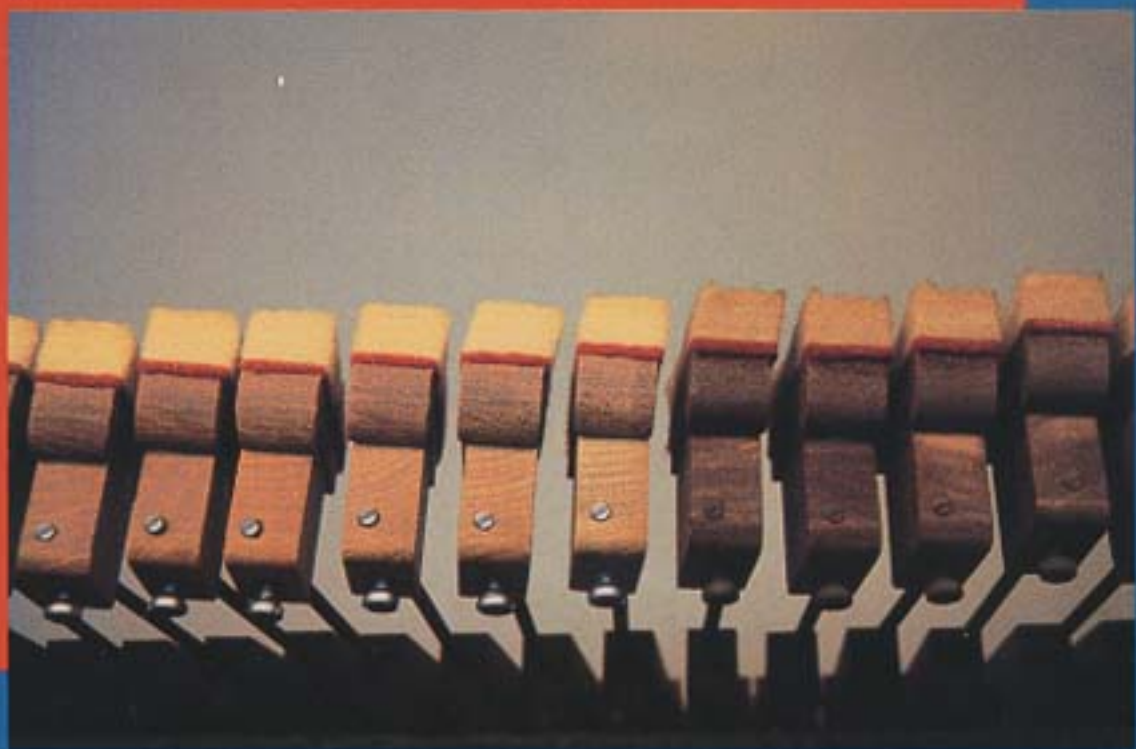


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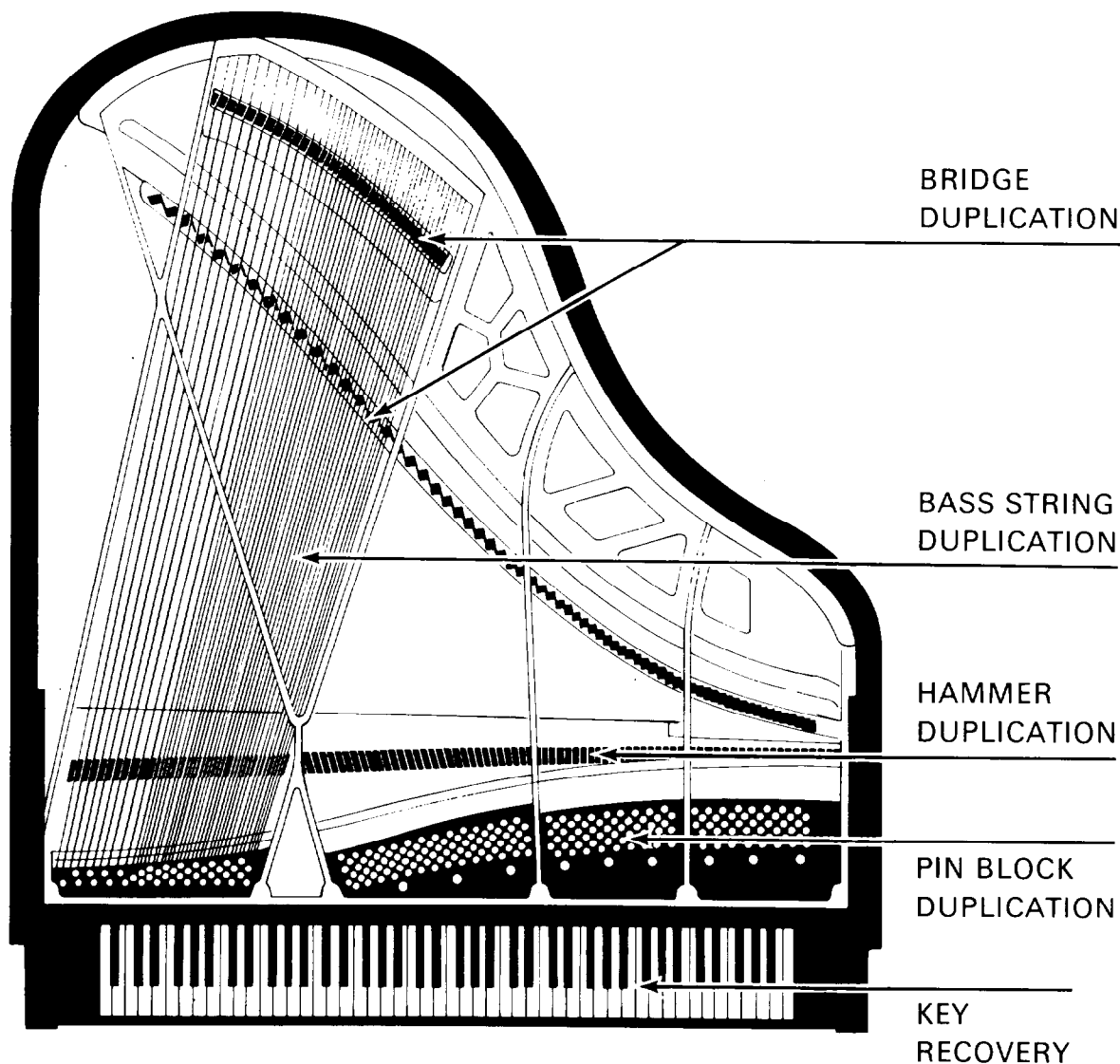
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designed and placed in the center of this
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ABOUT THE COVER

Old piano actions are made to look like
new by cleaning them with a glass bead
blaster, as explained in this month's
Practically Speaking article beginning
on page 18.

Randy Potter School Purchases Aubrey Willis

As you may be aware, the Aubrey Willis School of Piano Tuning and Repairing ceased to exist September 21, 1990, when Career One, of Phoenix, Arizona, a licensee, went out of business.

Owners of the course, Dave and Rose (Willis) Pennington asked us to consider taking over the license, to offer to "teach out" to stranded Aubrey Willis students and to allow former Aubrey Willis students to transfer into our school as Continuing Education students. Many already have.

David Pennington, RTT, former President and Director of instruction at Aubrey Willis said, "It was the best course in its day, but it has needed rewriting and updating for many years. When the Randy Potter course was published (1987) it was more complete and up-to-date than anything even my father-in-law had conceived. They have become the industry leader in teaching piano technology. I have been recommending Randy's course for some time." Pennington was trained by Aubrey Willis and is married to his daughter, Rose.

For more information, see the related news release in the July 1991 Industry News section of the *Piano Technicians Journal*.

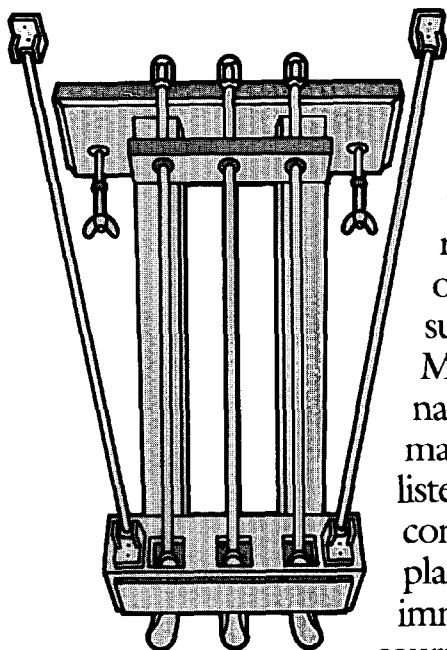


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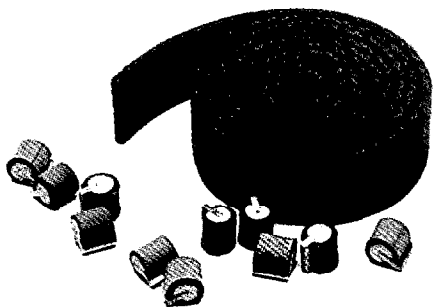
How we to silence



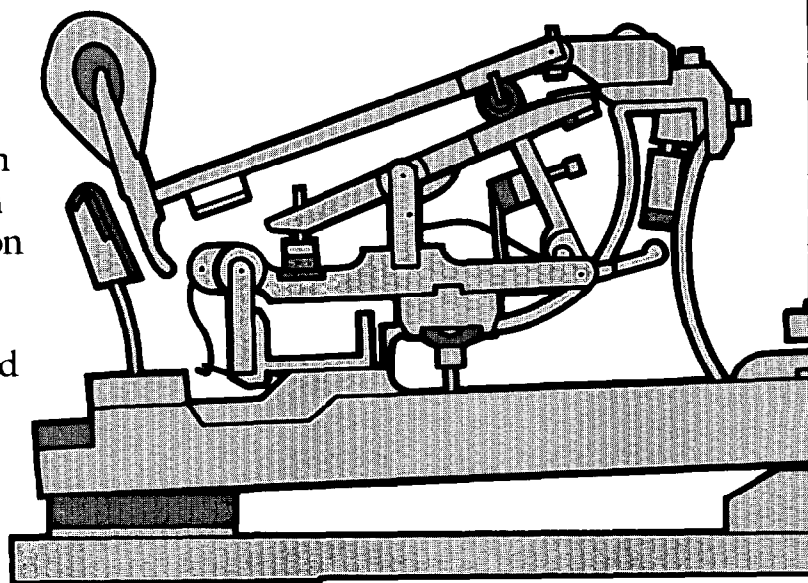
Several of you have recently written or phoned with suggestions. Don Mannino, our national service manager, read and listened to your comments and planned an immediate course of action.

Some of you have suggested that we lessen the amount of mechanical noise in our pianos. With the help of your suggestions, we've come up with a number of ways to quiet our pianos down.

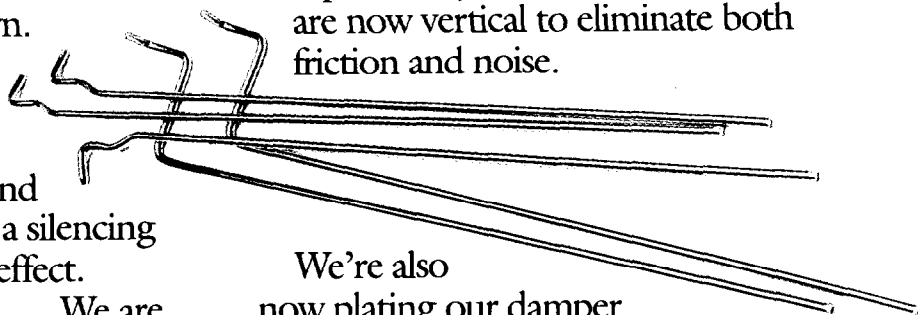
For starters, we've changed the knuckle core felt, whippen heel cloth and keyboard rail cloth in our grand actions to softer materials for a silencing effect.



We are now fastening our grand pedals to the pedal



box bottom instead of using nylon dowels in the box sides. And the grand pedal rods that previously had been angled in slightly are now vertical to eliminate both friction and noise.

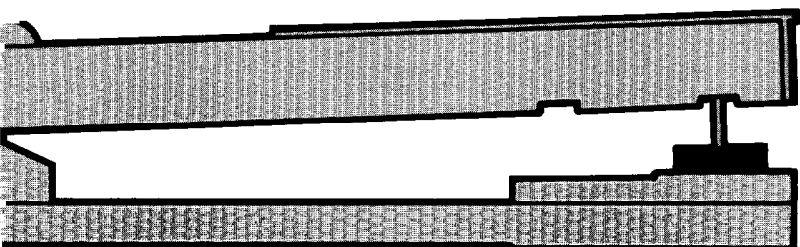


We're also now plating our damper wires more heavily and smoothly to decrease wear and corrosion as well as reduce noise where they pass through the guide rail.

In addition to diminishing noise, we've

are plotting our critics.

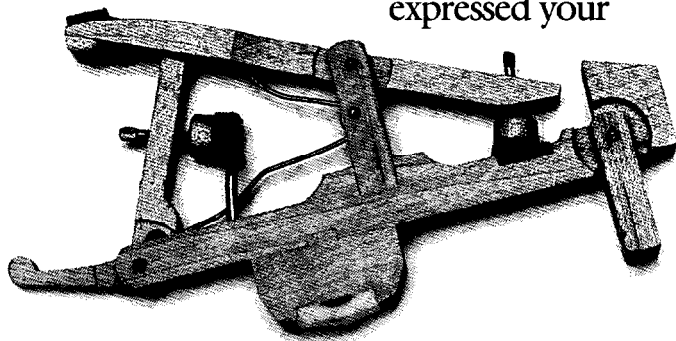
also lightened our touch through the repositioning of jack tenders and letoff buttons, and the use of auxiliary whippen springs in selected models. In response to your comments and suggestions about our action, we've now introduced a lighter



weigh off standard, as well.

We're also excited to have discovered a truly remarkable grade of English bushing cloth for our action centers and keys. Its superior properties will dramatically increase action longevity as well as create a noticeably smoother touch.

On his latest trip to the factory, Don expressed your



concerns to our manufacturing department heads and production engineers.

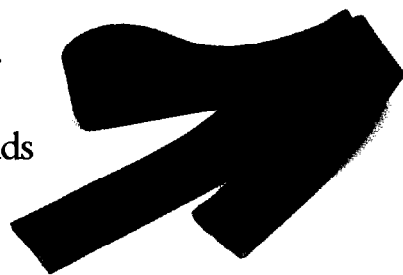
Within six days,

they began implementing improvements and refinements. And within a week, many of these were already in use in our pianos.

Striving to build a perfect piano is not an easy task. It's a challenge we eagerly face each day. But we're getting there thanks to all of you —

our not so silent partners.

To share your comments and suggestions on how we can continue to improve our pianos together, please write us at Young Chang America, Inc., 13336 Alondra Boulevard, Cerritos, CA 90701, or call us at (213) 926-3200.



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President's Message

New Year's Goal: One Step At A Time

As we begin the new year, 1992, my wish is for a healthy and prosperous year to each of you. Every year we all have grandiose plans which soon fall by the wayside as things get back to a regular groove and we fall into the same old routine. Change is difficult to accomplish and it will always be easier to plow along as usual.

I think we can take the PTG marketing plan as an example. We know in marketing one can be just about as imaginative as they would want to be, (and you can spend a limitless amount of money) but is that the way that would have been practical for PTG? I think not. As marketing was researched for PTG, we knew it was necessary to take one small step at a time and accomplish many little things professionally, which in the end would be painting a larger and more attractive picture for the membership. Looking at the outset of the research, it was like not being able to see the forest for the trees, or similar to when I started out with my computer. One would ask what was it that I wanted my computer to do, and my question was what can the computer DO? As the saying goes; "Don't bite off more than you can chew."

With the marketing program we have set small goals to achieve by certain dates, and we will do these with professional results. As the years go by and more has been accomplished we will find ourselves in a working professional program which will benefit all of our membership.

