

October 2011

News & Notes



Newsletter of the Boston Chapter *Piano Technicians Guild*

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October MEETING—Mason & Hamlin Factory Tour
FEATURING: Bruce Clark

When: Tuesday October 18th

Where: Mason & Hamlin Factory Tour!
35 Duncan St.
Haverhill, Ma 01830

Schedule: **6:00 p.m.** Gather, Converse, Eat
7:00 p.m. Chapter Business Meeting
7:30 p.m. Factory tour with Bruce Clark. (see below)

Bruce Clark grew up working in the shop of his fathers piano store in Garden City, Kansas. He later learned to tune and service pianos at the professional level. While studying at the University of Wyoming, Bruce tuned for the music department as well as other concerts.

After college, Bruce went to Boston to work for Santi Falcone, specializing in replacing soundboards in vintage pianos as well as creating the Key Proportion Job: the complete re-design of the action geometry and leverage. He was one of the major contributors in the creation of Falcone Pianos.

He worked for Mason & Hamlin (Aeolian American Corp.) and then Pratt/Read, when they assumed ownership of Mason & Hamlin in 1985. In 1989, when Falcone acquired Sohmer and Mason & Hamlin, Bruce moved with them to the current factory in Haverhill, MA. He has been instrumental in restoring Mason & Hamlin to a high level of quality and was lead design engineer on the new Mason & Hamlin AA-64, B-54 and CC-94, as well as the Wessell, Nickel & Gross Composite Action project.



"PREZ SEZ"

Doug Tybor, RPT
President, Boston
Chapter PTG

Well, last month I wrote about surface preparation, and how over time the results of a finished job reflect the amount of time spent on surface preparation. Once done it's all about maintenance; if not maintained, it can start to look a little out of date.....

By the time you read this, the Member Directory of the Boston Chapter's Web site should be almost completely updated. Thanks to information provided to me by Debbie Cyr, there were several members whose names were missing or improperly listed in the Directory. I was under the assumption that the chapter's member directory mirrored the directory of the main PTG Web site, and that additions and changes noted by the Home Office resulted in automatic changes on the Chapter level. Apparently that's not the case, so sincere apologies go out to the members whose names and listings of services offered only recently made it into the Chapter Directory.

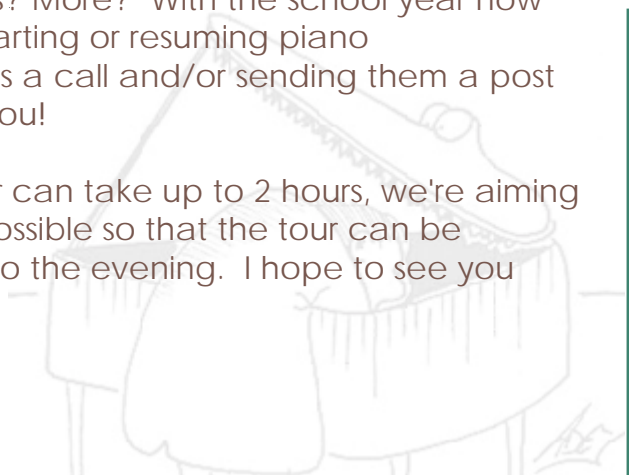
I encourage everyone to inform me or the chapter Webmaster (gary@vandinedesign.com) if there are inaccuracies or omissions from your listing in the Directory. If you choose to update or add to your listing, please make sure that the information provided to the chapter member directory is consistent with the information provided to the main PTG Membership Directory. And if your listing currently has no information about services offered, I encourage you to add your skills and services to that line.

And what about your own customer base? Is it a little out of date? Mine is, I admit it. How many tuning customers do you have that you may not have heard from in, say, two years? Three years? More? With the school year now in full swing, and traditionally a time for starting or resuming piano lessons, how about giving those customers a call and/or sending them a post card? I bet they'll be glad to hear from you!

Because the Mason & Hamlin factory tour can take up to 2 hours, we're aiming to have as quick a business meeting as possible so that the tour can be underway quickly, and not go too late into the evening. I hope to see you there!

