PHOENIX
Agraffe Graffiti
Newsletter of the Phoenix Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

September 2008

President's Message

Scott Helms, RPT

Greetings from your new Chapter President! I'd like to fill you in on some hopes I have for the chapter. **First, I would like to concentrate on improving attendance at our chapter meetings.** I'm sure there are many reasons people don't come to the meetings; some live too far away for the drive to be practical, some aren't interested in the technical session topics that we present, and some just simply aren't that invested in PTG and will never come to a chapter meeting. There are probably other reasons that I haven't thought of as well. I hope to contact members of our chapter whom I've not met in the two years since I moved to Arizona, introduce myself, and get input on how we can better meet the needs of our members through our meetings and events.

I would like to use some of the many thousands of dollars we have in our treasury to benefit the chapter, including bringing in some interesting instructors from outside the chapter for technical sessions. I am very proud to be a member of a chapter that has so many truly excellent technicians in its ranks, but it can become a burden to those people to regularly teach the technical sessions. Also, those who do not attend the National PTG Convention might not be aware of the caliber of classes that are offered there. I realize that practical considerations (finances, time, etc) can make it difficult to attend, but we could use some of our treasury money to bring some of those instructors to us! Spending money can become a contentious issue in any organization, but we are a not-for-profit group. If we aren't spending the money that YOU pay in chapter dues to benefit the organization and its members, why do we collect dues?

I also believe that one of our top priorities should be to encourage Associates in our chapter to upgrade to RPT status. To that end, I hope to establish scholarships within our chapter for Associates who take and pass the RPT exams. I also want to institute some Saturday workshops for Associates, where they can work on the skills needed to pass the exams in an environment that makes them comfortable asking questions and making mistakes.

Finally, I would like to establish a bylaws review committee which would be charged annually with reviewing our bylaws. I know lots of us HATE dealing with the businessy-nitty-gritty-bureaucratic component of the organization, but the truth is that it's important. PTG's National Council meets every year and debates several national bylaws proposals, not because we just like to turn the cogs of the wheel like some hamster in a Habitrail, but because the bylaws are at the heart of who we are as an organization. It's just as important that we stay on top of our chapter bylaws, add provisions as necessary at the local level, and adjust the wording to stay in sync with changes in the national bylaws.

I am excited to be a part of the Phoenix Chapter of PTG, and I look forward to doing my part to make it even better. See you at the next meeting!

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PIANO TECHNICIANS GUILD
PHOENIX, ARIZONA CHAPTER

President:
Scott Helms, RPT

Vice President:
G. Eliot Lee, RPT

Treasurer:
Wendell Smock

Secretary & Newsletter Editor:
Mark Purney, RPT

The 51st PTG National Convention in Anaheim

In June, a number of Phoenix Chapter members made their way to the National Convention, and I was grateful to be among them. I want to encourage everyone to begin thinking about the July, 2009 Convention in Grand Rapids—I mean *really think about it*.

If you are not planning to attend, I would challenge you to consider the reasons. Cost is the big factor that keeps most people home. It's expensive to book a flight and hotel, and hard to forego earning money for a few days.

There is a world of difference between an expense and an investment. The Convention is an investment in your life and in your business. **I believe it is an investment that pays off far beyond the cost of attending.** If you start planning for it now, it won't be a strain on the wallet next summer.

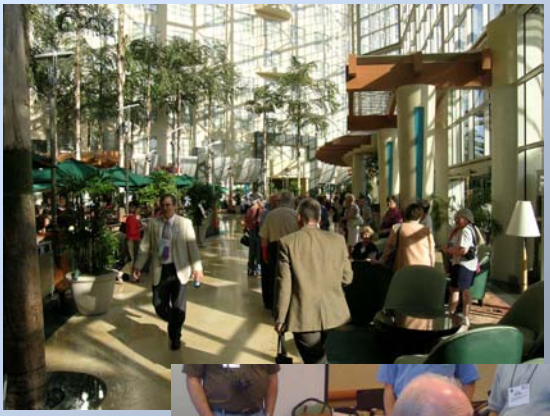
More than just valuable classes and career-altering inspiration, the National Convention is an opportunity to build relationships. It's a chance to talk to vendors and piano manufacturers, put faces to all those famous names, and play some incredible pianos. National helps us to step back from our routine and find a new appreciation for our unique and rewarding profession.