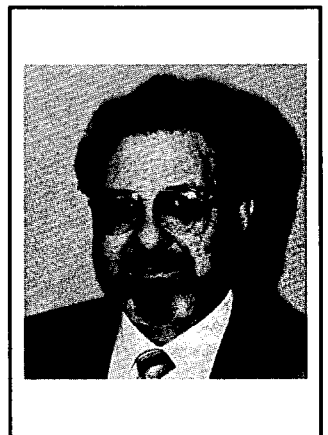
Why not do the same with your plans for your business in this new year? Set small goals to achieve in certain periods of time. Do you want to double your tuning load? Don't try to do that before February 1st. Instead, develop a plan for

adding one or two per week until you reach the planned number. Do you want to increase your income? Set a realistic method of reaching a desired goal by certain dates and stick to it. If we plan a course of action and proceed one small step at a time we have much more chance for success than if we jump in whole hog and realize only too late that we had no plan to achieve what we desired, thus, again we fail to accomplish our goal.

For our plan to be successful, first of all we must be realistic in the goals we set, but once that is accomplished, proceed on with the plan one step at a time. Don't dwell on how little you seem to be accomplishing with each step, but wait to evaluate the success or failure half way through, or better yet at the end of the year. I'll bet you will surprise yourself with your success if you just see the plan to completion.

Remember, every journey starts with just one step. Good luck in the new year!

Nolan P. Zeringue,
RTT
President



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Investing in Change

Our world has changed so much in such a relatively short time, it's impossible to predict what the coming year will bring.

Cataclysmic events can make us feel that our lives are out of control, that the very foundations of our existence have been shaken. I recently heard someone say that he had gone out for lunch on December 7, 1941, and by the time dessert came, the world had changed completely.

In times of change, we look for ways to control our lives. We can't do much about wars and large-scale economic movements, of course, but we can prepare for the things that will happen closer to home. Take the recession, for example. In any change in the economic climate, some people do well, and others suffer. To some extent, this is a matter of luck, but it can just as easily be a matter of being in the right place at the right time, of being in a position to capitalize on opportunities as they present themselves.

The key word in the paragraph above is preparation. By keeping an eye on the world around you and by preparing yourself by ob-

taining the proper education and training, you can be ready for the opportunities that are sure to come along. Attending technical programs and seminars is an investment in your own future, just as PTG's new marketing activities and our support of music education are long-term investments in our future — and yours as well.

But there's another form of investment that's even more important than simply renewing your membership or sitting in an Institute class. We need your participation, your ideas, your vision. Within the limitations of a few laws and regulations, PTG can be anything you want it to be, anything it needs to be to better serve you and your customers.

So don't leave it to someone else to run things. Get involved in your chapter. Share your knowledge by doing a technical or writing an article. Run for office. Call your Regional Vice President and ask to serve on a committee.

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*Larry Goldsmith
Executive Director*

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Institute Update

Master Teachers

*Ben McKlveen
1992 Institute Director*

It is interesting to reflect on the state of the art of teaching piano technology today. In order to understand our progress, we need to look briefly at the history of national institutes as they were presented by the predecessors of the Piano Technicians Guild.

There always have been "giants" in the field who were well known teachers to the members of the tuning profession. People like Wm. Braid White, who wrote textbooks and taught a tuning school, Charles Frederick Stein, who built pianos, ran a design lab and was the "godfather" to most of the young technical person-

nel of the Pratt-Read Co., and others working in the private sector. The many factories of years ago had their outstanding starts: Bill Hupfer and Fred Drasche from Steinway, Len West from Aeolian-American, Cliff Geers from Baldwin, Roy Newstead and Bud Corey from Wurlitzer. All had distinguished teaching careers. There, men all had their disciples who learned and grew with their tutoring and went on to become instructors of note.

There was a dark side to these "old days", however. Most technicians practicing before 1945 were former factory employees, some with basic tuning skills but only fragmentary

knowledge of how pianos worked, were repaired or regulated. Many guarded what information they had and were very secretive about sharing with their peers.

In the 1930s, there were thirty-five to forty piano brands manufactured in the United States and Canada. There was very little international input. Asia was not represented and European pianos were distant names about which little was known except by a few tuners with European backgrounds.

The nadir of piano manufacturing and also of piano technology occurred during World War II, in the early 1940s. Material shortages closed

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piano factories or converted them to war production, and the draft took the young tuners. In 1945, a National Piano Manufacturers Association (NPMA) survey determined that the average age of piano tuners in the United States was 56 years.

The end of the war brought the piano factories back to life but piano technicians remained in short supply. The NPMA, with the help of some colleges and conservatories, sponsored the establishment of several tuning schools. Piano technology entered the classroom and some interesting changes began to take place.

Many of the people entering these schools were "crossover" students. They came from other university departments and brought with them skills and information from other disciplines: music, education, business, engineering and liberal arts. In addition, the life and times of the 50s and 60s fostered an atmosphere that encouraged a great many tutorial

and apprentice candidates to study with outstanding technicians.

The demographics of the field began to change. The new young technicians were often literate, educated and multi-disciplined. The next generation of factory service technicians began to emerge, and they, too, reflected the influences of higher education.

I saw my first Yamaha piano in 1960 at a regional seminar in Toronto and, later that year, I saw my first Bosendorfer. The international gates opened and Europe and Asia began to exert an influence that prevails to this day. The foreign manufacturers recognized the value of trained service technicians outside of their organizations as being vital to the acceptance of their pianos and the concept of the "service school" was born.

Yamaha's "Little Red School House" spurred some of the American manufacturers to organize their own training schools. Baldwin, Kimball

and Steinway were among the leaders who established training programs and from these programs came some outstanding instructors.

In the years since World War II, piano craftsmanship has shown unbelievable improvement. When I was a student in 1948, almost no one knew how to replace pinblocks. Pinblock doping was the remedy of choice for loose pins. Today, not only has pinblock material improved but a substantial proportion of contemporary craftsmen-technicians can and do replace pinblocks. The same is true of sound boards, refinishing, or any other facet of piano rebuilding and service.

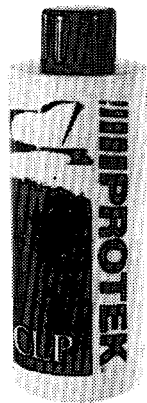
The Piano Technicians Guild formed in 1958 from two other organizations and with its birth came a dramatic increase in the flow of information. Today, we have available the very best minds in the piano industry and in the field of piano service to teach at our conventions. These instructors bring an encyclope-

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dic knowledge of pianos, repair and rebuilding procedures, and the ability to present an explosion of tuning techniques.

As the Institute Director, I have at my disposal an embarrassment of riches when it comes to picking instructors for our conventions. They can teach classes on any facet of the piano and its peripheral interests, as well. In addition to the "bread-and-butter" classes dealing directly with piano care, we offer classes on business, hearing, health care relating to our craft, management, computers and classes dealing with the use of new products and materials. In other words, anything you need to make you a successful craftsman.

There is a price for all of this. First of all, one needs to see the value of the opportunity to learn that an institute presents. Then, one needs to be willing to expend the time and the money to take advantage of this opportunity.

Last month, I compared costs of our event with similar educational opportunities in other fields, medicine, for example. This month, let us look at school teachers. In order to remain certified, they must keep working on educational credits, even beyond a masters degree. They have a specific amount of time to acquire six credit-hours to keep current. Credit hours these days, at the University level, are costing about \$250. And this is just the tuition. Other costs would include living expenses, food and transportation. So, our Institute is a bargain!

I will share with you a fantasy that has crossed my mind during the planning of an institute: suppose we had a convention and *everyone* came?! While we deal realistically with providing classroom space, instruction and support for an attendance of roughly, on thousand, wouldn't it be fun to deal with the problems posed by registration three times that much?

So, surprise us! The Annual Convention is next summer, July 23-26, 1992. It is at the Hyatt Hotel in Sacramento, California. We have space for you, so please attend! Next month, I will start to tell you about the classes.

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Technical Forum

Expanding Our Horizons

Jim Harvey, RTT
Editor

Happy New Year to you! I'm excited about the prospects of the new year, in spite of pessimistic attitudes about both the economy and the state of our industry. Of course we must practice resourcefulness, but piano technicians are famous for that. But we must also continue to expand our horizons, and continuing education is one such horizon.

My rationale for these remarks? Most of our clients do not know the "buzz-words" (our nomenclature), but perhaps you've noticed that many of them—those who are willing to spend money for good service—are becoming increasingly aware of what they expect from their instruments. It is up to us and our abilities to translate those expectations into reality. The days of mediocrity in our chosen profession are rapidly coming to an end, so it is important that our skills increase proportionally to the tasks at hand.

I'm not suggesting something as ambitious as gearing up for soundboard replacement, regardless of the way Nick Gravagne presents the subject. I am suggesting that we learn to recognize when a soundboard needs to be replaced instead of repaired, and that we associate ourselves with someone who is capable of performing this work. Or perhaps gain the confidence required to tell a client that neither choice is a viable option; that it's time for them to consider replacement. This way we maintain an element of control.

I am suggesting that if we're only interested in tuning (for example), we may want to find out what the rest of the instrument is all about.

I'm also excited about some of the things that are happening within our organization. If you've ever said (albeit silently) "What has the PTG

done for me lately?", then you're in for some surprises. It may mean that it is time for the non-members to jump on board. It may mean that it is time for existing members who have been on "vacation" to start attending chapter meetings again, and to start preparing now to attend the next PTG institute, as well as local/regional activities that are available to them. Did that cover everyone? One more. It may mean reading instead of skimming the Journal, and actually trying some of the concepts mentioned herein. End of sermonette.

ALL THOSE YEARS

As you know, the December '91 installment was the last of Rick Baldassin's "Tuning Up" series. Now that I'm keenly aware of what is required to provide useful and timely information month after month, needless to say I have a new-found respect for Rick. He had both the ability to keep fresh information flowing into the column for years, as well as the word skills that made the often complex subject matter understandable. A rare combination, and one that is (fortunately for us and for generations to come), committed to the PTG archives. Well done Rick, and thank you!

NEWS FROM THE FRONT

Now that there is nothing left to be said about tuning...

Seriously, the good news is that there will continue to be a separate section of the *Journal* devoted to tuning. The bad news is that the transition will not be seamless. The

model currently under way is that of rotating contributing editors. This method should assure differing ideas, and also provide a vehicle for "discovering" more *Journal* writers. To date several people have been contacted, and have agreed to participate; but I in turn have agreed to protect their identities for now. Meanwhile, to keep the process from being unnecessarily complicated, any tuning-related submissions or questions should be sent to me for proper routing.

This month we introduce the "Tuner's Corner" column. Note the word "tuner", not "tuning." This will of course feature tuning articles, but also permit those items closely associated with tuning to be under the same "umbrella." For evidence of this, check out this month's independent contribution from Bob Russell of the Cleveland chapter, wherein his method of "selling" pitch raises is discussed.

As mentioned earlier, piano technicians are resourceful. What wasn't said was that often this is a by-product of need. This month's column will be devoted to several indicators of this. (I'm looking forward to receiving more resource material from you, however.)

EMERGENCY ARCH PUNCH

Recently I had need of some cloth regulating punchings. The supply house had the right size in felt, but not cloth. Nor did they have the appropriate arch punch in stock so that I might make my own. I didn't bother checking with my local supplier, since I had a feeling the folks at K-Mart would only look at me funny if I asked for an arch punch. And of course the job was on a deadline. After successfully making the punchings, I felt that the method might be worth sharing (no one sees the unsuccessful

projects).

(Refer to the cut-away illustration.) The only parts required are a t-nut and matching machine bolt, lock washer and nut. I won't mention sizes here because only the procedure is important. Hammer the sharp points on the t-nut flat: the t-nut surface should resemble a flat washer.

Install the (regular) nut, the lock washer and the t-nut onto the bolt, in that order. Stop threading the bolt into the t-nut when there is just enough of a cavity showing inside the t-nut to accommodate your punching. (You will gain additional clearance later.) Lock everything down with the nut/lock washer. Cut the head off the bolt. Choose a drill bit that will only remove the internal threads of the t-nut. While holding the bolt captive, drill out that visible threaded portion of the t-nut, so that only the shell remains. The drill will also dimple the bottom of the bolt in this process: the slight extra clearance, as promised.

At this point, I chucked the bolt into the drill press, and while it was running, used a file to form the

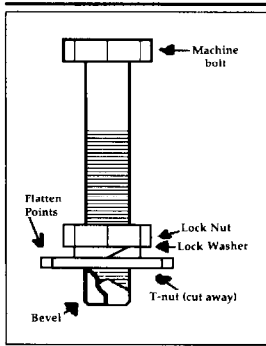
cutting edge on the bottom of the t-nut. (Note that the bevel already present on the bottom of the t-nut provides a good starting angle; just continue that taper to a cutting edge.) An alternate method would be to

chuck the bolt into a drill motor, and guide the t-nut onto a file or belt sander. That's it!

The negative side of this project is that there is no exit hole in back of the punch. You must pick out each punching manually.

This too has merit: since the hole is only as deep as the punching, it's easy to "feel" when you have punched through the

material, and the punchings are already compacted. I must caution that this is not a suitable replacement for the "real thing." Arch punches are built and hardened for this type of use; t-nuts are not. But after getting my ninety punchings (including the two that invariably disappear to never-never land, and the job out on time, it was worth the ten-minute effort to build. By the way, with either the home-brew or commercial arch punches, a small chunk of end-grain pinblock material makes an excellent



backing block. (I'm taking liberties with the word "end-grain": it means you're driving into the plies, not the top or bottom dress layer.) And in this case, the more plies the better.

REPAIR FOR SPLIT MUSIC RACKS

Technical Editor: Here is an excellent method of repairing the spinet type music rack when the mounting screws fall out, or break the wood next to its mounting.

In the place where the screw came out, drill a 1/4" hole far enough to hold a brass hammer shank repair sleeve. Glue the sleeve in the hole. Glue an upright hammer shank inside the sleeve and cut it off flush. Drill a small hole to start the screw and you are back in business better than new. The sleeve will prevent further splitting. I don't know why they don't make them this way in the first place.

Hope this will be helpful to all you technicians who have been trying to fix these racks the "old fashioned" way without permanent results.

- Dick Beaton, RTT

See figure 2—opposite page for details of written instructions.

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Arrgh! Even as I sit here grinfaced, wishing (1) I had thought of this, and (2) I had a trashed-out music rack with which to try this process, I recall trying no less than a half-dozen other methods to effect this repair: none of which were "in-the-field friendly," simple or fast, and none of which permitted a method of getting rid of those brass repair sleeves, which I abandoned (for their original purpose) years ago. Got any more of these tips tucked away, Dick?

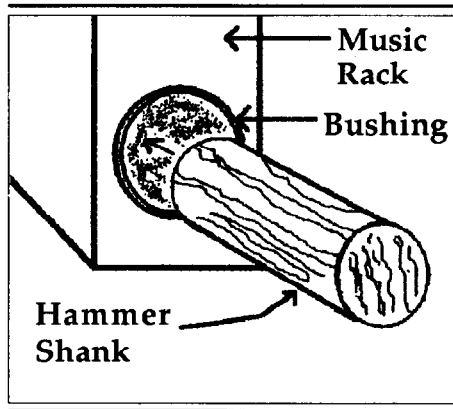


Figure 2

CUSTOM WEIGHTS

As mentioned in last month's column, I'm interested in recycling tips. Since I'm the only one who knows that as I write this (publication deadlines), I'll give the process a "kick start." For our purposes, recycling means that we are free to reuse materials, not just make those materials available for others. This tip incorporates three recyclable items:

If you have a need for mass (weight) for anything, such as veneering work, or keeping your regulating target grounded during test blows, try this: Start with a good quality cardboard box (my first experiment used my Makita Finishing Sander box). Then, after your next restringing job, lay out the old, rusty tuning pins in the box in an orderly fashion (so that they look the same as they did in their original box before you dropped it). Finally, after each batch of hot hide glue you use, pour any unused portion of the glue over the pins. The glue will flow down between the pins and quickly gel, making all the components one integral, heavy, rattle-free unit. Although not as aesthetically pleasing as gravy on a biscuit, you only have to look at it until you close the top on the box.

