that there are 22 lubricants listed in the new Schaff catalogue There are lubricants for every probable need in piano work. Isn’t it great to have all these “state of the art” products at our disposal? They can certainly save us a lot of time, and they can be very effective.

However, there can also be a downside to their use. For example, the temptation can be all too great to squirt a little something or other in, or around the area of a squeaking pedal in order to do a quick fix and be on our way. But what would be the cause of the squeak? If the noise is being made because of worn felts, worn parts, or perhaps a creaking pedal board, then the “lube job” will only temporarily mask the symptom, but not address the real problem. Or how about that tight flange? How permanent is that shot of Protek? Would repining be better?

Many of our customers can’t tell the difference between a finely tuned piano and one that is slightly out of tune, otherwise they wouldn’t wait several years between tuning. However ALL of them can tell if a note isn’t playing correctly, or if there is a foreign sound where it shouldn’t be. Whether or not we add a permanent customer to our clientele may depend on whether our repairs are permanent.

Someone once said, “If you don’t have time to fix it right the first time, when will you have time to fix it right the second time?”

Bob

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## **I made more lousy pictures than anyone in history. Humpfrey Bogart**

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### **Detail Mishaps:**

There are lots of little details that go into every service call that really can become very routine. I often find myself cutting corners and figuring “I will ask when I get there” or just assuming that the customers already know how long it will take to fix a broken key or if the piano needs a pitch raise. Of course neither are true. I have found many times over that it is better to take the time on the phone to set up the appointment as much as possible with all the details. It is after all your first impression.

Here is a story of a detail I goofed on, not that I skipped, but I could not read my own writing! (hey I am a doctor of pianos, so I am supposed to, like all doctors, have bad hand writing!)

I received a routine phone call from a friend of the family wanting a standard tuning. The friend also informed me that the bench had a broken leg from a “wrestling incident” from her son and wanted me to repair it. I had never been to their home and naturally asked for the address when I scheduled the appointment. When I arrived to tune the piano the following week, I went and rang the doorbell. A young man (about my friends sons age) in a wrestling sweatshirt answered the door. I figured it was a son I had not yet met and stated I was here to tune the piano. He told me his mom was not home yet and directed me to the piano bench with a broken leg. I asked to borrow a chair to sit on for the tuning and went ahead and tuned the piano. The young man came up after I was finished and thanked me for coming. He said he had been trying for a long time to get his mom to call a tuner and was glad she finally did! I accepted the thanks, took the broken bench and headed off for my lunch break. About thirty minutes later I get a phone call from my friend who I had a 11:00am apt that day.

The conversation went like this:

Me: Bruce Piano, this is Jordan.

Friend: Jordan, are we still scheduled for today? It is almost 1:pm and we haven’t heard from you.

Me: I just finished tuning your piano! Your son helped me load the broken bench. It’s in my truck.

Friend: No....Jordan I have been in the piano room all morning working on filing papers and no one has touched my piano!

Me: What?!? I Promise All tuned up! You have a Wurlitzer Console correct?

Friend: No Jordan, I have a Kawai Studio!

Me: Oh no! What is your address??

Friend: 1907 Place

Me: I just tuned 1901 place’s piano and I have their broken bench.!!!!

To make a long story short, these people had never called me, or another tuner to come over. It was a plan to do so but had not yet been done. I just showed up because I could not read my address I had written down, and had tuned the wrong piano. It was just a coincidence that they had a broken bench as well. You can’t make this stuff up folks! Weird.

I rescheduled the friends appointment and fixed the bench handsomely. I also fixed the bench of the “detail mishaps” home and left them an invoice and for the tuning and repair for which they agreed to the price of services.....I am still waiting on that check (six months and counting)

Moral of the story.....

I need a secretary to type out my appointments!! Possibly a very attractive one  
Happy Tuning!!!.....  
Jordan Bruce  
Associate Member

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### **Elayne Boosler quotes....**

**"I've never been married, but I tell people I'm divorced so no one will think there's something wrong with me."**

**"You never see a man walking down the street with a woman who has a little potbelly and a bald spot."**

**"Wouldn't it be great if you could only get AIDS from giving money to television preachers?"**

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### **Dealing with assumptions can be "interesting" at times:**

That great line from that 70's movie "...the word assume makes an ass out of u and me" comes to mind. I was called upon to service a piano in Moore. The father of the household began to try and explain the problem to me. I recognized a West African accent right away having spent much time with them in Pittsburg, Kansas. The way they speak English and the culture itself is very unique to say the least.

For example:

When I arrived at their home he told me he wanted to have the piano fixed because he didn't want to be responsible for killing his child's dream. How 'bout that? In that household living your dream is important! Another thing...every truly special occasion like a wedding or a graduation is celebrated by the butchering of a goat. They would chop up all the pieces, and I do mean all, (I even found a few teeth once) and cook them with this really tasty red sauce and rice. The butchering process is pretty wild and joyful, and messy. They try to have fun every chance they get and at whatever they are doing.

Back to the piano:

He began to describe a key that was stuck down and a few other things which made me think plastic elbows or broken key. He did not know the brand but that it was waist high which led me to assume spinet with plastic parts. I brought along my sack of Vagias elbows and determined to brace for plastic flanges.

When I got there it turned out to be a Baldwin spinet (I really like to work on Baldwin) which, instead of elbows had a flat piece of slotted wood that the hooked part of the sticker fit up into. There was bushing cloth in there, and gravity held it in place. Pretty good idea really, but maybe not good enough to repeat. The slot being toward the front of the wood made this the weak link. This part of course had broken off and the sticker was just hanging there limp. Instead of ordering the part, removing the action, and repining the wippen, I chose to search the bottom of the piano, sort of like dumpster diving and look for the piece and guess what, down amongst the pedal assembly was the piece I needed.

I used the Scheer technic of starting with Titebond and clamp, then applying penetrating ca glue for instant set. Realizing the family was watching every penny getting their new start in America I chose the inexpensive route, there I go again making assumptions! They may have been wealthy Nigerians in the oil business! I was amazed at how strong the glued part was though. Test blows revealed this. The most difficult assumption there is, is trying to assume which stuff NOT to take. The father was very happy and I got some

more tunings out of it.

A lot of people know exactly how their day is going to go, but we don't do we!

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Cactus Cuties

(youtube)

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I don't know the key to success but the key to failure is trying to please everybody. Bill  
Cosby

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President – Bob Scheer  
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