PIANO TECHNICIANS

Journal

MARCH 1991

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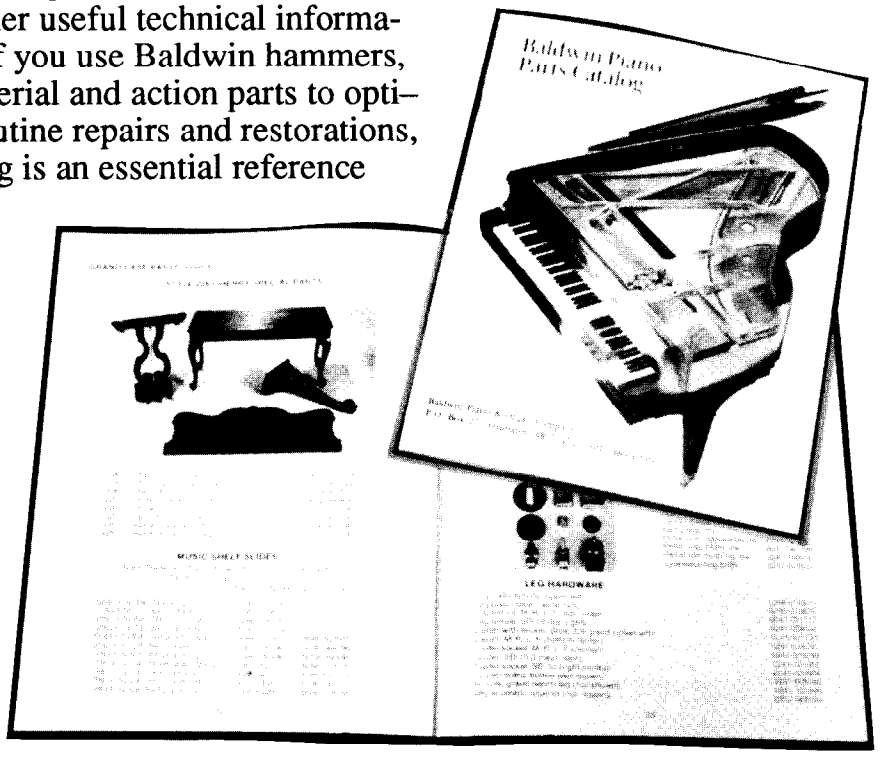

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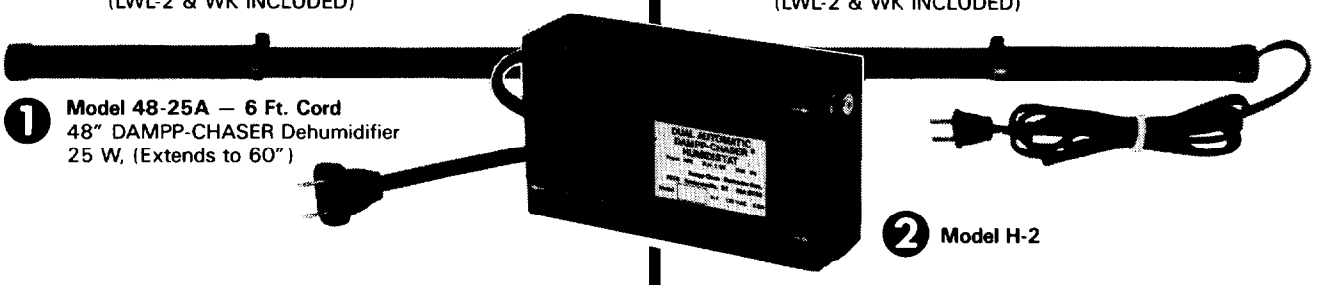

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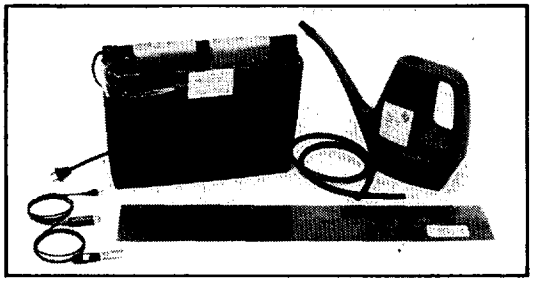
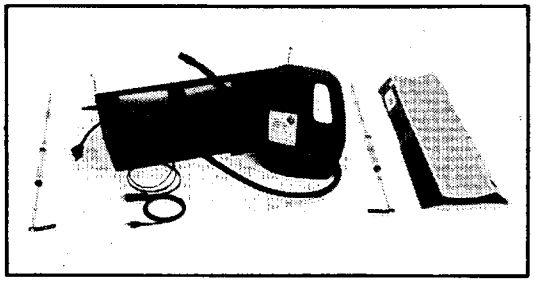


3 **Model HM-2**



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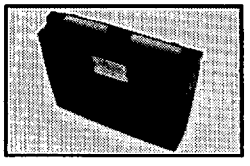
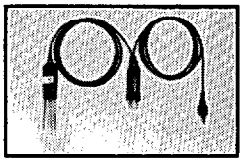
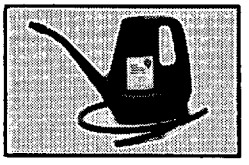


Model HM-1ST
Vertical Humidifier Bucket



Model LWL-2
Vertical & Grand Low Warning Light



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PIANO TECHNICIANS
Journal

MARCH 1991 — VOLUME 34, NUMBER 3 OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE PIANO TECHNICIANS GUILD, INC.

ABOUT THE COVER:
Disaster struck the recital hall at California State University Long Beach. On July 2, the roof of the eight-year-old recital hall collapsed, with the results shown on this month's cover. See story by Kathy Teetsell beginning on page 26.

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE OLD PORT?

New England/Eastern Canada Regional Seminar

April 25-28, 1991
Portland, ME

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Piano Technicians Journal Staff

President's Message

Keeping In A Progressive Mode

Nolan P. Zeringue, RTT
President

Our dues have been $114 for the last 10 years, and even at one point in these 10 years when PTG was very near bankrupt, we were still able to sail along with success. This, without a doubt, is because of the very dedicated people interested in the welfare of PTG and PTG Boards who took their office and duties very seriously. Administrating the annual PTG budget at times was not one of the easiest duties of the PTG Board, but I can assure you during the time I have been involved in Board activities those members whom you have elected to the Board have always been frugal.

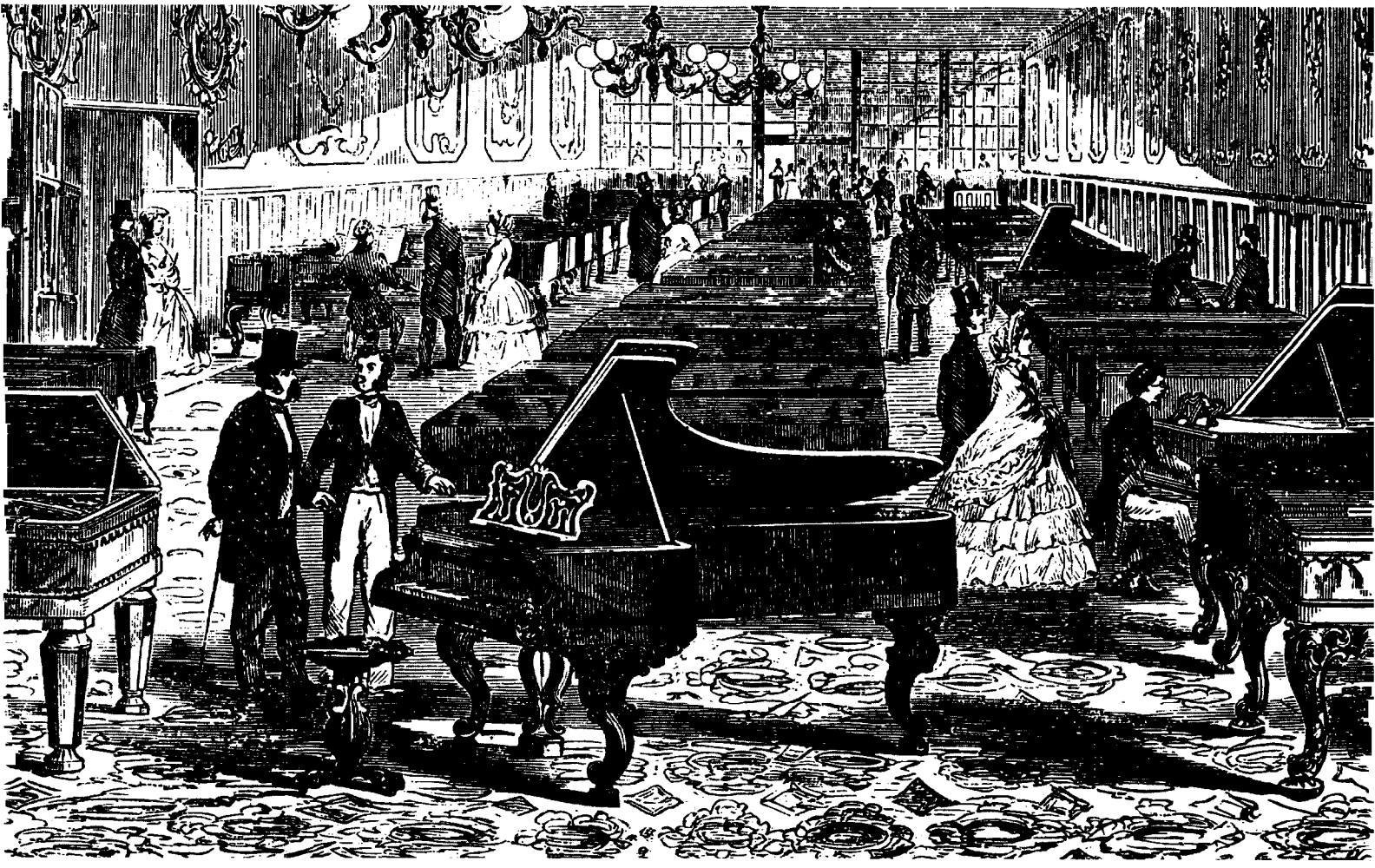
I guess the time has come for the snake to raise its head. The question of a dues increase has been brought before the Board before and has always been rejected. Well, this past January's Board meeting had the question of a dues increase again, and this time there was need for serious discussion. We are coming away from a PTG year that was more costly and a convention in Dallas that was very expensive for more than one reason. The convention this year may just break even.

There are many projects that are going to cost us more as we try to bring PTG to the level of visibility and viability it deserves. Our new marketing program is just one example of a new direction for PTG which will greatly enhance PTG in the marketplace. Another project is the possibility of owning our own building some day. Postage for March, 1981, at 18¢ is going to cost us 62% more in February 1991 at 29¢.

If you would please, take a serious look at our proposed budget and council action for the July 1991 Council meeting. Don't just say yes we accept the increase or no we don't accept the proposal, but be sure your delegate is well informed about what the need is in the proposals that are to be put before Council.

We have come to the time when a dues increase is needed to keep operations in a progressive mode, and I will appreciate your serious considerations of the needs of PTG.

Some manufacturers ask your customers to invest in their past.



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From The Home Office

Remodeling And Reinventing

Larry Goldsmith
Executive Director

During a temporary departure from mental clarity, we decided to remodel our kitchen and bathroom. For months, we pored over magazines, toured hardware and tile stores, talked to contractors. When invited to friends' houses, we gravitated to their kitchens and lingered far too long in their bathrooms, admiring well-executed design details with an interest that was completely unnatural.

To be honest, these rooms needed help. But they were comfortable, if ugly, and most of the fixtures worked most of the time. We had lived with them for years and had adapted to their eccentricities. But the promise of shiny new equipment and a layout dictated more by utility than 60 or 70 years of compromises led us to take the plunge.

It was then that the hard part began. Difficult choices had to be made. Life would have been simpler had we gutted these spaces and installed modern, modular cabinets, counters and fixtures. But some things were worth saving — antique tile, some woodwork, and so on. This was an emotional — and costly — decision, but one which should give us rooms with personality when the process is over. At least that's what the contractor tells us. Visions of "The Money Pit" are constantly with us.

Remodeling is one of those activities that immediately puts us in touch with our limitations, not to mention the laws of physics. You simply cannot have everything you want. You cannot preserve everything that is old and comfortable and have an end product that works. You cannot have *House Beautiful* on a *Popular Mechanix* budget. Compromises and sacrifices have to be made. All you can do is try to preserve the best of the old — its essence and personality — and make it work in the modern world.

I'm sure this is an equation that's totally familiar to anyone who works with pianos. As the expert, you are in a position to tell your client what can be fixed, what must be replaced and what they will simply have to endure, given the economics of the situation. You can say, "Yes, it could be a nice piece of furniture, but it will never again be a worthwhile musical instrument. You choose."

It also applies to organizations like the Piano Technicians Guild — with one important exception. We will — I devoutly hope — be done with our remodeling project at some point. With the Guild, the work of making the organization function at peak efficiency while preserving the things that make us unique is ongoing. Organizations must constantly reinvent themselves. Otherwise, they wither and die. It requires a constant eye on the progress of programs and the influence of outside factors. It requires commitment and participation. It requires a vision of what the organization could and should be. It requires a plan.

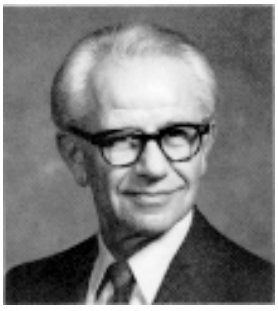
Unfortunately, our decision-making process is cyclical, not constant. Council meets only once a year. As we prepare for this important meeting, you'll be receiving a large amount of information that must be weighed and sifted. Preparation is essential to informed discussion and decision-making. I urge you to study the issues at hand and make sure you have the answers you need to make the best choices for the future of the Guild.

In Memory

A Tribute To Jim Burton

Jack Caskey, RTT
Orange County, CA, Chapter

I was asked to write a eulogy for Jim Burton. How could I refuse such an honor, even though I know it will be difficult to put into words what I hold in my heart for him. Jim is one of my finest and closest friends, and I use "is" because the memories he leaves will always be alive and part of me for as many years as I have left.



Jim Burton, RTT
1914 - 1991

I first met Jim sometime in 1945. He was stationed with the Signal Corps in Seward, AK, which also served as home port for my ship. It became known that if one played a musical instrument the welcome mat was out at the Non-Com Officer's Club. One night, while I was playing, he walked up to the stand lugging his tenor sax. A few nights later he came up again, this time with the tenor and also a valve trombone. He played them both well and I wondered, what kind of guy is this? The next time we played, he asked me if I was a piano tuner. I said, "Well, yes, sort of." (I'd gone to a school and two weeks later was in the armed forces.) When asked why he asked that of all things, he mentioned that he also tuned and evidently I had gotten to the local USO piano a few days before he did — ha! Not only was he a tuner, but his father, and brother were, too — a family affair. It wasn't until the 1950 ASPT Convention in Los Angeles that I met his brother, Bob, and I learned he and Jim had started a rebuilding shop. After some serious soul searching along with an exchange of many letters, the Caskeys pulled up roots in 1951 and moved to the Seattle area to join the Burton Piano Shop. Thus a long, rewarding association began for me, both in the technical and human aspect. Bob, as most of us know, was a natural-born craftsman, and some sort of genius. I, only 29 at the time, was an energetic eager-beaver "sponge," ready to soak up everything I could from those two veterans. Jim, always the business strategist and deep thinker along with his technical skills, kept the operation on track.

Jim later became seriously turned on to PTG after attending a regional convention somewhere in the east during the early 1960s. He became keenly struck with what he felt was the need for the average technician to develop an improved self-image. He saw in PTG a great opportunity to help build his self-esteem. Working together in the shop we had endless discussions on this and other subjects about the "loner" plight of piano tuners. This finally culminated in what was one of the first chapter seminars held independently of PTG-sponsored regional conventions. (Many present PTG members may not realize that at one time there were only the annual conventions and two mid-year regionals.) Jim spearheaded the arrangements and promotion for this first Seattle Chapter Seminar (of what would become an annual affair — later emerging in the present Northwest Conference). The idea was to pay an expert instructor's transportation and hotel to come to head up the program. We also had a theme which we would treat thoroughly for the two days instead of a number of workshops. Our first expert from out of town was Don Morton. The theme was, naturally, "Professionalism And The Piano Technician." Our second seminar was on the subject of tuning. We concluded that most tuners, because they usually worked in an isolated atmosphere, were never able to compare their techniques, or lack of same, with anyone else. Harvey Smith, a reputable tuner in Los Angeles, who also lectured his peers on professional ethics, put on a magnificent two-day program on the many and varied aspects of tuning, our daily work, ending with a complete tuning of a piano in front of 30 or 40 tuners — a feat probably seldom if ever, done. Harvey had some serious misgivings about exposing himself this way before coming to us but decided to bite the bullet and go through with it. Afterward, he became enthusiastic about the idea and "The Tuning Concert," as it was captioned, became an added attraction to annual PTG conventions for a number of years following.

Around 1964, Allen Pollard, then the Executive Secretary, was leaving his post, as was Leslie Hoskins, editor of the *Journal*. People such as Chuck Burbach, Wendell Eaton, Les Hoskins and others urged Jim to interview for the job. I strongly urged him also, as he possessed great administrative capabilities as well as fully understanding the piano tuner and his many problems and potential. He was selected to become Executive Secretary under the presidency of Chuck Burbach. He also inherited the added job of being the editor of the *Journal*.

continued on page 11

KEYSTONE...

The Philadelphia Story

Ernie Juhn, RTT
1991 Institute Director

As time progresses we try to refine our methods and broaden our knowledge. We often wish to know how various technicians do different jobs in their own time-proven way. At the 1991 Technical Institute we will have an excellent opportunity to make this wish come true.

Some similar subjects will be covered during different class periods as well as by different instructors, all of them experienced and knowledgeable. Grand and vertical regulation from basic steps to the most sophisticated concert preparation. Producing better tone in new and used pianos, is one of the many subjects explored in detail. From preparation before rebuilding to the most detailed and minute adjustments to make an instrument sound its best at a concert.

You will have a chance to learn why manufacturers do the things they do, certain things that sometimes seem illogical and impractical to some of us — why "they do" certain things and why "they don't" do others. Why action centers influence the tone of pianos and whether or not to install a new soundboard. How to remove pinblocks and how to install the new one.

If you have plenty of business but are too tired, if you suffer from fatigue or stress, you will have a chance to learn how to go about your business in a controlled way, without the harmful effects of slow self-destruction in a class on the "Alexander Technique For Piano Technicians."

I have tried to schedule most class repetitions at different times so registrants will have an opportunity to attend most of the sessions they plan on seeing. In future articles I will also have class write-ups as well as the complete Institute schedule so you will be able to plan ahead and see what interests you most.

For those who fear overcrowded and "full" rooms — I can put you at ease. Most of the classrooms have plenty of seats. In short, the 1991 Technical Institute in Philadelphia is the answer to your continuous education in piano technology and certainly the best way to broaden your knowledge.

OF BETTER PIANO SERVICE

Each month our anticipation of your trip to our lovely region grows. With the tremendous variety of sights and experiences awaiting you here, the hardest part for us is to limit the things we tell you. We have history, we have one of the great American metropolises, we have skyscrapers, Atlantic City, the Wyeths, Valley Forge, horse farms, sport fishing (fresh water and deep sea), Phillies baseball, the Eagles in training only minutes away from the hotel, and we haven't even gotten to Philadelphia itself yet. But that is coming, and it will make your mouth water. Our group is planning things for you that will make your trip here unforgettable.

Upon reading Sandy Hartman's article this month, you may even want to do more than just visit us for the convention — you may end up moving to Bucks County!

Ruth Brown, Host Chair, SEPA

Just outside the portals of the city of Philadelphia, in the pristine beauty of Bucks County, is the last original land grant of William Penn. Know today as Snipe's Farm and Nursery, it is representative of the tenacity with which Bucks Countians labor to preserve the bucolic atmosphere and historic heritage that characterize our landscape.

Nestled among the rolling fields and twisting country roads, historic fieldstone farmhouses and beautifully restored barns whisper of times gone by. Those who wistfully regard the past can follow the tourist commission's circular tour through the dozen remaining covered bridges along charming roads dotted with bed-and-breakfast inns, small wineries and historic homes. A carefully planned trip can make even the most galvanized skeptic wonder what century he has entered. History buffs and those who pine for simpler times will be fascinated by the implements of bygone days in the Mercer Museum. Housed in a distinctive, castle-like concrete building, the Mercer Museum contains an enormous collection (some 40,000 objects) of farm implements and colonial-era tools. A stone's throw away one can visit the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works. Here distinctive ceramic tiles are still made using methods and molds employed by Henry C. Mercer. Around the corner from the pottery sits Mercer's own home. Fonthill is the showcase he built to exhibit his famous collection of tiles. This bevy of museums is perched on the lap of the county seat, in the small-town charm of Doylestown.

Small shops, beautifully maintained Victorian-era homes and posh eateries contrast the hustle-bustle of this lively burgh. Like a dignified colonial lady arrayed in rich silks, Doylestown wears her heritage with grace, infused with, yet unscathed by, 20th century hustle. This is the home of the James A. Michener Arts Center with its sculpture garden and contemporary art exhibitions.