All the best,

Doug Tybor



Member Spotlight

Eric Donnelly

I grew up in Glen Rock, NJ, a small suburb outside New York City and have been playing music since the age of 8. My secondary education consists of attending Montclair State University in NJ for music education. As a Freshman I studied under Dr. Christian Wilhjelm with a concentration on French horn. In my Sophomore year I transferred to the University of New Hampshire and received a B.A. in Music Education in 2004 while also studying jazz trap drums and jazz and classical piano. After graduating, I became the band director at Greenland Middle School in Greenland, NH and continued to have a studio of private students in the area.

During this time, I was also an active free-lance musician in the seacoast NH area. I played keyboards with the Amorphous Band, a soul-funk outfit that played clubs and ski resorts in NH and around New England, and also with MacTough, an instrumental and original jazz group. I recorded a CD of original music with my own jazz group, The New Underground, in 2006 and played small clubs in the area until our saxophonist and bassist moved to Brooklyn. I also worked as co-director and pianist with Rock My Soul, a traditional Gospel choir from Berwick, ME. I currently still play trap drums with the first group I joined out of college, Mango Groove Steel Band of Conway, NH.



In the fall of 2007, after a year as an apprentice piano technician, I began attending North Bennet Street School. I graduated the first-year Basic Piano Technology program and then moved back to Portsmouth, NH, to continue teaching and also to focus on building a piano tuning business. Within a year, the two local piano stores in the Seacoast area closed their doors due to the recession and I decided to move back to Boston. After two years of working in the field, I decided to return to North Bennet Street School for the second-year Advanced Piano Technology program. After graduation, I traveled to New York City for a month to work for Sing For Hope, a local nonprofit arts outreach organization, to help with the installation of 88 pianos throughout the 5 boroughs of the city known as "Pop-Up Pianos", inspired by the art installation "Play Me, I'm Yours" by Luke Jerram. I am currently serving as secretary of the Boston Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild.

I currently live in Somerville MA and split my time between piano work, playing gigs, and writing arrangements for various groups. Besides work, I enjoy sampling craft beers, seeing as much local live music as possible, and traveling throughout New England. I still spend quite a bit of time in New Hampshire and also some in New York City, and my most recent trip was out to Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival in San Francisco.



Replacing “cork style” bridle straps.

Having worked in a market area where most of the pianos I tuned and repaired were new sometime before the great depression, it was common that all the straps disintegrated. Often I opted for the cork style replacement. Typically in three sizes, small, medium and large.

Obviously selecting the correct size is the first issue. Even with poor eyesight, at this point in the game, you can size these up with a quick look and test fit. Second the standard tool is a hammer shaft style stick with a pin sticking out of the end. This simple matter is to put the cork on the end so the tapered side will fit into the back stop.

The difficult matter is to push the cork in the hole on the back stop and attach the new strap to the Bridle wire. The main issue is the jack sticks under the hammer causing two problems. First if you do manage to get the strap on to the wire, the action will be jammed. Second the strap is typically too short to do so. I have found this to happen both with the action in or out of the piano. And depending on what else you need to do, I typically have the action out and do this with other work, therefore the jacks always stick as the assembly drops and the spring forces the jack back.

The solution I found to work great is a homemade tool from a coat hanger. If you cut a section of wire about 5 inches long and then bend about 3/8" at a 90 degree angle you have it. With the bridle strap stick in the left hand pushing the cork in place, you can use the wire in the other and to pull the jack back enough to set the strap in place. Then you can snake the strap end up and grab it with your fingers while pushing the whippen up and forward with your left hand. Finally a quick twist and over movement will attach it to the bridle wire. I got to a point with it were I could set the strap without setting the stick down and only have to set the wire tool down which helps when you have 88 to do. (I use the past tense here as in the Metro west area I am surprised not to see as many pianos missing bridle straps). This bent piece of wire is also helpful when you need to reglue a jack which is also a common theme. I think I used that tool more than most in my box. As far as tools go, anything I can lose leave at a customers piano or forget on the workbench, and make another in two minutes is cool.