Using this method, you may easily design custom weights for various applications—all at no cost—and using totally expendable materials.

PIANO CLEANING

Starting in this issue, Mr. Bill presents his first installment on glass beadblasting, a concept that I'm confident you'll find exciting, and one that I can attest is highly effective. As he begins cleaning the inside of the piano, we'll close this month's column with a reprint of Don Galt's March '74 "Forum," and another cleaning area worth consideration—even if it's not a fast as my leaf blower!

Routine cleaning is very much a part of professional piano service, even in institutions and in other circumstances where the performance of the instrument is of vastly more concern than its appearance. Most of us insist on keeping our clients' pianos free of the dust and debris which can lead to all sorts of trouble if allowed to accumulate.

But what about the dirt that is impervious to dust cloth and vacuum cleaner? The dirt that doesn't seem to do any real harm, but clings there to the plate and soundboard looking what it is: dirty? The grime that seems to thumb its nose at us from its safe place under the strings in the tuning pin area of the grand?

Not every owner, and not every piano, is a prospect for a deep cleaning job. But there are many cases where we could add to our income and to the satisfaction of our customers by doing this sort of work, if we know how to go about it.

Seattle member Bill Smith recently did a chapter program on the

subject, and some readers will surely gain from a description of his procedures.

We will be thinking particularly of grand pianos, with their large horizontal inside areas so often exposed to view and so vulnerable to settling dirt. (To be abreast of the modern idiom, should we call it the precipitating particulates in the polluted atmosphere?) But if appropriate, vertical pianos can be treated the same way. It is probably most convenient to tilt them on their backs.

Bill was describing shop procedures. If they are carried out in someone's living room, precautions to protect rugs and other furnishings should obviously be observed.

First remove the action. Its treatment is another matter, not covered in this discussion. It may be rebuilt, repaired, or more thoroughly cleaned by your usual methods. But it should be out while the rest of the piano is being cleaned.

Next do the most thorough vacuuming job you can, to get rid of all of the loose dirt. In the tuning pin areas, the bridge and hitch pin areas, in the nooks and corners of the plate and around the rim, dig it out with the bristle ends of a stiff paint brush. Dust the soundboard as thoroughly as you can, not only under the strings and where it is exposed, but also under the plate. In the shop you can use compressed air if you have it, or the blower end of the vacuum cleaner. In a home, the blower is not such a good idea. The owner may not like to have you fill the air with dirt from the piano. Something long and flexible, like the soundboard steel available from the piano supply houses, can be used to worry a cloth around on the soundboard in otherwise inaccessible places. Use the vacuum frequently to rid your cloth of loose dirt. You want to get the dirt out of the piano, not just move it around from place to place.

The strings should have your attention next. If they are dull or corroded, the plain wire strings are rubbed with Polita. This is a hard rubber eraser impregnated with emery. It is carried by supply houses.

Bill Smith points out that strings are more likely to be corroded on the top side than on the under side, so vigorous lengthwise rubbing on the top side usually cleans them up nicely. This takes some time to do thoroughly, as there are lots of strings, and you are covering them about a half dozen at a time. The part between the bridge and hitch pins should not be overlooked. The part of the strings on top of the bridge can be polished by rubbing across the strings between the front and back bridge pins. This avoids abrading the blacking on the bridge top. If the dampers remain in the piano, they can be blocked up out of the way, so that the Polita rubbing can be carried right to the bright part of the wire where it is protected by the dampers. More clearance between dampers and strings may be gained by loosening and raising the damper upstop rail which is behind the damper wires and above the damper levers. (Don't forget to re-position the rail afterward.) If the tops of the bridge pins are ground flat, you can brighten them up with the Polita.

Where the bass strings cross over the plain wire strings, what to do depends on how bad the strings appear. If they are quite bad you can let down the tension of the bass strings enough to unhitch them, thread the loops on a wire, and pull them back out of the way in order to polish the wire underneath. But often this step will not improve the general appearance enough to justify the extra work.

Bill recommends the use of coarse steel wool, lengthwise only, on the copper-covered bass strings. Were you to use fine steel wool, or rub across rather than along the strings, you would risk leaving bits and fragments of wool wire caught in the interstices between the windings. Should the bass strings be iron covered, rather than copper, you can go back to the Polita.

When you are satisfied with your string-polishing job, another round of brushing and vacuuming is in order, to pick up all of the newly made dust, Polita crumbs, and wool fragments.

This brings us to that problem spot: the tuning pin area. The plate surface under the strings among the tuning pins can become very grimy in time because of its inaccessibility, and it seems almost impossible to do anything about it.

But Bill Smith uses a method that almost always makes a tremendous improvement, and sometimes brings really amazing results. The secret is to "wash" with dry suds, and I do mean dry. Using mild face soap, a paint brush (1-1/2" is about right), a cup, and very little water, work up a dry suds and brush it into one plate section among the tuning pins. Jab it thoroughly down to the plate between the strings, covering the whole area including plate, strings, felt, and tuning pins. You shouldn't use more than about a teaspoon of water to suds a whole section, so it is impossible for any water to reach the pinblock. You can let the suds set for several minutes while you do something else. A second application on top of the first may be good, and you can work back and forth between two sections.

To remove the suds, use cheesecloth (nothing else is as good), and another brush, stiffer and probably bigger than the sudsing brush. Lay a thickness of cheesecloth over the entire area and jab it thoroughly down among the pins and strings with the brush bristles. You can see the cloth turn brown as it absorbs the dirty suds. You can put down another layer or two of cheesecloth for added absorption. Remove the cheesecloth and continue to peck away at the plate and strings with your brush to dislodge and pick up all of the suds and residue that you can. Anything which was grimy — the plate, strings, felt, pins — will now be much cleaner and brighter. Treat each section the same way, and you can also use the same treatment in the hitch pin area.

Unless the ventilation is very good, you may want to use the blower of the vacuum cleaner to be certain no trace of moisture is left on the strings or pins.

Bill Smith has used the dry soap method for many years, having

learned it from an old-timer who was his shop mentor for a while. He also demonstrated the same procedure with a modern product, Woolite Spray Foam Rug Cleaner. This delivers dry suds from an aerosol can. The procedure is the same as with the soap suds, and both materials seem to be equally effective. A test using an instant shave lather foam, while not conclusive, suggested that this sort of product probably had less cleansing effect. That is not its purpose, after all.

Next comes the soundboard. Here again, washing is the procedure, but with not very much water. Bill uses a strip of cloth long enough to reach clear across the soundboard; standing at the straight side of the case, pushing on the soundboard steel inserted through the strings, and pulling on the near end of the cloth at soundboard level, he can rub the working part of the cloth back and forth on the surface of the board. The cloth is damp, but not wet, and charged with liquid soap. Rinsing is done the same way, with a clean, damp cloth. Don't neglect the exposed area behind the bridge, and the surface of the bridge apron, if you want to be thorough. Mild soap is preferable to strong detergent. You don't want to take off any thin varnish.

The plate comes last in the washing procedure. Again a damp cloth and soap are the tools. You will be working on the large flat surfaces and the bars, or struts. It is pretty easy going, although there are many surfaces to cover, and many junction corners.

Water is sometimes called the universal solvent, and in fact it is the most useful solvent of all. But sometimes there may be greasy spots on the plate or soundboard, requiring a bit of white gas or naphtha. Daub it with a small paint brush and you can then probably wash the residue away with dry suds or soap and water, depending on the location.

Touch up the gilt. Nicks, chips and worn spots in the plate gilt, as well as mismatched patches, are often unsightly. Even if you can match the

color of the original gilt (and there are many different colors), it is hard to make a brushed-on repair that will blend with the original spray job.

Bill demonstrated a paste gilt, somewhat like shoe polish in consistency, that can be rubbed on and feather-blended with the fingers. It polishes well, and after drying it has quite good durability. It is available in various shades. The product he used is Treasure Gold Non Tarnish Wash Gilt, by Connoisseur Studios, Inc. Louisville, Ky. I can name one other brand, La Tip Instant Metallic Finish, by Leo Uhlfelder Co., New York, N.Y.

The case exterior deserves a comment, although this demonstration did not go that far. For cleansing, a damp cloth and mild soap is again the thing to use. After the dirt and grime are off, and the finish, whatever its condition, is fully exposed, then you can decide whether or not some sort of polish will make it more presentable.

Deep cleaning of pianos involves effort, time and patience. It is best done by people who know and understand pianos. It may not be for you, but on the other hand, if you try it you might like it. Thoroughly done it can bring pleasing results, and is worth a good price.

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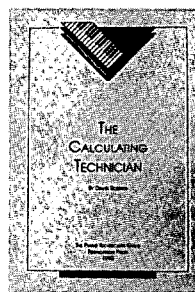
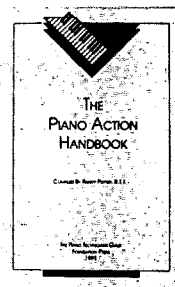
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Practically Speaking

Part of the appeal of rebuilding pianos is that when done they not only sound good, but look good as well. The combination of brightly colored felt, shiny metal and clean wood adds greatly to our satisfaction with the job as well as to the customer's impression of our workmanship. Unfortunately, detailed cleaning of every wood and metal action part is impractical to do by hand, so we often have to limit our efforts to simple dust removal. However, there is a way that we can thoroughly clean almost any part with very little effort. Abrasive blasting with glass beads and compressed air gives us a quick way to renew the appearance of most action parts and hardware, including wood, felt, and metal. In this article I will describe this process and its applications to piano rebuilding, and next month I will present plans for making your own glass bead blasting booth from inexpensive and readily available components.

WHAT IS GLASS BEAD BLASTING?

Abrasive blasting is a common process used by industry for cleaning and texturing surfaces of manufactured items and by automotive repair shops for cleaning engine parts during rebuilding. I was first introduced to glass bead blasting of piano parts by Des Wilson of the Monterey Bay Chapter, who showed our chapter some slides of his custom made blasting cabinet.

Most people are familiar with "sandblasting," in which sand is

Cleaning Piano Actions & Parts With A Glass Bead Blaster

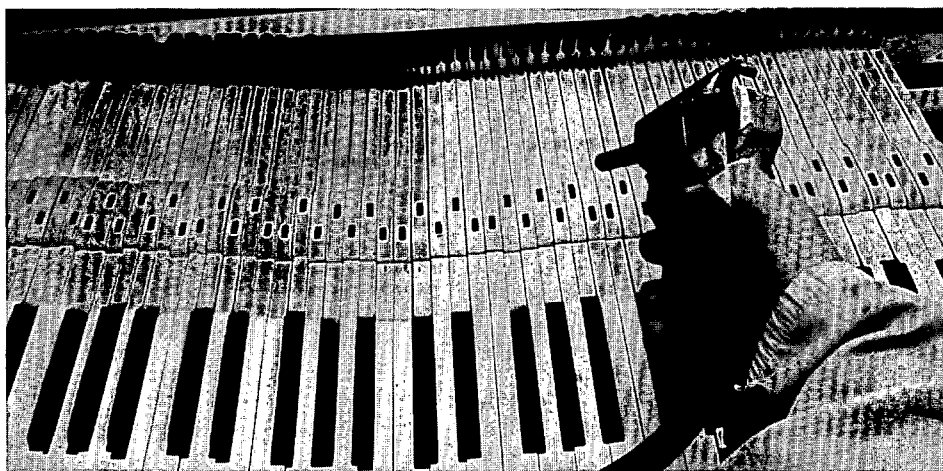


photo 1—a glass bead blaster used for cleaning and texturing surfaces

blown by compressed air toward the surface to be cleaned. However, there are a great many other materials which are used for blasting media, depending upon the application. These range from ground up walnut shells to plastic pellets to man-made abrasives and microscopic glass beads. Each has a different effect upon the surface being blasted. Blasting is an abrasive process; like sanding, the object is to renew a surface by abrading away the outer layer. Therefore the choice of abrasive (and the air pressure used to propel it) is very important to achieving a satisfactory result.

I find that glass beads are an ideal blasting medium for cleaning piano parts because they are hard enough to remove corrosion from metal but smooth enough in shape (they are actually tiny spheres) that they do less damage to the surface than more jagged abrasives like walnut shells and sand. Glass beads come in varying sizes. I use 100 mesh beads, which are a medium size. They

are much smaller than granulated sugar, and smaller than fine beach sand, but large enough to feel like particles rather than powder when rubbed between the fingers. They are widely available; just look under "Sandblasting Equipment & Supplies" in your Yellow Pages.

The glass beads are sprayed from a "sandblasting" gun as shown in photo 1, which operates similarly to a paint spray gun; compressed air blowing through a nozzle creates a suction which siphons the material (in this case glass beads) up a hose where it exits the nozzle at high speed. The degree of abrasive effect is adjusted by means of an ordinary pressure regulator on the incoming compressed air line. I use 60 psi for cleaning soft wood parts such as piano keys, 80 psi for maple action parts, and 100psi or more for cleaning metal parts such as action brackets and screws. The air compressor output required to operate the blasting gun depends upon the size of gun used. For glass bead blasting of piano parts a small gun

requiring around 3 to 5 cfm at 90psi is adequate. This will usually be a two HP compressor or larger. (Sources for components will be given next month).

THE BEAD BLASTING CABINET

My blasting cabinet is made of 1/4" plywood with angle iron end frames, a large glass window for visibility, four arm holes in front and a large door at the right end. See photo 2. Other technicians have had cabinets made from sheet metal. Two very inventive technicians in our chapter, Bob and Sonja Lemon, made a very nice wall mounted unit consisting of a steel frame covered with a hand-sewn canvas cover.

The blasting process must take place in a closed chamber. While it is possible to blast those rusty car rims with sand or walnut shells outdoors on a clean patio, do not try this with glass beads. They are so fine and bounce around with such force that it would be impossible to keep them out of your ears, eyes, belly button, etc. Besides, although not expensive, you want to keep them enclosed so they are used again and again. As you can see from photo 2, the bottom of the cabinet is a hopper shaped like an inverted pyramid. Hanging from the bottom of the hopper is a reservoir (coffee can) holding about 15 pounds of beads. The siphon or pick-up tube from the gun draws the beads up from the reservoir and into the nozzle. After impacting the part being cleaned, the beads fall down into the hopper and

back into the reservoir. (The beads cost around \$25.00 per 50# sack, which would be a five to ten year supply, depending upon usage. You only replace them if they become very dirty or because of gradual loss).

My blasting cabinet is large enough to hold an entire set of keys, or a complete vertical or grand action. In order to give good access to all areas of the cabinet's interior, it has four arm holes in the front. These holes are fitted with sleeves from nylon wind-breakers, equipped with elastic cuffs. Some of you may be familiar with commercial blasting cabinets in which the operator reaches into long rubber gloves. These restrict each hole to only right or left hand use, whereas the glove-less sleeves allow either arm to be used in any hole. Therefore you can work at the left end using the two left

arm holes, the center using the center holes or the right end using the two right holes. When blasting at keys, an action, or other large parts it is not necessary to wear gloves since the rebounding beads will not hurt you. In cases where you will be blasting directly toward your skin, such as when holding a single small part by hand, you can simply put on leather gloves before reaching through the sleeves.

