

# THE SOONER TUNER

NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA CHAPTER  
OF THE PIANO TECHNICIANS GUILD, INC.



HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY! ♦♦♦♦

March 15, 1993

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I've just returned from the Regional Seminar in Fort Smith, Arkansas. As always, it is stimulating and rewarding to connect with other professionals in our field. I was glad to have Robert Qualls and Jesse Lyons there from our chapter (thanks to Gerald, assistant and chauffeur extraordinaire) and Keith McGavern also. Several other oklahomans were there that are not in our chapter. I was disappointed that more of our own group could not participate, especially since we voted to make this our event for March.

I was privileged to win a copy of the PTG Source Book at the Banquet just for singing a song from Camelot that the Seminar Director and pianist could not remember. This is a great resource on a multitude of technical piano areas designed to help associate prepare for the technical exam and become RPT's (Registered Piano Technicians). I will make it available to the Chapter members on a sign-out basis.

At the Regional Meeting held at the seminar, Bob Johnson (Regional Vice President) and Leon Speir (National Vice President, also from our region) outlined some issues that will be addressed at the National PTG Convention meeting of delegates in July in Milwaukee. I will address those this next month.

I look forward to seeing

you at the next chapter meeting or perhaps at the Steinway technical event in two weeks.

David Bonham, RPT

S  
P  
E  
C  
I  
A  
L



*ONE DAY STEINWAY*

*SEMINAR MARCH 30*

Mike Gilliam of Gilliam Music and Steinway & Sons invite all area piano technicians to a one day seminar on Tuesday March 30th at 9:00 am through around 2:00 pm. Lunch will be served. Scott Jones from Steinway Tech services, a concert and artist technician, will present a technical on preparing the new New York hammers. There is no cost for this seminar and all piano technicians are invited. Please contact Mike Gilliam by phone at 348-0004 to make a reservation to attend.

There will be a very short business meeting to discuss and vote on one item of chapter business.

Oklahoma Chapter Officers  
1992-93

President David Bonham  
721-0566

V. President Tim Hast  
359-0440

Secretary & Treasurer Nathan Sobel  
329-6971

**NORM'S NONCENTS**

This months newsletter is a little later than usual due to several events of which I will not elaborate. Please do accept my apologies for being tardy. The newsletter contains a new feature this month--TUNER TALK. This open letter format is designed to let you ask questions which may or may not have anything at all to do with piano technology and the answers will reflect a similar approach. In other words the advice that appears in this column comes with a very large block of salt and should be taken similarly.

There is also a reprint of an article from the INOY 440 newsletter. The article is in response to the paid advertisements by Lloyd Whitcomb's articles from Yamaha which have appeared on the back covers of the PTG Journal in the months of January and February. As editor of the Sooner Tuner I will gladly accept any comments, rebuttal, and or discussion. Please note that the situations discussed with piano dealers are representative of the

Indianapolis, Indiana area and may or may not reflect the situation in Oklahoma at the present.

Norman Cantrell, ED

**PIANO PROVERBS**

If you don't have time to fix it right the first time, when will you have time to return and do it right?

**MEETING IN  
REVIEW**

\*The February meeting was held at the OU piano shop with 9 in attendance. Tim Hast brought a guest from Mexico City, Francisco Chavez. Francisco shared some of the conditions of piano technology in Mexico and Mexico City. He is one of only 4 RPT's in Mexico and hopes to help develop others so that a chapter can be formed.

\*One item of business discussed and voted on was to pay for Tim Hast's air fare to the national convention in Milwaukee this summer where Tim will be teaching a class on Pinblock Plugging.

\*The technical presentation by Gene Black on Key repair was very informative. Gene's experience as a structural engineer was insightful. I never knew you could do so much with a toothpick.

## "Technician vs. Dealer" Bill Scharbrough

Those who read the PTG Journal from cover to cover certainly noticed Lloyd Whitcomb's editorial entitled "Technician vs. Manufacturer" that appeared in January and February. I must take exception to the conclusions he draws in his editorial. I have worked for four major dealers in the Indianapolis area as either a technician or salesman. Now, being a technician and co-owner of a fifth, I believe Lloyd neglected the number one reason for technician-manufacturer-dealer problems...Dealers. Yes. Dealers!

### "Blame the Technician"

The first four dealers I worked for all saw technicians only as necessary evil. Technicians were permitted to do the least amount possible to make the piano playable for the least cost to the dealer, leaving more money for sales efforts or profit. Conversely, true piano preparation will solve almost any problem encountered on new pianos. Any major problem will be found and corrected before delivery. Then, it never becomes a problem at all! Lloyd perceives that technicians are at fault. I say they are often "stuck in the middle" because of dealer cost-cutting and the expectation that they do warranty or make ready work of the price of \$20 or \$30 floor tuning.

### "Dealers vs. Customers?"

Let's face it. Many piano dealers don't know the difference between a piano and a pineapple and don't care! Profit is their business and service becomes a charade. With this attitude is it any wonder we call the manufacturer for a knowledgeable and sympathetic ear? Given that many dealers subcontract their concert work, it is common that in-house tuners barely know let-off from a lid prop. If the typical dealer would do right by his customers, prep his pianos, and pay for proper service, then Lloyd, we wouldn't have to call you so much!

### "True Piano Service"

I believe we perform our service for the benefit of our customers. This includes the expectation that a piano should perform at it's potential. Whenever have you heard a salesman admit, "We send out our pianos at 50% of what they are really capable"? More likely they say..."Our concert quality Lower Mongolian piano was designed by the famous European piano designer Krass Fanner and has been personally regulated by our symphony tuner who spends at least 20 hours painstakingly going through a 397 step procedure which insures you the very best piano money can buy for only \$1495.00!

