

Agraffe Graffiti

Newsletter of the Phoenix Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

February 2010

2010 Arizona State Seminar

This year's seminar was a big success. We spent the day with Steve Brady, RPT, the author of *Under the Lid, the Art & Craft of the Concert Piano Technician*.

Steve shared many of lessons and valuable techniques he's learned over the course of his career, from servicing regular clients to preparing pianos for famous concert pianists in major venues.

We owe a special thanks to Peg Browne who headed the Seminar Committee and organized this fine event.



Our Next Meeting Monday, Feb. 1st, 2010

Bösendorfer Factory Tour with Fred Smith, RPT

Bösendorfer

See the jigs and fixtures used in the Bösendorfer piano factory.

 **PIANO
TECHNICIANS
GUILD**
PHOENIX, ARIZONA CHAPTER

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Scott Helms, RPT
Vice President:
G. Eliot Lee, RPT
Treasurer:
Wendell Smock
*Secretary &
Newsletter Editor:*
Mark Purney, RPT

Phoenix Chapter On the Move

November 2009: Don Mannino Visits Our Chapter

The Phoenix Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild is always striving to provide members with quality educational opportunities.

Most of our technical instruction comes from Phoenix Chapter members, and we've had some fantastic classes recently. In November, we had a voicing class with a visiting guest; one of the PTG's best known instructors, Don Mannino, RPT.

The Phoenix Chapter's success is made possible by generous contributions of time from volunteers and leaders within the chapter. It is because of your help that we can continue to promote excellence in our profession.

We've seen a genuine enthusiasm and a higher level of member participation. We want to continue making our Phoenix Chapter activities valuable to all members.

Please consider how you might be able to help us continue moving forward in 2010. We need volunteers to instruct technical sessions. We have no shortage of talent in the chapter, and limitless topics to choose from.

Officer elections will take place in a few months. If you have never served as officer, or have not done so in a long time, please think about taking on a leadership role in the Phoenix Chapter this coming year.

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Improvisation Isn't Just For Pianists

Servicing pianos can be an adventure. I'm often having to fix problems I've never seen or heard of before, and I rarely have a lot of time to diagnose and find a cure. This can be a fun challenge, or an unwanted change in strategy. I had a client who was thrilled when she could finally open her fall-board all the way *and* still play all the notes. She said none of the tuners back in Wisconsin could fix the problem. Eek!

Mark Purney, RPT

I recently serviced a piano for a church that needed a lot of attention. I discovered a string making contact with a damper wire on a medium to loud blow, and the buzzing sound was horrible. A careful adjustment of the damper guide rail was the proper cure I'll do next time, but I could not do that and still finish the tuning on time. I stared at it for a few seconds and an idea came to me: I lowered the tension on the strings running through the agraffe, and rotated it about 10 to 15 degrees counter-clockwise (the right-most agraffe in the photo). This pulled the buzzing string far enough away from the damper wire to eliminate the noise. Not pretty, but the hymns sound better.

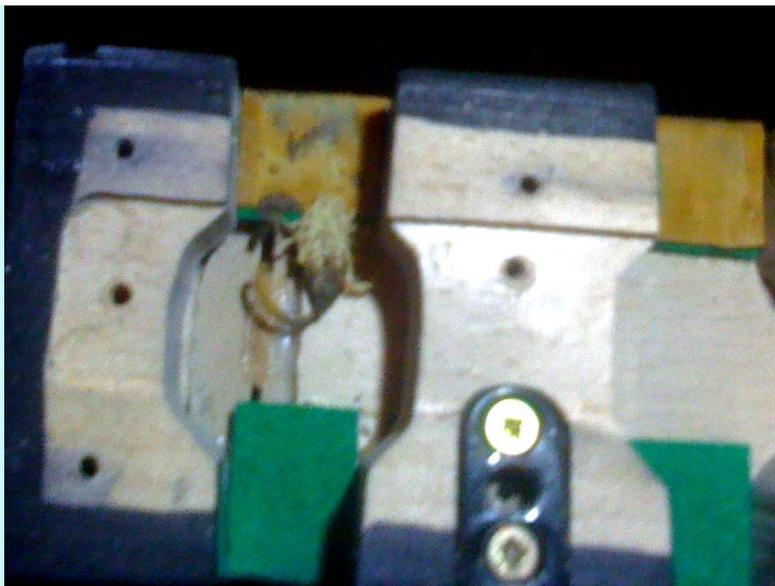


One of these agraffes is not like the other

Sometimes, part of the adventure is the unusual things we find when we open up the piano. It's not always pencils and paper clips, but often nasty things like rodent droppings or moth damage. I had an old upright with a green, powdery dust inside. Had it not been for a class at a

