

THE SOONER TUNER

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

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER – This month's meeting will be on Thursday at 8:30am, Thursday the 16th, at David and Barbara Bonham's home.

Directions: From Hefner and MacArthur, go south to the first street. Turn right and then right again on Eastlake Circle. Can't miss it! Just go to the end. Call 405-721-0566 if you need help.

David will be doing the technical on:

- 1) Repairing a broken key
- 2) broken hammer shank repair
- 3) Soundboard problems and solutions.
- 4) Demonstrate his method of transporting grand and upright actions in a small car.

Come with calendar in hand as we choose a time for the yearly Christmas dinner. Gary Bruce has offered to host it at his new home. (I think I have that right). See you then!

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I'm thankful for laughter except when milk shoots out of my nose.

--Woody Allen

If only God would give me a sign, like making a huge deposit for me in a Swiss bank.

--Woody Allen
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FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Did you ever have "one of those days"? Recently, after a particularly long and grueling day of tuning, I decided that, after dinner I would go out to the shop and check on a baby grand I had been refinishing. It looked fine, and was ready for the final rub out, but I reluctantly decided that the top could use one more coat of clear lacquer. Since it would only take a few minutes, it seemed like a good idea.

So, I turned on the compressor and started spraying. Just as I reached the exact center of the top, the lacquer filled cup suddenly decided that it didn't want to be associated with the spray gun! Yep, you guessed it, the entire contents dumped out on the grand top. Words cannot describe how I felt at that particular moment.... Actually, that's not true! Words DID describe how I felt, and it was lucky for me that no one was around to hear them!

In absolute frustration, I turned off the compressor, put down the gun, and went to the house! Obviously, if I had checked to make sure the cup was securely fastened to the spray gun it wouldn't have come loose, but the whole experience made me seriously question my sanity. I had to ask myself, "What is it about refinishing that keeps me doing it?". Perhaps it's the warm sensation I get when stripper accidentally gets on my skin, that motivates me. Or, maybe it's that feeling of euphoria after spraying in an inadequately vented area all day. Of

course, nothing can match the exhilaration of having both hands in stripper soaked gloves, perspiration pouring in your eyes, all the while a gnat is attempting to make figure eights in your right nostril! There's just nothing like it!

Seriously, though, in a rather masochistic way, I actually do, occasionally enjoy refinishing pianos. There's something about the challenge of transforming an otherwise dull or damaged piano into a thing of beauty. Most of the work we do on a daily basis doesn't make a physical change. Although the instrument might sound and play better, it doesn't look any different. For me, it's fun once in a while to make that physical change, and it's all part of the total piano service experience.

Bob
Bob Scheer, RPT
Edmond, OK

Do not wait for leaders. Do it alone, person to person.
--Mother Teresa

Tips And Tricks

Voicing is a somewhat advanced skill and the amateur should certainly not be learning by trial and error on the stage at Carnegie hall. But you have to start somewhere. So here's a way to get your feet wet— thanks to a roundtable discussion among members of the Baltimore, MD chapter.

1] Learn to Listen. Listening for voicing purposes is a different kind of listening. The piano must be fine tuned beforehand. Once that is accomplished you can then listen for notes that need voicing. This is something that can be done for free, and without worry in regards to damaging the customers piano. You're not making any changes; no needling, no filing. Just listening. Practice "Voicing Listening" on every piano after each tuning.

2] When you feel you have learned to hear differences in tone quality between notes, and are ready to use the needles, first start by 'voicing down' bright notes. Also, it is easiest to begin on vertical pianos where you have ready access to the hammers. Listen for notes that, with an even touch, tend to be 'brighter', 'louder', 'tinnier' than their neighbors. To voice these down insert a shallow needle point (about 1/16") into the hammer at both ends of the string cut-marks (a total of six on a plain wire note). Remember, a little goes a long way. At this point your goal is not to make a perfect match. You are still learning to listen; determining how much change is made to a note by just a little effort. Just listen to the difference made by six jabs. If you feel more is needed do six more jabs, and listen for the difference. Stop here for now. Do this on every vertical piano you tune - just two or three bright notes on each piano. Gradually learn without making any major mistakes on expensive pianos.

Experience: That most brutal of teachers. But you learn, my God, do you learn.
--C.S. Lewis

Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.

--C.S. Lewis

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