### "Accountability"

As long as there are dealers who skimp on service and technicians who will prostitute themselves to these dealers, complaints will continue. So, come on Lloyd, address the whole problem and not just one symptom, and realize that at least part of the "Dirty Underwear Award" goes to your "lily white piano dealers".

These comments have been printed in entirety exactly as presented by Bill with the exception of one word that was too "fax-garbled" for me to read. They are in response to the paid advertisements by Yamaha on the very back cover of the January and February PTG Journal. Equal space will be given to anyone with an opposing view.

I have to add, Bill, that I can assure you all manufacturers I know work with PTG technicians at every opportunity, sometimes at the risk of making the dealer and his non-PTG technician angry. Why? I'll give you just one example, though I could give hundreds:

In my 15 years as a representative of 3 manufacturers, I have encountered 3 different non-PTG technicians who wanted to cut the tops off of all the jacks in order to increase lost motion. One of (continued on pg 4)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

MARCH 30 ONE DAY  
STEINWAY SEMINAR AT  
GILLIAM MUSIC

APRIL 17TH CHAPTER  
MEETING AT 2:00 PM AT  
NORMAN CANTRELL'S SHOP  
2 MINI TECHNICALS

MAY 15TH CHAPTER  
MEETING AT 2:00 PM AT TIM  
HAST'S PIANO SHOP  
COMPUTER USES FOR TUNERS

JUNE 17TH CHAPTER  
MEETING AT 7:00 PM  
REFINISHING- BURN IN AND  
TOUCH UP, TRADITIONAL AND  
NEW ACE METHODS

Make plans to attend the Steinway Seminar at Gilliam Music on the 30th of this month. Be sure to call Mike Gilliam to let him know you are coming so that lunch arrangements can be made. If you know another technician who would be interested they are more than welcome to attend!

The April meeting will include an experimental demonstration on the Effects of Treble String Replacement as it relates to Tone. Does a new string sound different? What if it is the wrong size wire? How far from the right size is noticeable? Come in April and find out!

May holds a fun time with a presentation of computer use (abuse) and the piano technician. Would a computer help you keep up? How? Why? Why not? Come to Tim's place, bring your floppy and your questions.

In June we have the meeting on a Thursday night. The place will be announced later but if you have ever wondered how to magically repair those nasty dents and unsightly dings and scratches come to see Burn In and Touch Up.

July as you may know by now is the month for the National Convention in Milwaukee. Save your pesos and experience this event in person!

**Technician (cont.)**

the 3 worked for our dealer and wanted to do it to 11 new pianos on the dealer's floor.

While it would be foolish to say that only PTG technicians are qualified, I can tell you that as a manufacturer I refuse to spend the time and tragedy it would take to discover non-PTG technicians that are qualified.

Jon Light, Editor Indy 440\*

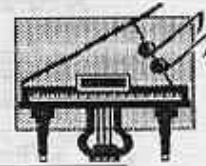
\*Jon Light is an RPT and works for the Kimball Piano Company. This article is reprinted with permission from the March issue of the INDY 440 newsletter of the Indianapolis Chapter PTG.

The Sooner Tuner is the monthly publication of the Oklahoma Chapter PTG; Norman Cantrell, Editor. All articles may be reproduced without further permission. Send contributions to Norman Cantrell, Editor; The Sooner Tuner; 2251 NW 19th;

# TUNER TALK

WITH

Bob Barnhoff



Hello My name is Bob Barnhoff and this is Tuner Talk. This is an open forum for those of you with questions concerning pianos, piano technology, or any other issue life brings your way. I am a shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen and most important one who has all the answers. They may not be the answers to the questions you ask but they are answers just the same. Enough about me let's dig into the mailbag and read the first letter.



Dear Bob:

I was reading last month's Sooner Tuner and I am having trouble figuring out what CM DUCKS means. Is that some kind of secret code or what. Sincerely,

Confused in Calumet

Dear Confused:

First let me assure you that there is a simple explanation for CM DUCKS. This is a type of shorthand for, shall we say, Arkansas hillbillies and other equally enlightened folks. Each letter that stands alone represents one word; ie. C=see, M=them, so the translation would be as follows:

C M DUCKS  
M R NOT DUCKS  
S A R  
C M WANGS  
L I B  
M R DUCKS

See them ducks  
Them are not ducks  
Yes they are  
See them wings  
Well I'll be  
Them are ducks

I hope this ends your confusion.

Dear Bob:

I have been trying to tune a Lester Betsy Ross Spinet and am having a terrible time with the false beats in the top end. What would you suggest I do?

Warbling in Wewoka

Dear Warbling:

I have found that a good dosing of Sodium Pentothal usually does quite nicely in stopping "false beats." if your local Army Surplus store doesn't have it in stock I suggest you write the gift shop at CIA headquarters. They are very helpful.

---

**TECHNOLOGY UPDATE*****Northridge Music Enters 21st Century\****

Northridge Music Center in Citrus Heights recently leased a Music Writer NoteStation, an electronic kiosk which produces customized sheet music and MIDI disks.

This is the first NoteStation kiosk in Sacramento, and one of only three in the Central Valley. It allows you to select from a database of over 2,000 songs, using simple commands on a touch sensitive screen.

NoteStation can play you the song, letting you adjust the key up or down to match your vocal range, before printing out the music in that key.

As printers evolve to give us high resolution more and more quickly, we may be approaching the point where books, magazines, and newspapers will not be printed in advance, but only on demand. (It would certainly save paper!)

\*From the February issue of The Valley Technician, newsletter of the Sacramento Chapter.

---

The Sooner Tuner  
2251 NW 19th  
Oklahoma City, OK 73107