

GOOD Vibrations

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND CHAPTER OF THE PIANO TECHNICIAN'S GUILD, INC.

OCTOBER 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wade Johnson, RPT

Chris Rawson's smart new key-leveling system, which he gave members a chance to try hands-on at our September meeting, was really well received. Several members left equipped to begin using it. If you feel you missed out, check his website at www.key-leveling.com or call him at (802) 373-4312.

At the business meeting, it was decided not to change the meeting time at least for now: In October and November it will still be 7 p.m. on the third Thursday at Avery Piano. One new development is that Avery will be closing at 7 instead of 9 p.m. on Thursdays, and we can only stay after 7 if Kirk Russell will be there with key to let us out and lock up — which he has agreed to do the next two months but can't promise beyond that. But it appears there might be other options for next year, and we'll keep you posted.

Wishing you a glorious fall, and hoping to see you on the 18th!

Wade

OCTOBER MEETING

Lyres, Posts & Pedals - Debbie Cyr, RPT

General grand lyre repairs, featuring proper repairs for unglued lyre posts, all kinds of pedal mechanisms, and a demonstration of just how easy installing a Steinway lyre really is!!

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Business Mtg

&

Technical

October 18, 2007

7:00 pm

Meeting at

Avery Piano Co.
256 Weybosset St.
Providence, RI

Remember to join us for dinner
5:00 Trinity Brew House before the
meeting. Trinity Brew House is at
186 Fountain Street on the corner
of Empire Street.

PTG COUNSEL SAYS ONLINE APPLICATION OK:

You may recall that per request of the Chapter at our April meeting, Wade sent to our RVP a letter of concern about the new PTG member application form and particularly its online version. Where the old form used to read “By signing this form...” the online version now reads “By checking this box I acknowledge that I have read the PTG Code of Ethics and I agree to abide by the Bylaws, Regulations, and Codes of the Piano Technicians Guild.” It was the consensus of our Chapter that a signature should be required.

Last week Wade followed up with our new RVP Chris Solliday, who responded that “as for the signature, the filling out of the electronic form meets the guidelines of our code of conduct and therefore is the same as a signature for all practical purposes...At least so legal advice tells us.”

Tech Tip

By Ruth Van Dine

Regluing an ivory keytop in the home without clamps when in a pinch - first spread a thin layer of PVC-E Glue on the key and let dry a bit, so it is tacky. Then, put a thin CA glue layer on the ivory and spread it out making sure it covers all the way to each edge. Apply the ivory top to the key and smooth into place. No need to remove from piano or to clamp. This procedure has been working for me for years. I've not had a call-back yet.

Tid Bits.....

“The only winner in the War of 1812 was Tchaikovsky.” — Solomon Short

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Like a Needle in a... Felt Stack - Finally, a needle for the piano industry!

By John Wilson, RPT *Sound Advice The official newsletter of the Utah Valley Chapter 846 of the Piano Technicians Guild*

I remember being fascinated as I watched guys like Norman Neblett, Michael Spreeman, and Terry Otake quickly and precisely needle a hammer over and over. The focused look on their faces declared that they knew exactly what tonal change had taken place with each stab. So what determines a good voicing? I'll leave that for another discussion, but one thing these guys all had in common, besides many of their techniques and approach, was that they were all sticking needles into a piano hammer. So what kind of needle were they using? If you ask around you'll quickly learn that there is somewhat of a standard among technicians, but it varies within reason. The needle of choice among technicians is a #6 sharp. That having been said, this is an interesting point of topic as I have researched what exactly makes a needle a #6 sharp or other wise. First, let's look at the different types of needles out there. There are, in alphabetical order, Bodkin, Chenille, Darners, Easy Threading, Embroidery, Leather (a.k.a. Glovers), Long Darners, Milliners, Quilting, Sharps, and Tapestry (for more information on each of these needles go to <http://www.colonialneedle.com/html/about-needles.html>).