To the north of Doylestown is the lovely Peace Valley Park and recreational paradise of Lake Galena. Sailboats dot the placid blue waters and picnic tables nestle among the trees. Nearby, the beautiful Pearl S. Buck homestead marks the site where this famous author penned her works over a period of 38 years. This 1835 stone farmhouse is a National Historic Landmark.

Lest we neglect a historic landmark of international renown, let us turn southward. Route 611 joins route 202 just south of Doylestown. If we travel east on 202 we will soon find ourselves winding through hamlets laden with antique shops. Scattered among the expansive views of lush rolling fields are developments of colonial-style homes alternating with pastured horse-farms.

Soon we arrive at Peddler's Village, Lahaska. Just past the Quaker Meetinghouse, it is a unique potpourri of shops, restaurants, a dinner theatre, flea markets and horticultural wonders. If you're weary of shopping malls, conventional merchandise and slick stores all in a row, you'll love Peddler's Village. Winding brick walkways bordered by exceptionally exquisite landscaping create the impression of a languid stroll through a garden. A Victorian gazebo overlooks the lush central landscape and provides a picture-perfect setting for community events and an occasional wedding. The water wheel of a reconstructed grit mill splashes rhythmically as a picturesque stream emerges from the opposite side of the walkway. The water cascades over stones and through marsh reeds, under an arched bridge to a large reflecting pool.

Browsing through the delightful shops is a favorite pastime of tourists and residents alike. With everything from ice cream cones to penny candy, and stickers to toys, there is plenty to amuse the younger set. Peach festivals, scarecrow contests and gingerbread house competitions indicate no season is without its own particular attractions here. Everything from locally handcrafted pottery, stained glass, baskets and sweaters to unique children's clothes, gourmet cookware and handmade quilts is obtainable in these distinctive shops. Restaurants range from fast food (Animal Quackers) to inexpensive but delicious and substantial (The Spotted Hogg) to more elaborate (The Cock 'n Bull).

Back on 202 east the adventurous traveler can stop at Bucks County Vineyards for a tour, or continue toward the artists' colony of New Hope. A plethora of shops and restaurants graces this quaint town as well. For a unique experience in recreated history, mule-drawn barge rides are available down the Delaware Canal.

If you travel south from New Hope you'll find yourself on the marvelous trail of history that leads past the Thompson-Neely house and the lookout point marked by Bowman's Hill Tower to the place where George Washington's troops crossed the Delaware in the decisive battle of Trenton. Historically, this was the turning point of the Revolutionary War and occurred on Christmas Day. A reenactment of the crossing takes place every Christmas Day in reproduction longboats by authentically-costumed soldiers. The public that watches from the banks of the Delaware gets a real flavor for the bitter cold and great difficulty of crossing an icy river. Small wonder the Hessian troops were surprised to be attacked. The famous painting of Washington crossing the Delaware can be viewed accompanied by narration in the nearby visitor's center of the Washington Crossing park.

In a very real sense the battle won at Washington Crossing ensured the defeat of the British and launched the great American exercise in democracy. Though there are many more things to see and experience in Bucks County, the essence of the county is to be found in the wonderful balance between history and contemporary living; between the beauty of the rural landscape and proximity to urban cultural centers; between great recreational opportunities and equally wonderful educational attractions. For the ideal family vacation or permanent residency, there is not a lovelier or more stimulating part of the country in which to be. In case you haven't guessed, I'm a born- and-bred Bucks Countian and proud of this special corner of the world. And if your children still want to go to Sesame Palace, well, we have that too!

Sandy Hartman

CONVENTION

Host Chapter To Hold Auction Extravaganza

Webb Phillips, RTT
Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter

Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA), your host chapter, is helping to see to it that our international convention gets bigger and better every year. This year is going to be the biggest and best ever. One of the things that will make it better is the fantastic auction extravaganza and party night, Sunday, July 14. This promises to be the — biggest — best — and most exciting auction you have ever attended. We have done this several times on a smaller scale with great success. This promises to be the *Great Granddaddy of them all.* We should have just about everything imaginable relating to piano servicing, piano remanufacturing, piano use and piano sales.

A sample of items sold at our recent auctions: Sets of Steinway hammers, Imadegawa hammers, many sets of double-wheeled rubber casters, small drill press, large 15" drill press, several Falconwood pinblocks, neckties, books, invaluable collections of felt and leather, center pins, tuning pins, several gift certificates from $10.00 to $100.00 each, Steinway wips, many styles of shanks, flanges and wips, tuning hammers, heat guns, tool boxes, electric drills and screwdrivers, a 15" band saw — tools of all kinds and descriptions just too numerous to mention at this time.

Clam bakes and pig pickin's are great, but you've never had fun like you are going to have at the auction on Sunday night, July 14. This will be the highlight of the convention. Food, entertainment and liquids await you to match the greatest you have ever enjoyed. And, in addition to all of this, it can be an extremely profitable night for you in two ways; first, on the items you sell, and second, on the new piano parts and tools you buy at a terrific savings.

We already have a good start for Sunday, July 14. One of the first to donate tools for this one was none other than Steinway's own Joe Bisceglie, who is not only a tool donor, but has volunteered to be one of the auctioneers. Two more of our premier auctioneers are David Snyder and the song bird of the southeast, Larry Crabb.

I'm sure that all of our suppliers of the past, such as Dampp-Chaser (donated several demo systems to our last auction), Dryburgh Glues, Schaff Piano Supply, Wally Brooks, American Piano Supply, and all the other supply houses, along with many manufacturers, technicians, and rebuilders, will supply us with enough tools and supplies to keep you breathless and attentive all night.

This is a great opportunity for craftsmen as well as associates to pick up IBM-compatible computers, VCRs and trade tapes, tools and parts at a real bargain.

And it's a great chance for *you* to generate some *cash* for those extra *tools and parts* you've wanted to get rid of.

Don't forget this will be the highlight of the convention. So come prepared to make it a profitable night while having the time of your life.

It's already started and this is only the middle of January. Here is a partial list of items to be raffled and auctioned: IBM-compatible computers (you can save big bucks), VCR and trade tapes, such as Yamaha action, Benvenuto S.B. tapes, tuning and refinishing tapes. Steinway hammers, music lamps, Delignit, Falconwood, Maple pinblocks, Super 40-ply pinblocks, piano wire, invaluable collections of felt and leather, gift certificates galore, tools donated by Steinway's own Joe Bisceglie (his own personal tools), Dryburgh Glues, Dampp-Chaser systems, new sets of hammer butts. There jest ain't no end.

Can you imagine what this will be like by July, after all of you technicians send your tools and parts to me to be listed for sale?

Be sure, when you receive your registration packet, that your auction number is included. This is very important. You will be seeing bits of information in the *Leader Letter* and the *Journal* from time to time until July. In the meantime, if you need any additional information, contact Webb Phillips at P.O. Box 392; Hatboro, PA 19040. Tools, parts and any merchandise to be sold are to be shipped to our factory at 1836 Stout Drive, #16; Ivyland, PA 18974. Telephone (215) 674-2555.

When shipping your sale items to us, be sure to tell us if there is a bottom price for each item, or if you will settle for whatever it sells for, less our commission. We can take a commission for selling it, or you tell us what you want for it and we keep all over that selling price.

If you are flying and you buy anything too big to carry — don't worry — we can ship it for you.

So what are you waiting for? Get with it — send us your list now so we can advertise it in the *Journal.* The items can be sent at a later date.

Don't procrastinate — do it now.

Industry News

Young Chang Names New National Service Manager For Acoustic Piano Division

Don Mannino, RTT, has been appointed national service manager of Young Chang America's acoustic piano division, company Executive Vice President, C.O.O. Lloyd Robbins announced. In his new position, Mannino is responsible for answering all service-related questions from Young Chang's nationwide dealer network. Mannino also manages Young Chang's service department and acts as a liaison with the company's technical staff in Korea.

"Dealers who have worked with Don say that he is a people person who knows and understands how to make customers happy," said Robbins.

Prior to joining Young Chang, Mannino operated his own piano service business for 11 years. He provided tuning, maintenance, repair, rebuilding and warranty services for serveral piano companies and dealers in San Diego County. He also prepared concert pianos for famous artists who visited the San Diego area and has provided piano service for the San Diego Opera since 1981.

For the past two years, Mannino has served as chairman of the California State Conference of the Piano Technicians Guild. Mannino oversees the operation of the annual California State Convention each February and also represents the PTG at the annual Music Teachers Association of California convention. In addition, Mannino frequently teaches technical seminars at PTG chapter meetings and was scheduled to teach two classes at the California State Convention in February 1991.

Mannino

He attended San Diego State University, studying music and piano performance. Mannino and his wife reside in Jamul, CA, and will be relocating to the Los Angeles area.

Young Chang America, Inc., located in Cerritos, CA, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Korea-based Young Chang Akki Company, Ltd., the world's second-largest manufacturer of acoustic pianos. It began distributing in the United States 10 years ago.

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The rest is history, and I can testify that there was never a more devoted man to his very difficult job. He spent untold hours on the job thinking, worrying and just carrying out the endless needs of the Guild. His was definitely not an eight-to-five day. He never lost track of the purpose of his work — the needs of the technician, the dream of providing the means for us all to be better at our craft and for raising our status professionally. He was truly the sweetest man I have ever had the privilege of knowing. The many of us in or out of the Guild who rubbed shoulders with him through the years will now miss him greatly. So we salute you, good buddy — yours was a life well lived and we are all better for it.

James H. Burton is survived by Lois, his wife of 55 years, a brother and four sisters. Memorials in his name are suggested to the Emil Fries Piano Hospital And Training Center at 2510 E. Evergreen Blvd., Vancouver, WA 98661. Jim served as a member of the school's Board of Directors until his death.

TECHNICAL FORUM

1991 NAMM Show

Susan Graham, RTT
Technical Editor

If I told you that the mood of this year's trade show wasn't somber, I'd be lying. Affected by the war in the Middle East and the decline of some aspects of the piano business (less serious but more immediate), the atmosphere was definitely quiet and a little apprehensive.

As for the piano, perhaps the most hopeful news is that no one has quit. These are not expansive times and this was not an expansive show. There were very few new models, and changes were subtle rather than showy. An accurate report takes the same tone. It is written as an update of industry news: as always, intended as background material for working technicians — not a critique or an endorsement of any piano or company.

The size of the show is still overwhelming, and some will be left out of this report. My apologies. The information that is here is as accurate as I can make it, and, I hope, useful and interesting as well.

For the past several years most acoustic piano displays were in the ballroom of the Anaheim Hilton, rather than in the Convention Center itself. This year the Center opened a new wing, and pianos were reunited with the rest of the show. This may have improved traffic, but the acoustics were even more difficult than those of the ballrooms. A fine piano on a concrete floor covered by a plush carpet in an enormous room may look marvelous but the sound is literally eaten up by the surrounding materials and the inevitable ambient noise.

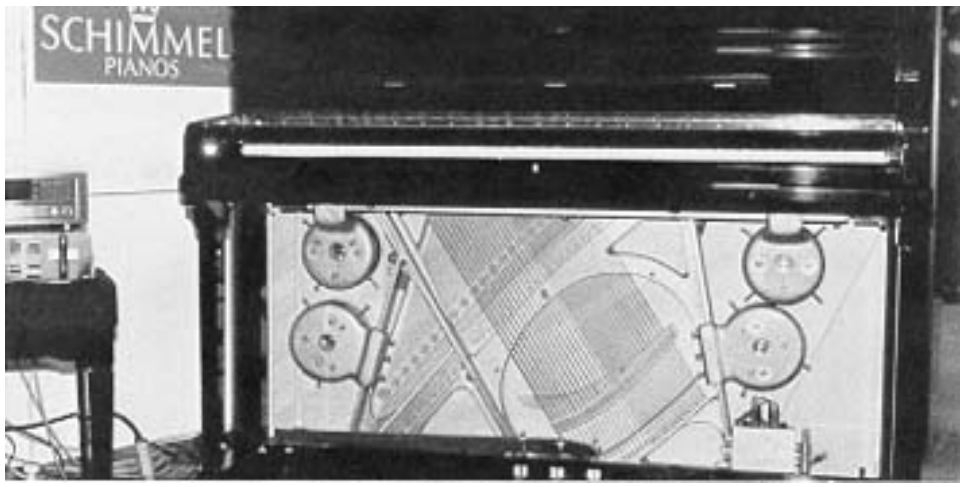
Kawai booth during the deluge (notice flood control device in top right corner just under sign)

Other factors also inhibit accurate evaluation. Some displayers have good luck overcoming the problems of shipping, set-up and technician availability and are able to voice and tweak and polish their instruments to perfection — but who knows if they turn up at the dealers and in homes that way? Others are forced to display straight-from-the-crate, and wrestle throughout the show with the buzzes, instability and just plain crankiness even the finest pianos display under such treatment.

Certainly the most-heroic-of-show award goes to Kawai, which had an extensive display of nicely prepared pianos abruptly disrupted by a fountain of water from a broken pipe — *overhead*. Within minutes the booth was a logjam of pianos and keyboards piled together under a sea of plastic tarps, and it was several hours before the water could be completely shut off. Somehow, by opening time the next morning, the display was back in order: carpet replaced, pianos tuned, plants rearranged, and Ray Chandler looking hardly the worse for wear. When we had a chance to talk, he informed me that changes in the acoustic piano line include redesigning the GS70 grand to increase the vibrating surface of the soundboard, expanding back curve of the case; the center point of crown has been moved to enhance flexibility and response. In the vertical line, the CX21 (48") studio has a stringing scale change to improve the bass/tenor break (the furniture styles also have been changed). There is a new US6X, which replaces the US55, and a US8X to replace the US75. Both are 52", and now have synthetic ivory keytops, as does the rest of the professional upright line. The US8X also features a sostenuto. None of the pianos appear to float, but they all survived the deluge remarkably well.... Ray also reminded me that Schiedmeyer, the oldest name in the piano industry (est. 1735), is now manufactured by Kawai, which markets them in the United States; Ibach leases the name and handles marketing in the rest of the world. They make grands in 5'4", 6'1", and 6'9" and verticals in 45" and 48". They are a distinct scale and design, not stencil Kawais, featuring a more German style of sound and construction.

Another venerable German name, Schimmel, featured a new 8'4" grand with a noticeably more massive case than the traditional "European" style instruments; tone was quite

marvelous in the bass, although a little woody in the high treble. Of interest to technicians is the lyre brace: a simple threaded-rod and cap arrangement which can be adjusted for proper tightness while the lyre is still in place. (Many thanks!) They also have a new 48" vertical with an improved case design, the same soundboard as the 118 and an action featuring longer keys for a more grand-like feel. Schimmel has an extensive design and research department which utilizes CAD and other computer-based technology. One byproduct of machinery designed to test soundboards is the new Audio-Forte system. Drivers similar to speaker magnets are installed in a piano, contacting the soundboard. They can be connected to any audio signal producer such as a receiver or CD player; they turn the soundboard of the piano as a loudspeaker. (The system even divides the signal and sends it to the appropriate area of the board for optimal frequency response). It is available in both vertical and grand pianos, but is not sold separately (the pianos are the standard production line, with a standard soundboard). Sound produced was quite remarkable — the piano can be played at the same time, although I understand pedal usage can create some problems.



Audio-Forte system in the Schimmel vertical

Wandering across the aisle, I came across a new name: Estonia. These pianos are made in the Soviet Union (in Estonia); the company is about 40 years old. They are distributed in Canada by the Oxford Music Group, and in the U.S. by The Piano Group, based in Sarasota, FL. They were showing 6'2" and nine-foot grands, featuring a Schwander style action made by Renner. Verticals are marketed under the Nordheimer name, and are made in four factories also in the Soviet Union. The grands seemed quite presentable, with particularly pleasant tone in the mid-range.

A much more familiar name and product is Kimball. They make three lines of Kimball vertical pianos, all 43". These have new stringing scales, Mapes bass strings, and use the same hammer and action in all three quality lines. The top two lines have solid spruce soundboards, while the lower end Prelude still has laminated basswood. Beyond that, the significant difference between the three lines is cabinet style. An interesting development: when the company surveyed their dealers, they discovered that many of them wanted an "Asian" name to market: they now make the "Shinju" in their Mexican operation, which has been equipped for polyester finishes. The piano is essentially a Prelude, and is also available in a more traditional case as the W.W. Kimball. In the grands: two 4'5" styles: the W.W Kimball, made in Mexico, and the La Petite, which has the Baldwin compact grand action made in Juarez. All keys and the grands are made in French Lick, IN; all the actions (except for the La Petite) are made in Tijuana. Their second line is the Jasper-American series, with a 4'5" grand and a 42" console made in Mexico, and a 43" console made in French Lick with the same action, keys and scale as the Kimball line but a different soundboard and case.

Baldwin is another familiar name. They are now making the B1 grand, with a better case design and a 19-ply pinblock instead of the five-ply originally introduced in this model. The model on the floor put out a lot of sound, although by the time I got to it on the last day of the show, it was quite out-of-tune so tone was difficult to judge. In addition to their domestic grands they carry the Kranich & Bach C141 and C156 and the DH Baldwin C172, made for them by Samick. They displayed their "Dino" case styles at the show. These ivory grands are available in 5'8" and nine-foot. They are made in honor of the Christian musician Dino, who is associated with the 3-C music education promotion (the three Cs are concentration, coordination and confidence). With the ivory cases, a large D embossed on the music desk and the "Dino" signature in gold on the side, there is no mistaking these pianos. Alan Vincent has rejoined the Baldwin piano effort, and is now

Fred Odenheimer studying up on the Estonia grand

The Kimball display

part of the manufacturing management team, while Kent Webb continues as technical services manager. An article in one of the trade show editions of *Upbeat* indicates that Baldwin has contracted with SE Recordings, Inc. to install reproducing mechanisms in Baldwin grands. These systems are CD operated and the mechanism will be completely concealed.

A welcome return of a familiar and venerable name is the re-emergence of the Mason & Hamlin grand. It is now part of what was known as Falcone: the company has been renamed The Mason & Hamlin Companies and makes the A (5'8") and BB (seven-foot) grands and the 50" vertical. Work is also being done to bring the CC (nine-foot) back into production. The Mason & Hamlin and the Falcone are made in Haverhill, MA. The company also manufactures the Sohmer vertical in Pennsylvania. The new Mason & Hamlin grands have maple inner rims (for a time poplar was being used), solid spruce boards and Renner action parts and hammers which are assembled in Haverhill. (Some of you purists may notice that the old fat M&H sharps have been abandoned for a more slender version. Well, we can't have everything...) All cases are ebony, both satin and high gloss, but walnut will be available soon. In particular, one of the BB models on display seemed to be a very nice grand and demonstrated the sound and quality we associate with this name. I have to confess that I was so absorbed with them and in conversing with a rather pleased Monachino that I didn't pay much attention to the Falcones, other than to observe that they continue to be good-sized, good sounding grand pianos.

I had an extremely interesting conversation with Herr Ingbert Bluthner. We are all aware of the drastic political changes in that part of the world. One result is that the former owners of companies which had been nationalized have been given the opportunity to buy back their businesses: Herr Bluthner has regained ownership of his family piano company. It is hardly a simple matter of just stepping in at the controls: the money system and price structure has changed, the factory needs modernization, pollution control and labor laws are suddenly quite different and there is an obvious need for a different marketing strategy. He described it as starting at the beginning — with a tradition to uphold. They see an advantage, however, at having been isolated from the changes which have occurred in the mainstream European piano manufacturing community, feeling that those instruments have developed a characteristic sound while their piano has retained a different quality — Herr Bluthner likened it to the difference between white and red wine. The company is gradually redesigning their entire line, making use of new materials such as multi-ply pinblocks and also returning to traditional features such as the fourth string in the top treble section. This is now done by a much simpler method than the previous altered agraffe. A notch is cut in the capo bar for the fourth string, allowing it to sit enough above the other three strings of the unison so the hammer does not strike it. (A corresponding notch is cut in the bridge to equalize downbearing). The pianos are currently being made with Renner actions and Abel hammers. Production is about 500 units a year, allowing them to emphasize handwork and quality.

Baldwin's "Dino" grand


Paul Monachino, hard at work for Mason & Hamlin Companies

Continuing in a conversational mode, I might report that Steinway, as is usually the case, displayed no pianos and was, in fact, not technically at the show, but was present at a hotel a few miles away. They offered seminars and an opportunity for dealers and technicians to have contact with the folks from New York. I had a quick chat with Michael Mohr about the success of the new service program they offer in the New York area. Steinway customers may purchase a service contract for four tunings and two two-hour seasonal regulation adjustments per year. This has proved very popular and successful in keeping the pianos maintained and the customers free from worry. Any dealers out there paying attention? How about you technicians?

Not everyone is a candidate for the high end, of course, and there are still entry level acoustic pianos on the market. Probably the most basic at the show was the Brentwood. This was introduced several years ago under the name Pearl River. It is the product of the Guangzhou Manufacturing Company in mainland China, and is distributed by Westbrook in Columbia, South Carolina in the east and by Wilton Sykes in Phoenix, AZ, in the west. They still feature a low-end, studio size vertical but will be bringing in 5'3", 5'7" and six-foot grands and are now also offering American furniture styles.

