

THE SOONER TUNER

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

COMING EVENTS

JULY – Saturday July 26th at 4:30 at the Bonham home will be the OKC PTG Picnic. There will be no regular meeting. If you have not done so already, you must let Barbara know you're coming and what you will be bringing as a side dish etc. She would like for you to choose. [HYPERLINK "mailto:barbbonham@cox.net"](mailto:barbbonham@cox.net) barbbonham@cox.net Ski boat, hydra bikes etc., will be there as well as good food and conversation. It's always great! See you then.

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## **Yogi Berra quotes:**

**All pitchers are liars or crybabies.**

**If you don't know where your are going,  
you may end up someplace else.**

**We have deep depth**

**You wouldn't have won if we'd beaten you.**

**How can you think and hit at the same time?**

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Anyone who has ever done or has attempted to do veneer work, knows how difficult it can be. Whether one is veneering an entire panel, or patching in a missing or broken area, at the least, it can be exasperating.

It is fascinating to me to see some of the complex veneer work on old pianos that were made before electric power tools of any kind were made, much less the precision tools available today. Animal hyde glue was probably the only glue available, and surely, was difficult to keep a consistency while working a large area.

I wonder how they were able to cut a thin, even sheet of veneer using the tools they had available. But yet, we've seen those buryl walnut uprights that are book matched from top to bottom. Has anyone seen a modern piano made in the last forty or fifty years that had this type of craftsmanship? I haven't. It's a shame that this high level of craftsmanship will probably never be seen in piano manufacturing again.

Some of the earliest American veneer artists were actually Native Americans. One tribe in particular was famous for their quality veneers. Even today, after all of those years, we still find "Sioux Veneer" shops all across the country!.....Sorry about that!.....I really am! See you at the barbeque.

Bob
Bob Scheer, RPT

Things you don't want to hear during surgery:

- 1) Better save that, we'll need it for the autopsy.
 - 2) Someone call the janitor, we're going to need a map.
 - 3) Accept this sacrifice, O great lord of darkness..
 - 4) Spot!...Spot!... bring that back here!
 - 5) Wait a minute, if this is the spleen, then what's that?
 - 6) Hand me that...that, uh....thingy.
 - 7) OOPS! Hey has anyone ever survived 500 ml of this stuff?
 - 8) Could you stop that thing from beating? It's throwing my concentration off.
 - 9) What do you mean the patient wasn't in for a sex change.
 - 10) Has anyone seen where I left that scalpel?
 - 11) I hope his family won't miss him.
 - 12) Page 47 of the manual is missing.
 - 13) Don't worry, I think it's sharp enough.
 - 14) Fire! Fire! Everybody get out!
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Softening Knuckles (the piano's, not yours)

Put a center pin in some needle nose vise grips and clamp it down tightly. Stick the pin between the buckskin cover and the inner felt of the knuckle, then move the pin all the way around the circumference of the inner felt, pulling out on the buckskin as you go. You are trying to stretch the buckskin out a little, and separate any bonding with the inner felt. You can also use a voicing needle on the inner felt to soften it.

Dean May, Terre Haute, IN

Measuring & Ordering a Wound String

If the remaining string of a unison is present, mic its core and wrap. Measure hitch pin to a point in line with it's mate's wrap. Measure the length of the mate's wrap. Now to order a string which will ultimately pull to those specs and align well in the string series: Subtract 1/8" from the hitch pin to start of wrap length and 1/4" from the length of wrap length. If replacing a missing single string, measure to points aligned with its neighbors. Masking tape placed across the gap at the ends of the wrap indexes well. Specify to the string maker to make the string 'to these specs' so they won't do something similar to accommodate the stretch factor and your replacement will be way off.

Jon Page, Harwich Port, MA

ALIGNING GRAND ACTIONS

There was a brief discussion at the May meeting about the possibility of using a capstan or screw in the dags to stop the action at the correct position when pushing it back into the piano. This discussion applies mostly to Steinways, but also to some earlier Baldwin pianos and possibly other brands.

The procedures of aligning hammers to strings, fitting hammers to strings and voicing the hammers,

necessitate pulling the action in and out of the piano literally hundreds of times. Therefore, this should receive scrutiny because any repetitive movement on this level adds a great deal of time to the job.

I looked in three different models of Steinways and determined that there is simply no clearance to install a screw or capstan and still have the action align properly. Even if room was available, it would require additional tools for correct drilling angle into the dags. I arrived at an easier, alternative method.

With the cheek blocks in place, I used a white charcoal pencil (available at any art supply store) and made a mark on the key bed at the left and right ends of the front of the key frame. This is my regular method of aligning the action by sight. I pulled the action out. Then I took a cardboard punching and cut it in half. I used a piece of my traveling tape to hold the punching inside the dag. I pushed the action back into the piano until it stopped. I slowly put the cheek blocks in place and watched to see if the action moved. If the action moved toward the player, then I knew I needed more punchings. If the cheek block would not go down on to the key frame pin, then I knew that I used too thick of a punching(s). In my case, I was lucky and got it right the first time. However, it is my belief that this alignment process with punchings would take very little time.

In a comprehensive regulation, we have to look at many different parts for the tiniest deviation from proper alignment. We can eliminate yet another alignment issue by doing this simple procedure. The result for me was that the overall tedious nature of the job was reduced, and therefore definitely worth the effort.

There are people in our chapter who can look at a key that is not level and immediately determine that a .010 punching is needed. I am not at that level yet. As I continue to practice this craft, I am confident my adjustments will be more accurate. This will, in turn, minimize the amount of times the action must be pulled out of the piano. Until that time, I will continue to use the alignment procedure with punchings. I hope this will help you as well.

Sincerely,
Greg Lynch, RPT

President – Bob Scheer
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