So why do we use sharps and why #6? The answer is pretty simple. These are the most common, readily available needles and they work nicely to change the density of a piano hammer. Sharps are general, all-purpose sewing needles. You can go into just about any general store that has the most basic of sewing departments and find a sewing needle. Typically a basic pack of sewing needles will have an assortment of lengths and sizes (or diameters). It is interesting to note that the sizes #5, #6, #7, etc., designate a length and diameter change. This change varies depending on the manufacturer. This complicates things a little because you can buy a #6 Japanese needle or a #6 English needle and end up with two different diameters and lengths. I have concluded that this is one of the main reasons why a technician may say he uses a #5 while another insists that a #6 is the only needle to use. I am now proudly introducing Dr. Flügel's Deluxe Premium Golds, a needle specifically designed for piano tone regulation. Finally, a needle for the piano industry!

I took an average of the different needle manufacturer's sizes and determined that a #6 was closest to a .69 mm needle in diameter but usually had the length of 40 mm. This is unless you use a quilter's needle which would then give you the exact same needle in a 30 mm length. Both of these needles, I realized, had one item that was not needed, the eye. Because we are not going to stick a thread or anything else in this small and seemingly useless hole many of us have found ourselves clipping it off, not only because the needle may be too long but also because the eyes of the larger diameter needles are not always accommodated by the hole in our tool. There needed to be and now is a needle designed for the piano technician that works better than the needles we have been used to using. I am also attempting to standardize that which we think to be standard but is not. By the way, look around and it won't take long to find an abundance of items in our industry which are not standard.

So... here is what I have done. First, there is now one standard and one non-standard length in the order heretofore mentioned, 30 mm and 40 mm. Second, in the 30 mm length, which by the way works best in the Flügelbauer Premium Voicing Tools, there are three standard diameters: .61 mm, .69 mm, and .76 mm. That would be, in the order heretofore mentioned, #7, #6, and #5. Note that in needle sizing in this diameter range the number size gets larger as the diameter decreases. Note also that this is not always the case but only in much larger and smaller diameters such as sizes #16- 18 which are larger than #1-12 Sharps. Just as any other high quality needle, Dr. Flügel's Deluxe Premium Golds start as a

Like a Needle in a... Felt Stack cont.

drawn carbon steel rod. They forego the eye process and simply become a sharp point needle which is then hardened and nickel plated. Finally, they are electro-plated with 24 carat gold, which means that the gold molecules are bonded to the nickel plating through electrolysis. This type of plating means that it won't chip off, but rather wears off with use (about 2000 strokes to wear off most of the gold plating on the tip and point). The electro gold plating has been added as a lubricant. The gold plating, just as the standard nickel plating, wears more near the tip where it is taking the brunt of the impact upon entry. The needles are then packaged in tubes of 20. The tubes are printed for easy determination of size. 30 mm x .69 mm, for example, would be considered an eyeless #6 Quilters or a 30 mm #6 Sharp.

The "point" of all of this? I'll let you decide. But remember, you no longer have to go searching for that perfect voicing needle in a haystack.



Flügelbauer Piano Supply

www.epianoworks.com/flugelbauer.html

Dr. Flugel's Ultimate Voicing Kit

Kit includes: 3 needle, 4 needle, 1-3 needle, 8 needle sugar coater, chopstick needle, 2 voicing blocks, 2 sanding paddles, 20 extra needles, (Dr. Flugel's Deluxe #6 Premium Golds) suede brush, and of course the kit case. \$450.

Definitions (humor):

Piano: A cumbersome piece of furniture found in many homes, where playing it ensures the early departure of unwanted guests. -David W. Barber, *The Musician's Dictionary*.

Piano Tuner: A person employed to come into the home, rearrange the furniture, and annoy the cat. The tuner's chief purpose is to ascertain the breaking point of the piano's strings.

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Upcoming Meeting Dates:

October 18 Lyres, Posts & Pedals – Debbie Cyr, RPT

**November 15 – David Dragone - Basic salesmanship
for the piano technician**

December – No Meeting



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