Every now and then they let me off my piano leash and I wander into the rest of the show. In one of these excursions I encountered a Mr. Ludwig himself in the Ludwig drum display. In spite of the cacophonous noise (these halls are accurately described by us hyperacoustive piano technicians as "the zoo"), he was calmly tuning a timpani set with the aid of a pitch pipe. I stopped to shake his hand — sort of a tuners' solidarity — and he explained to me that their timpani heads are now mylar instead of calfskin and can be tuned "to the range" and will stay forever (a tim-

pani plays five difference pitches, varied by a footpedal — they must initially be tuned so that those five notes are within reach). He described the old days of calfskin heads: if the weather was too dry, the low notes went out and the percussionist had to soak rags in water and stuff them inside the drum to moisturize the heads. If, on the other hand, the heads were too damp, the high notes wouldn't sound: standard equipment for the timpani player was a hair dryer, used for several hours to dry out the head. Has the use of mylar affected sound quality? Didn't seem like it. Interesting idea — mylar soundboards...?

In the face of uncertain economic times and the general air of forces hunkered down for a long cold winter, Yamaha has come out with a new grand. It is the C6, checking in at 6'11". The one at the show was, simply put, a very, very nice piano. Almost the entire grand line has been rescaled. The G series now has wound tenor bichords to ease the bass/tenor break; most grands are slightly longer, with longer strings. Pinblocks are being mortised into the stretcher, and most of the pianos have more substantial rims. A "tone collector" has been added to the G series — this is their name for the metal piece installed at the intersection of the beams and the belly rail — also a strengthening factor which may have positive effects on both tone and tuning stability. All grands except the GH, the CF and the S400 have the bolt-within-a-bolt plate mounting system, although the bolts are now hex head and so, from above, have the appearance of the more conventional system. Simply put, this means that a metal sleeve bolt is installed in the inner rim, the plate is set to a height which establishes desirable downbearing, and the internal bolt is installed to hold it in place. (These bolts, being metal to metal, should not loosen but should be checked just like conventional plate bolts.) New grands have the "soft touch" fallboard — a spring in the end pin of the fallboard prevents it from slamming down but allows it to close at a more stately pace. LaRoy Edwards seems reluctant to continue to refer to this case part as a "fallboard" (since it no longer falls). Please direct all ideas for name changes to LaRoy. On a more serious note, the C series grands now have boxwood caps on the top section of the treble bridges: this extremely dense, fine-grained wood is highly durable and is thought to improve transmission of high frequencies. The changes in the acoustic-only grands will also be in the disklavier series. Changes in the vertical lines are mainly in offering new furniture styles and finishes. As most of us know by now, Ray Reuter is the new Piano Service Manager for the company — certain to be a welcome and beneficial addition to the team.

The Young Chang display

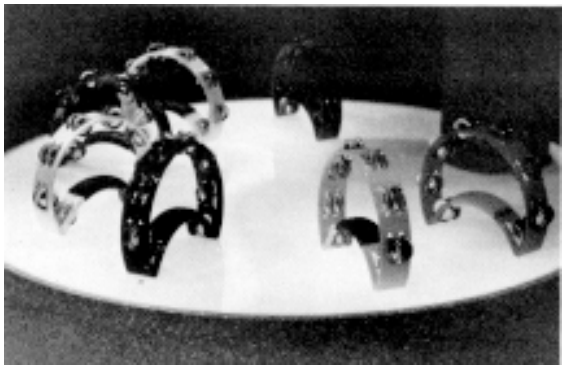
Samick is offering changes in cabinet style, with American-style finishes (being done for them by Kimball) on the 43" console. The same piano is available in a new European style case (no legs). All their vertical pianos include muffler rails: they offer a 46 1/2" school piano with a suitably durable case and locks. Richard Elrod continues as technical services manager for the acoustic pianos.

A new face in this branch of the industry is technician Don Mannino, now National Service Manager for Acoustic Pianos for Young Chang. Don is a highly respected technician, formerly from the San Diego area. He reports that the seven-foot and nine-foot grands have been rescaled. Both have Renner action parts, and the seven-foot has Renner-made hammers as well. All the grand actions have been redesigned for a lighter "feel" — both in actual touchweight and in perceived resistance/inertia. Leads in keys have been moved, jack tender and let-off buttons altered for slight geometric changes, and an auxiliary wippen spring has been added to the 6'1" grand. Individual rest cushions have been eliminated and a rest rail installed. Blow distance has been reduced, and the actions made in Korea now have a softer knuckle core and back rail cloth. These changes should result in quieter and smoother actions. Ibach engineers have assisted the com-

A family business — The Charles R. Walter Company


Boesendorfer

Hyundai



Tambourines have a new shape

pany to redesign the 116 (46") studio. Young Chang now owns Kurzweil, a premier digital synthesizer. As ever, this company is exploring new possibilities while they seek to improve the products they already have.

Renner is pleased to be part of the Mason & Hamlin/Falcone endeavor by providing hammers for all pianos. Rick Baldassin tells me they now have shanks made to exact dimension for New York Steinway pianos (slightly different from the hybrid produced for Steinway themselves to use). Renner has two new grand hammers in their "blue" series, both with longer moldings. All of this line of grand hammers are now being made with mahogany moldings, and the T-pin (or "staple") has been eliminated.

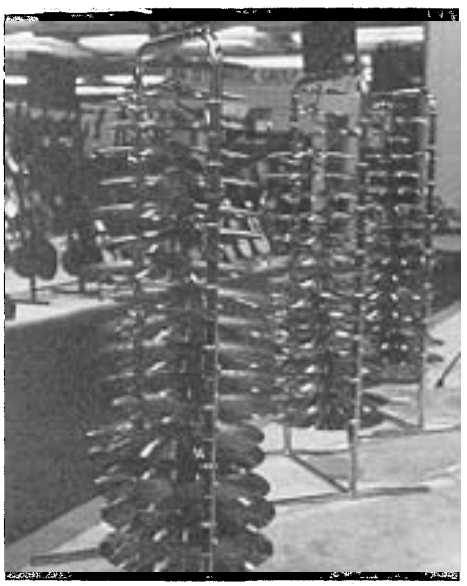
A supplier undergoing significant changes is Kelly. They opened a new finishing plant for grand plates in Jonesboro, AR; casting is still done in Springfield, OH. They supply plates for Baldwin, Kimball, Steinway, Mason & Hamlin and Wurlitzer, and can now utilize traditional sandcasting while taking advantage of more modern equipment in the new operation. Appearance of the various plates around the show was definitely very good.

Lyon & Healy, the biggest harp company in the United States, now owned by Salvi, are distributors in North America of the Grotrian pianos: grands in 5/5", 6/3", 7'5" and 9'1", and also the line of verticals. They carry Lyon & Healy pianos made for them by the Dutch company Ripon. These are 42", 43", 45", 46", 47" verticals and a 5'3" grand, all using a Langer action.

One of the most notable and consistent names in a studio size is Charles R. Walter, making 43 1/2" and 45" pianos in the classic American style. They use mainly Herrberger, Brooks actions, with a few of the pianos containing a Pratt-Win product. They are justifiably proud to inform us that their pianos are now being carried in the Steinway Hall showroom in New York — the only name other than Steinway. They (with the able assistance of Del Fandrich) have developed a prototype of a 6'3" grand which should be in production this summer, and we can all hope for the same quality and care in manufacture in this piano as is currently displayed in the verticals.

As most of us know, Wurlitzer is a now a division of the Baldwin company. They took over the manufacturing plant in Greenwood, MS, and make all vertical pianos there: the five-foot grand is made in the Baldwin plant in Conway, AR. The key and action making equipment from Holly Springs was divided between the Greenwood plant and the Pratt-Win operation in Juarez, Mexico. In keeping with the fact that 1991 is their 135th anniversary year, they have added a number of upgrades to their products. The top line verticals now have a more flexible, four-section bass bridge. They use a variety of soundboard materials, ranging from laminates in the lower end, solid spruce in the middle lines, and a "multi-radial" laminated board in the top end verticals and the grand. This board is actually more expensive than the solid spruce, but they believe that the system of a thick spruce core and veneer "faces" with the grain running at a slightly wider than 90 degree angle to

What goes on in the rest of the show? Guitars...



If only we could stack pianos like this...

Keyboards and computers...

the core produces more and better sound. They compensate for the lack of taper in laminated boards by tapering the ribs, and do not notch ribs into the case, feeling that this insures the integrity of the glue bond all the way around the rim. They are also exercising better control over bridge notching and drilling, so that speaking length within unisons will match more exactly.

Back among the overseas entries, Seiler reports that they haven't made a lot of changes, simply because they're happy with their product. They have a few new cabinet styles and do continue to do research, particularly in soundboard design and scaling.

The Performance Piano distribution group based in Houston is now carrying the Sauter line. Their longstanding top line piano, August Forster, is affected by the same political changes mentioned in the Bluthner report. The Forster family will be purchasing the company, and plans to make pianos with all Renner actions, more substantial cases, and utilizing access to better polyester finishing materials. As might be expected with the changing money market, the price has gone up, but availability is vastly improved. Performance also distributes the Zimmermann, now available in an additional 5'10" grand.

The effort to continue the Weber name with products made by Young Chang continues. They, too, seem to be concentrating on producing cases more appealing to the American eye, including Queen Anne and Chippendale styles in some models. They have several new studio size vertical pianos, including a 45" which is a new design.

Classic Player piano purchased the Story & Clark name in February. This enables them to offer a 42" piano which includes their player mechanism, in addition to the larger instruments which are constructed around the Baldwin Hamilton back and Pratt-Win actions. The Story & Clark is the old 33-scale, with a full perimeter plate, made with additional back posts. Instruments are assembled in Seneca, New York. Technicians needing assistance should contact John Omiatek, Director of Technical Services at 814-676-6683

Well, as I've said, it's an update. To summarize what I've seen in four years of shows, I'd say there's been a noticeable swing toward larger instruments, and an increased polarization between the low and high end, with many of those who were once in the middle either forced to make improvements to survive or giving up entirely. How does it affect the working technician? Hard to say, but if you're in this business and aren't confident of your ability to do high-level tuning, voicing and service on very good instruments for people who really want true acoustic piano touch and sound, I'd get some more training. The piano may not enjoy the kind of automatic inclusion in family life it once had, but those who want them want them to be right and they want someone to take care of them. We have a good future together.

In keeping with the "industry news" theme of this issue, I'd like to mention a product developed by PTG member Jim Boratgis and now being marketed by the company he helped to start, Logotronix, Inc. Jim wrote first to Carl Root, as chairman of the Economics Affairs Committee, and the material has come to me since it does involve a product — but its application certainly applies to both areas! He has developed (and patented) a device which can be attached to a phone answering machine so that the machine can be programmed to forward calls to another number. Big deal, you say, the phone company will do that. Yes, but the phone company system requires that you physically return to your phone each time you want to change the number for forwarding — not real practical for the traveling technician who makes three, four or five stops a day. In addition, Jim's device will tell callers that they have the option of leaving a message or being forwarded.

As he puts it: "I arrive at my customer's home — say — Mrs. Smith. I ask her, 'May I program my phone to forward calls to your phone while I'm here?' She replies, 'Certainly, no problem!' Usually, when I have the opportunity I would explain about this invention to 'Mrs. Smith.' The responses were amazing! Anyway, while tuning, 'Mrs. Smith' will receive a call asking for me. She calls me to her phone and I get a live communication that clinches for me a job that I might have lost otherwise because many callers want immediate, live responses and will continue through the Yellow Pages until they do so."

He reports a 30% increase in business, much of which he attributes to his being able to respond to calls immediately, forstalling the likelihood that a new client will simply place another call to another technician, looking for a friendly and live voice.

As you might expect with this kind of electronic wizardry, the system isn't inexpensive. It is being offered at a special rate to piano technicians, however. It looks to be a real business builder, not to mention a way to take care of bookings and phone calls during the day and not have them waiting for you in the evening when it's time to put your feet up and read the *Journal*. Interested parties can contact Logotronix at 303-443-3975 (1877 Broadway, Suite 405, Boulder, CO 80302).

TUNING UP

NAMM Show Reflections

Rick Baldassin, RTT
Tuning Editor

I just returned from the NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) show in Anaheim, California. While I was there, I was able to prepare (along with two of my colleagues) 17 pianos for one of the piano manufacturers. It had been several years since I had tuned for one of these events, and I had forgotten exactly what it was like. For the benefit of those of you who have never had this pleasure, let me share some of my experiences.

I have heard tell of a tuner in my area who refused to continue tuning in a customer's home because the neighbor's dog was barking. This fellow wouldn't have been a happy camper at the NAMM show. For two full days before the show began, the exhibit hall which housed the piano exhibits was non-stop "ping-ping-ping." Not only could you be assured that there were at least a dozen other tuners within spitting distance, but since everything for the exhibits had to be shipped in, there were moving crews uncrating not only pianos, but the actual displays. Forklifts were everywhere. Quite often because the aisles were jammed with crates, the forklifts had to pause until a path was cleared. I am certain that these forklift operators took great pleasure in idling next to the nearest piano tuner. In addition to the forklift operators, there were carpet layers, furniture deliverers, electricians, telephone installers, and plant purveyors. Of course the pace was furious as the pressure was upon all to transform what was on Tuesday, four gigantic, empty exhibit halls, into an emporium of every possible facet relating to the music industry.

I have tuned with other tuners tuning around me before. This usually occurs in music stores. I generally find that other tuners find my tuning style so obnoxious that within a few minutes they either quit, take a break, or find some regulating work to do. At the NAMM show, there is no time to take a break, although if you were lucky enough to have had your name put on the "list" (which was left with security), you might find some quiet time between two and six a.m. During this time, there would usually only be four or five tuners going. And no forklifts. Those guys are union.

I have also tuned with noise around me. After all, I tune for concerts. I think many of you out there picture yourself tuning for a concert, all alone on the stage, in the silent empty hall, the piano barely lit by the lonely ghost light. Wrong! Stages are busy places. The stage crew, sound crew, lighting crew, and custodial crew each has a job to do. And it doesn't do any good telling them how difficult and important your job is. You just learn to block the noise out. The NAMM show really tests your mettle in this regard. I was working with Norman Neblett during the show. At one point when the noise was getting to me, I asked Norman how he was doing. He replied that it was difficult to tune. I sympathetically commented on how bad the noise was, to which he replied, "Oh the noise doesn't bother me. I am used to noise from working around the stage crews. It's that tuner over there who is pounding so hard that is giving me trouble."

Many of the Korean tuners were still tuning by ear. I noticed them at times gathering behind me or one of the other tuners using an aid, pointing and speaking in Korean, probably asking why they didn't have one of those. There were a few American tuners still doing it the "old fashioned way." In my way of thinking, there is still a place for tuning the "old fashioned way," but I am not convinced it is at the NAMM show.

I don't tune a lot of uprights in my daily business, but there were many of them for me to tune at the show. One of the reasons I quit tuning uprights was because it made my shoulder and back hurt. Knowing there would be uprights to tune, I took along the "Wonder Wand" that Charlie Huether gave me to try out while I was in Dallas. I am sure Charlie will be glad to hear that I tuned my fair share of the dozen or more uprights with no pain. I guess being able to hold on to the ball at the end of the lever allows the wrist and arm to be rotated 90 degrees from the usual position, which feels more natural. During the course of the show, a gigantic water pipe broke over Kawai's display. New pianos had to be brought in, and Ray Chandler, who left his tuning kit at home (smart fellow — if you don't have it, they can't expect you to use it), asked if he could borrow mine in this emergency. I gave him his choice of my conventional lever or the Wonder Wand. He chose the conventional lever, as he had never tried the other. In the morning, I had several grands to touch up. I found Ray, and asked for the conventional lever back, which I use for grands, and gave him the Wonder Wand so he could finish his tunings. When he brought it back, he commented on how much he liked it, and said that he was going to get one for himself. I now need a new excuse for not tuning uprights.

There were a lot of different makes of pianos at the NAMM show. Beside the American-made instruments, there were, of course, the German, Austrian, Japanese, and Korean brands. In addition, there were companies from China and Russia exhibiting. It was pretty hard to keep them all straight. My friend Alan Slater, in an effort to enlighten me, explained that the "XXX" (American sounding name) piano was actually a

copy of the "YYY" brand piano (made in China), and was being produced in a country which I may have heard of before. Thanks Al.

Down the way from where most of the pianos were being exhibited, there was a constant stream of smoke emitting from a strange looking building. This was rumored to be one of the sales closing rooms. Actually, I think they were selling special effects for Rock shows. All things considered, the piano area was pretty tame as compared to some of the other areas at the show. A real highlight for me was to see Bob Moog (the inventor of the synthesizer) dancing and going crazy while listening to a performance of the new Digital Hammond Organ.

At home, I gain real satisfaction in listening to an artist perform beautiful music on an instrument which I have just prepared. At the NAMM show, I think there is more satisfaction watching a so-called "artist" pound the daylights out of a piano which somebody else has tuned.

In spite of all of this, everyone that I worked with said what a good time they had, and expressed interest in doing it again next year. We must all just love what we do, tuning pianos.

*****

This month we have a letter from David M. Porritt, of Plano, Texas. David writes:

As always, your column was the first one I read yesterday when my Journal *came in the mail. Tuning is my first love in this business. All of the work needs to be done, but tuning is the most immediately gratifying.*

In your January column you referred to formulas for inharmonicity, string-length/wire-size/tension, etc. All of this information is "available" if one has access to an excellent library and the time to do the necessary research. However, most of us fight the clock to just get the most essential work done.

Since we are in the "Information Age" there are other resources available to us. If the PTG had a computerized database of pertinent information available on-line to members, this could be a great boon to all of us. If I could download past Journal *articles, get piano factory information or other information from current research I could be more effective in my work.*

If all of the above were available on-line, then it would be an easy matter to add electronic mail, ordering of parts, posting of messages, etc. Last summer in Dallas, during the College and University Technicians Committee session, the need for better communication was mentioned. Information about job openings can't be placed in the Journal *because of publishing lag time. Timely information exchange is as important to us as any other professional organization. As a group we need to get into the 90s (or at least the 80s) technically speaking.*

A database and bulletin board system would be a costly thing to create. It is probably beyond the fiscal resources of the PTG at this point. The hardware and phone lines would be expensive and members would have to pay long distance rates to log on. A more practical approach might be associating with an established information service.... It could be that the information service would even help with some of the cost of updating the information.

Let me know what you think about on-line communication for the PTG. I personally believe that we need it, and if we can do it at a reasonable cost we should.

About six or seven years ago, Jim Harvey approached me with the idea of getting a few technicians set up on a bulletin board system. As I did not own a computer then, I did not become involved at that time. Mark Story, in Spokane, WA, told me not long ago that he was trying to set up a similar system. Because so much of my time is taken up by my business and writing for the *Journal*, I am not sure to what extent I could become involved at this time. My partner Carl Teel, on the other hand, would certainly program such a service into his auto dialer. My only fear would be that this would give him yet another excuse to play at the computer.

I am sure by publishing this letter, those parties wishing to be involved in such a venture can make themselves known, and if the interest is sufficient, then it may be worthwhile to take action, either privately, or by the PTG as a service to its members.

*****

I know at some time in each of our lives, we have had our hand up in the air, waiting to be called on, with words of wisdom to impart, only to have the person called on right before us speaking our mind, leaving us with nothing more to say than, "Yeah, what he said." A few weeks ago, I received a newsletter from the Cleveland Chapter. Upon reading it, I came across an article written by Ken Slater. After reading it, my response was, "Yeah, what he said." I have reprinted it here with the permission of the author.

Until next month, please send your questions and comments to:

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Provo, UT 84601

A New Way Of Looking At Aural And Electronic Tuning

Ken Slater, RTT
Cleveland Chapter

Of all the great controversies throughout history (cattlemen vs. sheepherders, heredity vs. environment, tastes great vs. less filling), the endless debate between tuners of the electronic school vs. the aural school seems the most puzzling to me. No matter what the method of tuning, the criteria by which the tuning is judged should be the same. These are: smooth progression of fast beating intervals, no slow beating intervals that stand out, octaves that are not noticeably beating, clean sounding unisons, ends of the piano that sound like they go with the middle, etc. Seeing the goals of the two schools as the same should help us to see that the two methods can be more similar than many people think. An understanding of both methods should be helpful no matter which approach you use.

I was trained as an aural tuner, both at the Perkins School and during further study with Albert Metz. Since aural tuning uses notes already tuned to place subsequent notes, a piano must be nearly in tune to have reliable reference notes. Because of the number of "first time in a long time" pianos that I had to tune, tuning to a reference that was unaffected by changes in string tension appealed to me as a first pass method. Use of the machine for pitch raising naturally led to exploring its other uses and capabilities.

Tuning with the stretch calculator is pretty straight-forward. Set the machine to a number and make the lights stop. The numbers are determined, basically, by logarithmically distributing the inharmonicity of the F3 to F4 octave plus 0.5 bps over the temperament octave, and tuning the notes outside F3 to F4 as 4:2 octaves and 4:1 double octaves plus 0.5 bps. Many people use this method with much success. Major thirds almost always beat in a smooth progression, fourths and fifths are usually acceptable, and octaves will always be slightly stretched. The piano will be as in tune as the piano scale follows the calculated tuning curve.