Notice that the cabinet has a small shop vacuum attached at one end, with the suction hose piped into the cabinet. This vacuum pipe (2" ABS plastic) continues to the center of the hopper, ending with a down-turned elbow about 16" above the bottom outlet. This serves two purposes: first, it evacuates the compressed air which the blasting gun blows into the

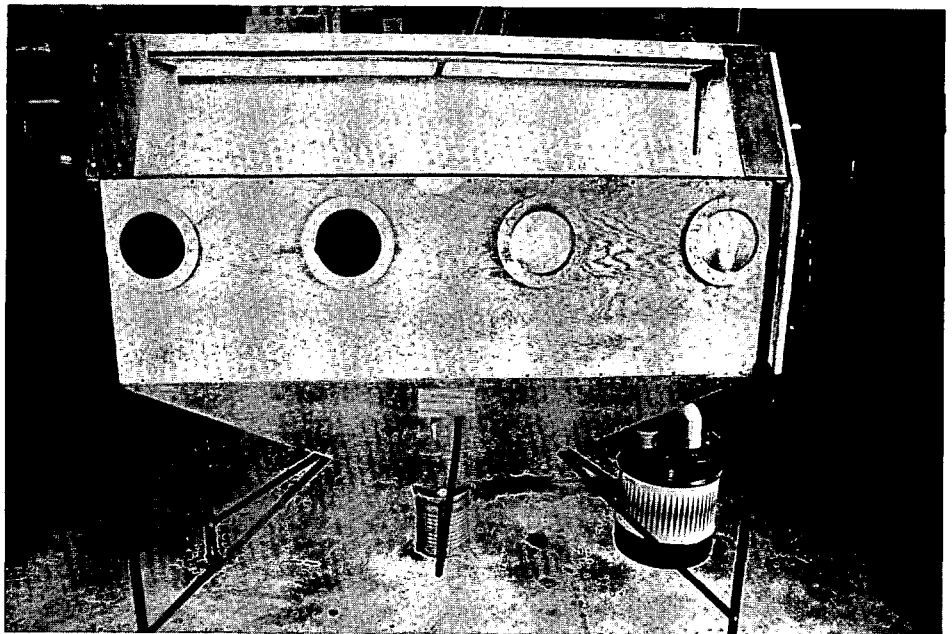


photo 2—blasting cabinet made of 1/4" plywood, iron end frames, glass window, four arm holes and large door at the right end.

cabinet, maintaining a slight negative pressure inside and preventing beads and dust from blowing out of every seam. Secondly, it helps to clean dirt from the beads; as they fall out the bottom of the hopper into the reservoir, the in-rushing air tends to lift the lighter dust and dirt particles up into the vacuum. Some such mechanism for cleaning the beads is important, otherwise they would become diluted with dirt, felt and wood dust and be less effective. A few glass beads are picked up by the vacuum, but not enough to be significant.

APPLICATIONS

Bead blasting does a good job of cleaning wood, metal, felt and leather. However, since blasting leaves a slightly roughened surface, you must avoid any polished metal or graphited bearing surfaces. These would include jack and repetition lever tops, jack tenders, damper spoons, damper lift rods, capstans and keypins. Fortunately it is easy to mask off or otherwise avoid these areas. While the glass beads are aggressive enough to clean rust off metal, they tend to bounce off softer materials. Thus masking tape will protect specific areas unless you really work at blasting through it. Below are some examples of typical uses for the bead blaster.

Actions: Normally an action would be blasted before disassembly for rebuilding. This makes it possible to clean the heads of all action screws while they are conveniently lined up in rows. Start by removing all loose dust with compressed air before placing the action in the cabinet. For grand actions lay pieces of masking tape across the graphited areas of the repetition levers and jack tops and the jack tenders. On actions with loops of silk spring cord exposed at the tops of the repetition levers, lay a 1/8" steel rod along to cover the cord. For vertical actions, you can unhook all of the bridle straps and lay a strip of masking tape over the jack tenders; the hammer butts will shield the jack

tops. Vertical damper levers will adequately shield the lift rod and spoons. The vertical hammer rail should also be removed to avoid damage to its finish.

With these preparations made, the entire action can be blasted. Using an air pressure of around 80 psi, go over the action as if you were spray painting. Keep moving, and avoid soft felt pads as these can be eroded away by excessive blasting.

Vertical dampers can be nicely cleaned, as shown in this month's cover photo, by holding a block of wood up against them and pulling them back against the spring rail (this prevents the air from separating the felt). The tops of the damper felt will brighten up along with the screws, wires and blocks.

When you are done blasting, shake the action to knock loose as many glass beads as possible, then take it outside and thoroughly blow it out with compressed air. You might think that glass beads would get stuck between the flange and birdseye and cause the action parts to seize up, but I have never found this to be the case. Action center bushings are much too dense to allow the beads to penetrate, and they simply fall out from between the flange ears. Soft felts such as dampers will retain a few glass beads, which you can see as tiny reflections when placing the parts in the sun. However I have never noticed any ill effects from this. Besides, the blasting

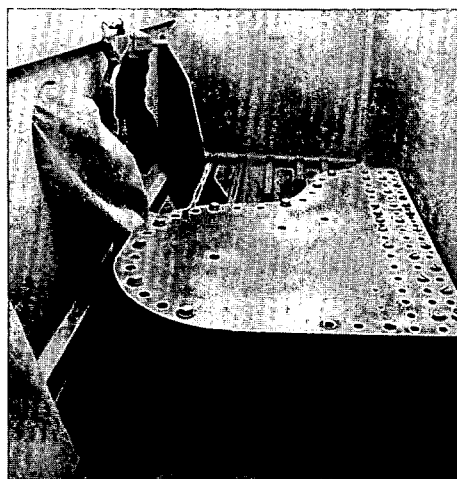


photo 3—shows 1/4" masonite holder used to keep plate screws in order.

is normally done on action parts before felt replacement, pinning, etc.

Keys: (See photo 1-Page 18) Cover the capstan tops with masking tape. Start with a low air pressure and don't blast any more than necessary, especially with pine or spruce keys which have alternating hard and soft grain. You can easily get the "driftwood effect" by overdoing it. Realize that old wood is discolored well below the surface, so don't expect them to turn out like brand new keys. Just move along at an even rate, watching only for the keys to turn lighter in color. Water stains are best removed by sanding, otherwise you run the risk of eroding a depression in the keys as you try to chase a stain down into the wood.

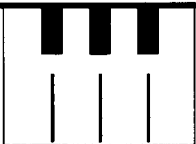
The spray pattern is sufficiently well defined that I never bother to mask off keytops or ivories; it's possible to blast the wood right up to the edge of the key tops and not hurt them. Do not blast keys while still on the keyframe; the balance rail mortise would fill with beads, locking the keys in place.

Screws and hardware: Pegboard or perforated metal can be used to hold loose screws. After blasting, they can be given a coat of clear lacquer to prevent corrosion while still in their holder. Photo 3 shows the 1/4" masonite holder that I use to keep plate screws in order. Blasting easily removes the old paint, and leaves a fine matte surface that provides maximum adhesion for a new coat of gold paint.

Action brackets are best cleaned by removing them from the wooden rails so all sides can be blasted. They can then be given a coat of gold paint followed by a clear lacquer overcoat and will look like brand new parts. (Note: Star finishing products makes an aerosol lacquer called #1528 Piano Gold that is a great color for such things.)

For Steinway tubular action frames I tape over the flange screw holes with narrow masking tape, then blast away. With the brackets, rails,

story continues page 27



Tuning Corner

The Art of Selling Pitch Raising

Bob Russell, RTT
Cleveland Chapter

How many times have you gone to a new customer only to find the piano 50 cents or more flat? It's even more interesting to learn that the piano has been tuned within the last year. It's sometimes the customer's "informed decision" to save money and not pitch raise the piano properly. Many times though, according to the customer, they weren't even aware that the piano was flat. The previous tuner didn't discuss a pitch raise. He tuned the piano to itself, collected his money, and left. I find this approach objectionable. This is not to say that I am against tuning pianos flat to themselves under certain circumstances, i.e., old uprights and grands that won't hold a tuning at pitch. (This must always be done with the customer's knowledge).

Whatever you decide to do, remember that the piano must hold its tune for a reasonable period of time or you won't be called back next time. If you feel uncomfortable tuning to anything other than A-440, you may want to screen a prospective customer's telephone call and explain just what it might require to correct a neglected piano. In this manner, if they don't want to invest in a pitch raise, you will know and it will save you a trip. On the other hand, it also begins their thought process and your sales pitch: that they might have more expense than just one tuning. I usually set up a "normal" tuning appointment and take my chances by explaining the situation in person. Face to face over the piano is the best way.

There are several methods that technicians use for pitch raising; .3 tunings, 1 visit; 2 tunings, 2 visits; 1-1/2 tunings, 1 visit.

Usually the pitch of the piano dictates the method used, but in many cases whatever method you prefer is fine, providing the results are acceptable. I prefer to pitch raise with two tunings, one week apart. The piano has a chance to settle in before you put the second tuning on it.

However, under certain circumstances, such as for concerts, recitals, and other similar situations, you must be prepared to pitch raise and tune during the same visit. Whichever method is used, after the initial pitch raise the piano will need tuning within six months. Six months is also the minimal tuning interval to maintain for at least one year.

One of the problems in selling a pitch raise to customers is that of communication. You have to use language that they understand. What makes it even harder is that typically they are new customers and you haven't had the time to develop an element of trust with them. I believe this is what causes many technicians to avoid selling the necessary services: pitch raising, like other piano work, requires salesmanship.

The first step is to develop a mental script to follow. As Ronald Reagan clearly showed us, good script preparation can be instrumental in selling your services. Have your mental script ready before you enter your customer's home. Next evaluate the piano to decide what the best method is, and prepare to talk with the customer. Tune one string in the middle of the piano. Tune it up to pitch, plus the amount you want to overstretch, then hit the note for the customer. Next play the octaves going all the way to the top of the piano in reference to the string you tuned. Using this demonstration you will

usually get the customer's attention. I find this method of explaining "flat" to be better than most.

Now that their ear really hears the difference in pitch, I begin talking about string tension. I explain that a piano has 20 tons or more of string tension. I point out that when I remove the piano plate to rebuild pianos, I use a car engine hoist. When you say "engine hoist", they understand the tremendous weight of a car engine and how heavy the piano plate must be. It then makes it easier to explain the enormous amount of string tension on a piano plate and structure. So when I tell them that one tuning cannot stabilize the string tension at A-440 they can relate to it. The problem for the customer is not the lack of desire to have the piano in good condition, it is the lack of desire to spend the money. A little reverse psychology works for you. Agree with the customer that the cost of pitch raising is too much money to spend all at once; and that with reasonable care in the future they shouldn't have to repeat this procedure.

The important thing is good eye contact and a confident expression in your voice. If you sound monotonous and insecure you won't gain their trust. Accent the key points you want to make. Style is almost as important as substance.

I'm sure there are other approaches that are equally effective. You have to try your script and adjust your selling techniques to customer reactions and what works for you. Remember, the customer ultimately makes the decision as to just how their piano sounds. The buck stops with them...not with you!



Good Vibrations

More on the Business of Rebuilding

Nick Gravagne
New Mexico Chapter

Continuing in our study of the rebuilding business, let's recall a case made in the October '91 installment of this series for the necessity of earning a gross yearly income of \$95,000 in order to net an after-expense and after-tax income of about \$42,000. It was stated in the article that "the large yearly gross will be modified downward as... other business practices are factored in." The idea was that gross income generated from rebuilding *alone* would be modified downward; subsequent articles have shown that the single most effective way to do this is to hire an assistant or two. At least three primary events follow when this course of action is taken: 1) the hourly earnings for the shop owner increase in comparison to working alone; 2) every hour worked by an assistant opens up an hour available to the owner to earn money from other sources—tuning, for example; 3) competitive job pricing can at least be partially controlled since the owner-to-assistant job hours mix (ratio) can be analyzed and possibly adjusted to meet qualified retail competition or, in the case of rebuilders who also work wholesale for the trade, to rightly offer lower rebuilding prices to other technicians.

FULL OR PART - TIME REBUILDING

By far and away most technicians involved in piano remanufacturing are part-time. The traditional and classical rebuilding house of which there are relatively few employ many workers of all levels of

skill, work out of rented, or owned commercial space, do everything to a piano that can morally be done, and offer wholesale prices to other technicians who sub-contract to them. In between the small one-job-a-year rebuilder and The Big Rebuilding House are many medium-sized businesses which draw significant income from rebuilding, but whose work force is small, and whose space is a large attachment to a home. But whatever the size and scope of the firm the important thing here is that, whether one or one hundred pianos a year are rebuilt, each one is not only a quality job, but is also profitable in its own right—that each one is microcosmic of the whole enterprise and earns a respectable hourly wage for the business owner.

DIFFERING MARKETS

Despite what many sales and marketing experts have to say, the market—that area of trade with its complicated mix of types of people, its population numbers, peoples' interests, their erudition or lack of, their incomes, and geographic psychology—varies greatly across these fruited plains. What dollars a rebuild might fetch in Los Angeles may have little to do with Albuquerque fees, or Bismark fees, even though the exact work and materials are used in all three cities. Hence, only in a relative way is it useful to know that so-and-so in such-and-such a city charges \$16,000 to completely restore a Steinway, and that elsewhere the fee is only a flat \$10,000. Now this isn't to say that the widest price spread is really possible here, it isn't. What really matters is

that the qualified rebuilder is earning a legitimate and respectable income from bringing to bear the multitudinous forces of talent, honed skill, tool and physical plant investments and the like. A legitimate business means one that can stand on its own merits—that the enterprise is professional, smoothly run and accounted for, that prices are set intelligently and not from the seat of the pants or out of guesswork or even fear and that no form of subsidy (including being propped up by spousal income) keeps afloat what would otherwise be a sinking ship.

ALAS POOR YORICK

Imagine a dead Steinway O built in 1910. You know the look and smell of it. It's not a piano any more, but if properly remanufactured will be a fine instrument again. But even decomposed, there remains a skeleton of the Steinway grand which can be re-fleshed and breathed back to life. And even that skeleton is worth a lot of money; it has a "salvage value." And although we might not agree on what the value might be, or how to universally arrive at it, we cannot be far wrong in reporting that wholesale prices for such instruments (assuming availability) are commonly set at about \$3,500 give or take some hundred dollars. I know of a man who recently bought an old Steinway S from a private source for such a cost and then inquired as to having it totally redone. But whether we agree on the dollar value of old and tired Steinways there is no doubt that they are worth a lot of money.

PIANO TECHNICIANS
Journal

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*Danny L. Boone
Heart of Texas Chapter*

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Watch for more clues in the months to come!

Contest Rules

The contest is open to all PTG members and non-member registrants at PTG's 35th Annual Convention and Technical Institute July 22-26, 1992 in Sacramento, CA. PTG Board members, staff, and Convention Planning Committee members are not eligible to win.

The prize will be awarded to the correct entry with the earliest postmark or, if no winning entry has been received prior to the convention, to the first correct entry received at the convention membership booth.

Name: _____

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My Eight Lucky Kids Are:

1 _____	5 _____
2 _____	6 _____
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4 _____	8 _____



Send your contest entries to:

Gold Contest
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REBUILDING PRICE AS A FUNCTION OF NEW PIANO PRICE

Let's briefly consider a much-used method in quoting rebuilding prices to customers.

Now, for comparative purposes let's consider a brand new Steinway L retailing for \$25,000 (plus or minus). Backing out a salvage value of \$3,500 what we have left is an actual and "paper" depreciation value of \$21,500. Actual in the sense that, with use and age, the instrument with its many components is going to deteriorate; and paper in the sense that, not being real estate—pianos are considered to be tangible personal property—value depreciation is an economic fact of life. In any case, this actual and paper value, a sort of reservoir of depreciable dollars, directly reflects the age and relative health of the instrument. The proportion is clearly direct: the younger and healthier the instrument, the higher the reservoir; and the older and sicker it is, the lower the reservoir. But salvage value suggests there will always be some water in the bottom of the reservoir.

Most of us are aware that rebuilding prices are sometimes set as

a function of new piano prices; for example, a retail remanufacturing price for a Steinway A or O might be set at two-thirds of a new "L", or \$16,750. And then the \$3,500 salvage value is added back to the rebuilding price the "asset basis value" computes to \$20,250, which is still \$5,000 less than the retail price of a new piano. From the accountant's point of view, there is little to argue with here; the arrangement seems economically feasible. Obviously, there is some merit to this method of price setting.

