



Agraffe

GRAFFITI

November, 2007

Newsletter of the Phoenix Chapter, Piano Technicians Guild



PHOENIX CHAPTER

Where IS Everybody?!

Last month the *Agraffe Graffiti* announced the creation of a new chapter email list to allow chapter members to communicate more easily, ask for help with piano problems, advertise tools or equipment they have for sale, etc. However, the email list will only be useful if our members subscribe to the list! So far, only a few people have signed up to be included. Even if you decided never to post anything to the list, it would be helpful to have you included so we can easily send out notices about meetings, relevant announcements, etc. Please, if you haven't already subscribed to the list, take a minute to do it!

Subscribing to the list is simple:

1. Send an email to phoenix_ptg-subscribe@googlegroups.com
2. A confirmation email will be sent back to you automatically
3. Click on the link in the confirmation email to confirm your subscription

To post a message to the group, simply reply to any previous posts, or send an email to phoenix_ptg@googlegroups.com. We're hoping to get every chapter member on the list, so email today!

Chapter News: Jim Jr. is Moving

Jim Coleman, Jr, longtime member of the Phoenix Chapter, will be

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Chapter News: Jim Jr. (continued from p.1)

moving with his wife, Laura, and their daughters to Tennessee in January. Jim is taking a position as staff piano technician at the University of Tennessee - Knoxville. We'll be sorry to see him go, but wish him and his family the best of luck in their new home!

Jim will have pianos and related items for sale in the first week of December. Check the next issue of the *Agraffe Graffiti* for details on what he has available, or subscribe to the email list and be one of the first to find out when he announces what he'll be selling!

Next Meeting:

Troubleshooting & Removing
Player Actions for Tuning
Monday, November 5, 7:00 p.m.
Pete Knobloch Residence

1507 E. Fremont Dr., Tempe
(480) 820-7093

Pete has been working on player pianos and organs for years. He will show us the proper way to remove components of a player unit as necessary for tuning, and show us some basic player troubleshooting techniques. Even if you never intend to work on player actions, this meeting will be interesting & informative!

Coming Events:

December Dinner: There is no chapter meeting in December; rather, chapter members and their spouses/significant others will meet at a local restaurant for a nice dinner and good conversation. Watch the *Agraffe Graffiti* next month for details.

ARIZONA STATE SEMINAR: The Soul of the Craft: Inside the Intentional Technician. Classic Piano Restoration, 25214 S. 182nd Pl, Queen Creek, AZ, Saturday, Jan. 5, 2008. Gary Telleen will again host our own regional this year, which will feature instructor David Andersen of Malibu, California. Mark your calendar now!

Pacific Northwest Conference: Red Lion Hotel on the River, March 12-15, 2008, Portland, OR. Contact Thomas Levings, RPT, 2821 N. Kilpatrick St, Portland, OR 97217, phone 503-285-2454 or email lvngs@comcast.net.

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The *Agraffe Graffiti* is the official newsletter of the Phoenix Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild.

Chapter Officers:

President: Gary Telleen
Vice President: Eliot Lee
Secretary: Scott Helms
Treasurer: Wendell Smock

To volunteer to teach a technical session or to suggest possible topics or instructors, please contact Eliot Lee at 602-957-1711.

To submit newsletter articles, suggestions, corrections, or address changes, please contact Scott Helms at 480-818-3871, or send an email to: tuner@helmsmusic.net. Newsletter deadline is the 22nd of each month.

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Chapter website:

www.ptg.org/chapters.php?Chapter=851

Chapter Meeting - October 1, 2007



Scott Helms, chapter secretary, discusses the need for contributions from other members for the *Agraffe Graffiti*. Many of our chapter members have been very complimentary about the new, expanded newsletter, but Scott has written most of the content for the newsletters himself, and needs to lighten the burden a bit by including content submitted by others. If you have a technical tip you'd like to share, a story about an interesting or funny experience you've had when doing piano work, relevant pictures, or other material that would be suitable for the newsletter, please submit them to Scott. His contact information is in the information box on page 2 of every issue of the *Agraffe Graffiti*.

The technical session was taught by Jim Coleman, Sr. Jim discussed various historical tunings and temperaments, beginning with Pythagorean tuning. This system was devised by the Greek mathematician/philosopher/musician Pythagoras, and was based on tuning consecutive 5ths at a 3:2 ratio until each of the 12 notes of the chromatic scale was tuned. As we know, the problem with this system is that, while the twelfth 5th in the series should be the same as the starting pitch, it actually deviates from that pitch by about 23.5 cents. This deviation is known as a *Pythagorean Comma*. To get around this problem, Pythagoras tuned one fifth in the series as a

much narrower interval. The narrow 5th in the scale was known as a *wolf fifth*, and it sounded quite bad. As long as music was very simple, the



Jim Coleman, Sr. tunes a historical temperament to demonstrate its sound.

wolf 5th could be avoided. As composers began to treat 3rds as a consonant, rather than dissonant, interval, meantone tuning became more popular. This tuning smoothed out the thirds, but still had a wolf interval. In the early 18th century, more complexity in the music led to the development of well temperament, which divided the comma more equally. Finally, William Braid White developed a practical aural method to tune pianos using equal temperament in 1917.