It can be helpful to electronic tuners to learn what things in this process are similar to aural tuning. Though the temperament is tuned to a curve which may or may not be optimum, octaves are tuned by matching partials. The temperament octave is tuned at the fourth partial level. The next octave is tuned at the second partial, and the following octave at the first partial. These are set at the same numbers plus 0.5 bps. Therefore, slightly stretched 4:2 octaves and 4:1 double octaves must exist. This is really the same thing that an aural tuner does with the M3-M10 test for 4:2 octaves, the M3-M17 test for 4:1 double octaves, and the M10-M17 test for 2:1 octaves.

An aural tuner compares the fourth partial of the lower note to the second partial of the upper note of a 4:2 octave by comparing them both to a note that has a partial close enough to beat. If they beat the same, partials four and two are equal. If the upper note beats 0.5 bps faster, the octave is stretched to that degree. Electronically, the same two notes are compared to the same setting on the machine. Seeing this similarity can help both schools of tuners decide the kind of octaves to tune in different places in the piano, and the aural tests or machine settings to achieve them. In either case, the tuner should be thinking of what he or she thinks sounds best musically.

Another example of how the methods are similar is setting pitch. Electronically, compare the first partial of A4 to the machine set at A4. Aurally, compare the beat rate of the first partial of A4 and the fifth partial of F2 to the beat rate of the A-fork and the fifth partial of F2. If the beat rates are the same, then the fork and A4 are equal. If A=B, and B=C, then A=C.

How can these same kinds of similarities be applied to temperament tuning? Many aural temperament systems begin by dividing an established octave into three equal contiguous thirds. Learning to do this electronically can be an excellent way for electronic tuners to start to learn temperament tuning by ear. Once an octave has been established (for example, F3 is equal to F4 at F5, or slightly stretched) tune the first third to the theoretical width (13.7 cents) by setting the fourth partial of the upper note of the third 13.7 cents sharp of the fifth partial of the lower note. For example, A3 at A5 setting 13.7 cents greater than F3 at A5 setting. Repeat the procedure for the next third in the chain. For example, C#4 at C#6 setting 13.7 cents greater than A5 at C#6. The notes of the final third (C#4 - F4) are already set via the octave. Listen to the chain of thirds. The final third will probably sound slow. Measure this third and it will probably be narrower than the other two (less than 13.7 cents). Measure the width of the C#4-F4 third (C#4 at F6 and F4 at F6), and average the three widths. For example, 13.7 + 13.7 + 11.9 = 39.3. 39.3 divided by 3 = 13.1.

Now set the thirds within your octave at 13.1 cents. Listen again. The octave should be good and the third should progress evenly (in a 4:5 ratio). This is only presented as an exercise, but I think a useful exercise for both aural and electronic tuners. By applying this same kind of approach to other intervals, electronic tuners can learn aural tempering and aural tuners can learn the coincident partials to which they are listening. Knowing the coincident partials helps to focus the hearing of beats on instruments where beats are hard to hear.

This article has not been presented as any kind of a method for tuning, but as a new way to look at what one does by examining someone else's approach. Tastes great? Less filling? Who knows? Who cares? ≣

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

Key Recovering, Part I

Bill Spurlock, RTT
Sacramento Valley Chapter

Upon first approaching a piano we receive a powerful message from the appearance of the keyboard. If the key coverings are chipped and uneven, we suspect a klunker before even playing a note. But if they are clean, smooth and level we are likely to approach with at least some hope, even if the case condition is poor. To the pianist, of course, worn keytops are distracting and an obstacle to fine control. To the technician, worn keytops are an obstacle to fine regulation because they prevent accurate key leveling and dip adjustment. Thus key recovering is one of the most basic improvements we can make to a piano with a worn keyboard.

This work is frequently farmed out to specialists because it does require a certain amount of special equipment. However, it is possible to do professional quality key recovering without a major investment in special tooling or shop space. In this series I will outline a system of key recovering that is very practical for both the small shop and high-volume shop alike.

The main components of this system are a drill press, a router and router table, and a few easily made jigs and fixtures. In this system, the drill press and table-mounted router remain multipurpose tools and so do not take up shop space and funds solely for their functions in key recovering. For technicians wishing to do their own key work to increase business or just to maintain control over quality, this system is efficient: average time to recover 52 naturals is three hours, with quality matching that of new piano keyboards.

Overview Of Procedure

In this method measurements are taken, the old keytops removed, and (if they are to be replaced) the old key fronts are removed using a router and special fixture. The top surfaces of the keys are then planed down using a rotary planer mounted in a drill press. Adhesive is applied to the keys and keytops using a roller, then the tops are installed and momentarily pressed in a woodworking vise. The excess keytop material is trimmed flush with the sides of the keys in two separate router operations followed by final hand trimming with a file. Finally, the sides and fronts of the keys are cleaned and the tops buffed if desired. I will present this method in a step-by-step format, explaining the procedures and equipment as we go.

Before Starting The Job

Before removing the keys from the piano you should make the following observations:

1. Make sure that the keys are numbered clearly, or else number them yourself.

2. Look to see how much clearance exists between the front ends of the sharps and the notches of the naturals. If there is a large gap, make a note so that when you trim your new keytops you can reduce the space. Conversely, if any of the sharps contact the naturals at the notch ("pully" keys can also cause this) plan on increasing this clearance during notch trimming.

3. If you will be replacing the sharps, look to see how much clearance exists between the rear of the sharps and the fallboard. New sharps are only available in certain lengths; if the old sharps are shorter than standard you will have to shorten the new ones unless there is adequate space between sharps and fallboard.

4. While estimating the job, inspect the key bushings, key pins, key level, dip, and condition of key punchings and backrail cloth. Removing the keys may reveal heavily moth-eaten felt which should be replaced as part of the job. Part of the benefit of new keytops is that they can be better regulated, squared and spaced; this is only possible if bushings and under-key felt are in good shape, so look at the whole keyboard and estimate accordingly. It is helpful to carry a sample group of recovered and rebushed keys (both sharps and naturals) so your customers can see exactly what kind of workmanship you can provide.

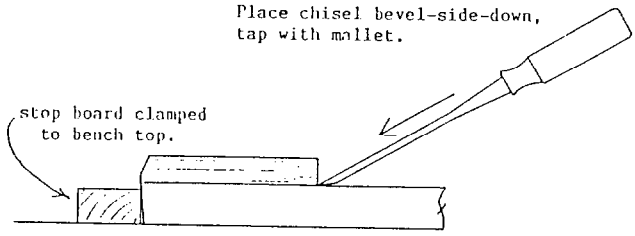
5. Have a convenient box or clamping system on hand so you can keep the keys in order and transport them safely to the shop. Part of the efficiency of any piano work comes from handling numerous parts quickly; stuffing the keys into a shopping bag borrowed from the customer looks unprofessional and costs you time later when you have to put the keys back in order.

Removing The Old Keytops

Once back in the shop, lay the keys out in order on the bench top. Most commonly we will be replacing old ivory tops with plastic. Since the plastic is thicker than the ivory, we will be planing the key wood down prior to installation of the new tops so that the completed key thickness remains the same. Therefore we need to measure and record the original thickness of the keys, including ivory. Measure several keys in the set; measurements may vary slightly, especially on very old keyboards, so choose an average. Avoid measuring at the very front end of the key, but do compare measurements just behind the front mortise and at the back end of the tail. If the key height tapers from from to back you can easily duplicate this taper during the planing process.

Old ivory is most easily removed by steaming with a damp cloth and a

figure 1: removing old sharps with a chisel



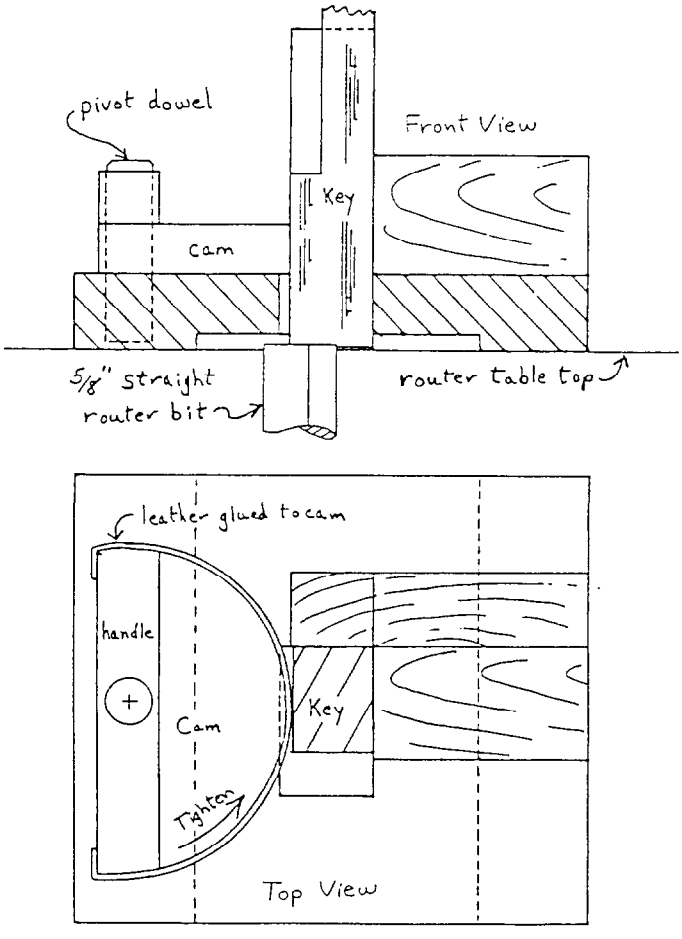
clothes iron. The steam penetrates the ivory, softening the glue joint. It also makes the ivory more pliable, so breakage is minimized and any good ivories can be salvaged for use in patching up other keyboards.

With the keys laid out in order on the bench top, wet a piece of clean, white terrycloth and lay it over a group of ivory heads and tails (dirty or colored cloth will leach dye into the ivories, staining them). The keys should hang over the edge of the bench slightly, so any water dripping down the sides of the keys will not wet the front key bushings. Set an iron on the wet cloth, letting it steam for 30 seconds or so, then move it up the keyboard a couple of keys at a time as you peel off the loosened ivories behind. I like to run a dull knife blade under the ivory to coax them off. I find it most convenient to segregate the salvaged ivories according to note, so that all ivories in each box have the same notching; this makes it easier to find replacements later to match a given key.

If the old keytops are plastic or celluloid they will probably come off cold, or else with gentle heat applied as above except with an iron and a *dry* cloth. Here you need to watch the grain direction on the sides of the keys and adjust your knife direction so you are peeling in the direction of *rising* grain. If, as you work the knife under the old keytop, you see that a split is developing in the key wood and traveling deeper into the key, stop and run the knife in from the other end. The grain will vary in different areas of the keyboard so stay observant. If any keys do split deeper than can be cleaned up by your planing, just slice the wood fragment off the keytop and glue it back onto the key.

As you remove each old keytop, place each key in order onto an 18" by 48" piece of plywood. This will serve as a carrying tray as you move the keys through the remaining steps in the recovering process, and will speed up your work considerably compared to moving handfuls of keys among different work stations.

figure 2: key end trimmer for removing old key fronts



Removing Old Sharps

The process for sharp replacement is similar to that for naturals. As with naturals, the new sharps are usually thicker than the originals, so the wood of the sharp keys will be planed down in order to maintain the same original key height. Measure the height of several sharp keys, then remove the old sharp tops. I find this easiest to do using a chisel and mallet, as shown in figure 1. Clamp a wooden stop-block to the benchtop, then butt the front ends of the sharps up against the block and place the point of a chisel bevel-side down at the base of the rear of the old sharps. A tap on the chisel with a mallet will send the old sharps flying. You can do three sharps at once using a 1 1/2" chisel, and have the whole set off in less than five minutes.

Sometimes the sharp will take off part of the key with it; when this happens just glue the sharp and attached wood back onto the key and either saw it off close to the glue line or chisel it from the front end. As with the naturals, place each sharp in order onto a plywood board so they can be handled efficiently through the rest of the process.

Removing The Old Key Fronts

In most cases I use molded keytops *without* fronts; the original fronts can almost always be cleaned up acceptably and re-using them saves some work. However, when it *is* necessary to replace the fronts, I use one-piece tops with fronts and remove the old fronts using the jig in figure 2. This jig holds the key vertically, with the key front sitting flat on the router table top. The router bit is adjusted to protrude above the table surface a distance equal to the thickness of the new key front. (The new one-piece keytop fronts are thicker than the old-type separate fronts). The jig is then slid across the router table and the bit cuts off the old thin plastic as well as a small amount of wood. Then when the new fronts are installed, the key length will be the same as original.

I have provided 1/2-size patterns of the parts of this jig in figure 3. By expanding these patterns to full size using an enlarging photo-copier, you can easily mark out the pieces on lumber and build your own key end trimmer. Note that the cam is just a semi-circle with the pivot hole moved 1/8" off center.

When placing a key into the jig,

make sure that the key contacts the router table surface; any sawdust between the key and table will alter the depth of cut and therefore alter the final length of the key. Also be sure to hold the key firmly into the "corner" of the jig so it cannot shift position during routing.

Figure 3 shows the correct path of the key over the router bit; when fed over the bit in this way, the cutting edges always cut *onto* the sides of the key, never *off* of the sides, thereby preventing chipping of the key sides. Any chipping of the top edge of the key will be cleaned up when that surface is planed.

Key fronts can also be removed with a chisel, by holding the key bottom-side-up on the bench top and inserting the edge of the chisel blade between the old plastic front and the key wood. With the chisel held vertically, it is pushed down to peel off the old front. This method works well on some keys and not so well on others. If the old fronts are stubborn, the work is slow and the ends of the keys are likely to get chewed up. The new, thicker fronts of the one-piece keytops will also lengthen the keys slightly since only the old plastic, and no wood, is removed.

Planing Down The Keys

Planing the keys accomplishes two things: First, it maintains the original key thickness when using thicker-than-original keytops. Second, it removes the old glue residue and provides a smooth, clean gluing surface. When replacing keytops on a modern piano your replacements will probably be of the same thickness as original. In this case the old tops usually come off easily and leave a smooth surface with little glue residue; new tops of equal thickness can then be glued on directly without planing. However, if you are re-doing someone else's recovering job, you will often have a poor surface covered with an unknown glue. Here you need to purchase thicker tops, if available, so you can plane to a fresh surface.

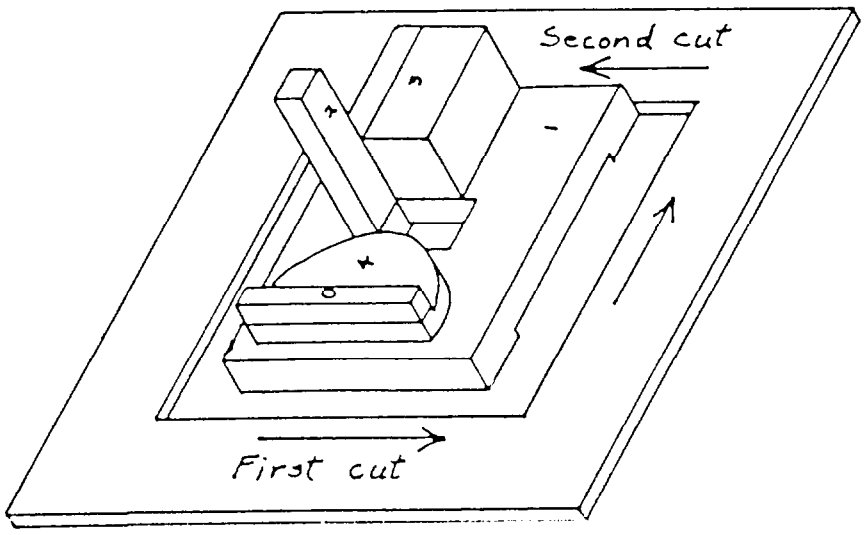
I use a rotary planer mounted in a drill press for this operation. I described the rotary planer, as well as several drill press modifications, in my article "Upgrading Your Drill Press" in the March 1990 *Journal*. All of the modifications described in that article, including the quill lock, chuck upgrade, air nozzle and auxiliary formica table top, are helpful for the key planing operation. The rotary planer is available from P&R Tool Co., P.O. Box 606, Sand Springs, OK 74063, (918) 245-8720. For best results, this planer should turn at least 3000 rpm.

For key planing I clamp each key in a drill press vise which has been fitted with a special milling jig as shown in figure 4, and as also pictured on the cover of the March 1990 *Journal*. This arrangement holds each key at a consistent height and angle as it is run under the planer. (If the keys were simply slid directly on the table top during planing, the results would not be consistent because keys are not necessarily flat across their entire bottom surface.) In addition, the added mass of the vise reduces vibration and makes for a smoother cut.

The milling jig mounts to the drill press vise with a single screw (see March

figure 3

1/4" plywood frame clamped to router table guides key end trimmer automatically in correct path over bit.



Key End Trimmer 1/2 size patterns

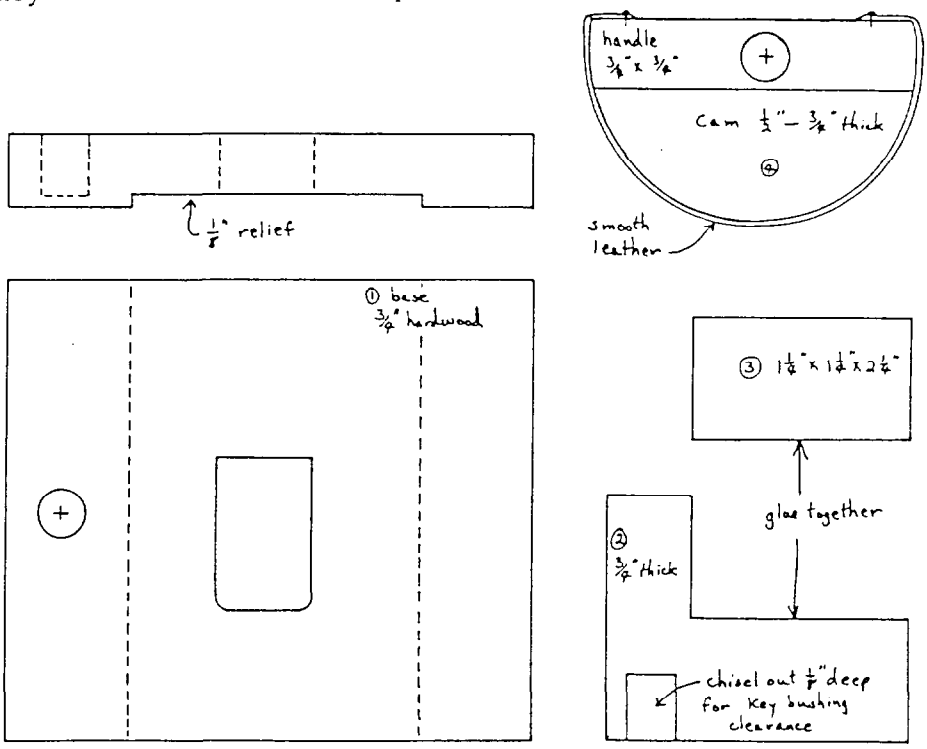
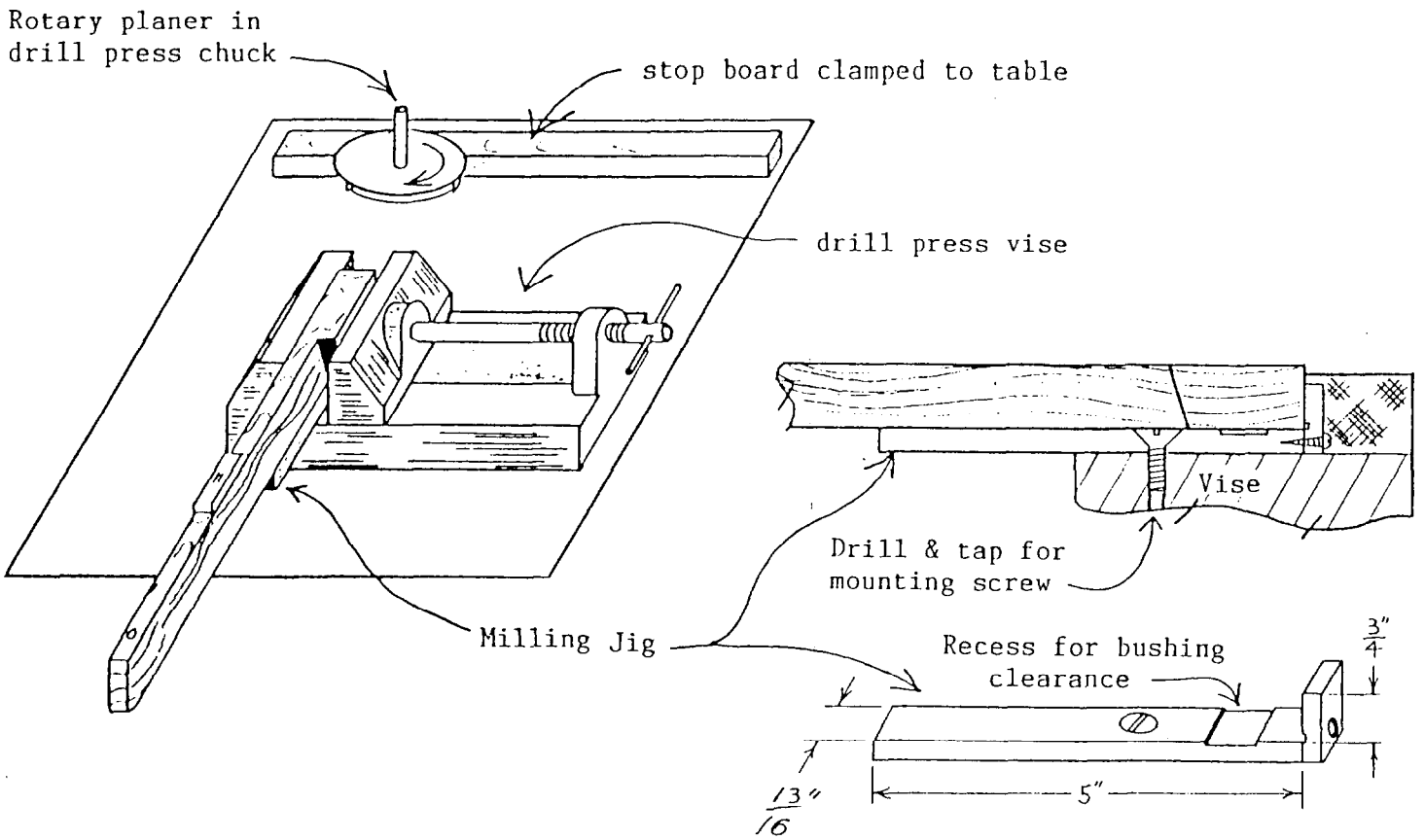


figure 4: planing down keys using rotary planer and drill press



1990 article for instructions on drilling and threading cast iron). Choose a thickness for the jig wood to give a measurement of 7/8" from the top of the vise jaws to the jig surface where the key sits. This allows the key to sit as low as possible in the vise for the most secure mounting. To clamp very thin keys you can place a spacer between the jig and the vise as necessary, so the top of the key is above the vise jaws.