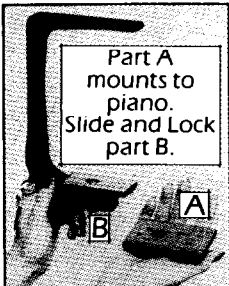
On paper this works fine, and in certain areas of the country where the demographics are resonant, such prices might fly. Still, the geographic psychology of an area plays a significant role in setting prices. "Why should I pay New York or Los Angeles prices when I live in New Mexico?", some will ask. The question is unreasonable and is in large part based in a comparative analysis of housing and real estate tax costs which are considerably higher in the respective homes of the rain-soaked Yankees or LaSorda's glamorous Dodgers. Besides, NY and LA rebuilding prices on the average are not necessarily higher than anywhere else; nonetheless, dwellers of the hinterlands expect to pay less for anything compared to what they believe big-city folk are paying. But there is an even

more elusive psychological mist borne along in the minds of buyers everywhere which is at once phenomenal and inscrutable. This must, when finally condensed as a thin film between the brain and skull, causes a sort of knee-jerk reaction to the cost of something irrespective of any rational thought. If the price "sounds" right, or if, at some hidden spot at the geometric center of their being, they "sense" the price to be within some unidentifiable parameters of acceptability, they will consider buying it. If not, nothing short of fraud, or scare tactics, or skulduggery will shake them loose. Studies have shown that all buyers, and that includes us, have a maximum price we will pay for something whether we know it or not, or whether we can afford it or not; beyond that price we pull the plug.

Be this as it may, rebuilding prices can always be arbitrarily set at some percentage function of new piano prices. This is an individual matter but I have never been really satisfied with the method. That is why I decided to set an income goal as outlined in the Oct '91 article, and analyze what combination of pricing, costs, and hired help would be required to attain it. Which brings us back to the point of this article's opening paragraph: Can the remanufacturing retail price be

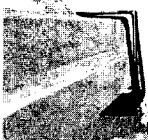
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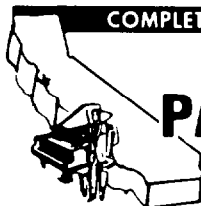


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lowered to where more people can afford it for a given demographic area, but without compromising the shop owner's earning potential? This idea was already touched upon last month as we discussed the value of hiring assistants.

Well, let's take a closer look.

ADJUSTING THE REBUILDING FEE— A COMPARISON

We'll start with a break down of the basic direct materials costs for a typical all-out restoration.

Soundboard wood, including ribs and pro rata freight	\$ 350
Bridge capping material	\$ 20
Pinblock	\$ 125
Tuning pins and all strings	\$ 135
New hammers, shanks and wippens	\$ 825
Damper felts	\$ 30
Finishing products	\$ 50
Misc. cloths, punchings, pins, etc.	\$ 15
Total Direct Materials Costs	\$1,550

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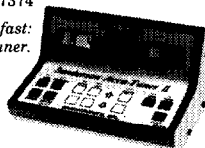
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Obviously, other costs might incur. Moreover, there might be farm-out costs for key recovering, refinishing, bellywork, etc. Still, for every farm-out cost there is a corresponding decrease in total hours necessary to complete the project in-house. How to know if farm-out costs are reasonable? Simply ask yourself if instead of farming out some aspect of the job, could you complete it in-house for the same or fewer dollars? Farm-out costs should represent hours of work contributed toward the completion of the rebuild, only they are contributed by someone other than you and your crew. It is only natural and right that services and products supplied by one technician or specialist to another should be offered at 15 to 20% below retail.

Now, again per the October article: assuming a rebuilding price to the customer of \$14,250 and an hourly estimate of 300 hours to complete the project, what kind of earnings will the shop owner enjoy working alone from start to finish. After backing out expenses and dividing the remainder by total hours, the solitary rebuilder will earn an after-materials-expense

hourly wage of \$42. Even working for only seven hours of direct work, and leaving one hour per day for book-keeping, telephone, etc., the rebuilder will earn \$294 per day throughout the term of the rebuilding project. From this total all other business and personal expenses must be paid. But it certainly looks respectably do-able for certain individuals.

Suppose, however, that at a price of \$14,250 only one prospect in ten will buy, whereas if the price were, say, \$11,500 he or she could be kept busy all year with shop work. Is this possible? At such a price the hourly after-materials-expense earning will drop to \$33. Again, working a direct seven-hour day, five-day week, daily earnings will be \$231 from which all other business and personal expenses must be paid. This is cutting it too close. So, although an increase in volume of work has been attained, the earnings have dropped dangerously low. To reiterate an idea, what really matters to the shop owner is how much he or she is earning per hour, either directly in hands-on work, or indirectly as the beneficiary of the work of assistants. And this is true whether the shop puts out one job or twelve jobs per year—each job should be successful in its own right.

If the rebuilder, then, believes that the going market rate for grand piano rebuilding is maxed out at \$11,500 (and I'm not suggesting it is or should be), an assistant or two is imperative in order for the hourly earnings to increase. Now refer to TABLE 1(above), which is a printout of a computer program I have designed to show the effect on hourly profitability of lowering or raising the rebuilding price (called the Job Fee in the Table). The headings should speak for themselves. But notice the underlined row. In particular our interest is centered on the employer-to-employee hourly mix. What the Table tells us is that in order to raise the owner's hourly rate back up to \$40 or more, an assistant will have to work (for \$6.50/hr) at least 80 of the total 300 hours necessary to complete the project. Also notice the two right-hand columns

JOB FEE	TOTAL HRS	OWN HRS	OTHER HRS	MATERIALS	OWNERS HR.WAGE	RATIO OWNER/ EMP HRS	HRS/WEEK OWNER	HRS/WEEK EMP
\$1500	300	300	0	1500	33.33		40.00	0
		280	20.00		35.25	14.00	37.33	2.67
		260	40.00		37.46	6.50	34.67	5.33
		220	80.00		43.09	2.75	29.33	10.67
		200	100		46.75	2.00	26.67	13.33
		180	120		51.22	1.50	24.00	16.00
		140	160		64.00	.88	18.67	21.33
		120	180		73.58	.67	16.00	24.00
		100	200		87.00	.50	13.33	26.67

table 1—shows the effect on hourly profitability of lowering or raising the rebuilding price of a job.

which indicate that on a weekly average throughout the duration of the project, the owner will put in 29 hours for every 11 worked by the assistant. Now what this means is that not only has the owner's shop hourly earning been raised, but 11 hours of the week are now open for additional earnings. All this being so, the answer to our query in the first paragraph is yes—gross income from rebuilding will be "modified downward" as the per-piano fee is lowered, but the hourly earnings can be maintained (even increased), as well as additional income earned due to the availability of more open hours, simply by hiring a shop assistant. Now as to gross yearly income from rebuilding: if 300 hours are required to redo a grand piano, then only six or seven complete jobs can be done in a 50 week period. Let's say six. At \$11,500 per job, the gross yearly income will be \$69,000. In addition, eleven hours per week of additional work time have opened up for the shop owner.

If it all sounds too neat, that's because it is. On paper everything works brilliantly; all the football plays work like a Swiss watch. But somewhere between the drawing board and the playing field real life intervenes, and like poor Charlie Brown, there will be some nasty Lucy to yank the football out of place just as you're all wound up to kick it to the moon—and flat on your back you go with a thump. We'll explore some of these thumps in a future article; for now let's consider...

HIRING ASSISTANTS

There are three main character traits you want in your assistants—a good attitude, a good attitude, and a good attitude. To be sure, an innate ability to work with both hands and head must be a given; with these in place you can train them to jump through all sorts of hoops. But a willing and humble and teachable attitude you cannot teach and without it there can be no foundation on which to build. If you treat them right, train them right, give them a pleasant work environment, most of them will work hard to please you, and most of them will be faithful to you.

Other tuners seem like natural choices for assistants. But, except when hired as sub-contractors for specialized tasks, they are sometimes the worst on-going assistants because their motives and fidelity tend to be torn between two worlds: their own business and yours. Conflicts of interest and time abound. If you are thinking of hiring a tuner-assistant, especially one with "years of rebuilding experience," the two of you have much to discuss at the outset. But the chances for a long-term, successful relationship are slim.

Partnerships of tuner-technicians also must be very carefully worked out. From the standpoint of shop income, two partners are on a par and expect to earn the most per hour that the shop can produce. This

is a critically different sort of arrangement than when hiring a general assistant in order to raise the owner's hourly earnings. Partnerships work best when specific areas of expertise or preference are delineated between the two, or among the three, etc. One party, for example, might be the bellyman specialist, while another might be the action specialist and yet a third party might be the field specialist, with a special knack for selling big rebuilding jobs.

One big pitfall to avoid when either hiring a general assistant (one you will train), or working in tandem with a partner, is the one of "linked-assistance." That is, if the hired hand or partner is always at your side, helping to set up jigs that you can set up yourself, or helping to carry an action that you can carry yourself, or hitching on bass strings while you cut and turn coils, the shop and everyone's earnings will suffer. This is a huge mistake. Assistants must have

jobs that they accomplish alone and without your help, and the same is true for you. Obviously, there must and should be communication, and pleasant at that; and the assistant will have many questions which should be courteously answered. But the overall scheme of the shop at work should be specialization: You do your thing, and they do theirs. Unless under a time crunch, if an assistant must be out of the shop for a few days (as with part-time help) avoid the temptation to finish his or her partially completed work even if you have nothing better to do. Go out and tune a spinet, take a nap, write a *Journal* article, but let an assistant's work sit until he is back to complete it. This will pay monetary dividends later, as well as instill in the worker a sense that he is valuable to the shop in specific ways.

The part-time rebuilder, which includes most builders, has an inherent and limiting problem. At best, considering that by circumstance

or by choice, the volume of work is small and intermittent, the difficulty of hiring good people and keeping them is serious, and seems to preclude any possibility of organizing a shop which will run most efficiently and profitably. Hence, for all their knowledge and skill many rebuilders find themselves whiling away shop hours scraping bridge notches, or cleaning damper heads, or poking into any of a thousand little holes better left to assistants. This isn't to suggest that hired help should only be used to carry out these simple repetitive tasks, but that the shop owner needs to reflect on the matter that the presumably hefty fee he is charging his client might best not be dissipated irresponsibly.

So, then, the part-time rebuilder requires a part-time assistant; even full-time rebuilders require some part-time assistants. As to finding and hiring these people, use common sense; and during the interview make especially sure that your perceptive antennae are fully tuned in. In general, stay away from Macawbers who are in-between jobs, or who just want to keep busy until something else turns up.

Helpers must become infected, or show early symptoms of coming down with the fatal piano disease, the Great P Plague, or they will never work out. Part-time assistants will probably not contribute more than 80 to 100 hours of time toward a 300 hour job. But that's enough to make a big difference, for them and for you.

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CORRECTION

NOTICE

John C. Bryner, RTT, of Clearfield, Utah, has spotted an algebraic typo in the July '91 *Journal*.

On page 36, the second formula for finding radius (r) when deflection (d) and length (l) are known.

The incorrect formula reads:

$$r = l^2 + 4d^2 / 8d$$

but it should have read:

$$r = \frac{l^2 + 4d^2}{8d}$$

The worked-out mathematics, however, which appear in the example support the correct formula if you trust that many of you interested in the subject were able to spot the typo and make the correction yourself.

Interestingly, though, Bill pointed out a well-known and oft-used "approximating" mathematical technique which, under certain circumstances, can be used to simplify an otherwise unnecessarily complicated formula. And so without going into the reasoning or respective derivations, I have taken the liberty to further reduce Bill's already reduced formulas to:

$$d = l^2 / 8r$$

$$r = l^2 / 8d$$

But please note that these extremely simplified formulas are perfectly fine to use if you are working out soundboard crown and radius since the upward crown deflection values are relatively tiny compared to the quite large radii. But they are not to be used as general formulas for deflection or radius. If you are building an archway to your house, for example, and you want to figure (d) and (r), use formula 1 of the July '91 *Journal* for (d) and the corrected formula for (r) as shown above. And many thanks to Bill for spotting and pointing out the typo.

Practically Speaking from page 20

and let-off screws all perfectly clean and with new action parts installed, you will have a visually stunning rebuild!

Screws and hardware with a heavy plating should be buffed rather than blasted, as long as their plating is in good shape. However, often metal parts will have only a very light plating which is corroded and too thin to stand up to buffing. For these parts the bead blaster can be used to remove the old plating (rust is usually found under the plating anyway). The result will be perfectly clean metal with a light sheen, ready for a coat of clear or gold lacquer.

Agraffes clean up beautifully with bead blasting. Remove them from the plate, placing them in order in snug holes drilled in a board. Blast off old paint or corrosion, ream, and apply a light coat of clear lacquer.

Is It

WORTH IT?

Yes, a bead blasting cabinet takes some time to make. And, it takes up some shop space. However, it is one of those tools that, once owned you will never want to be without. I put off building my bead blasting cabinet for quite a while. Now I realize that I could have built it several times over with the time I spent over the years holding rusty screw heads up against a wire wheel. And, I can turn out a better looking rebuild now in less time.

Next month I'll save you the hardest part of the project by presenting plans and instructions for building your own glass bead blasting set-up.



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Economic Affairs

To adequately create a business pricing model, you'll have to first track your expenses for different aspects of your business. Some category examples would be: tuning; repairs in the home; shop work; rebuilding; pianos sales; pianos parts' sales; refinishing; etc.

Each category can be thought of as a separate business unit. That way the expenses will be allocated to the proper business category and you'll definitely see where your money is coming from and where it isn't.

If you are equipped with a computer and an accounting expense program, switch on the computer. Otherwise, take out a piece of paper. To the left of the page list the business categories that are pertinent to your specific situation. Leave enough space so you can list your major expenses for each category. As this article continues, and thoughts come up for you about your business, list major expenses for these business categories. Separate expenses into two columns — fixed expenses and variable expenses. You may also want to cross reference your tax return so nothing is forgotten.

FIXED EXPENSES

Fixed expenses do not vary with your sales volume. They are incurred as a management decision you make, generally over a longer time frame. Some examples are shop rent or lease payments, employee salaries, yellow pages advertising costs, payments on your business vehicle. Since fixed expenses cannot be eliminated in the short run, these expenses must be provided for in

your pricing model as naturally as bringing your tuning hammer to a tuning job.

VARIABLE EXPENSES

Variable expenses vary directly with your volume of sales. Some examples of variable costs are gasoline expenses, auto repairs, subcontract wages, the portion of utilities expense that vary with shop usage or long distance phone calls, small tool repair and replacement costs, small shop supplies such as glue, or piano parts supplies. The difference between fixed and variable expenses is that variable expenses can generally be eliminated or cut back in the short run. For instance, if your business is in a financial pinch, you may be able to lower your costs for variable expenses. Knowing this basic difference between your expenses is a must to proper budgeting.

Some examples: cut down on long distance calls; eliminate short-term advertising if the return is negligible; work four 10-hour days in your rebuilding shop to save electrical and heating costs; eliminate carrying inventory — use a "just in time" inventory policy; no cellular phone; group tunings in well-planned routes to lessen gas and auto maintenance costs.

When you know what your fixed and variable expenses are for the year, allocate them to the business categories that make use of those costs. For example, tuning does not make use of your rebuilding shop, so rebuilding shop overhead is not a tuning business expense. Jumbling your expenses can put you in the position where one segment of your business—such as tuning—is carrying your rebuilding shop or piano

sales business. If you already know this — fine, but if you work too many hours a week and don't quite know what's wrong with your business setup, spending the time to structure your business in this manner will assist you in determining what impact each aspect of piano service has on your profit figure.