National Convention, I would not have known what I was looking at. Many years ago, some people thought it was a good idea to put arsenic all over inside the piano to control the mice. Unfortunately, this is also dangerous for piano technicians, and a fine, green dust can be a sign of a highly toxic substance.

The most interesting thing I've found showed up while eliminating a nasty squeak in the damper pedal of a Petrof concert grand. Upon disassembly, I found a dead scorpion. Cause of death: When the pianist stepped on the pedal, the scorpion living inside saw daylight and peeked out, contemplating a relocation. The pedal promptly came back up and crushed his head. Ah, but that had nothing to do with the squeaking problem. Many Petrofs made from the late 90s until around 2004 have squeaky, plastic bushings on each side of the pin that the pedal pivots on. A good flushing with CLP does a great job... until the squeak comes back, which it always does. Petrof suggests outwardly bending the U-shaped brackets that house the bushings, giving the pedal some side-to-side play, eliminating the squeak forever. I disagree with their theory as to why this fixes the squeak, but the important thing is that there is a cure that doesn't require machining new bushings. The other option is to completely replace the pedal assembly with the newer design, which is what my client opted for.

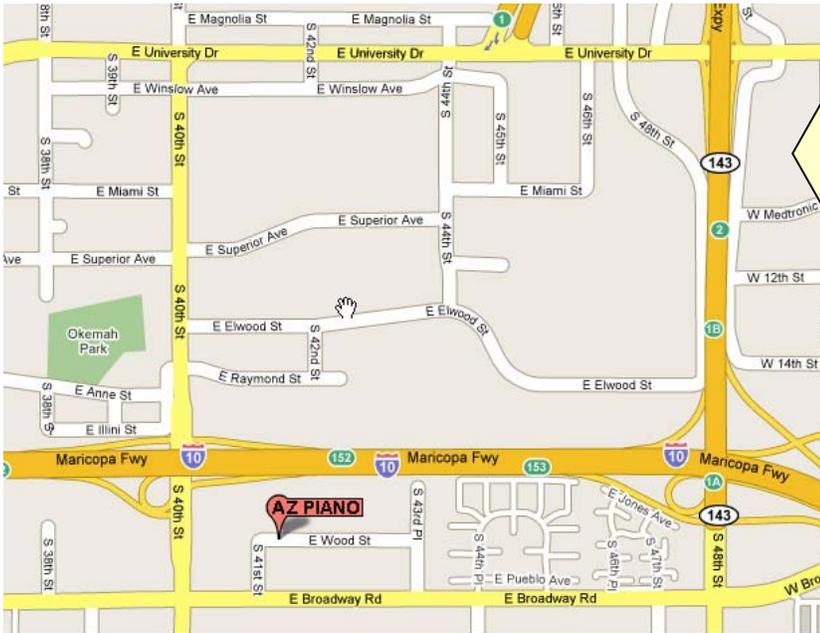


Photos from the Annual Holiday Dinner in December



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AZ Piano 4134 E. Wood St. Phoenix, AZ 85040

Map to our next meeting

Monday, Feb. 1st at 7:30 PM

AZ Piano

4134 E. Wood St. Suite 200

Phoenix, AZ 85040

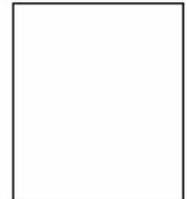


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All expressions of opinion and all statements of supposed facts in this letter are published on the authority of the authors listed and are not to be regarded as expressing the views of the Phoenix Chapter or the Piano Technicians Guild unless such statements or opinions have been adopted by the Phoenix Chapter or the Guild.

from: Phoenix PTG
c/o Mark Purney
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