The drill press table and the bottom surface of the vise must both be flat so that as the vise is slid under the planer there is no rocking. Test the table surface with a straightedge and shim the auxiliary formica top if necessary. Test the vise for flatness on a piece of plate glass, and file any high spots until it does not rock. In addition, the table tilt must be adjusted so the drill press spindle is perpendicular to the table, using the simple wire gauge shown in the March 1990 article.

Two adjustments have to be made before planing the keys: First, the depth of cut must be set. Lower the quill and lock it down, or raise the table if you do not have a locking quill, until the thickness of the planed key plus a new keytop equals the original key thickness. You can make trial and error tests on scrap wood until your setting is correct. Secondly, you need a distance stop so that the planing will stop just behind the key tail. Any straight piece of scrap wood clamped to the table will work. Position it to stop the planing about 1/16" behind the key tail; this slight clearance is needed because the ends of the tails are usually irregular and will vary slightly in length from keytop to keytop.

With these adjustments made you are ready to begin planing. The rotary planer will produce a smooth surface on most wood. However, there are a couple of precautions you must take to prevent chipping of the key fronts and edges. Figure 5 shows a top view of the planer, and the path of the key as it is planed. The vise is pushed up against the table stop, then slid left along the stop until the planer has cut a swath across the rear of the key tail. The vise is then moved back to the right until the right edge of the key just comes to the edge of the planer. The vise is then pulled back under the planer, keeping the right (bass) edge of the key just under the right edge of the planer. Note that because the key is kept as far as possible to one edge of the planer, the path of the cutters is almost parallel the right edge of the key. This minimizes splintering of this edge as the cutters exit off the side of the key. (If the key were pulled directly under the *center* of the planer, the path of the cutters would be almost straight off the side of the key, increasing the chances of

figure 5: path of key under rotary planer to prevent chipping edges of key

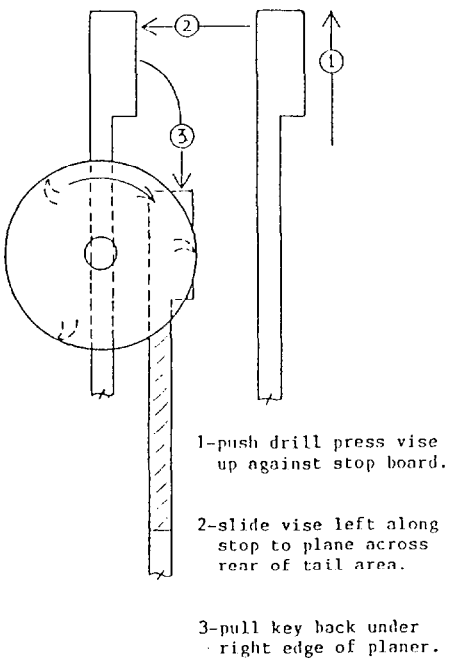
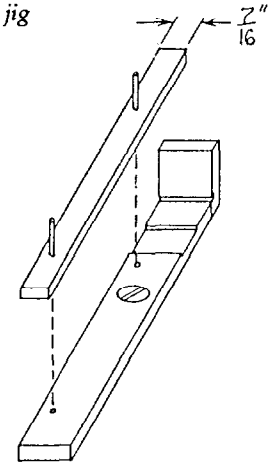


figure 6: adapter for clamping sharps in milling jig



chipping the edge). Keeping the key to the right of center of the planer also prevents chipping of the original plastic key fronts, if they are being retained. Here the path of the cutters will be across the plastic and onto the key wood. If the key were pulled under the *left* side of the planer, the cutters would exit off the end of the key, chipping the plastic.

Before placing each key into the vise, always check its lower surface for any protruding glue or wood that could prevent the key from seating fully in the milling jig. Also check the milling jig for any wood chips; the air nozzle described in the March 1990 article is a time-saving feature here since it can be positioned to blow into the milling jig each time a key is removed.

It is helpful to periodically apply a coat of paste wax to the drill press table and vise bottom, followed by buffing off the excess with a clean cloth. This lubricates the surfaces, making the vise slide easily. This lubrication increases accuracy and safety on all power tool tables, because the work slides through the cutting tool without grabbing or jerking.

Planing Sharps

Sharps are planed in the same manner as naturals. The milling jig is adapted with a drop-in piece of hardwood as shown in figure 6, so the vise will clamp the narrow sharp keys. The adapter is held in place with two bridge pins that fit into corresponding holes in the milling jig.

When planing sharps, the distance stop is set so that the planed area is exactly the same length as the sharp. The step at the rear of the planing then serves to locate the sharp during gluing.

Next month I'll continue with gluing, installation, and trimming of the new keytops.

At Large

A Case Of Two Pianos (or 'Grand Slam')

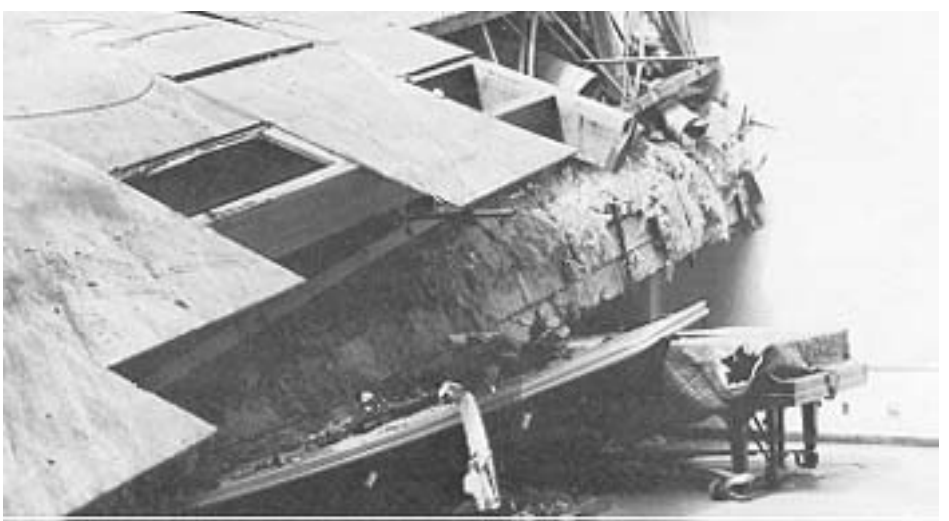
Kathy Teetsell, RTT
Los Angeles Chapter

On July 2, 1990, on a calm sunny Monday morning at California State University Long Beach, the 120-ton roof of the Music Department's eight-year-old Recital Hall crashed down — just caved in completely. Luckily the staff had seen ominous warning signs and had time to clear the building of all human occupants. However, the two Steinway concert grands (plus a two-manual harpsichord and a new upright) were on the stage and ended up under many tons of rubble. Only three days later, I left for a week in Dallas for the PTG convention, without having been allowed to get near the disaster area to see the fate of some of my "children" — I was noticeably distracted that week in Dallas! When I went back to Long Beach on the 12th I was allowed, with hard hat and police escort, to peek in a back stage door. The two Steinways were in that corner of the stage, only five and 10 feet away, and I could see through the rubble that both were still "on their feet." Both were pinned under huge pieces of structural members, and both Colson dollies were noticeably bowed down, the wheels tilted, the legs and pedal lyres of both pianos pressed right down to the floor. The other two instruments were not crushed because they were closer to a wall, protected from heavy weight by the Steinways.

The pianos were not freed from the rubble for over four weeks. The four walls were still standing, though askew. The crews took extensive photos for a week from an observation cage lowered in with a crane. Pieces and chunks of rubble were then lifted out over the walls with two huge cranes, and forensic demolition experts saved significant parts to lay out in order in an adjacent parking lot (as they do after plane crashes) to find causes of the failure. Meanwhile, the pianos were exposed every day to morning fogs and midday July sun. The cloth covers were shredded and full of concrete dust. Crew members repeatedly expressed their astonishment that pianos could bear such terrible loads and were not crushed. The clearing process started at a large rear loading door and progressed across the stage toward the pianos. The photo printed here was taken with the stage half cleared after three and a half weeks. Much of the maple stage flooring was crushed and broken and most of the audience seating crushed. Estimated survival rate in the house, had a concert been in progress, would have been 10% with 0% on the stage itself (except for anyone who would have happened to be standing behind the pianos).

After the pianos were freed and pushed off the stage, they were moved to a classroom for temporary storage. The two Steinways, although very banged up, still "looked like pianos" as our chairman said. They had remained structurally intact, despite the fact that one engineer estimated roughly 20 tons of rubble on the steel beam on the piano in the photos, probably half being supported by the piano itself. No one could estimate what was on the other one — there was too much rubble to get near it for photos or observation, until it was nearly uncovered from above.

And the aftermath? The 1972 D in the photos needs a *lot* of cosmetic lid and leg repairs, refinishing and intense cleaning, but is basically much as it was before — it wasn't even all that much out of tune! (I have lots of witnesses!) The crooked bass leg in the photo turned out not to have any broken parts. Somehow the leg plates had bounced and popped apart without breaking or stripping out the screws, and the leg went back on normally after the piano was moved. The 1984 D is a sadder story. It was a very nice D, much-loved by all the faculty and well-complimented by many Steinway artists. It was under a broken sprinkler pipe and had a small amount of water go through the lid hinge onto the dampers and soundboard. The water sat on the board around the treble bridge until the puddle dried up — the piano was under an awful weight and



An unlucky Steinway grand at California State University Long Beach three and a half weeks after the roof caved in.

inaccessible for three weeks. The middle dampers were ruined and the strings rusted. The lid was crushed in, pushed down to the plate — when unloaded, the lid sprung up level again but was visibly cracked from end to end, and the crossbars were pulled off the underside of the lid. The piano seemed to have stood up structurally to the load, but a few quarts of water hurt it badly. Its fate is unclear, but the treble area crown and downbearing have undergone some very strange changes and the tone is a ghost of its former self. It has been examined at great length by four technicians, one from Steinway New York. There doesn't seem to be much reason to rush repairs and decisions because we have no Recital Hall now to put pianos in! I have learned an interesting fact — there are at least as many ambulance chasers in this profession as there are in the legal fields. People were calling within hours wanting to salvage those two pianos, long before we had the dust out of our eyes.

A report has finally been issued concerning reasons why an eight-year-old performance hall roof would collapse, and the general tone is that there is plenty of blame to go around. Serious questions were raised about the original design, the contractor's work, and in small part, subsequent maintenance. The Music Department later lost the use of five other important buildings in our 22-building complex due to doubts about them raised by the event, but the program has continued to function while being moved all over campus and the community. Return to total normalcy will take years, but no one was hurt and we will be fine. Should the university find itself in a position to buy another concert grand, the administrators will probably seriously consider another Steinway — just in case!

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Pinning And Finishing The Bridge

Nick Gravagne, RTT
New Mexico Chapter

We left off in the last issue having notched and carved the bridge. It is now time to pin the bridge and finish the notches with varnish. Since an article on pinning (a bridge reconditioning article) in this series has already appeared, you are referred to it for additional information.

To summarize, however, bridge pinning is not as easy as it seems. If you are banking on any experience you have as a house framer, where misplaced blows and crushed wood are of no concern, you will need to adopt another frame of mind. There are 400 pins to drive into the typical bridge; and multiplying that by six blows on each pin means well over 2000 hammer blows to deliver, not to mention arm and wrist actions as well. Now it takes only one perfect miss to damage the speaking length landing of a unison, or a half dozen misses which, although amounting to no serious damage, are eyesores, appearing as potholes in an otherwise smooth runway. As the previously mentioned article suggested, it is possible to swell out the dents by applying heat from a soldering iron directly to a wet rag which is placed over the dent. The resulting steam will swell the fibers locally and most of the dent will disappear. The graphited area, however, will turn a bit pale.

The Bridge Protector — Worth The Trouble

To minimize denting, a bridge protector (photo 1) might be used. The one in the photo is made from a thin steel strap I had lying around somewhere. A slot was hacksawed into one edge of it which allows clearance for a row of three pins. To use: tap the pin into the hole to get started; pick up the protector and position it per the photo; and finish driving the pin, the blow will be delivered to the protective shield. Yes, this procedure requires that you pick up an extra tool every time a pin is driven, and the job must necessarily take longer for it; on the other hand, you'll thank yourself every time your hammer hits the protector. If you find that your accuracy and control are extraordinary to begin with, or that they grow with practice, you will never need employ such a safety net.

Relax Your Grip

The hammering technique requires a firm but slightly relaxed feel. Remember, you are working with a lightweight hammer and driving tight-fitting pins at an awkward angle. Swing the hammer in whatever style feels natural, but consistency over the long haul is equally important. Remember to always position yourself such that a clear view of the pin can be had; and, again, develop consistency of orientation regarding hammer, pin, line of sight, and your body. Drive all front pins first, then rear pins. And always drive a row of pins such that you are never hammering over the top of a previously driven pin; in photo 1, for example, the sequence is from left to right.

Depth Of Pins

It is not necessary that the pins be driven to their final depth as you go. In fact, considering the lean of the pins, their small heads, and relatively large head of the hammer, it is difficult to settle the pins to uniform depth unless a punch is used. My practice is to drive a section of pins close to final depth and go back and level with a drift punch (the kind used for driving broken tuning pins clear through a pinblock). "But," some ask, "shouldn't the pin 'bottom out' in the hole for best transmission of string energy to bridge?" Not only is "pin bottoming" not a mechanical or acoustical imperative, it is equally impractical. Unless all the holes are precisely drilled to the correct and uniform depth, there is no hope of leveling the pins using the "bottoming out" criteria. But if you are worried about a tiny column of air existing beneath the bottom point of the pin you have a common alternative: drill the holes to slightly less than the required depth for a given pin length, and without regard to whether the hole depths are uniform. All pins are driven to the bottom, and pin leveling is accomplished by filing the tops. Still, filing is much simpler, and less traumatic to the pins if the pins are close to level from driving only. If air under the pin point doesn't frighten you then drill the holes to what you think is exactly the right depth (say 7/8" deep for a one-inch pin) using the favorite but unreliable masking tape depth gauge, and drive the pins close to the final depth and level by eye, rather than by feel, with a punch. Most pins will bottom out anyway. In any case the more level they are, the easier to file they are.

Filing Pins

Unlike the huge manufacturers, which employ machines to drive pins such that pin heads are not marred, the rebuilders' driven bridge pin heads will evidence marring and bunging and some unevenness. Filing is a cosmetic answer. A pre-filing technique is to chuck a disk sander into your electric drill (coarse or medium coarse paper) and "walk" the spinning disk over the army of pins. This is easy and gets you close for filing. Use a large, heavy file to brighten. Yes, the pins will get warm from the friction, but not dangerously hot enough to cause a loose pin. (I don't recommend filing new pins which have been driven into an old bridge.) As many of us have

photo 1

photo 2

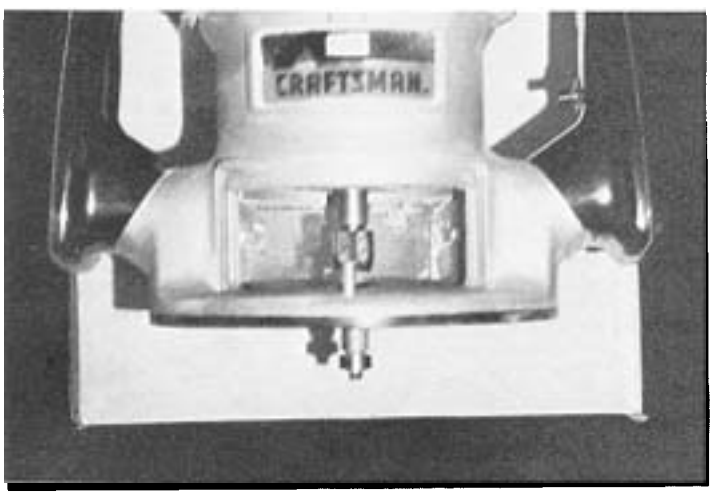


photo 3

photo 4

learned, pain oftentimes lurks in the shadows of beauty — filed pins are dangerously sharp! Admire them, touch them gingerly, but, as with grizzly bears, never lose respect for what they can do to you.

Finishing The Notches

For reasons of appearance and hygroscopic stability, consider finishing the raw wood of the notch carvings with shellac or varnish or polyurethane, etc. My practice is to start with a shellac (dries fast), following with varnish. Use a small, suitable brush and be generous; lay in a liquid sheet of the material in one or two strokes and let the stuff settle. Don't try to coat several notches with one loading of the brush. For a really shiny and full effect, two applications may be necessary. Of course, you will want to exercise care not to coat the pins or the bridge top. But that doesn't mean that just touching the base of the pins slightly must be (or can be) avoided. Use common sense. This operation may sound like horrible toil which could eat up an entire day. No such thing; it moves along very quickly.

Miscellany

Photos that I had hoped would be ready in time for past articles — but were not — are appearing in this issue. Photo 2 shows a jack plane (15" long) being run into a bridge cap from an angle; that is, the tool is not riding along the length of the cap as it is often imagined it always should. The point of planing into a cap from an edge is at least two-fold: 1. to get a new bite; and 2. for selective reduction of the bridge cap in a relatively small area. The large plane is being used for its heavy weight, and because the long sole existing *in front of* the cutting blade (under the knob) allows for setting the tool down flat on the work before pushing it forward. Minor unevenness left in its wake can be scraped and sanded out later.

Photo 3 is of a laminate trimmer bit chucked into a typical router having a six-inch base. At the lower end of the bit can be seen the limiting pilot disk. Above the disk can be seen the cutting flutes. In use the lower shaft of the cutting bit spins freely inside the ball bearings of the disk; hence the disk can be "walked" along the bridge body (under the new cap) thereby preventing the cutters from ever moving inside the edge of the bridge. Photo 4 shows the router tool in position. Note that since the bit spins clockwise relative to the top of the tool, the movement of the tool as shown in the picture should be from left to right. Moving it in the opposite direction is fine for purposes of smoothing away small overhangs, but is generally ineffective for overall operation.

Conclusion — And Back To The Future

Well, except for a thousand items or methods I have left out, or the several that have changed slightly in my practice as new information or products have surfaced, I am going to leave the subjects of soundboards and bridges alone.

Well, almost anyway. I have received many requests for an article or two in summary of what I have written, including any changes or updates in procedures or products. I think this to be a good idea; so, after a month off, my next efforts will be in that direction. Some time after that will follow articles dealing with pinblock installation.

Is This Really A Business?

I really think that the topic concerning the *business* of piano rebuilding is hollering for its day in court. Such articles will not be easy to write since there are as many ways to run a piano rebuilding business as there are people engaged in the work. Still, there are broad constants that supply a foundational thesis; but first some irksome realities must be faced. The wide latitude we believe we have in running our businesses, and of charting a lifetime course for real financial and business growth is a myth when viewed in the vast context — indeed, the only real context we *can* relate things to — of the social, governmental and economic landscape in which we find ourselves. It is this landscape — which flourishes in some places and lies desolate in others according to many arbitrary whims and competing forces — that dictates, whether we know it or not (or like it or not), how our finances will go. It makes little difference that one business is set up on computer while another isn't, or that one rebuilder swears by what he or she differentiates as "billable hours" from parts and supplies, or any other of a hundred uses or tricks of accountancy.