You can further break down several of the business categories, such as rebuilding, major reconditioning, sales, and refinishing into per-job units. Building contractors do this all the time. For example, you've purchased a piano for rebuilding: 1. List the initial cost of the instrument as an expense. 2. Add expenses incurred to complete the project: parts, supplies, shop overhead, tool and equipment replacement costs, etc. Be aware which of these expenses are fixed and which are variable. 3. Add the salary expense you allowed for labor to complete this job (which was determined from your personal pricing model).

When business expenses increase on clearly identifiable items such as the price of a set of hammers or yearly advertising expense, you directly see that increase and are most likely charging for your services accordingly. There are many smaller types of expenses that may slip through the cracks such as small shop supplies (glue, steel wool, sandpaper, brass cleaner, dowels, etc.), and small piano part supplies (those parts kept on hand to do in-the-home small repairs — not complete sets of anything). These expenses have to be attributed to an overhead number that is specific to the work calling for these supplies. Our auto repair shop calls this category "small tools and supplies service" and includes a separate charge on the bill for this expense. It's a direct expense charged to the job.

You now have developed a "market basket" of goods and services for the

The Business Expense Model

rebuilding of one piano. This can be used as a pricing guide for your next project. Watch price variations and adjust your pricing accordingly. After a while you'll know exactly what you need on a weekly or on a per-job basis to cover expenses and a profit.

As you can see, we now have the basis for a two-part pricing model: personal wages pegged to the CPI, paying close attention to tax increases and the personal income index. Business expenses are tabulated as either variable or fixed expenses, and tracked separately according to the specific job category they relate to.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING PRICE

When creating your pricing policy you must be aware that you cannot set price in a vacuum. There are all sorts of economic theories explaining how prices are determined. Many of these theories have no validity since they are based on perfect competition in the market place which does not exist. The following principles, however, do have a direct application to pricing policy.

LAW OF SUPPLY & DEMAND

If supply of those providing services or products like yours is great, price decreases for the service because

of competition. This decrease in price will mean that some suppliers will leave the market, lowering supply and eventually increasing price. In order to overcome this cycle and keep your price at a reasonable level, you must either do a high volume or target the high end, high-quality market.

ELASTICITY OF DEMAND

If a product or service is said to be "elastic" then a decrease in price, means and increase in revenue from significant sales increase. In my experience piano service tends to be "inelastic," which means not a significant increase in sales, to overcome a drop in price per unit. This again is dependent upon how you target your market.

LAWS OF CONSUMPTION

Income varies with the age of the family, education and occupation, added to the basic tenet that as income increases, spending for miscellaneous items in relation to spending for basic needs increase.

LAWS OF DIMINISHING UTILITY

As additional units of a product are consumed, the satisfaction obtained from the purchase of additional units decrease. Each product or service has a

consumable limit. In our profession people usually have one piano, tune it once or twice a year, and don't expect to spend money on major service very often within the life of the instrument.

Some business experts consider pricing policy a function of cost accounting, while others clearly see the larger perspective of integrating economic theory into a strategic marketing policy. These four economic principals are used in a strategic marketing framework to determine the "right price" to cover expenses and allow for a profit, by targeting the "right market" that will allow you to achieve those desired results.

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International Relations

This month I have two articles to share with you. The first is a translation of an article that appeared in the Europiano magazine 1/1991. It is about the 4th annual meeting of the Australian Piano Tuners and Technicians Association. I think it gives a good picture of that convention. In many ways, conventions in different countries are the same. But each has its own national flavor which keeps things interesting. I want to mention a special thanks to Hans Sander for his help in translating this from the original German.

The second article is the next part of the speeches that were given in Seoul, Korea at the 7th IAPBT conference. This one is my presentation on behalf of the PTG. I want to give credit to Karl Bruhn and the work of NAMM and MENC about the current status of music education. Their reports shaped much of my thinking and I have included a number of quotes from their report.

I received another letter from the Russian Association which describes their activities in setting up their association. I will print that letter next month.

National Meeting of the Australian Piano Tuners and Technicians Association by Max Matthias reprinted with permission from Europiano Magazine 1/1991 (Original in German)

From the 8th to the 11th of November, 1990, the 4th national meeting of the Australian Piano Tuners and Technicians Association took place in Perth, Western Australia. I was invited to that meeting.

About 2:00 AM I landed in Perth. After a couple of hours to catch up on sleep, I met with the President of the Western Australia Guild, Mr. Rod Collins, and the President of the National Guild, Mr. John Cross. There was a friendly welcome among many friends who had taken part in the first Congress in Sydney in 1985. At the evening buffet, how could it have been different, we were already talking "piano."

OFFICIAL PART WITH SPEECHES

There were the following themes on the program:

1) *Piano servicing - Bosendorfer*

Here a videotape was shown about service work, especially regulation of Bosendorfer grands.

2) *New marketing at Kawai*

With a Kawai parts list, instructions on how to handle Kawai warranties, technical information, as well as a regular newsletter including technical news, Kawai wants to contribute to better communication and better service performance. This information is available from the manufacturer on request.

3) *Tuning*

How do you tune profitably? Ara Vartoukian, an experienced technician, showed several possible ways to achieve a good stable tuning in a suitable amount of time.

4) *The Yamaha Disklavier (Upright & Grand)*

On hand was a grand Disklavier where the whole system with all the possibilities and features were explained. A small black box under the grand contains the entire electronics with its control unit. All functions of the grand can be tested by using a test program. The pedals are operated gradually by small solenoids. Later, after all the possibilities of the grand were demonstrated, one of the participants asked, to the amusement of all, if the grand could be tuned automatically as well. The whole system is in principle a further development of an idea from Hupfield and Welte at the beginning of the century, with the help of modern technology.

5) *Plates, soundboards, string length, tension and soundboard wood*

Ron Overs reported on his activity in his repair practice in which he can obtain better tone in older instruments by moving sections of the bridges

story continues on page 35

*Ron Berry, RTT
Chairman, International Relations Committee
Past President, IAPBT*

The Future of Pianos and Piano Technicians

THE PROBLEM

We have a problem. I am sure that you are aware that piano sales have been dropping by about 10% a year for the past several years. Has this slowdown hit your business yet? Maybe yes, maybe no, but we have a problem. What is happening in the piano market is only a symptom of a much larger problem. In the U.S. there is an alarming lack of interest in learning music. While everyone enjoys music, six out of ten Americans have not attended a live music performance in the last year! Learning to play music takes time and effort. Today's society is instant: "Got a headache? — Take a pill and it's gone instantly." All our technology is aimed at making routine tasks easier so they can be done quickly without as much work on our part. Learning to do anything has always taken time but we haven't been good at showing our children the value of taking the time to learn to do something difficult. In the meantime, the pace of modern life is such that we have little time to spend with our kids. Many countries have family time when they sit together and sing folk music. American kids listen to prerecorded rap music on a Walkman while in the car with their parents, who are doing business on the car phone. Society itself is moving away from meaningful communication among people. Is it any wonder that music would reflect this?

I personally feel a loss that interest in American folk music has faded. When I was growing up you could get a guitar and learn three chords and produce the music you heard on the radio. The music was socially relevant and you felt it was important. Today's pop music is so engineered in the studio that even the groups that make the music will lip sync to a tape in public performance. What does this say to kids about making their own music? They would need \$10,000 of electronic equipment to reproduce the sounds they hear. I'm happy to see that some pop musicians are returning to acoustic instruments and more of the simplicity of folk music. This is hard to do because the

MUSIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

music itself must have more substance when it doesn't have all the electronic engineering to dress it up.

A large concern for everyone in the music industry is the status of music and arts education in public schools. The American education system has been under scrutiny as Americans realize that their children are not as well educated as those in Japan and Germany, among other countries. Consequently, there has been a focus on "back to basics" — mathematics, science and reading. This leaves many with the attitude that music and the arts are merely unimportant frills that can be cut first when the budget gets tight. And that is exactly what is happening. We have been asking such central questions as "What do our children need to learn?" "What is truly basic?" and "How shall we teach?" Yet, until we focus our thinking and energy on "Why must

we educate?" we will miss our children's greatest needs. The National Endowment for the Arts was prompted to say, "The problem is basic arts education does not exist in the United States today."

The following appeared in a special edition of Newsweek:

"Beethoven told one of his pupils that his own music education had been sorely lacking. 'But,' he said, 'I had talent.' Unlike Beethoven, most of us cannot triumph over a poor musical education — and that's exactly what most American children get. So poor, in fact, that in 1984, an informal Musical Alliance poll of 6th and 10th graders revealed that though Beethoven was the composer kids recognized above all others, only 5 percent know who he was."

Those music programs that do exist are left understaffed. A recent report by the National Association of Music Merchants found that student-to-teacher ratios were as follows:

Out of 41 states where figures were available, South Dakota ranks best with 151 students for every single teacher. California ranks last with 1,535:1. Only 15 percent of California music classes are taught by a qualified music teacher.

So you see that we must focus on a larger problem. Without new people learning to play music, piano sales will continue to decline. If we tackle the problem of developing interest in music, the piano business will grow as a result.

story continues...

THE CAUSES

Technicians often feel isolated from the rest of the music industry. It is easy to go tune a piano and return with your money and leave it at that. But technicians must reach out and become part of the whole music community. Technicians and teachers have the most lasting and direct relationship with the customers. We have perhaps a greater commitment to pianos than other parts of the industry. In the past, we have relied on manufacturers and dealers to carry the load of promoting music. It is time we take the responsibility on ourselves.

As well as a general slow-down of piano sales, the U.S. manufacturers have faced increased competition from manufacturers outside the U.S. Labor costs are less in some countries than in the U.S., although U.S. manufacturers have moved to southern Indiana, Arkansas, Texas and other states as well as Mexico to find lower labor costs. Part of this problem came about in the 1970s when foreign competition was growing. While Oriental manufacturers were making larger verticals at competitive prices, the U.S. manufacturers were lowering quality in spinets to beat the competition. Only recently have they seen that the change must be upward toward better quality even at a higher price. Almost every manufacturer has stopped making spinets.

Electronic keyboards hit the U.S. market in a big way and have skyrocketed ever since. While some of these became an extra toy for serious musicians, they have affected the low-end piano market. Why pay \$1,200 for a cheap spinet when you can pay \$300 for a keyboard? Neither of them sounds that much like a real piano anyway. The growth of electronic keyboards puts a keyboard instrument into the hands of many people who would otherwise have nothing. Ask a good pianist what kind of piano he

learned on and you will find it was often one that we would consider totally unacceptable now. The electronic keyboard may serve the same purpose of getting the young musician started. Then they graduate to the piano later. It has now surpassed the guitar as the instrument of choice among young players. One concern I have about electronic keyboards is that there is no system in place to help purchasers learn to play them. Pianos are generally sold in music stores which have teachers available. Also the piano is enough of an investment that the parents feel the need to make their children stay with lessons for a while. The keyboards, however, are sold at discount stores which don't even sell music to play. My concern is that parents will spend \$75 on the cheapest keyboard. After the child has not shown much interest on his own they will then figure that he is not interested in music and will pursue it no further.

On a positive note, it seems to me that keyboard players will be the musicians in demand in the future. Already in studio work the orchestra is replaced by synthesizers. String and wind players are in a much worse position than keyboard players. But at least part of the musical training on any instrument is transferable to other instruments. The PTG membership survey said that 84% of PTG technicians play the piano or another instrument fairly well or very well. It is music we need to support in any form.

Values have changed. While a piano was considered an important part of any good home in 1900, a good stereo and a wide screen TV are the new status symbols. Pianos do have the advantage that they hold their value. The electronic keyboards will be worthless in a few years because there will be better units for less money. There is something sentimental about pianos and it is hard to imagine people speaking fondly about the old DX-7 they had as a child. I think people respect pianos because they last so long and carry memories from one generation to the next.

Our technology and communications have made us less able to communicate. Now we talk to phone answering machines and people hide behind voice mail systems to be more "productive." People go to work with a walkman on and don't talk to anyone all day. Computer technology has now developed "virtual reality" where you put on TV glasses and sensors all over your body and enter a world created by a software designer. There are positive uses for this technology, but people may also use it as yet another escape from the real world. It seems that human values have not been able to keep pace with technology. When it reaches a breaking point, attitudes will snap back to a simpler life style.

Values and public opinion seem to swing back and forth. People are now in a fairly materialistic stage with their focus on getting ahead rather than the finer parts of life. But just as the 1960s had a movement away from technology and materialism to a simpler life, we are probably heading for a similar change of attitude. I think that every so often people need to take a break to let human values catch up with technology. When people turn from material goals, they turn to the arts.

THE SOLUTIONS

In the U.S. all the organizations in the music community have begun working together to solve our problems. A networking activity has developed on a national level. The presidents and executive directors of national organizations of technicians, manufacturers, dealers, teachers and sheet music publishers have been meeting two or three times a year to find ways the whole industry can work together. The National Association of Music Merchants organized a petition drive to show public support for music in the schools. More than 100,000 signatures were collected. The NAMM report quoted earlier focused

on the benefits of making music. This report stresses the importance of music education in making a well educated whole person. There have been studies showing that learning music helps children become better at other subjects. Music is beginning to be better understood as a form of intelligence, not merely a manifestation of it. The work of Howard Gardner developed the theory of "multiple intelligences." By intelligence, Gardner means an ability to create and solve different kinds of problems. He identified seven basic intelligences: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, intra-personal (intelligence about one's own feeling life) and inter-personal (intelligence about human interactions, temperaments, and motivations). Since this means that music can be a way of knowing, it can become a way of teaching. A brain researcher, Gordon Shaw, has done work leading him to believe that when the brain does certain tasks related to learning and memory, it reflects a structure that is "musical" in form, shape and timing. He believes that we can use music to examine higher creative and learning functions which we could not understand otherwise. The NAMM report was presented to the U.S. government committees studying education. Hopefully it will make some difference. The one quote which perhaps sums up the necessity of arts education was from Susan Driggers of the Bell South Corporation:

"At perhaps no other time have music and arts education been more important. Apart from their obvious benefits, music and the other arts produce critical thinkers, people who are decision makers. In the information age, our company needs people with critical thinking skills to analyze data and make judgements."

Technicians need to be aware of piano teachers in their cities. PTG members have found success by networking with teacher organiza-

tions. They exchange newsletters and provide technicians to do a program on piano service for the teachers. Technicians are often asked if they know a good piano teacher. By knowing the personalities of local teachers, technicians are more able to match the needs of the customer with a teacher.

Our industry is small, so we cannot advertise our way to success. The amount of money spent on advertising in the U.S. is around \$480 per every man, woman and child. A budget of \$1 million would be less than one cent per person. So you see that we must be smart in the approach we take. Any promotions or advertising we undertake must be aimed carefully at our target markets. The PTG is proposing a dues increase to spend \$50,000 a year on hiring a professional marketing firm to help us present a better image of PTG. In the past, PTG has done some promotions but they have been unfocused and lacked continuity.

When we work on instruments that haven't changed substantially in the last 100 years, it is easy to think that things will always remain the same. Compare us to the electronics field where technology changes daily and technicians have to specialize in one small area such as two-way radio or audio equipment. But the field of piano technology has changed and will continue to do so. As piano sales move from spinets to better quality uprights and grands, customers' demands on technicians will increase. Piano owners will demand better tuning and expect technicians to do full service. High level voicing and action regulation skills will become more necessary to the average technician.

Our various organizations can do much for the future of piano technology. PTG is preserving some of the technical information from the past by publishing books and hopes to expand its publications with more. All of our organizations support technicians by providing technical information through magazines, seminars and conventions. PTG established a

foundation which recently has given a grant to a university student of acoustics who is studying the characteristics of piano hammers. This way we have been able to get someone from the scientific community to do research that we could not do ourselves. Our organizations should focus on helping technicians develop their business skills to make their businesses more efficient. Most technicians work on their technical skills but many have terrible business practices. Many American technicians are using computers to keep track of customers, remind them of future service, keep income and expense records, etc.