There is no need to leave your spouse behind, either. The PTG Auxiliary members have just as good a time as the technicians do.

Mark Purney, RPT

I'm convinced that those who get the most out of the Convention are those who contribute to making it happen; the instructors, examiners, moving crew, organizers and delegates. I got to experience this in a small way when I was asked to join Ed Sutton, Evelyn Smith and John Parham in teaching a class. This was a rewarding experience that I won't soon forget.

I hope you will join me in making the trip to Michigan. We're going to have fun!



Hyatt Lobby

Crystal Cathedral

Wes Flinn chats with Don Mannino

Fred Redekop Demonstrates Aftertouch

David Andersen's Whole Tone, Open String Tuning

We even had a game show

Evelyn Smith shares wisdom in the "Best Work" class

PTG Auxiliary Boat Tour

Our Next Meeting

Technical Session: Tuning Hammer Techniques

When: Monday, September 8, 7:00 PM
Where: Arizona Piano
4134 E. Wood St. Suite 200
Phoenix, AZ 85040

The New W400 Reyburn Cyberhammer: One of the tuning hammers you can try out at our next meeting.

Our September meeting will be an important one as we return from our summer break and kick off what is going to be a great year for our chapter. There will be a vote on a possible change in meeting times.

Our technical session, **Tuning Hammer Techniques** will be presented by **Jim Coleman, Sr**. Joining him will be Wes Flinn, demonstrating his Jahn hammers, heads, tips, and customizations. Mark Purney will demonstrate the new carbon fiber tuning hammers from Fujan Products and Charles Faulk, plus the Reyburn Cyberhammer, and will discuss the physics of tuning pins.

Technical Notes: The Spurlock Grand Action Let Off Jig

Eliot Lee, RPT

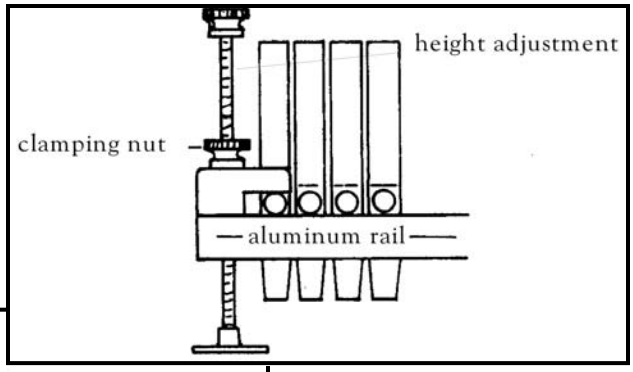
At some point in grand regulation we need to set the let off. This can be tricky with the action in the piano, particularly in the high treble area. We would normally need to use a mirror in front of the dampers because the capo bar is in the way. It can be a daunting task to adjust let off in the piano while bobbing our heads repeatedly, especially for those of us impaired with trifocals or other vision issues.

Bill Spurlock made a jig that sits on the hammer rest rail and clamps to the end hammers for a section of hammers. Samples are taken at the ends of the sections in the piano.

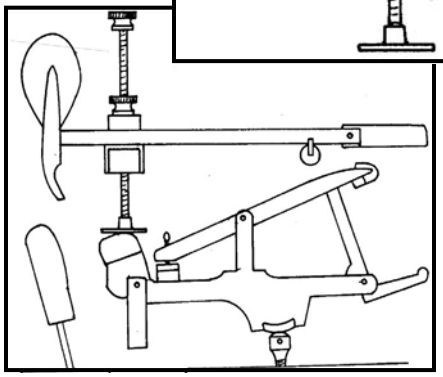
"A group of hammers is supported at the desired let off height by the jig. Then, one by one each key is played. If let off is correct, a hammer shank will barely wink and click against the jig as the jack escapes, brushing the knuckle. If the hammer does not wink, let off is too wide, and if a hammer jumps noticeably, let off is too close.

The advantages of this method are: speed and consistency, and physical comfort. Once samples are set in the piano, all other notes can be set with the action pulled out."