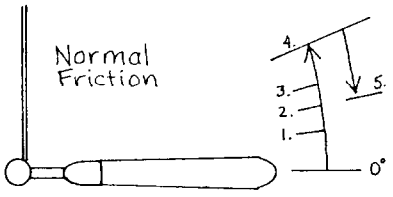
The real question is: How well can anyone expect to do rebuilding pianos in our present, mixed economy? Implied here are a plethora of additional questions such as: Is rebuilding primarily a service business or a manufacturing concern? How does piano tuning relate as a business? What about small businesses in general. Are they getting a fair shake to begin with? Is it even possible for a one-wage-earner family to make it these days? If nothing else — and I think this is a critical point — we should know *where* we find ourselves in this vast socioeconomic panorama and *why*. Ignorance here has been the soil in which gross misconceptions and deceptions regarding affluence have taken root, and a mythology has grown up in which certain of life's players are allowed to stand tall, while others, we are told, must not only creep in the shadows, but must be made to feel guilty for it as well. We in piano technology tend to equate skill, intelligence, and good grooming with financial success — there is much more to it than that. A good fish must be equipped with gills, scales and fins; but in order for it to thrive, it must be thrown into the lake, not the desert. ≡

AT LARGE

String Friction And Its Coordination With Pin Friction In Tuning Mechanics, Part II

Bill Ballard, RTT
New Hampshire Chapter

In the first installment of this article, we went from familiar ground (tuning pin friction) on to the obscure and unchartable region of string friction. We are now ready to explore the mechanics of tuning as they are set by the coordination between pin and string friction.



1. String friction overcome
2. Desired Pitch Change
3. Pin friction overcome
4. Further turn beyond pin Friction overcome, equal to Desired Pitch Change
5. Reverse turn, equal to Pin Friction Overcome

For me, setting the pin and the string are a little like bookkeeping: Whatever wire I move at the pin, I would like to hear move at the speaking length. If it doesn't, then there's some loose wire somewhere in between. Tuning is straight-forward if pin friction is greater than string friction. I start turning the tuning pin. Torsion begins to develop in the pin and wire is changed at the coil. Before long, the string friction is overcome and I hear a change in beat rate. When I reach the desired change in beat rate, my arm has counted how many degrees the hammer turned the tuning pin (and thus how many millimeters of wire were changed at the bottom of the coil). I continue to turn the pin, because pin torsion has yet to be overcome. When it finally does break, I continue to turn an extra amount so that the bottom end of the pin can now turn the same amount that the top end turned in overcoming string friction and accomplishing the desired change in the speaking length. When the bottom end of the pin has reached that spot, I gently reverse direction on the hammer, the torsion in the pin relieves itself, and any wire temporarily moved across the speaking length entrance while overcoming pin friction returns with the tuning pin. Or at least that's the way it works in slow motion. In my dreams.

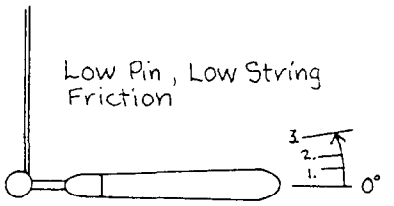
Each piano is going to feel different in its tuning, depending on its particular combination of pin and string friction; in fact, there's nothing to keep that feeling from changing from one note to the next. But the fundamental principle is unaffected: The toughness of the tuning depends on the fact that any wire turned on or off the tuning pin should also be moved through the entrance to the speaking length. Regardless of whether string friction or pin friction is the greater barrier, wire in excess of that required by the pitch change will always be turned on or off at the tuning pin while the second (and greater) barrier is being overcome. For a solid tuning, this excess must be "mopped up" by a final reverse turn on the tuning pin. The amount is a function of the string/pin differential: The bigger the differential, the more will have to be mopped up. Mopping up is vital because, if you don't see to it that this wire change at the pin is also being distributed across the rest of the string's path to the speaking length during the course of the tuning, then one good blow from the pianist will do it for you. Sounds straight-forward. And wasn't that supposed to be our mission, anyway? There is, however, a loose monkey with a couple of wrenches to throw at the system.

First there is a skewing of our perceptions which can confuse a beginner's judgement. We know that wire is moving at the tuning pin because we feel the pin turn, first at the top then at the bottom. We also know when wire is changing at the entrance to the speaking length because we can hear the pitch change (unless of course, you're an electronic tuner, in which case you'll see it). But we can neither hear wire change at the pin nor feel it change at the speaking length. Correlating what's happening at both places (the beginning and end of the "pipeline") is important as it would allow us to learn and control the reflexes of the system. Although converting the bouncy feeling of the tuning pin's torsion to the sound of beat rate animation may be like comparing apples and orangutans, we all eventually learn to do this reliably.

The bigger challenge is the second monkey wrench we have to work with. The fact that while we have a direct handle on changes at the pin, what happens at the speaking length is controlled by string friction, something entirely out of our hands. We would be on Easy Street if we could control the passage of string at the speaking length by loosening or tightening the string friction grip. (For instance, how about backing off a string's individual clamp — a tiny set screw — next setting the pitch, and then reifing back up on the clamp... but maybe that's one for David Stanwood). It's bad enough that we have to use different senses to keep track of the system and that we have no direct handle on string friction. What's worse is that the two halves of the tuning system are entirely independent of each other. This third monkey wrench is the notorious crapshoot in which pin friction turns up with one number and string friction, another.

Monkeying With The Tuning

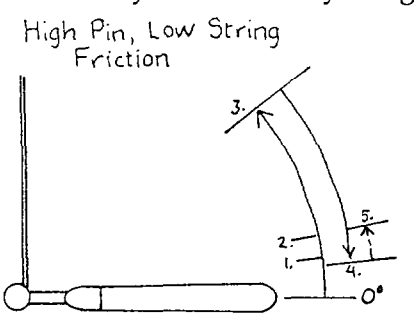
What's it like to tune a piano with a monkey wrench? Consider the follow-



1. & 2. Pin and String friction fairly close and both overcome by the time (3.) Desired Pitch Change has occurred
Reversed mop-up easily achieved by test blow

ing scenarios. You put your tuning hammer on the pin and start to turn. The wire moves immediately and obediently across the bearings and into the speaking length. After 15 degrees, you notice that you have yet to encounter a twist in the pin. "No temper to these pins, they must have had a bad batch of steel," is your explanation for all that turn and no twist. And you press on. Finally, at 30 degrees of turn at the pin, and way out-of-tune at the speaking length, you realize you've been had! It's low friction at both the pin and the string. The hammer manipulation was simple enough that a baby could have set the pin and string solidly. The only happy note in this embarrassing "slip" (pun intended) is that, as you backtrack that long, lonely 30 degrees, the pin and string follow your motions as obediently as ever. (While we're on the subject of "banana slips," a burned tuning pin hole is easy to spot. Regardless of what initial torsion is required to overcome the static pin friction, once it's moving, it might as well be on ball bearings.)

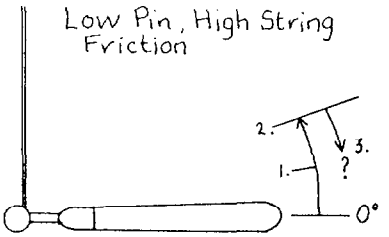
Or how about this one. You begin to turn what you immediately recognize as a tight pin, and at 10 degrees, the string friction is overcome. After another three degrees, the pitch change you were looking for in the speaking has occurred, but the tuning pin is still twisting. If that was a torque wrench in your hand you could read directly the current torque. But only the pinblock knows the total torsion required to reach the bottom of the pin. So you press on. And on... and on. At 200% of desired pitch change, warning lights begin to blink at the command console in your left cerebral cortex; at 400% these change to sirens. Your handhold on the tuning hammer changes from firm to Bubble-Pak™, as blisters spread across your palms. Bullets of sweat pop out on your forehead. What was a light coat of graphite grease now hisses and spits from the hammer's collet. And at 465%, *Crack!* goes the tuning pin as the bottom finally breaks free, landing 8∞ away from its original position. After a few minutes, your heart rate returns to normal and you try to calculate your next move: +10 degrees to overcome string friction, +3 degrees for the desired pitch change, and when you add on the +30-something to untwist the pin, the release of that potential energy overshoots the desired pin position by five degrees. As for the 20-something (the pitch change occurring after string friction and before pin friction), that can be wrestled out of the system on the way back from the five degrees overshoot. But if a 30+ degrees total pin twist overshoots by 166%, do you trust the system to land you on the mark with an 18.75 degrees total pin twist on the return? And why should a system of moving string be so unwieldy? Simply because of the string/pin friction differential. If the string friction were lower, more excess string would be moved in the process; but if the string friction climbed closer to the pin friction, the smaller excess string would be more difficult to re-settle. You mutter "Bless those little glue lines," as you rub your St. Christopher medallion.



1. String friction overcome
2. Desired Pitch Change Achieved
3. Pin friction overcome
4. Reverse turn to mop up wire turned off to overcome pin friction. (Position at which tuning pin feels tortion-free.)
5. Net shortfall of desired pitch change (Try again.)

Tuning In The Twilight Zone

But that's not the worst that can happen to you trying to tune a piano. Suppose on this next tuning pin, that the pin friction breaks at 10∞, and your arm and the bottom of the pin chug along, two for the road, turning further



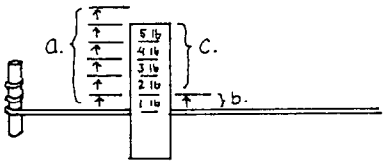
1. Pin Friction Overcome
2. String Friction finally overcome (and a pitch change)
3. Reverse turn to mop up String friction equal to what? (You can't feel string friction differentials being relieved.)

amounts of wire off of the coil which you would prefer not to have to recall when you've reached pitch. But there's little comfort in the fact that this wire is being sent on its way by a torsion-free pin, as there is no pitch change from the speaking length to signal that the wire has arrived there and no hint of how soon that might happen. By now, you and the bottom of the pin have turned another 10 degrees, making a full 20 degrees of wire turned off the coil. That wire, now somewhere between the pin and the agraffe/capo, is still waiting for enough coins to get through the string friction turnstile. Are you on the right pin? A furtive glance confirms this. A constellation of alien harmonics (the 16th, 19th, and 20th?) is pulsating with the Twilight Zone theme where for all you know, that lost wire now lies. There's no stopping now, however, as restarting the pin would only throw a further 10 degrees (the pin friction amount) into the Black Hole. Finally, at 30-something degrees, the agraffe/capo opens up and the pitch changes. But not the pitch your were looking for. A voice tells you that you are the reincarnation of Christopher Columbus and that you should outfit a boat for your true mission, the discovery of the New World.

But relief turns to horror as you

illustrations by Betsy Ballard

Uncertainties In Low Pin/ High String Friction Situation

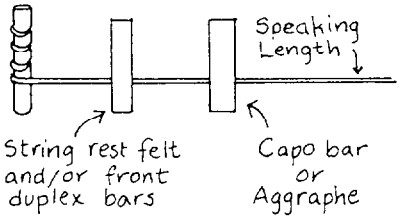


Monolithic String Friction Barrier

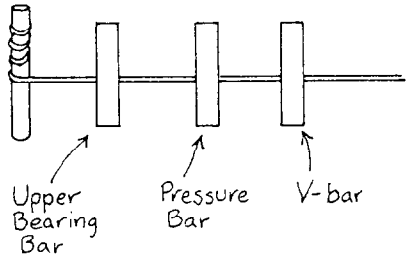
You want to raise speaking length string tension by 1 lb. when string Friction Barrier = 5 lbs.

a. You raise front string tension by 6 lbs.
b. 1 lb. passes barrier into speaking length.
c. A reverse mop up turn equal to 4 lbs. is required to leave two sides of string friction barrier level.

Actual String Friction Barriers:
1. Typical Grand Construction



2. Some Upright Pianos



Here, neither the individual string friction barriers nor the string tension levels between them can be derived from the total string friction barrier. Thus no calculation can be done for a given input which will land the Speaking Length Tension at the desired level and leave the intermediate segment tensions at roughly equal levels.

realize that although part of pitch change was a matter of how much wire you pushed up to the string friction barrier, the remaining part had to do with how much of that would actually jump across the barrier when things got rolling. You have no way of gauging that. Remember that mop-up. With low friction and high pinblock grip, two things make it a cinch. In wrestling with the pin, you've spent most of your time familiarizing yourself with the string/pin coordination. (Whatever amount of turn occurs between the overcoming of the two barriers is immaterial because the partner in this correlation that the string is waiting for is the top not the bottom of the pin, and that was the first thing to move.) Also, most of the excess to be mopped up passed through the entrance, changing the pitch of the speaking length: Hearing it pass back through on the reverse turn will let you know where the excess is.

It's a whole new ball game when string friction is the barrier you had to move all that wire to overcome. As for the coordination on which to gauge your hammer manipulation, the correlation you did observe can really only tell you about the distribution of wire during that part of the hammer movement when both the pin and string were free. There's no such accounting for the wire moved up to that point which will most likely be 95% of the total. Your hand might remember how much the hammer moved up to the point when the speaking length opened up, but without the corresponding pitch changes that recollection is only half the picture, and what's worse, no cigar.

As you prepare to make that final reverse turn, you know but two things about the way tensions lie between the pin and the speaking length. One is that you've just finished turning an excess of 20-something degrees to overcome the string friction and achieve the current (and hopefully, desired) pitch change. The second is that your only hint as to the evenness of that wire's distribution, is that when a vengeful test blow throws its tension spike onto the current balance of tensions on either side of the friction barrier, the wire stays put. But if this is all that you have to go on in mopping up the excess string, you might as well be blindfolded at the edge of a cliff wondering in which direction to take the next step.

When a string with this kind of coordination stands pat under a test blow, that's because the tension imbalances across the bearing points are small enough that the addition of this tension spike doesn't exceed the friction barrier. But the step in tension levels from the pin-to-agraffe/capo section to the speaking length can be either up or down, for all you know. Often the "safety margin" created by a high string friction barrier will be big enough to contain both the speaking length entrance tension differential and the test blow spike. But you have no way to gauge the size of that margin. This is vital considering that you're about to introduce to these two tension levels with a reverse turn at the pin, which itself could either raise or lower the pin-to-agraffe/capo step, depending on your last move. Seeing as how you have no way of knowing where the pin-to-agraffe step is or how the reverse turn might move it, you might just think to quit while you're ahead. (But don't kid yourself that a string which survives a test blow doesn't need a mop-up. That safety margin is a treacherous illusion easily undone by the weather, stage lighting, air conditioning, or a pianist's passions.)

Furthermore, as complicated as the situation you now find yourself in may sound, we've tried to keep it simple by representing string friction as a single bearing point, the entrance to the speaking length. In fact, this friction barrier is not a single monolith: There are a minimum of two, and very often three bearing points between the tuning pin and the entrance to the speaking length. This situation will be further compounded (and yourself, confounded) by any multiple passes at this unison which you may be foolhardy enough to try. If you were hoping to leave this note solidly in tune, it has been a losing proposition since you first turned the pin. Your only help now is brute force in the left hand. What overcomes the string friction barrier are wire change at the pin and test blow tension spikes in the speaking length: of the two, I'd lean toward the one which mops up after itself. I'd also suggest to the owners that the piano is best suited for Clementi and Mozart.

At this point, Dorothy says, "Pianos in Kansas were a lot easier to tune, Toto." And I'd agree. All of this kind of tuning sounds much more complicated than the old-timer's "Bring-it-up-a-hair-over-and-pound-it-back-down." Most of the time, tuning does work that way, in the same way that Newtonian physics works at low velocities. And as I mentioned at the beginning, tuning is supposed to be done, not analyzed. But

when the friction differential grows and when the wrong friction is on top, very clear perceptions of how pin and string are behaving are necessary in order to find, as best possible, the solid tuning.

Conclusions

The truth of the matter is that you can't do much more to adjust the relative levels of string and pin friction beyond renewing the pinblock grip and providing the tuning system with fresh wire and bearing felts (in short, rebuild the beast!) Even at that, you're in no better shape than the rebuilder who can alter string scale characteristics by changing wire sizes but not bridge curves, or a voicer unable with his needles and files to reset soundboard crown and downbearing.

I can offer a couple of examples of what's possible. A 15-year-old Steinway B started off with robust pin and string friction. A decade later, the tuning pins, still at their initial tall setting, were considerably looser. Taking care of the resulting low pin friction/high string friction coordination was as simple as driving the tuning pins. A much older Steinway B sat for years in a beach house in Florida. The thick rust scale on the strings and pins faded noticeably as you moved from the bass (the side next to the Florida window) to treble. Although the piano was not atrociously out of tune on its arrival for its first New England winter, it became so immediately after I sat down to tune. The pins and string had been rust-locked, and once I broke that lock, the pins became sprung (ie., unwinding an M3d below pitch once the hammer was removed.) Rx: restring with a new block.

Then there was the rat's nest of a Jacob Doll grand belonging to the community arts groups in the next town over. It had a bearing ridge in the bass section sharp enough to chop wood with, and at some point (and for good reason) the tuning pins had to be driven. The single string would rather snap than move up from lowered coils over such a knife edge: I quit after the third one. Two years later I was talked into another tuning and discovered on arriving that since my last visit, another tuner had wound the coils upwards from the becket. With a number-one tip on the tuning hammer, it worked fine!

As for pianos being held in tune not by their pin blocks but by their string friction, there are less extreme examples. I can think of one 80-year-old grand due for a restringing, which, as far as I can tell, has spent its life in one or two well-protected living rooms. The ivory keyboard is immaculate; the strings, plate felts, and string friction are pristine. But given the decline of the original stringing's pinblock grip, the otherwise moderate string friction is the higher of the two, and definitely the part of the tuning system keeping the piano in tune.

In a vertical piano, you can go straight at string friction by raising the pressure bar. (Wise men might fear to tread in this direction, so use plenty of common sense.) Driving the tuning pins in a vertical piano will also lower the string's angle of incidence to the pressure bar.

Unfortunately, there's no magic spray can to lessen the drag of rusted wire on old string felts. A good dousing of Slip-Spray teflon appears not to make a difference, and I'm not about to try Liquid Wrench. As for dealing with the string friction of pinched wires, the direction in which you tune your unisons will determine whether the upper pin with the pinched string gets tuned before or after the lower pin which doing the pinching. Under most circumstances, that direction is from bass to treble in a vertical, and in a grand from treble to bass.

Actually when you put all of the above-mentioned means of solving string-pin coordination problems, they don't amount to much. Which is lucky, because the only string/pin coordination which desperately needs repair, and which humbles beginners and old hands alike, is the space warp of low pin/high string friction. Given these facts of the matter, it would seem that the best therapy is not for the tuning system, but for us tuners. The more we can recognize and understand the pin/string coordination at hand, the less we'll have to fight it. ≡

Coming Events

March 8-9, 1991	**South Central Regional Spring Seminar** Bentley Hotel, Alexandria, LA Contact: Elizabeth Ward; 1012 Warren Street; Alexandria, LA 71301 (318)443-0327
March 14-17, 1991	**Pennsylvania State Convention** Allentown Hilton Hotel, Allentown, PA Contact: John J. Zeiner, Jr.; 830 Hanover Avenue; Allentown, PA 18103 (215)437-1887
March 16, 1991	**Bluegrass Tuning Seminar (one-day)** Transylvania University, Lexington, KY Contact: Ben Griffith; 101 Crestwood Drive; Frankfort, KY 40601 (502)875-2297
March 20-22, 1991	**Pacific Northwest Conference/Convention** Tyee Hotel, Olympia, WA Contact: David J. Stocker; 9324 Littlerock Road SW; Olympia, WA 98502 (206)786-TUNE
April 13, 1991	**East Tennessee One-Day Seminar Workshop** Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, TN Contact: Tom Graves; 228 Hillcrest Drive: Knoxville, TN 37918 (615)688-0916
April 20, 1991	**Los Angeles Chapter Annual Seminar** La Canada Pres. Church, La Canada, CA Contact: Jon Longworth; 6926 Bellingham Avenue; N. Hollywood, CA 91605 (818) 982-2431
April 25-28, 1991	**New England/Eastern Canada Regional Seminar** Sonesta Hotel, Portland, ME Contact: Joseph Bacica; P. O. Box 104; South Windham, ME 04083 (207)892-0031
May 5, 1991	**South Florida One-Day Seminar** Hale Pianos and Organs, Pompano Beach, FL Contact: Bob Mishkin; 1240 NE 153rd Street; N. Miami Beach, FL 33162 (305) 947-9030
July 13-17, 1991	**34th Annual PTG Convention & Technical Institute** Adam's Mark Hotel, Philadelphia, PA Contact: PTG; 4510 Belleview, Suite 100; Kansas City, MO 64111 (816)753-7747

AUXILIARY EXCHANGE

President's Message

You will all already know whether or not March "came in like a lion or a lamb" as you read your March *Journal*. I only know that I am writing in the depths of winter, sunny, beautiful day or not! I am looking forward to the ferocious winds of March or to the balmy days which might instead preview spring.

Minor problems continue to hassle your traveling tuner's chauffeur and PTGA Prez. The muffler fell off the car while we were driving on a busy highway heading for a tuning 25 miles distant from home, a tuning for a chamber concert in a private residence which the piano owner had arranged with artists traveling from as far away — about 100 miles — as New York City and a tuning which had already been postponed because of a sleet and ice storm. Tuner husband got out on the highway, protected by a big yellow school bus (kind driver!), picked up the muffler, and on we drove to reach the appointment on time and, thereafter, to be met with the next incipient blizzard as we left the concert-arranger's home.