We as technicians need to become involved in our local music communities. Beside being good for business this will help strengthen the music community and help more people become part of it. Learn to play something on the piano when you are finished tuning. Many customers never get to hear what the piano can sound like. Even good pianists like to hear their piano from a distance. We are teaching people about the love of music and the best way to do that is for them to see it in us. Support public performance either by buying advertisements or just by attending. Start networking with other local associations in the music industry.

We need to become advocates for public music education. When sports programs are about to be cut, parents come to the school in anger to see that they are saved. But when music programs are to be cut, we sit back and say "isn't it too bad." We must make school officials aware of the importance of arts education.

The current decline of the piano business will continue unless we all work to prevent it. Technicians tend not to be concerned because the slowdown has not hit our part of the business yet. So what if dealers aren't selling much? There are still millions of old pianos to sell and repair.

We need to act now before our part of the business slows down. I feel that it is much more difficult now for a technician to get started that it was even 10 years ago. A recent survey of

PTG membership showed that 43% of those who respond to a question about outside income noted that more than 50% of their household income came from non-piano activities. Part of this means that their wife or husband works also, but I was surprised that the figure was so high. If the business slows down more this trend will continue. I feel that those of us who are full time piano technicians have more time and energy to become better technicians. If economics become such that piano tuning could be only a part time profession, I feel that the level of service would decline.

Probably the worst thing we can do at this time is *nothing*. It is public apathy about pianos, piano service and music in general that is causing the problem. We know that the piano is something very special which can enrich the lives of those who play it. It is one of the few instruments which can play music of any kind. A symphony can be reproduced for piano, so can vocal, choral or other instrumental music.

Elitism and jealousy among ourselves will surely bring us all down. Dealers have been operating in a survival mode for several years and therefore sometimes acted more in desperation. They cut down each other and explain why they can sell

their piano for a few dollars less than their competitor. They need to work together to tell people why anyone would want to buy a piano in the first place. The music industry spends its energy fighting over pieces of a shrinking market while ignoring ways to make the whole market bigger. Educating the public about general piano quality upgrades the business with high pressure tactics. Of course technicians must realize that manufacturers make pianos to meet various price points and the piano must be judged for relative value. Too many technicians are quick to condemn a piano because it doesn't meet the standards of a seven-foot grand. Present the facts and let the customer make his or her own decision. Do you always buy a Mercedes because it is one of the best cars made, or do you decide what quality level you can afford and look for the best value in that range?

THE CONCLUSION

We are in a unique business which offers a freedom that few jobs have. The fact we take a piano from a starting point to an ending point and see the improvement we have made gives us satisfaction in a job well done. The PTG membership survey rated flexible schedule, challenging work, tangible results and client appreciation high as what we like about our work. Listed as much less important were job security, income and prestige. We are doing something that gives people enjoyment and enriches their lives. Let us take our love of music and the piano and show others why we love it.

I will leave it with a quote from American composer, Aaron Copland:

*"So long as the
human spirit thrives on
this planet, music in some living
form will accompany and
sustain it and give it
expressive meaning."*



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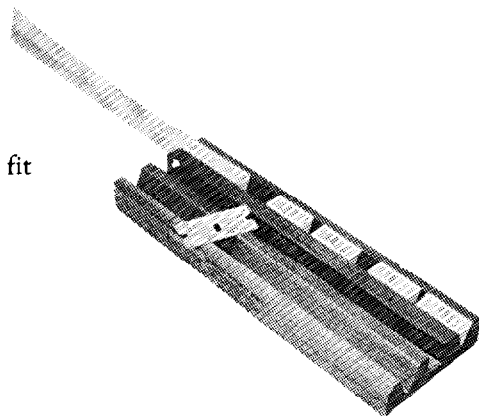
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National Meeting of the Australian Piano Tuners—continued from page 30

and correspondingly fitting the strings.

6) *Damper springs and touch*

Walter Haase explained the influence on touch because of the damper springs and the weighing off of the springs on a piano.

7) *Gluing up new grand dampers*

Lynton Luff demonstrated on a model he had brought along with him how he successfully replaced grand damper felts without removing and reinstalling damper heads and wires. He cuts the felt off and pushes the new felts between the strings and the damper head, thus keeping the damper automatically in the right place to the string.

8) *Use of materials for grand building and action making.*

Here, I mentioned the use of materials used for building Steinway instruments. The touch (as technical and psychological phenomena) as well as the development of the action which was a separate topic.

Between classes there was ample opportunity to get involved in private conversations. There was also plenty of time for socializing. A nighttime trip on a ship into the Perth harbor with an evening meal aboard was the high point of the social part. Humorous additions to the program from participants and a raffle added to the richly varied program.

Up to now, not all of the state organizations belong to the national association. There is an effort in progress to integrate all the regional associations into one national association. At present there are four regional associations with over 200 members: New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. Southern Australia has not yet made up its mind on joining the national umbrella organization. The Association in Victoria met on week later in Melbourne, celebrating its 10th year in existence. I was invited to that meeting as well.

THE STATE OF THE PROFESSION

Australia doesn't have any regulated apprentice training, in our (the German) sense. They distinguish between the tuner and the technician. Many have learned to tune only, some even taught themselves. The disadvantage for learning to become a tuner-technician is that Australia doesn't have piano factories or larger workshops to take care of necessary training. Almost all tuners and technicians are independent and work for themselves with the exception of institutional employees. Trained experts as we know them came mostly from England or European countries. There are experts who perform excellent work but also many inexperienced less-qualified piano tuners and technicians. The association tries to distance itself from the inexperienced people by means of a qualifying examination. On the other hand, the association finds it difficult to set a suitable standard for themselves. Their monthly publication "The Tuners Voice" has information for the members and good suggestions are passed on. There are relations with the association from New Zealand. There are some attempts too for contacts with the American PTG.

THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

Australia is a giant land with rich natural resources and ideal living conditions, but scarcely 17 million inhabitants. Cities have a blooming musical life. In spite of a current domestic recession, this year nearly 7,000 uprights and more than 1,100 grands were imported. The lion's share falls to the Asian products with 3,253 Japanese uprights and 695 grands as well as 2,402 Korean uprights and 295 grands. The large distances within the country and the remoteness of other continents make the people uncertain. Many in Australia believe that their homeland is not as well acknowledged as other countries and that it is economically and politically insignificant. In addition, this makes the market conducive to being flooded by Asian firms with good business instinct. It is hoped that Australia, after receiving its independence as an English colony, will not be drawn into a new dependency. What earlier was obtained with weapons is done today with the help of money. An apparently unstoppable way?

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PTG

AUXILIARY



EXCHANGE

This is the month to begin to carry out all those self-improvement New Year's resolutions which were made just a short while ago! One that is tops on my list is to double check and be sure my PTGA dues have been paid. Life goes by very rapidly in my little corner of the world here in High Falls, New York. There are times I've had something in mind to do for so long, that I think I've already accomplished the necessary action. If you are "living life in the fast lane" too, glance in your checkbook to see if you are paid up and ready to have the annual convention fun in Sacramento with the PTGA when July 1992 comes zipping up. Remember, registered PTGA members pay less!

Another resolution I have considered adding to my list is to try, in some subtle way, to discover whether or not an appointment made with a new customer will be in a heated house! One thing can be said about our tuning excursions - they are always different!

There were three people in the home of one of our most recent appointments whose native language was Chinese and only one-and-a-half of them spoke English. The one-half was a four-year-old boy, who spoke English quite well, but was very much engaged with the TV set in another room. A cold coal- and wood-burning stove mocked us from the kitchen since it was not burning on this chilly day. No one would know for another week, when the former owner was to arrive, how to light the furnace which promised to provide future heat.

Grandma was all smiles and very friendly. She spoke to me at great length in a very confiding way. Unfortunately, I neither spoke nor understood Chinese! The boy's mother, who was Grandma's daugh-

ter, had to leave for work and there we were! It was 40 degrees outdoors; there was a blustery wind to boot and Grandma, wearing a heavy quilted coat, donned a ski cap for added comfort while we went to work.

The piano was a 20s upright, donated by the former owner of the house and suffered from unglued jack flanges—four of them! I found myself kneeling on an ice cold dining room floor helping "my tuner" seat the flanges in the glued areas, while the parts danced everywhere but into position. My reward for completing this phase of the project was to be seated and permitted to read the latest, brought from home, National Geographic, while hubby tuned. Sitting and reading was worse for the circulation in the prevailing cold. I must confess that the daughter was kind enough to provide hot coffee and cookies before she left, but we would have "abandoned ship" long before this stage if we weren't so far from home.

I have never been so thankful for my wonderfully functioning car heater! We did thaw out in time. We did leave the piano in much better shape than it was when we arrived, but we'll probably never return to that address where the vintage glue could release yet more of the pesky flanges. And to think that in Hong Kong, the lady of the house complained, ere she departed, the tuner came and made any repairs to their Yamaha for free!

So go the "perils of Arlene and Bill." We hope you all fare better than this and please, have a happy, happy New Year. We are going to make a special effort in this direction and in our big resolution to keep as warm as possible this winter of 1992.

Arlene M. Paetow, President

FROM YOUR EDITOR

The October PTGA President's message made reference to the questionnaires filled out at the Philadelphia convention and some comments made about the unfriendly reception some people felt they received from other PTGA members. Luellyn Pruitt, who is now a staunch supporter of PTGA and a past president of our group, was kind enough to send the following comments on the topic. Thank you Luellyn for taking the time to respond. These exchange pages are an open forum for our membership. Please be assured that all submissions will be published. I do need to sometimes edit for space, etc., but I try very hard to maintain the "flavor" of the article.

FROM LUELLYN PRUITT

I read with a sense of recognition and empathy the report of some guest who felt snubbed at the auxiliary convention in Philadelphia. It has been quite a few years since I was in that position, but remember vividly going on a ladies tour during one of the last mid-winter conventions of the Guild and being totally ignored. The next summer my husband took me by the hand and lead me to the auxiliary registration table and "joined" me.

After that, although I was not necessarily nor automatically a member of the group, it was easier. Doing the first thing I was asked to do (installation of officers) pushed me through the gap.

Some of us are just not joiners by nature. Neither are we extroverted enough to overlook the close-knit

camaraderie of others who have been together in many situations, many times. At times this camaraderie can be carried to such extremes as to exclude non-members.

On the other side of the coin, it is possible that the ladies who felt slighted made a genuine effort to meet others and become part of the group. If so, we all need to apologize to them and pledge to do better.

Perhaps we just think we make enough of an effort to invite spouses and friends to join the auxiliary. If we are really lax in that regard, show us up by taking the initiative and joining. We really don't bite!

OUR TWO NEWEST CHAPTERS

Hurrah for the two newest chapters in our PTG Auxiliary. We are so proud of them.

The first chapter, South Eastern Pennsylvania, was formed September 10, 1990. They immediately started working with the National PTGA President, Arlene Paetow, making plans for the 1991 Convention in Philadelphia. And what plans they were! The trip to Atlantic City for those arriving early was their idea. The ladies helped man the registration table and were so friendly and helpful throughout the convention.

We can't thank Pres. Joyce Helzner, V.P. Fran Milanse, Sec. Marilyn Raudenbush and Treas. Sandy Hartman enough for all their hard work. By July 1991 they had a new slate of officers. They are Pres. Marilyn Raudenbush, V.P. Sandy Hartman and Sec./Treas. Joyce Helzner. We are so looking forward to working with them in the future. They are a great chapter and an asset to our Auxiliary.

The second chapter is our new Dallas Chapter formed in January 1991. This was such good news given to us at our Council meeting. The charter application was found and presented to their Treasurer Sue Speir, who was taking it home to their President, Rhonda Speir, and Secretary, Edith Mullen. Other charter

members include Rose Tomko, Sharon Williams and Donna Connell. We see great things ahead for this chapter. With dynamo Sue Speir in the chapter who is our Newsletter Editor, they can't help but be an asset to the Auxiliary.

We welcome both Chapters with open arms and a lot of love thrown in!

*Ivagene Dege,
PTGA Recording Secretary*

OHIO STATE CONFERENCE

I received a nice note from Ginny Russell concerning the activities for the Auxiliary at the Ohio State Conference held in Columbus, October 3-6, 1991.

This year the Ohio State Conference was held at the Truman Hotel. The leaves were displaying beautiful hues of autumn as 11 happy spouses gathered for a fun filled weekend together. Norma Moon and Ginny Russell headed south from Cleveland to view the Ohio Theatre restoration; Helen, Lynette and Jason Hollingsworth, age 3, arrived from Dayton to enjoy the classes and information; Joannie Morris and Doris Zimmerman drove from Illinois for the shopping and the brewery tour; Marilyn Orr, East Liverpool, OH, Phyllis Tremper, KY, Zee Hawkins, MD, and Julie Berry, IN, were all looking forward to the classes and Marilyn Ritchie was our Columbus hostess, ably assisted by Kim Fippin.

Ginny reports that the classes were interesting and educational, the shopping spree was fruitful and the tour of the recently refurbished Ohio Theatre was very enjoyable. It also sounds as if the food was a high priority. That's always one of the added bonuses to attending the PTGA event—almost everyone seems to enjoy a nice meal with friends, both new and old!

If you have a minute, jot down some of the highlights (and even some of the problems) from PTG/PTGA

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- March 6-8, 1992 Mid-America Workshop and Tool Show**
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COMING EVENTS

auxiliary from page 37...

events you may have attended and forward them to me. I think that everyone enjoys reading about what other people have done at their conferences. It not only creates interest in attending the conferences, it also may provide information to anyone involved in planning an upcoming event.

A TIMELY TIP OR TWO

Phyllis Tremper, our Vice President and faithful contributor forwarded the following tips for protecting valuable possessions. Perhaps as you contemplate your list of chores to tackle during the winter doldrums you might like to add these to the list.

How many pieces belong to the set of china you inherited? What is the model number of your washer, dryer and other major appliances? These may sound like trivial questions, but the answers would be very important in the event of a burglary or devastating disaster at your house.

A household inventory is a good way to keep track of these not so trivial facts. Go through your home room by room and record make, model and serial numbers of the expensive items as well as anything valuable to your family such as heirlooms, antiques, etc. Pictures really are "worth a thousand words". Especially with those items that don't carry a serial number, a picture can prove invaluable in case you need to file a claim. (Perhaps this would be a great use for that video camera you received last Christmas! You can videotape your possessions and narrate therefor eliminating the need to write all the information down!)

Once you've completed the inventory make sure you store it in a safe place AWAY from your home such as a safe deposit box or with a relative, and update the information every year.

Phyllis also suggests that instead of putting cartons (from valuables you may have purchased or received for Christmas), at the curb for the trash collector, dismantle the boxes and RE-CYCLE if possible. This way anyone passing by won't know what new "goodies" you may have in your home..

I RESOLVE...

It's resolution time again. As PTGA members I would like to invite you to add to your list a little and resolve to 1) send your dues to Phyllis Tremper right away; 2) pencil in a trip to Sacramento in July and start saving the loose change lying around for "mad money" to use shopping in Old Sacramento at all the interesting shops; 3) see if you can't think of a tidbit or two that you might like to submit to the exchange.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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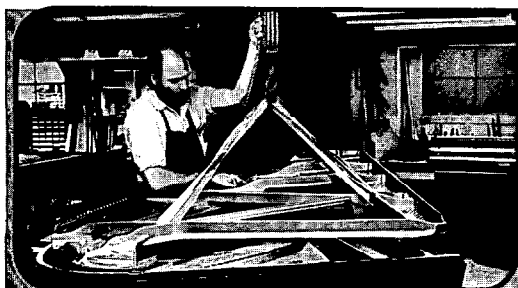
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Don't Miss Out

July 19	Pre-convention Board meeting
July 20	Board meeting council delegate check-in Registration opens
July 21	Council meeting, regional caucuses, elections
July 22	Council meeting Opening Assembly Exhibit Hall ribbon-cutting
July 23	Institute classes Regional meetings Auxiliary Tea
July 24	Institute classes Auxiliary tour
July 25	Institute classes Auxiliary Installation Luncheon Exhibits close Awards Banquet
July 26	Institute classes in morning

Don't Forget...