-Bill Trotman (please don't hesitate to submit your tech tips)

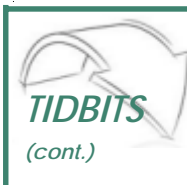


ASSIST WITH THE TUNING EXAM—We have been doing quite a few tuning exams lately. Any RPTs out there willing to help out? The tuning exam requires one CTE (Certified Tuning Exam-iner) and two (or more) RPTs. Recently I asked several RPTs to help out and both were under the mistaken impression that one had to be a CTE to take part in a tuning exam. Not so. Any RPT can help. It's a good way to give back to our organization, have fun and probably learn something. Plus you have the satisfaction of knowing you are helping uphold the high standards of PTG! There is no monetary reward, but you might get a sandwich and cup of coffee, and reimbursement for parking.

Another reminder—the pool of CTEs nationwide is shrinking. If any RPT is considering becoming a CTE, the first step is to take the full tuning exam (entirely by ear) and pass all categories at 90 or above. THE TEST FEE IS WAIVED, whether or not your scores are all 90 or above.

The Boston Chapter does testing on a by request basis. So, if anyone is thinking about taking the tuning exam, it usually takes a few weeks to set up a time. Testing is done at North Bennet St. School on one of three approved pianos: A Steinway L, a Mason & Hamlin BB or a Kawai RX2. Questions? Call or email me. -

Christine Lovgren



Piano tuner: A person employed to come into the home, rearrange the furniture, and annoy the cat, child or dog or conversely entertain them. The tuner's chief purpose is to ascertain the sanity and clear thinking of its owner. After doing so real piano work can begin. In addition understanding how the washing machine dishwasher and neighbors lawnmower sound with all the notes is helpful. After doing so the tuner will proceed to multi task in conversation, losing tools, day dreaming, arguing with a significant other whom is not present and tuning the piano. The irony is some people get paid more to do far less. Although doctors patients are typically living which is problematic if you make a bad mistake. If a piano tuner kills a piano it is a different kind of dead.



A motion was made to submit to the executive committee for further review to consider a scholarship for North Bennet Street School, or for more members to become CTEs regarding the amount of time spent the school spends administering PTG tests. The motion was adopted after some discussion about achieving the objective while respecting bylaws.

Two new members were accepted into the chapter: Nicholas Morello and Wanda Robinson.

Jude Reveley presented a brief Delegate report from July's PTG Council Sessions, and may present a more detailed version at a future meeting. Tom Driscoll announced the dates and technical programs of some upcoming chapter meetings.

Next PTG meeting dates include:

- October 18: Mason & Hamlin factory tour
- November 15: at Chris Brown's in Littleton, MA -A Revised Regulation Station with new hammer hanging feature.
- December: no meeting

The technical presentation was giving by Dave Hagberg, a piano technician and current middle school science teacher about the procedure, benefits, and science of the pneumatic soundboard press. He explained the science of how glue dries in a vacuum, how the pneumatic press creates a solid and even glue joint, and he recommended Vacuum Pressing Systems in Brunswick, ME for their high-quality urethane materials. The presentation also included some audience participation including pressing a stuffed bird and an inflated latex glove, and some chapter members demonstrating their varying abilities at inflating a balloon.



Nov 1	Dues invoices mailed	Nov 15	Chris Brown's in Littleton, MA: A Revised Regulation Station with new hammer hanging feature.
Oct 29th	16 yr old piano prodigy GEORGE LI's 8PM Jordan Hall. More Info: Liz Diamond 617-426-1900 x223	December:	no meeting



Steinway grand piano model A, 6'1".



Fully rebuilt and refinished in 1990 including new sound board, all new Steinway action. Art case cabinet. A few minor case imperfections. \$15,900.



Martin Snow
781-837-6531
martinsnowpianos@yahoo.com



Kawai KG2, 5'10", wonderful tone and a satin finish, excellent original condition from the 1980s. \$8550.