We went cautiously to the next appointment down near the Hudson River, closer to home and 20 minutes late due to the weather, and no one waiting for us, no phone available, only oil tanks, the Rondout Creek and blizzard-like conditions. We then went roaring off — remember the muffler? — and phoned from home for a new appointment. There was no possibility of phoning for an appointment for poor, sick auto for three days. Our local garage closes for the week-end in winter!

Can you understand why I am overjoyed at the advent of March? Are the crocuses blooming yet? Do I hear a robin?

Our problems which seemed so frustrating were quickly solved. By late Tuesday afternoon we were on the road again, and by Friday we were back at the church to complete the missed appointment and to cover two others postponed due to the northeastern elements. All is right with us again, but how petty and unimportant our little problems seem now.

On Wednesday evening the Persian Gulf War had begun and the desperate problems of the real world came pouring into my living room via the television set. There was coverage of bombings, anti-aircraft firing, unhappy, suffering American mothers and fathers whose sons and daughters were putting their lives on the line to once again save the world from tyrants. I pray that the Operation Desert Storm will be completed as you read this, with a minimum loss of lives on all sides, that no more missiles are being lobbed into the homes of the poor innocents, no more bombings, and that our sons and daughters are returning safely home to their parents and families.

I'm fearful, however, that this may not be so, and a little ashamed to have even mentioned our trivial daily problems with the world in such an inflammatory state.

We are all looking forward to a peaceful summer, a coming together of old friends in July and the meeting and making of many new friends at the 1991 PTG Annual Convention in Philadelphia, PA. Hope to see you all there, and the World all patched up again and in better shape!

Arlene M. Paetow

The Latest From L.A.

The Los Angeles Chapter PTG Auxiliary met December 5th for their annual Christmas Dinner Party. This was the 8th year this party has been held at the Taix's French Restaurant on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. Reservations were made early in the spring.

Even though the Auxiliary is not as active now as it has been in past years, 32 were in attendance at the party, including spouses and friends. The ladies decorated the tables in the already beautifully decorated room. They brought plates of Christmas cookies to go with the sherbet at the end of the meal. The meal was delicious, as always.

Each lady received two small Chinese vases which were wrapped and put into lovely white boxes decorated with red and green bows. A candy cane was added to the box for the men. This special treat was taken care of by *Dorothea Odenheimer*, Auxiliary chapter president, with the help of *Fern Morton*.

Before the meal *Don Morton* brought some lovely thoughts on the Christmas Season. After dinner *Jan* and *Mallory Geller* gave us a lovely holiday skit. The music was played on their new harps. These are two really talented people, and we are proud to have them in our Guild. Their program was not only super, but they entertained us with beautiful music while guests arrived.

Sarah Lampiasi delighted us all by reading a lovely story of the season. She also brought greetings from the Auxiliary who met at the Ohio State Conference held in Cleveland in Octo-

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ber. She and *Jim* really enjoyed attending and seeing so many friends.

Our party concluded with the singing of Christmas carols with the *Gellers* accompanying us on their harps. A good time, was had by all, and most expressed their hopes that the party could be repeated again next year.

The L.A. Chapter Auxiliary hopes to have some get-togethers in the homes of members in the new year. The ladies are looking forward to the California State Convention in Sacramento in February. Greetings to all and good wishes for a Happy New Year.

Ivagene Dege

And From Sacramento...

Ginger Bryant took time out from her work on the Auxiliary Program for the California State Convention to send this update about some of our favorite Aussies:

Dear Julie,

During the holidays I received a card from Ron and Nell Harper of Mortdale Heights, Australia. You and many of your readers will remember meeting the Harpers at the 1986 Annual Convention in Las Vegas. During our Christmas in July program that year, which was the kickoff fund raiser for our Scholarship Fund, Ron contributed generously by purchasing a number of raffle tickets. Justice prevailed, and when the winning ticket was drawn it had Ron's name onit. On the back of the picture of the train set Nell wrote, "Look! You started all this! Ron spends a lot of time building and running his train set!!"

What started with Christmas in July in 1986, has continued to grow and there have been a total of four $400 scholarships given and four $200 scholarships given. Like Ron's train set, the Scholarship Fund has also continued to grow.

Ginger Bryant

Auxiliary Exchange Editor
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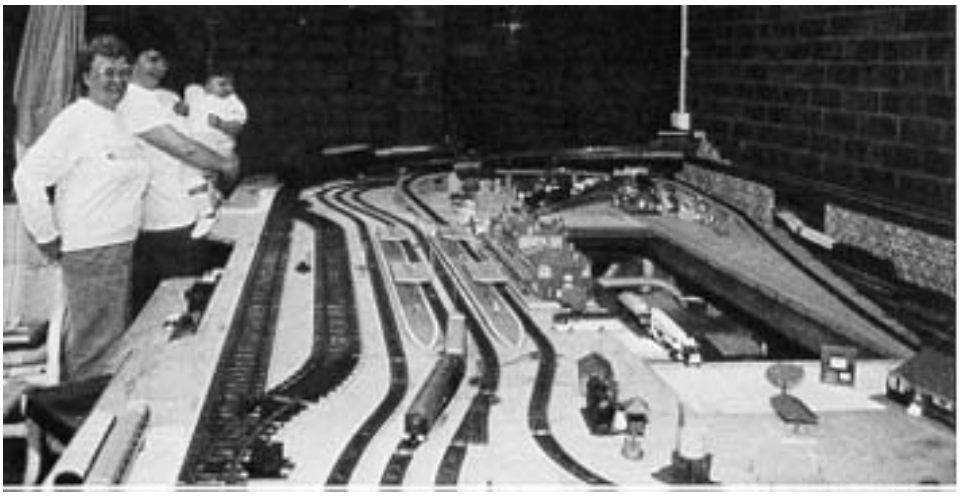
Start planning now !
for the 34thAnnual Convention at the Adam's Mark in Philadelphia, July 13-17, 1991

Langwitch: Phinglish

PTGA honorary life member Bert Sierota of Philadelphia, sends us the following tongue-in-cheek guide for understanding the way people tend to speak in Philadelphia, site of our next annual convention. Bert writes that "Bell Atlantic employees have developed a dictionary of proper Fluffyan or, as they call it, 'Phinglish' because of a well-developed ear for Philadelphia patois." Thanks, Bert, for helping us get ready in a humorous way for next July.

ACCROST...how to get to the other side
ADDYTOOD...your outlook
ALLUMIUM...whatcha wrap food in
APTEETOOD...how smartcha are
ARN...whatcha press your clothes with
ARTHERITIS...disease of the joints
ASCARED...afraid
ASPARAGRASS...food
AWF...not on
AWFUSS...where you work
AW-ITE...OK
BALDYMORE...a city in Merrilin
BATTREE...starts your car
BEEYOUDEEFUL...goorjus
BERFDAY...anniversary of your berf
BOUT...proximate
CAMMER...a place to stick your film
CAWFEY...a morning drink
CHESTER DRAWS...part of a bedroom suite
CHIMBLY...where Santa comes
CHOCKLIT...not vanella
CRICK...big stream
DARE...not here
DEEZ...not dem
DEM...not deez
DOZE...not dem
DEDDENIT...does not
ESKULATER...does not move
EYETALIAN...person from Italy
FILIM...whatcha put in your cammer
GAWHEAD...proceed
GRADDYTOOD...show gratefulness
HISSELF...alone
IGGLES...best team in the NFL
INSTEETOOT...as in Franklin
ITLY...where Eyetalians come from
JEET...question about food
KINNEGARDEN...where little kids go to school
LYBERRY...book place
MANAZE...sandwich spread
MIRRA...whatcha look in
MUNTZ...12 in a year
NUFF...all you want
NUTTN...less than sumpn
PACKITCH...parsill
PEENITZ...elephant food
PITCHER...(see PIXTURE)
PIXTURE...comes from filim
PLEECE...red car drivers
PORKYPINE...a prickly animal
PREESHIATE...eggspress graddytood
SAMITCH...normally eaten at lunch
SYLVANEERS...mementoes
TAWK...speek
TIDAY...day after yestiday
TIGGETS...whatcha need to get in
TIMARRA...day after today
TINNITE...p.m.
UNNERSTAN...comprehend
VANELLA...not chocklit
WAUDER...whatcha get from the spickit
WIRF...value
WIT...togedder
WONNERFUL...great
YESTIDAY...day before today
YOOZ...alladem
ZINK...where the spickit is



The Harpers (in Australia) survey the train set which got its beginning at the 1986 PTG Convention in Las Vegas.

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PIANO TECHNICIAN POSITION AVAILABLE at West Virginia University Morgantown. Full-time, 12 month appointment with benefits. For information: **C.B. Wilson, (304) 293-4091.**

JANUARY 1991 MEMBERSHIP

New Members

REGION 1

CHAPTER 165 — ERIE, PA

DANIEL M. HALLETT, II
324 BENSON AVENUE
MEADVILLE, PA 16335

DAVID M. RODGERS
9097 OXBOW ROAD
NORTH EAST, PA 16428

CHAPTER 191 — PHILADELPHIA, PA

FAITH S. SALVO
2802 CRESTLINE CT.
GLEN MILLS, PA 19342

REGION 2

CHAPTER 223 — NORTHERN VIRGINIA

ROBERT J. GRAY
7122 DRYBURGH COURT
SPRINGFIELD, VA 22152

CHAPTER 278 — PAMLICO, NC

GARY H. WHICHARD
11 PALMETTO PLACE, #11
GREENVILLE, NC 27858

CHAPTER 379 — KNOXVILLE, TN

DENNIS A. MAYHEW, JR.
7700 OLD CLINTON PIKE
KNOXVILLE, TN 37849

REGION 5

CHAPTER 553 — TWIN CITIES, MN

ANDREW S. BARKER
2611 W. 70TH STREET
RICHFIELD, MN 55423

CHAPTER 641 — KANSAS CITY, MO

ALAN K. STEPHENS
RR 1, BOX 3
COWGILL, MO 64637

CHAPTER 815 — COLORADO WEST

WALT S. MOYER, II
3449 ESSEX CT.
CRAIG, CO 81625

REGION 6

CHAPTER 941 — SAN FRANCISCO, CA

MARCOS E. TAQUECHEL
427 LINDA AVENUE
PIEDMONT, CA 94611

REGION 7

CHAPTER 001 — CALGARY, AB

MURRAY A. SEMINUK
5612 DALCASTLE RISE, N.W.
CALGARY, AB T3A 2A5

WANTED!! DEAD OR ALIVE: "Steinway Uprights." Call collect, **Ben Knauer (818) 343-7744.**

UP TO $1000.00 FINDER'S FEE will be paid for successful purchase of a Mason and Hamlin Ex-Player. I have mechanism to install. **Please call collect (317) 259-4307 or evenings (317) 849-1469. Jim Brady; 4609 Cranbrook Drive; Indianapolis, IN 46250.**

HIGHEST FINDER'S FEE paid for successful purchase of STEINWAY or MASON & HAMLIN EX-PLAYER GRAND. Please call me collect at **(612) 824-6722** anytime. **Grant Leonard, 401 W. Lake Street; Minneapolis, MN 55408.**

WANT TO BUY. Steinway duo-art player grand. Will pay finders fee. Especially want carved (fancy) case. Call Collect, **Jim Brady; (317) 259-4307; 2725 E. 56th Street; Indianapolis, IN 46220.**

Baldwin 9' grand. Need mahogany lid and prop. Will buy whole piano or parts only. **Richard Anderson, RTT (708) 464-4500.**

Did you ever have piano questions you didn't have an answer for?

We have the answers.

PRIVATE TUTORING

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International PTG Convention in Philadelphia

We will have expert instructors who will teach one-on-one any piano-related subject you want.

$60.00 per 1 1/2 hour session.

Sign-up deadline is June 10.

To sign up, contact Gary Neie; P.O. Box 3058; Pineville, LA 71361
(318) 640-3122

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OF BETTER PIANO SERVICE

PTG's 34th Annual Convention & Technical Institute

July 13-17, 1991
Adam's Mark
Philadelphia

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Tech Gazette

Yamaha Piano Service March, 1991

New Products

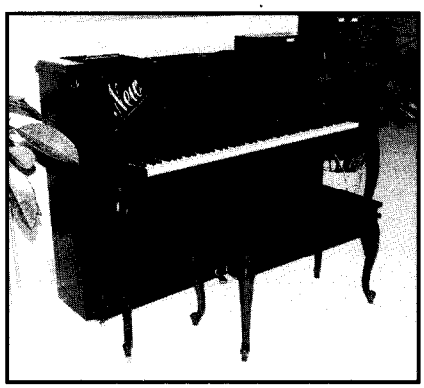
YAMAHA INTRODUCES NEW GRAND PIANOS

At the recent NAMM show, held in Anaheim, California in January, Yamaha introduced new grand pianos. The G1R, G2R and G3R have been replaced by the G1F, G2F and G3F. These are new versions of the 5′3″, 5′7″, and 6′ grand piano line. In the Conservatory series, the C3E and the C5E (6′ and 6′6″) have been replaced by the C3F and the C5F (6′1″ and 6′7″). The C7F (7′6″) becomes the C7FII. Also shown for the first time is a new addition to the Conservatory line: the all new C6F, which is 6′11″ in length. Rounding out the introduction was a new version of the S400B, the S400E (6′3″).

Specific changes and improvements include new scales that increase the length of the bass strings and provide for smoother transitions through the break area. Soundboards and bridges have been re-engineered to improve the performance of all these pianos. The Conservatory Series will also include redesigned hammers, resulting in improved overall tonal performance and a wider range of voicing capabilities.

Changes have also taken place in cabinetry to offer more user options for the performer. These include the music desk, which now has five adjustments instead of three; and a new lid prop that allows for three different lid placements. One of the most notable improvements, however, is the "soft-close" fallboard. No longer can the fallboard suddenly drop on unsuspecting fingers, or slam shut while you are in the middle of a tuning. The fallboard now glides shut gently, and can no longer cause any surprises to performer or technician alike. Finally, new casters on all Yamaha grand pianos will make moving these instruments a bit easier.

DISKLAVIER™ INTRODUCES NEW FURNITURE STYLES



Also introduced at the NAMM show were three new models of Disklavier™ Pianos. These 43″ decorator consoles have furniture style cabinets in Mediterranean Oak (MX82), Italian Provincial Walnut (MX84), and French Provincial Cherry (MX85). These pianos are produced in our Thomaston, Georgia plant. The "piano" specifications are the same as the M400 Decorator Console Pianos—with the addition of the Disklavier™ Playback/Record system. These three new Disklavier™ Piano models expand the Disklavier™ Collection of pianos to now include uprights, grands, and console pianos.

All of these new pianos will start arriving at Yamaha dealers in April. Please stop in and see them or contact us for more information.

Yamaha will Participate in

LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE:
March 18 - 22
May 6 - 10
June 10 - 14

DISKLAVIER™ SERVICE SEMINARS:
April 15 - 19
May 20 - 24
June 24 - 28

PTG CONVENTIONS:
South Central Regional
Alexandria, LA
March 8 - 10

Pennsylvania State
Allentown, PA
March 14 - 16

Pacific Northwest
Olympia, WA
March 20 - 22

New England Regional
Portland, ME
April 25 - 28

InterMountain Regional
Salt Lake City, UT
May 3 - 5

National PTG Convention
Philadelphia, PA
July 13 - 17

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YAMAHA®

MARCH **UPDATE** 1991

Published Monthly For Members Of The Piano Technicians Guild, Inc.

Board Of Directors Meets In Philadelphia

The Piano Technicians Guild Board of Directors met January 10-11, 1991, at next summer's convention headquarters hotel, the Adam's Mark Philadelphia. Board members present included Nolan P. Zeringue, RTT, President; Bruce Dornfeld, RTT, Vice President; Sharla Kistler, RTT, Secretary-Treasurer; Ron Berry, RTT, Immediate Past President; James Birch, RTT, Northeast Regional Vice President; Don Valley, RTT, Southeast RVP; Danny L. Boone, RTT, South Central RVP; Richard Bittner, RTT, Central East RVP; Michael Drost, RTT, Central West RVP; Fern Henry, RTT, Western RVP; and Stephen H. Brady, RTT, Pacific Northwest RVP.

What follows is a brief, unofficial resume of actions taken by the Board. In its two-day meeting, the Board:

- Voted to direct its Market Development and Advertising Committee to pursue negotiations with three marketing firms that had submitted preliminary proposals. The committee is to select one firm to conduct a pilot project using currently allocated funds for advertising and brochure production and to prepare a marketing presentation for Council consideration. Board also voted to propose increasing the advertising budget by $10,000 for 1991, and budgeting $50,000 for marketing activities in 1992.
- Approved for presentation to this summer's Council a 1992

Continued on page 7

Delinquent Members Dropped From Roster

With the passage of the March 4 deadline for payment of delinquent 1991 dues, individuals whose dues were unpaid were scheduled to be notified that they had officially been dropped from the membership roster. According to Guild Bylaws, membership dues became due on January first and were delinquent January 31.

Only members whose dues were paid prior to the drop date or those who had made special arrangements because of hardship or other circumstances will be listed in the upcoming membership directory. The directory will be published as the April issue of the *Journal*.

Meet Your Board Members: CERVP Richard Bittner, RTT

Lisa Gray
Assistant Editor

In his last chapter president's message, CERVP Richard Bittner brought up the question of why people don't attend seminars, conventions, etc. They say they're too busy. Richard comes back with the story of the man who was cutting wood with a dull blade. His arm was becoming quite sore, but when asked why he didn't stop and sharpen the blade, he said he was too busy.

People in this business have to put up with failed appointments, and customers who may not always respect their time. Richard thinks people should remember the customers who are nice to them, and respect them. "I have one customer who I have been tuning for every six months since I began tuning. I recently went to tune her piano, and she wasn't there. Her husband informed me that she was in the hospital and had just come out of a coma. Still, she told him 'Remember, the tuner is coming today.'"

Bittner

Having been a piano and organ teacher himself, Richard likes to promote PTG through piano teachers. "I give classes to teachers' organizations in Detroit. The classes deal with buying used pianos." Richard has a teaching certificate from the

Continued on page 4

Focus On Ethics: Healthy Relationships

Francis Hollingsworth
Code of Ethics
Committee Chair

In our daily lives, we have all kinds of relationships. We're constantly meeting people and interacting with them. We have family, friends, people we work with and for, customers, suppliers, manufacturers and many others. I would like to talk about the kinds of relationships we have as business people with those with whom we come in contact in our everyday working lives. As members of the Piano Technicians Guild, we have a Code of Ethics that we need to observe. This will influence our relations with others.

When working with customers, we need to establish an honest relationship that will gain us their respect. Obviously, we need to know our jobs well and develop the skills that will best serve their needs. A satisfied customer is an asset. Word of mouth advertising can work for us in a big way. By the same token, a dissatisfied customer can do a lot of damage to us.

Our relationships with dealers and manufacturers must also be healthy ones. We realize that the piano industry has taken some pretty hefty blows in the last few years, and since we share many of the same interests, we need to work together as much as we can. Certainly, we have some unethical piano tuner/technicians in our midst, and dealers share this same problem in their ranks. Most of us can cite instances where the customer was misled in order for the dealer to make a sale. It's hard to keep from criticizing such a dealer to the customer. If we are to observe our Code of Ethics, we must be careful of what we say. We can still be positive and helpful. If there is a real problem with the piano or claims the dealer has made, then explain these as clearly as possible to the customer. If you are working for the dealer in question, you will have to work out a solution with the dealer. If you don't work for the dealer in question, you may want to refer to the problem back to the dealer — especially if warranty work is involved.

I'm suggesting that we, as technicians, have a responsibility to dealers and manufacturers. Piano makers build pianos in different quality and price ranges and even though we may not particularly like a certain instrument, it may be exactly what the customer needs and wants at a particular time in their lives. It is our job to encourage the customer to keep it in top condition so that they can get the most out of it. Any time we try to discredit a manufacturer or a dealer we usually end up discrediting ourselves. Again, those relationships need to be as healthy as we can make them.

Our relationships with other tuner/technicians are also very important. The contacts we make with other technicians at PTG chapter meetings, seminars and conventions are of great value. We have the opportunity of discussing our problems with others and often come up with a better solution than we originally had. We learn from others; therefore, we need to keep these lines of communication open. If we don't attend chapter meetings on a regular basis, we lose more than the chapter loses. Of course there will be differences of opinions and friction may develop, but respect for others and a sincere effort to maintain this structure will pay off handsomely. Keep these relationships healthy.

As I said earlier, we have all kinds of relationships and if we make the effort to keep them running smoothly, the benefits will be great. Habits seem to carry over into all phases of our lives, and if we take care of our professional lives, we just may be nicer people to be around.

Here's to good health.

Piano Technicians Guild Code of Ethics

1. I will always conduct myself honorably in locations where I render service and in a manner which will reflect credit to the PTG.
2. I will always keep the best interest of my client in mind.
3. I will always render the best service possible under the circumstances.
4. I will not advertise or otherwise imply or claim to the public that my method of tuning is inherently superior to other professional methods of tuning.
5. I will not engage in unfair trade practices.
6. I will not advertise in a manner so as to convey information that is misleading.

Our Chapter Leaders: How Do You See Them?

Webb Phillips, Chair
Chapter Management And Achievement Committee

There is nothing caustic or snide intended in this article. However, be it good or bad — *if the shoe fits, wear it.*

Are the leaders that you know and see proud of their chapter and the fact that they are leaders, or are they unable to meet your chapter's needs? Is the level dull and nonchalant, mediocre, adequate, good or great?