...the Kid Pix Key Convention Contest is still open to the first person to correctly guess the identities of all eight people. (Photos appeared in the December '91 issue of the *Journal*. Send in your contest entries today!



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Tech Gazette

Yamaha Piano Service

January, 1992

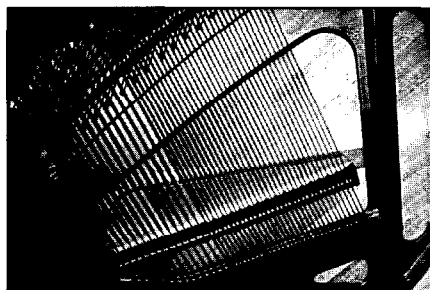
New Products

INTRODUCING THE NEW YAMAHA UPRIGHT PIANOS

This year, at the annual NAMM Show, Yamaha is unveiling four new upright pianos. We are incorporating new scales, changes in back designs and other technical advancements. All of these improvements have combined to produce pianos that are even better than their predecessors.

Let's take a look at some of the changes you'll see in these new models:

The U1F. Our newest offering in this well-recognized line is the U1F, which replaces the U1E. The most significant refinement in the new model is an improved scale design. The most notable feature of this new scale is the curved bass bridge which replaces the straight bass bridge on the earlier models. The result is overall better tone quality, especially in the bass and tenor sections.

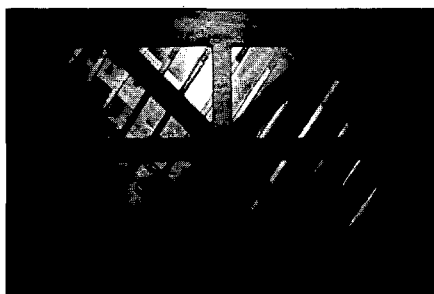
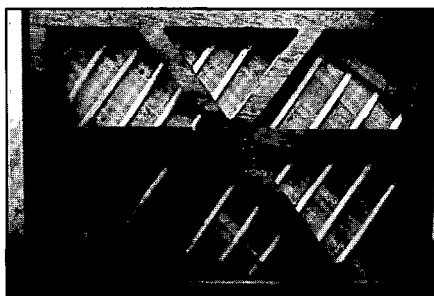


New scale with curved bass bridge.

Next is the U3F, which replaces the U3E. This new model has been given basically the same improvements as are found in the U1F: a new scale design, incorporating the curved bass bridge. Better tonal response has been the result in this 52-inch Professional Upright.

This brings us to our "WX-series" uprights. You'll recognize them by their characteristic case designs, and by their distinctive "Radial Back" assemblies.

In the 48-inch line, the WX1 has been replaced by the new WX1F. This model features an additional backpost to the radial back design. The benefit here is even more strength and stability in a proven back structure.



New radial back design with additional backpost.

Finally, we want to introduce you to the WX7F. Our top-of-the-line upright. A vertical piano that easily rivals the performance capabil-

ities of many smaller grands. The earlier WX7, with its agraffe construction, duplex scaling, full sostenuto and distinctive cabinet styling, has been the piano of choice for many discriminating pianists.

We have solved a bit of a contradiction with this piano. People who play vertical pianos are often accustomed to having a muffler rail (often called a practice or mute rail) at their disposal. The WX7 has a sostenuto function for the middle pedal and so did not have the muffler rail feature. We have now incorporated a hand-operated muffler rail on the new WX7F. This will give the pianist the best of both worlds: a true sostenuto function from the center pedal, and a hand-activated muffler system.

The WX7F also benefits from the improved radial back design that we've incorporated into the WX1F.

These new models have already started arriving at your local Yamaha dealer. Take the time to stop by and have a look. Listen to these pianos. We're sure you'll be pleased with what you see and hear.

Yamaha will Participate in

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Consistency Required In Marketing

Keith Bowman, RTT
Chairman, Marketing Committee

I would like to put the focus of this article on a single term which is fundamental in any form of marketing: consistency. Fundamental because by being consistent, we are assuring any audience or clientele that they can expect the same benefits in the same way, time after time. When it comes to identity, whether business or organizational, being consistent in goals, ethics and mission presents a clear image to the public or industry. This generates name-recognition and loyalty. Conversely, no amount of money invested in any kind of marketing plan can overcome inconsistent efforts in planning and execution.

To illustrate this point, think of an establishment that you frequently visit — a restaurant or hardware store, for instance. Why do you go there? Is it because you are always greeted courteously and made to feel comfortable? Do you count on the familiarity of seeing particular people or knowing that you can find what you need? If this is so, your loyalty as a customer is rewarding that establishment for its consistency.

To do everything right the first time is only the beginning. You must continue to do it the same

way every time. By making such a commitment, you are generating confidence in your business or organization.

The very first step in developing a marketing plan is to determine an identity that accurately portrays who you are and what you can do. Notice that I am not using the word image. Too often, especially in advertising, the consumer is starting to hold this word highly suspect. "Corporate image," for many, has become synonymous with insincerity and manipulation of buying trends. This type of image development ultimately is not a good foundation for marketing over the long term. And if image created in the boardroom might work for awhile for a large corporation, it certainly won't for a small business, or an association such as PTG.

I think of PTG as credible, ethical and committed to our Mission Statement. We have an excellent identity, even if it is understated and not reaching all our various target audiences as closely as we would like. There are, however, a couple of areas that can be improved on, and have been mentioned in the past by several members, including consistent use of one title or name for our franchised members.

As you well know, franchised members have the use of "Registered Tuner-Technician," "Registered Technician," "Craftsman," "Registered Craftsman," and "Registered Member." And almost anything with the word "Registered" or "Guild Craftsman" can be found in use. More importantly than ever, *Continued on next page*



Meet Your Board Members: **Leon J. Speir, RTT**

Jami L. Henry
Director of Communications

Many of us remember our high school English teachers for a variety of reasons...but South Central Regional Vice President Leon Speir, RTT, has his to thank for a 28 year career as a piano tuner-technician.

As a junior in high school, Leon developed an interest in piano tuning and repair and began his apprenticeship with his part time English teacher/part time piano technician.

Then, in 1964, with \$100 in his pocket, Leon set out on his own with three goals in mind. To keep overhead to a minimum, to provide quality work and to continue to educate and up-date his knowledge about the trade. His recipe has proven a success.

"My business has evolved from a primarily tuning business in the early years to a full service business including major rebuilding. My shop rebuilds player pianos and grands and we install soundboards and pinblocks. My *Continued on page 3*

MARKETING

PTG

Consistency...

we should finally decide this issue. As collateral (brochure) materials are generated by this committee and The Phelps Group, and as we begin to plan a media placement campaign, it is very important to give the public one and only one name when they think of qualified, professional piano service. Too, when member advertising shows this consistency, we are all pulling together.

Another area where we can clean up concerns our association logo. The Marketing Committee has been charge with developing a new logo. But this constitutes a future change that is not guaranteed. For now, our association logo remains "The Piano Technicians Guild, Inc." in Century Bold type. Legally, when used in abbreviated form, we should be writing and saying TPTGI. We are all fond of using PTG and Guild in articles, advertising, news releases and elsewhere. Look no further than earlier in this article, where I did the same thing. Personally, I would abhor having to refer to my organization as TPTGI, yet legally, it is correct.

Marketing Committee Update

As this is written in early December, I can report to you that the committee has processed the first collateral project, a membership solicitation brochure. We expect the brochures to be printed soon and available for our booth at the NAMM show in late January. Copy for approval on a general piano information brochure and the technical bulletin on pitch raising are being reviewed by the committee. The remaining three initial projects are near to submission, and other collateral projects are being prioritized. We also have received some interesting graphic logo ideas

from Phelps, which the committee is also reviewing.

As Marketing Committee Chair, I am going to the National Association of Music Merchants show, at which time a face-to-face meeting is scheduled with key executives of The Phelps Group. This, obviously, will afford an opportunity to meet these people, review work completed and work-in-progress, and to begin planning for a media placement campaign. I expect to report good results from this meeting in another update on Marketing Committee activity.

— Keith Bowman

The Marketing Committee is planning to submit proposals to the Bylaws Committee that would deal with these issues. As previously stated, addressing these inconsistencies will only make it easier for the committee to accomplish its charges, and may save The Phelps Group an occasional headache.

So what other areas can we address. We all have diverse backgrounds, locations and perceptions. If you are aware of other instances where we are not consistent as an organization, drop me a line; anything we can do to sharpen our identity will be of great benefit.

Nominations For Officers Close Feb. 1

M.B. Hawkins, RTT
Chairman, Nominating Committee

As PTG winds down the 1991 calendar year, the Nominating Committee suggests we allow ourselves to focus on the elections coming up at the next Council Session scheduled for July 1992. You, the membership, must decide

Membership Matters

Total Membership 3,886
Total RTTs 2,407

who the officers for the next year will be.

During the coming months, this committee will be busy investigating and examining information regarding various prospects. In compliance with our Bylaws, we are requesting nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and seven Regional Vice Presidents to serve on the Board of Directors for 1992-1993. Your input is absolutely vital if the Nominating committee is going to come up with a slate of officers which reflects the sense of the membership.

When your nominations are received by the committee, the person you propose will be sent a consent-to-serve form along with information on the duties of the office. While we expect nominations from chapters, it should be remembered that any member in good standing may submit his or her own name for consideration.

Your nomination must be submitted no later than February 1, 1992. Please mail to:

M.B. Hawkins, RTT
Nominating Committee Chair
P.O. Box 10386
Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Leon Speir...

wife Sue has worked with me in the shop for the past 20 years. She specializes in recovering piano key tops and has developed a clientele of piano technicians and music stores across the country."

"Continuing education is an important aspect to achieving a successful career as a piano tuner-technician," Leon said. "But," he quickly continues, "I believe it has been my association with PTG and the networking with other members that has proven a vital contribution to my career."

Ask Leon Speir about PTG and he'll be the first to tell you it took some time in the business before he could see the value of Guild membership. "After joining PTG and interacting with other technicians who were so willing to share of their knowledge and time I have

become a strong advocate for Guild membership," Leon says.

"One of the things I learned when I became a board member was the genuine interest and honest concern that each person on the board has in the individual members of this organization. It is after all an organization that exists because of its members and we must always remember that we are here to support and promote them," notes Leon.

That is the one goal Leon believes the board must never lose sight of, no matter how many changes occur. And change is the one thing Leon has consistently experienced both as a piano tuner-technician and as a PTG member.

After joining the PTG in 1978, Leon quickly became active in his local chapter, serving as program chairman, treasurer and as chapter president. Leon started the chapter newsletter, "The Piano Wire" and

introduced the concept of selling advertising to underwrite the costs.

In 1985, Leon served as PTG Newsletter Committee Chairman. In 1988 he was elected Texas State Association PTG Treasurer. Then, in 1989, he served on the Membership Promotion Committee and on the Bylaws Committee in 1990. His duties have also seen him organizing annual seminars and serving on the Advisory Board for the Piano Tuning and Repair Department at Grayson Community College from 1989 to 1991.

"We have taken steps into a new era for the Piano Technicians Guild. With the introduction of the new marketing plan, with our new ventures into publishing and the solid financial base we now enjoy, I feel these steps will propel us with a giant leap into excellence and I am excited to be a part of it."

In Respectful Memory...

Terence "Terry" Boyle

Terence Boyle, 58, a member of the Chicago Chapter, died October 22.

In addition to his work with pianos and antique musical instruments, Boyle was a tenor with the Chicago Symphony Choir since 1973 and director of the St. Cajetan Church Choir. His work with the choir included three Carnegie Hall performances and a 1989 tour of Europe.

A native of England, he first came to the United States as a merchant seaman in the early 1960s. On his first visit, he met his wife, Helen, who survives. They were married in England a short time later.

Other survivors include two daughters, Helen Kapinus of Joliet, IL, and Ann Marie Boyle of Morgan Park, IL; two sons, Timothy Boyle and David Boyle, both of Morgan Park; as well as two sisters, Philomena Bromilow

and Winifred Parry, and a brother, Thomas Boyle, all of England.

— *Audrey Karabinus*

Peter Dale Bates

It is with sadness that we note the passing of our friend and colleague, Peter Dale Bates, 72, of North Ogden, UT. His nearly 20 years with the Guild have been a span of devoted service to his fellow man. His cheerful outlook toward the many challenges life brings us was an example to those whose lives he touched.

Dale was an innovator. He could figure out how to get a job done when the going was particularly tough. One would rarely hear him complain even though his heart was giving him trouble at various times in recent years. It was heart problems that brought his colorful life to a close following a lengthy illness.

Dale was born, raised and lived most of his life in Utah. He

was an excellent organist. He had his own dance band for a period of years. He also sold pianos and organs.

Dale is survived by his wife, Irene, along with three sons and three daughters.

We will miss Dale's friendly handshake at future gatherings.

— *Wilford Young*

John Nardine

John Nardine, 57, a member of the Las Vegas Chapter since 1979, died of cancer October 18.

John worked for many years as a professional jazz musician before becoming a fine piano technician. Before moving to the Las Vegas area, he was a member of the Orange County Chapter.

He is survived by his wonderful wife Pauline, three stepchildren and three grandchildren.

— *Wayne Montag*



Emil Fries was presented the first "Emil Fries Merit Award" by the Portland, OR, Chapter. The award will be presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the chapter and PTG. Shown are, from left, Martin Nemecek, whose idea led to the first award and who chaired the committee that developed it; Wilda and Emil Fries; and John Cooke, who was president of the chapter.

Annual Award Honors Emil Fries

**John W. Cooke, RTT
Immediate Past President
Portland, OR, Chapter**

The Portland Chapter presented a plaque to Emil Fries on his 90th birthday last February in special recognition for outstanding contributions and distinguished service to the chapter and the Piano Technicians Guild.

However, we felt that a single

presentation would not adequately honor Emil's many contributions. He had been an inspiration to so many technicians as teacher and mentor. He invented the 9-in-1 gauge — seen at the bottom of the plaque in the above photo — to help visually impaired technicians regulate pianos. And every Portland Chapter president is the caretaker of "the gavel" that Emil made years ago and presented to the chapter.

President Nolan Zeringue mentioned what his chapter had done to honor Jess Cunningham. We felt that we would like to set up an "Emil Fries Merit Award" to be given annually to the person the chapter feels has made outstanding contributions to the Portland Chapter and the PTG in the tradition of Emil Fries.

I hope this will encourage other chapters to recognize the past contributions of their older members.



DATES & DEADLINES

January 1, 1992

1992 Annual dues officially due.

New Year's Day — Home Office closed.

January 11-12, 1992

RTT Tuning and Technical Exams. Puget Sound Chapter Test Center. Application Deadline: Jan. 4, 1992. Examiner trainees welcome to participate. Contact: Wayne Matley, 2502 Harmony Lane, Enumclaw, WA 98022. (206) 825-6921.

January 19, 1992

RTT Tuning and Technical Exams, Washington, D.C. Chapter. Technical exam contact: Sam Powell, (301)840-0267. Tuning contact: Michael Travis, (301) 441-3555.

January 25, 1992

RTT Tuning and Technical Exams. Portland, OR, Test Center. Contact: Dave Peake; 5826 NE 115th; Portland, OR 97266. (503) 761-4800.

January 31, 1992

Unpaid membership dues delinquent.

February 3, 1992

1992-93 officer nominations to Nominating Committee Chair.

Amendments proposed for 1992 Council due to Bylaws Committee Chair.

March 2, 1992

Members delinquent in 1992 dues to be dropped.

April 17, 1992

Good Friday. Home Office closed.

May 25, 1992

Memorial Day. Home Office closed.

June 24, 1992

Convention early registration deadline.

July 22-26, 1992

35th Annual Convention and Institute, Sacramento, CA.