-Bill Spurlock

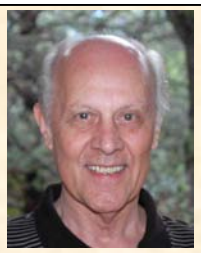


Close-up of the Spurlock Grand Let Off Jig



Comfortably regulate let off with the action removed

New RPT



We're proud to announce that Wes Flinn has passed his RPT exams. Congratualtions, Wes!

Our Previous Chapter Meeting (June 2008)

Our June meeting was held at Washburn Piano Company. The new officers were voted in during this meeting. We discussed the national by-laws proposals and voted as a chapter on those changes (Scott Helms represented us as the Phoenix delegate in Anaheim).

The technical session was led by Kevin Ramsey, who discussed the servicing of Disklavier Mark IV systems. He also gave some tips on coping with some of the technical issues found in various Asian piano brands.

Scott apparently doing stand-up

Glenn Brown - Entertainer/RPT

Disklavier Flash updates: So simple a rocket scientist could do it

Don't try this at home

Update on Gary Miles

Phoenix Chapter member, Gary Miles, suffered a stroke at home on August 4th, and is currently in HealthSouth Rehab Hospital. His right side is severely affected, including his face. If you would like to donate money to help Alice & Gary during this difficult time, you can send donations to:

Alice Miles, 18740 N 98th Lane, Peoria, AZ 85053.

Also, you can donate your time by offering to cover tunings for some of Gary and Alice's customers. Please keep them both in your thoughts & prayers.

Ice Cream Social (August 2008)

We'd like to offer our sincere thanks to Jim and Beverly Burns for hosting the Ice Cream Social in Prescott once again. We had a great time and the turnout was excellent.

Jim's back porch is lined with numerous contraptions to dispense ice cream, cotton candy, popcorn, and nachos. Conner Gevirtz commented that it's the coolest house ever. He may be right.

Wendell Smock

Treasurer's Report

From the treasurer's desk:

Our account stands at this date;

Checking: $2364.73 Savings: $10953.25

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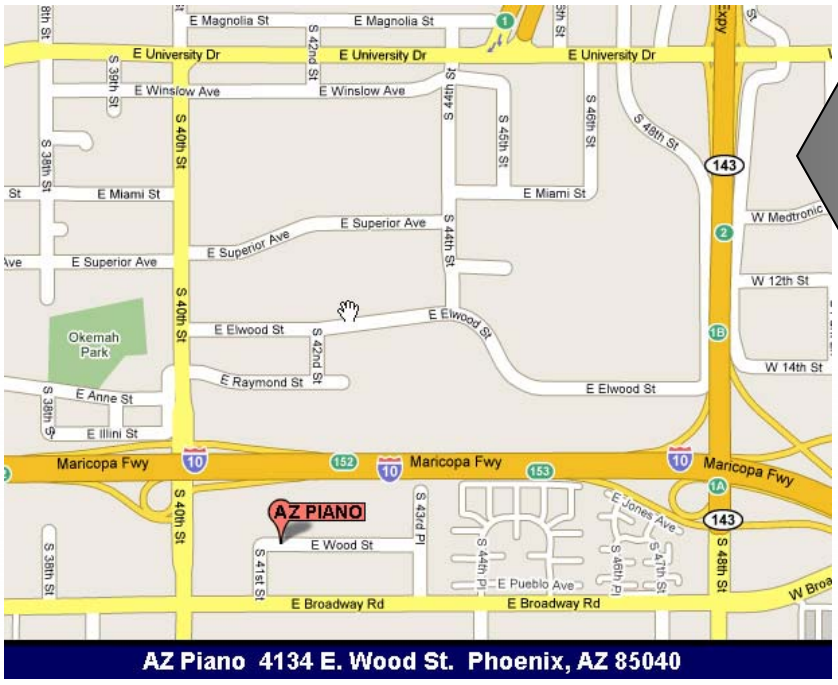

Map to our next meeting
Monday, Sept. 8th at 7PM
AZ Piano
4134 E. Wood St. Suite 200
Phoenix, AX 85040

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PHOENIX, ARIZONA CHAPTER

Phoenix PTG
c/o Mark Purney
3023 N. Sunaire Circle
Mesa, AZ 85215

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