Put yourself in the judge's chair, and act as the sole judge or jury. Let's hear your opinion. It's *your* Guild. Judge not only your chapter, but all those chapter and committee members with whom you may be familiar. If you do not approve, what are your suggestions for improvement?

What makes a chapter worthless, mediocre, good or great — not only to themselves, but to the entire Guild?

How is it that some small chapters of only six to 12 members continue to, year after year, win awards for their outstanding contributions to the Guild, and to their own lives, as well as the entire music industry? There are many other chapters with two, three or even five times that number of members floundering aimlessly and making a mockery of their chapter, the word "leadership" and the Guild.

If all your chapters and leaders are of the "great" variety, then we need not waste any time to do further research, but if it ain't all cream and peaches, where do we put the blame? If our leaders ain't so great, why don't we elect ones who can do the job?

Here are some of my thoughts on where weaknesses lie: Do you know of any occasion where behind-the-scenes operators have promoted stagnancy by intimidating inexperienced officers? This promotes goal-less meetings. The same operators often display negative cooperation on any suggested chapter projects which were not of their own doing (ego can't handle others' success).

Newly elected officers are often so intimidated by the previous officers that they are reluctant to set new goals, fearing that their inexperience as just another opportunity to work smarter and harder takes intestinal fortitude. The benefits are enormous for both self- and chapter-improvement. The job should be looked upon as an opportunity to prove yourself as a good leader. Fulfill your obligation to those who had enough confidence in you to elect you.

Where we do have some problems, I feel it's mostly from this lack of leadership experience and the consequential intimidation by some of our peers.

PTG'ers tell me their chapters ain't doing so good because they have lousy leaders. Gee, I wonder who elected them? I also wonder who they thought these leaders were going to depend on for help when and where it was needed?

Chapter management is the responsibility of every chapter member. Successful management, for every phase, will depend upon the preparation of a plan and the execution of that plan. Management is the process whereby the resources of people, money, material, time, and facilities are all used to accomplish the primary mission of an organization, no matter what it is. I know of no clearer explanation.

Now for those of us who have excellent leadership, let's not be too complacent. As Mark Twain once said, "You may be on the right track, but if you sit there very long, you will get run over." Searching the world of business for answers, we find this startling concept: There are many excellent business people who insist we should go out of our way to create dissatisfied people in every organization. Contrary to what you might think, dissatisfied members can be more valuable to an organization than satisfied ones. The main reason is that dissatisfied people want to change things. If, as a leader, you are able to harness that dissatisfaction and focus it on making your chapter or committee more effective and efficient, you and the entire organization will benefit. So do not ignore those dissatisfied, intolerant, impatient, or even totally disgusted members. They just may be the key to a better future for all.

Most of you who are leaders want to focus on creating satisfaction on the part of your members. You probably want to be sure that each member feels good enough about the chapter to enable him or her to develop personally, to where they can accomplish things of personal significance and be recognized for those things. Of course, all of this should be true, you do want people who are satisfied with their chapters, you do want people who feel they are an important part of the Guild and the fact that it is a first-rate organization. Each of us has those internal needs that we want satisfied.

But there is a big difference between being satisfied with the association you have with the chapter, and being satisfied with the way things are right now. A group of people that is satisfied with the way things are right now can be the most dangerous.

People who are totally satisfied with the way things are

Continued on page 4

Bittner...

Detroit Institute of Musical Art, which he attended for three years.

Richard was sent to Vietnam in 1969, as a percussionist in the Army Band. He had played the drums in high school. Along with entertaining troops, and playing in churches, they got to be around children. "There were many orphanages there. Some of the children had American or French blood. Many times we would go and spend the day with them. We would take percussion instruments, demonstrate them to the children, and then they'd play along with us. This turned out to be a really neat part of my life."

After coming back to the states in 1971, Richard and a partner went on the road as musicians, touring the U.S. and Canada. "We played a lot of Sheratons and Holiday Inns. We were playing at a club in Detroit when I first heard of piano tuning lessons. My organ broke down, and the guy who came to fix it said he had to get on to his piano tuning lesson. I asked him how to get into that, and he told me about the man who was teaching him."

The man teaching these lessons would accept only a small number of students in his shop set-up. Richard remembers, "We would learn by rebuilding old uprights, and he would sell them. At that time we knew of nowhere else to get this kind of opportunity." Richard took lessons there for a year and a half. It turns out several other members of the Detroit-Windsor Chapter took lessons at the same place.

Richard began tuning full-time in 1976. As part of his current client list, Richard works for the Royal Oak School District, "I graduated from high school there, and now I am tuning some of the same pianos that were there when I was." Richard does mostly in-home service and some shop work. Recently, along with a partner who specializes in computer programming, Richard has helped design a computer program for piano technicians.

Richard has been a member of the Detroit-Windsor Chapter since joining the Guild in 1982. Although he has worked hard in his chapter and region for PTG, he had deliberately taken a behind-the-scenes role prior to his election as a Regional Vice President in Dallas last summer. He attended the convention with intentions of working as a CTE, but had to quickly take on many more responsibilities. As an RVP, he likes being involved in reaching decisions today that will affect the future growth of the organization.

"PTG's still pretty young — less than 35 years — and it's still constantly changing." Richard says he wants to help the organization grow and be a part of those changes.

Chapter leaders...

right now have absolutely no incentive to make any changes. Furthermore, when change does occur they do everything they can to resist it. It turns out of course that all the progress that has been made in the human race has been made by people who were not satisfied, who were intolerant of the present condition, who were impatient for a change, who essentially were disgusted with the status of current events and committed to doing everything they could to make it different (or improve it). This is the kind of dissatisfaction your chapter needs, dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Now once you get that group of rabble-rousing, hard-nosed dissatisfied members organized into a tornado, you want to make absolutely sure you focus their energy on the evils that keep your chapter from being effective. Focus them on correcting the things that are keeping you from being an outstanding chapter in the Guild, meeting the needs of your members today, and doing an ever increasing better job of meeting all the needs in the future. Focus them on creating value.

This month's Prog report is simply to make you aware that, with the talent we have in the Guild, there is no excuse for not having good leadership at all levels and leading all chapters.

None of us likes to admit that we are not all that we can be, and most of the time much, much less, but be practical, wake up and look at your chapter and the need to establish good, clear goals by qualified leadership.

Lack of good, clear goals and not taking steps for continuous training and development of chapter leaders by all allows chapters to become stagnant.

Complacency and the general membership's lack of support when they do have an aggressive leader are disastrous. Not having worthwhile, practical goals is not only disastrous, it's ludicrous.

I guess I'm just plain lucky. I have always belonged to a chapter where every member was just as proud to be a part of it as I, and we were never embarrassed to say its name loud and clear. How about you?

Keep those reports rolling in!

In Respectful Memory...

Max L. Kulcke

Mr. Max L. Kulcke, 68, of Monroe, LA, a long time member of the North Central Louisiana Chapter of the PTG and a chapter sustaining member, passed away Oct. 27, 1990. Max started piano work with his father in 1934 at the young age of 12. They worked together for many years and were the leading technician/rebuilders in the area. After his father died, Max continued alone. A piano that he would rebuild was a work of art. He could be truly considered a master in his field.

He has helped nearly all the aspiring technicians in the area that would take the time to stop by his shop. He imparted an attitude of quality and never a harsh word about any other technicians' work. Even though his health was failing, he kept working and always had the time to stop and talk shop with whoever came by. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Fred Sponseller, Jr.

Fred Sponseller, Jr., a member of the Dallas-Ft. Worth Chapter, passed away Jan. 18, 1991, after a lengthy illness.

Fred will long be remembered for his enthusiasm and his love for the PTG and for his willingness to serve in any capacity in which he found himself. His friends throughout PTG will remember this energetic man, eager to share what he knew and what he had learned at the many conventions, seminars, and workshops he enjoyed so much.

Fred was proud to wear his 25-year pin which he received in 1989. He also received a plaque from the Dallas Chapter for his faithful years as treasurer. Charles Burbach (PTG President) appointed Fred Secretary-Treasurer of the newly-formed Dallas-Ft. Worth Chapter at the Baker Hotel in Dallas March 29, 1965.

In his earlier years he shared his beautiful voice with the PTG and his church, Lake Highlands Baptist. Before his retirement from the Dallas Independent School District, Sponseller taught English and Music at the Bryan Adams High School and at some time during his tenure was band director.

Fred Sponseller, Jr., is survived by his wife, Bonnie Sponseller; a son, Bob Sponseller; grandchildren, Scott Hogue, Jr., Brenda Hunter, Fran Bell; a daughter-in-law, Barbara Hogue; and several other grandchildren and great-granchildren.

Dates & Deadlines

March 4, 1991
Members delinquent in 1991 dues to be dropped from roster.

March 16, 1991
RTT Tuning Exam. Detroit Chapter. Contact: Hugh Gulledge (313) 669-4325.

March 23, 1991
RTT Technical Exam. Detroit Chapter. Contact: Steve Hornbeck (313) 627-6128.

March 25, 1991
RTT Tuning and Technical Exams. Skyline College, San Bruno, CA. Application deadline: Feb. 25, 1991. Contact Neil Panton, 5 Cedar Ct., Menlo park, CA 95025. (415) 854-8038.

April 6, 1991
RTT Tuning and Technical Exams. Austin, TX, Chapter Test Center. Application deadline: March 6, 1991. Contact: Bill Cory, 711 Landon Lane, Austin, TX 78705. (512) 472-9358.

June 8, 1991
RTT Tuning and Technical Exams. Puget Sound Test Center. Application deadline June 1, 1991. Contact: Wayne Matley; 2502 Harmony Lane; Enumclaw, WA 98022 (206) 825-6921

July 13-16, 1991
RTT Tuning and Technical Exams. 34th International PTG Convention and Technical Institute, Philadelphia, PA Contact: Michael Travis; P.O. Box 576, Greenbelt, MD 20768 (301) 441-3555

July 13-17, 1991
34th International PTG Convention and Technical Institute. Philadelphia, PA. Contact: Home Office, 4510 Belleview, St. 100, Kansas City, MO 64111. (816) 753-7747.

August 17, 1991
RTT Tuning and Technical Exams. Skyline College, San Bruno, CA. Application deadline: July 17th, 1991. Contact: Neil Panton, 5 Cedar Court, Menlo Park, CA 95025 (415) 854-8038

October 11-13, 1991
RTT Tuning and Technical Exams. Texas State Seminar. Austin, TX, Chapter Test Center. Application deadline: Sept. 11, 1991. Contact: Bill Cory, 711 Landon Lane, Austin, TX 78705. (512) 472-9358.

The PTG Survey: Advertising, Registered Craftsmen, and Employees

Carl Root, Chair
Economic Affairs Committee

"Tell them you heard about us right here!"

"Bring in this coupon and we'll give you $10 dollars off!"

Do these exclamations sound familiar? They demonstrate how important it is to track the effectiveness of advertising for media who solicit ads and for advertisers who place them. It may seem unimportant to know where your customers are coming from as long as the phone rings often enough to keep you as busy as you want to be, but the number of tunings we do is not the only thing that matters. We are interested not just in the quantity, but also in the quality of piano and customer. If we find that one source of customers produces mostly headaches and another source provides us with stimulating, enjoyable, and profitable work, we would naturally increase our efforts towards the latter.

We are fortunate in that we can easily keep track of where calls come from. Isn't it interesting how most callers who come from referrals mention how they heard about us even before we have a chance to ask? If callers don't bring up the subject, you should. That piece of information should become a part of their permanent record for future reference.

In the October 1990 *Journal*, we reported the percent of respondents who indicated which sources of customers were very important or fairly important both during the first five years and now. We noted that only dealers were mentioned by more than half the members and then only during the first five years of running a business.

Let's take a closer look at the importance of advertising as a source of first-time customers? Of the respondents who grossed more than $20,000 from field service tunings for private clientele, we get the following "importance ratings":

	First Five Years	Now
very	18%	11%
fairly	23%	18%
slightly	30%	33%
not	27%	36%

If you are looking for a correlation between advertising and net income, there is one, but it is negative.

Importance	Net Income
very	$19,000
fairly	21,000
slightly	22,000
not	21,000

Many members who have claimed that advertising is ineffective have never placed an ad bigger than the one-line listing in the Yellow Pages which comes free with your business phone. When I shared a 1/2" ad with a business partner who lives across town, it generated an average of one tuning per week for me (compared to two from referrals). The acquisition cost of each tuning from that ad was about $10 or 20% of my tuning fee at the time. If you need more work, an acquisition cost of 20% is pretty attractive, wouldn't you agree? The question is, can it produce two tunings per week, ...or 10, by spending proportionately more for ad space?

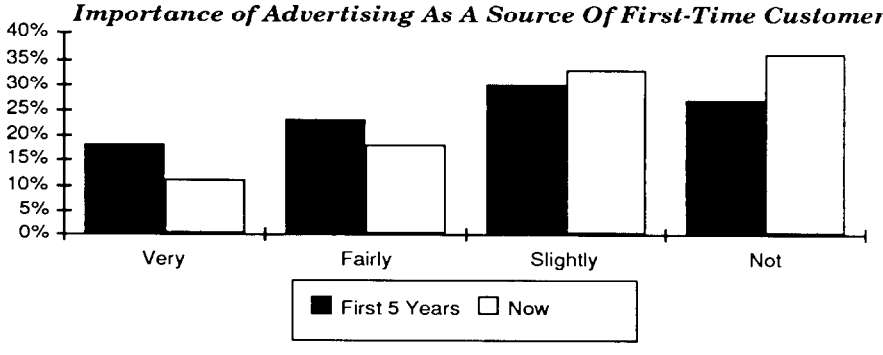
In my market, members are disinclined to advertise partly because the biggest ads are placed by tuners with low prices and no credentials. However, I have noticed that in other parts of the country, some well-known RTTs have large ads. Favorable conditions for advertising may vary according to the size of the market area. In a small town, a listing may simply be the way customers find the one technician in town.

The survey did not ask for your advertising budget, nor did it ask whether or not your status in PTG was mentioned as part of your promotional efforts. It is clear from the data that advertising budgets are low, even nonexistent for most members. The few members who do advertise and who include their affiliation use different titles to describe their status in the Guild. Members can't seem to agree on which title to use, either locally or nationally. Will it be Certified or Registered? Craftsman, ...Technician, ...Tuner-Technician, ...Member of (The) Piano Technicians Guild, (Inc.)? What ever happened to the proposal to form an Advertising Guidelines Committee?

Does this seem like nit picking? Other companies with products or services to promote

Continued on page 7

Importance of Advertising As A Source Of First-Time Customers



Survey...

don't think so. If you represent or promote another company, you will likely be given names and logos with explicit instructions on how they are to be used as part of your business promotion. Color and type of lettering are clearly specified. The purpose is to reinforce an image to the consumer by consistent repetition. Our lack of interest in maintaining conformity works against any effort to promote the status of members in PTG.

Another relevant issue concerns advertising membership status as part of the promotion of a piano service business. Members are currently required to list their name along with their status. This means that Metropolitan Piano Service must list the technician's name when promoting the technician's status. It also means that John or Jane Doe Piano Service must list their name as a separate item even though their business name includes it. This issue is not insignificant since over half of the members of our organization use <My Name> Piano Service compared to simply <My Name> used by only half that many.

Many of the technicians I've talked to don't know the rule and find it inconvenient and unnecessary to abide by it. It is inconvenient because the small ad space that is typical of those who advertise does not allow for a repeat of the name, organization, and status along with details of services offered, and other items of interest to the consumer. It is unnecessary because the customer assumes that if they call *John Doe Piano Service*, John Doe will be the technician who services their piano.

The survey data supports their assumption. Only one member in six who lists their

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Board...

budget which includes increasing membership dues to $138 per year. Part of the additional funds are to be used for the proposed marketing activities, with the balance allocated to operational and service costs which have increased since the last dues increase in 1982.

- Voted to pursue replacement of the current group life insurance benefit with a "return of equity" program and to instruct the Bylaws committee to propose appropriate Bylaws changes to Council.
- Approved three new Certified Tuning Examiners whose names had been submitted by the Examination and Test Standards Committee: David Porter, St. Louis Chapter; Dean Reyburn, Western Michigan Chapter; and Bernard Tolbert, Northern Virginia Chapter. In addition, four recertifications were approved: Charles Erbsmehl, Buffalo, NY, Chapter; Teri Meredyth, Los Angeles Chapter; Richard Raskob, Twin Cities Chapter; and John Stebbins, Western Massachusetts Chapter.
- Approved four members for Chapter Sustaining Status: Theodore Graber, Hutchinson, KS, Chapter; Phillip H. Moore, Seattle Chapter; and James A. Dinwiddie and Roger L. McRoberts, Houston Chapter.
- Instituted a policy under which members who have past-due bills for advertising, business aids or other Guild products or services will not be allowed to renew membership until their accounts are current.
- Accepted a PTG Trial Handbook as an official working document.
- Approved format and concept for producing a series of business forms in a camera-ready format for use by RTTs.
- Approved a revision of the Institute Committee Handbook. The Board also accepted the resignation of Richard Bittinger from the Institute Committee and expressed its gratitude for his years of dedicated service. Gary Neie was named Director of the 1993 Milwaukee Institute and Ernie Juhn was named Director of the 1994 Institute in Knoxville, TN.
- Directed the Home Office to further investigate Albuquerque, NM; Salt Lake City, UT; and San Diego, CA, as potential sites for the 1995 convention. Home Office was also directed to investigate Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis and Kansas City as the site for the 1996 convention.
- Approved a proposal to direct the Home Office to develop an annual buyers' guide publication to be available to Guild members.
- Created a "*Journal* Editorial Conference" committee which will be responsible for planning the *Journal's* editorial calendar on an annual basis. The committee will be composed of the *Journal* Editor, Technical Editor, Tuning Editor and Economic Affairs Committee chair.
- Voted to inform the Bylaws Committee of its position that chapters should not accept membership applications from individuals who live outside the Guild jurisdiction as defined in Bylaws Article X, Section 2.
- Voted to send Ron Berry and Ed Hilbert as delegates to represent PTG at the June meeting of the International Association of Piano Builders and Technicians in Seoul, South Korea and authorized Berry to invite IAPBT to hold its 1995 meeting in conjunction with PTG's annual convention.

Survey...

business as <My Name> Piano Service sends an employee out into the field to do piano service work. The use of employees by technicians who simply list their name is not significantly different. One in seven uses employees for field service work. Keep in mind that any piano technician is free to use an employee in any capacity regardless of qualifications. For PTG to insist otherwise would be in violation of restraint of trade laws.

The focus of this argument is that: 1) The use of employees is not common practice. 2) There is little difference between *John Doe* and *John Doe Piano Service* in this regard. 3) The misrepresentation of the qualifications and identity of employees is no more likely to be a problem with one type of business name than the other. Why, then, does our policy focus on the name rather than the hiring and disclosure practices of technicians who advertise? If it is because of detection and enforcement difficulties, let's at least admit it and change the policy to reflect that reality.

Membership Status

Northeast Region	856
Northeast RTTs	537
Southeast Region	619
Southeast RTTs	395
South Central Region	333
South Central RTTs	211
Central East Region	643
Central East RTTs	398
Central West Region	384
Central West RTTs	253
Western Region	622
Western RTTs	398
Pacific NW Region	357
Pacific NW RTTs	236
Total Membership	3814
Total RTTs	2428

Exams To Be Offered At Convention

If you're an Associate member who needs to take the Guild tuning exam to become a Registered Tuner-Technician, an excellent opportunity will be available during the Convention and Technical Institute in Philadelphia, PA this July.

The PTG Examinations and Test Standards Committee will conduct technical exams July 14-16 at the Convention. Before taking the exams you must have passed the Guild written exam. A reclassification form, verifying that the written exam has been passed, must be brought to the examiner at the time of the test. Written test scores are not required.

Only a limited number of exam slots are available, so be sure to apply early. To apply for a convention exam slot, complete the form on this page and send it to: Michael Travis; P.O. Box 576; Greenbelt, MD 20770-0576.

A $60 application fee payable to "Piano Technicians Guild" is required for applicants for RTT status. There is no fee required for RTTs who are attempting to achieve CTE status, and are enclosing a CTE form.

The deadline for applications is June 29, 1991, and application fees are non-refundable after that date.

Application For 1991 Convention Tuning Exams

Applicants for RTT status must enclose the $60 application fee. Make check payable to "Piano Technicians Guild" and send it with this application to Michael Travis; P.O. Box 576; Greenbelt, MD 20768-0576. The deadline is June 29. Fees are non-refundable after June 29. Receipt of your application will be verified by phone.

Name: _____
Member Number: _____
Phone: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____

Application for:
Complete exam(s) @ $60 fee: Tuning _____ Technical _____
Partial exam(s)*: part 2 tuning exam (@$30) _____
number of technical exam sections (@$20) _____
Total Fee Enclosed: _____
(No fee required for RTTs enclosing a Consent-to-Serve form.)

Have completed Written Exam _____
Will bring reclassification form _____
*(Partial exams available ONLY if repeating a section within one year of previous attempt)

Signature & Date: _____

For further information and individual scheduling requirements, call your convention exam representative. For Technical Exam information, contact Mike Carraher, (717) 367-8256. For Tuning Exam information, contact Kent Swafford, (913) 631-8227.