Associate member Wes Flinn played a hymn in various keys to demonstrate differences in "key color" in well temperament.



Removing Plastic Keytop Scratches

For removing minor scratches from plastic keytops, I have had good luck just using a motorized cloth buffing wheel and something called “clarinet key buffing compound.” This is available through your local instrument repair shop. Online, I have found it at www.ferreestools.com. The key buff compound is catalog #R49. This compound is even finer than jeweler’s rouge. I have used it to take chips out of crystal goblet edges. Be sure to use different buffing wheels for different materials. In other words, don’t use the same wheel on plastic keytops that you used on crystal or metal.

A chamois buffing wheel may work even better than cloth. Stock numbers for the chamois buffing wheels are #BR5A for the 4 in. and #BR5B for the 5 in. They also sell an adaptor to put on the end of your motor shaft to accept buffing wheels. I used a motor out of an old washing machine, which I got for nothing at the local “washing machine graveyard”. Whatever type of motor you use, be sure to go slowly to avoid melting the plastic. (*Editor’s note:* because this was reprinted from a 2006 issue of *The Piano Technicians Journal*, the catalog numbers listed below may no longer be accurate. To check on the availability and catalog numbers of these items, please email Ferree’s Tools directly at ferreestools@aol.com)

*Dick Day, Marshall, MI
Reprinted from The Piano Technicians Journal,
February 2006*

Good Things in Small Packages

I always want to carry more things in my tool case, while at the same time looking to reduce its size and weight. A recent success along these

lines is use of contact lens cases, which provides a good way to carry small portions of a variety of substances in a manner that takes little space and weight.

These come in two basic varieties: screw lids or snap lids. Screw-on is best for liquids. Snap on (cheaper) is adequate for powders and greases and the like. Cost can be as little as \$1 each in a discount house. Items I now carry in contact cases include:

- 1) Powdered Teflon™ (the size and shape of the opening makes it easier to dispense).
- 2) A variety of grease-like substances, like lithium grease, VJ, and Protek CPL.
- 3) Linseed oil (for eliminating buzzes and other noises from hinge pins and lock mechanisms).
- 4) Flitz™ metal polish (I use it during house calls to polish keybed glides to eliminate shift pedal noise, and sometimes on capstans to reduce excess friction).
- 5) A chunk of “restickable” adhesive (comes originally in a lipstick-style dispenser called Glue Stick™, by Scotch) for easily removable sticking of things like cardboard shims on keyslips.
- 6) A bit of specialty glue like PVC-E.

Having these things in my case saves a number of trips to the car, at very little expense in the form of weight on my shoulder. Frankly, it means I take care of more of those little things rather than putting them off or ignoring them.

*Fred Sturm, RPT, New Mexico Chapter
Reprinted from The Piano Technicians Journal,
December 2003*

Heat Shrink Protection for Agraffes

To protect agraffes from paint, when spraying a plate, heat shrink tubing from an electronics store is real handy. Cut it to about 1.5 inches and place it over the agraffes. Apply heat with the heat gun. It will be a perfect fit over the agraffe and the top closes pretty well. They can be reused a bunch of times.

*Guy Nichols, RPT, El Paso, TX Chapter
Reprinted from The Piano Technicians Journal,
January 2003*

BUSINESS BUZZ

ATTENTION ASSOCIATES: ACTION MODELS AVAILABLE! Phoenix Chapter member Lee Stocker has 6 vertical action models and a sawed-up grand action available for study use. Contact Lee at lkstocker@mac.com, or at 602-955-4941.

USED REYBURN CYBER TUNER FOR SALE. Contact Eliot Lee at 4ajay@cox.net, or call 602-957-1711.

COLEMAN SUPERIOR VIDEO TAPES. Video tape and DVD tutorials on piano tuning are available for \$35 each. Randy Potter uses them in his course. Contact Jim Coleman Sr., 480-966-9159, or by email at pianotoo@imap2.asu.edu.

WOOD FINISH REPAIR. Piano finish repair, including polyester finishes, is available locally from Dennis Denny, 480-580-0619, or from Jean Perrault at 480-246-7951.

FINDERS FEE. Craftsman Piano Restoration offers a finder's fee for referrals leading to the sale of their fine quality Steinway and Mason and Hamlin pianos. Contact Michael Alosi at 602-482-8511.

FIND A PIANO TEACHER IN THE VALLEY. Ever have a customer ask you for a referral to a piano teacher? Send them to the Phoenix Music Teachers Association website. Visitors can search teachers in 8 different areas of the valley. The site also has a calendar of events for PMTA. <http://www.phoenixmusicteachers.org/findteacher.html>

PRIVATE TUNING TUTORING. Jim Coleman Sr. is privately tutoring at his home in Tempe. Advanced whole day tutoring is \$200/day. This is a terrific opportunity for you to learn from one of the best in the business, and he's a member of our chapter! Contact him at 480-966-9159, or by email at pianotoo@imap2.asu.edu.