1985 Yamaha G2, 5'8".



The perfect grand piano for the home. This piano retails new

for over \$35K. At Martin Snow Pianos, my NEARLY NEW price of \$11,900 includes delivery, 5 year warranty and first in-home piano tuning.

Steinway M 1917, mahogany, previously restrung, perfect soundboard, excellent cabinet condition, ivory very good, installing new hammer action, Abel Natural hammers.....\$14,900.

Yamaha G1 1992 ebony, As new \$9500.

Yamaha 53" upright model UX \$4990.

I have a Zuckerman harpsichord built from a kit 30 years ago, and not used for more than five years. It is in good shape, needs some string replacements. I will part with it for a contribution to a non-profit. It is valued at \$600. This instrument is a real harpsichord; it also is a great teaching tool for learning about tuning and shaping plectras which pluck the strings. I built this with my young daughter, who later moved away to college, and on.
Center Harbor NH (603) 253-4342 Kent



Steinway Model A Piano (serial 84699)
6'1". My main sound string bass, three bridge, eighty-eight note piano. Manufactured in Queens NY, circa 1960. This piano has been completely restored. Restoration included: new soundboard, bridges, pinblock, strings and action.
All the case parts are original. The ebony case is a Victorian style with fluted, barrel shaped legs, carved music desk and ivory keyboard.
Lovely sound / Responsive action! **Mary P. Logue**
\$35,000 857-919-1532
mlogue@pianologue.com

Steinway A, 6'1, No. 84699. Fifty-seven wound string bass, three bridge, eighty-eight note piano. Manufactured in Queens, NY. This piano has been completed restored. Restoration included: **new soundboard, bridges, pinblock, strings, and action.** All the case parts are original; the ebony case is a Victorian style with fluted, barrel-shaped legs, carved music desk, and ivory keyboard. Lovely sound / Responsive action! \$35,000

Mary P. Logue (857) 919-1532
mlogue@pianologue.com



Bill Fucito at 978-692-3293 (Westford, MA). Barry Rosenberg, RPT



I have a customer who must sell his 5'2" Knabe grand by the end of this month (August). It is in very good shape for original parts (I replaced an agraffe, the two strings that went through it and one hammer head). He wants \$4000 or best offer.

Steinway Model K 1903

Doshie Powers, RPT 617-773-1223

If you or a client is in the market for a Steinway, I just saw a beauty. Model K 1903, mahogany, in excellent condition. A small crack in high treble (#83-88), otherwise board, block and bridges in excellent shape. The piano has been in one family since new and kept well all those years.

The finish is original, some chipped ivory, nickel plate worn off pedals.

Still. Has a wonderful full tone, no vertigris, not even a hint. Hammers are worn but have a lot of life left. This is a great opportunity for a client to own a Steinway and you would be happy (I would) to take care of it. Located in West Roxbury, asking \$3500.00



Boston grand piano for sale.

GP-193 6'4". 10 years old. Polished Mahogany Finish. Pristine. Comes with M.Steinert trade-up guarantee.

Claudia Cimenti

email: cimenti@gmail.com Stowe, MA



FOR SALE - Steinway O piano, serial #119155. Built in 1905, looks like almost all original parts. Owners asking \$7000.00, and need to have it out of their home in Hamilton, MA before October 25th. Additional picture available upon request.

Doug Tybor: (617) 645-3519 or cybertybor@comcast.net

Original owner of an upright Charles R. Walter (1999) Traditional Console Model 1520, serial # 524283, with a Cherry Finish and Bench. The piano is in excellent condition, has been regularly tuned, and played only by our daughter. \$2,400 or Best Offer. Boston Tel: 617-620-8651.

Steinway 45 upright, Serial #553473 (circa 2000) Mahogany "Crown Jewel Collection" Damp-Chaser installed

Owned and played by an RPT, second owner Hammers recently filed, action recently regulated, tuned regularly, tight pinblock, perfect soundboard Middle pedal is true sostenuto mechanism Asking \$14,500.00

Christopher A. Storch (617) 489-6436





CHAPTER ADMINISTRATION

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LOCATION MAPS

