



# The Voicing Tool



Wichita Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild. Newsletter.  
Monthly Chapter meetings the second Thursday at 7 pm.

## THE VOICING TOOL

### 2012

[January](#) February March April May June July  
August September October November December

### 2011

January February March April May June July  
August September [October](#) [November](#) [December](#)

### 2010

[January](#) [February](#) [March](#) April May June July  
August September October November December

### 2009

[April](#) [May](#) [June](#) [July](#) [August](#) [September](#) [October](#)  
[November](#) [December](#)

**Piano theme fundraising ideas.** Whether you are helping a school raise money for a piano, or just trying to keep pianos on everyone's mind, here are some ideas to be helpful while giving attention to "pianos"

- Sell 88 piano keys to local businesses. The key of their choice is then given to them mounted on a board and engraved with a thank you for them to put in their window.

- Key Covers mounted on black board signed by visiting Pianists to be auctioned off

Ask painters to give us one of their piano or music theme paintings to auction

Ask a professional pianist to do a charity performance

Create cookies in the piano shape, and sell them during social happenings all over your community.

Dale Erwin • I make soundboard panels for the techs. and I end up with a lot of small pieces of spruce. I have been planning them to a thickness of 1/4 inch and cutting them into the shape of a miniature Steinway B lid. I lacquer them and give them and make them look nice. I then give them to clients for hot cup coasters with the Erwins Piano Restoration logo embedded under the lac. You can do the same thing using a hot iron brand or some other decorative label detailing the "raise money for a piano" theme. They are useful and constantly visible and are fantastic to set your hot cup on which protects the furniture.

Nobody just wants one so they buy at least 2

Mario I Grec • I will attest that Dale's mini soundboard is an attractive and effective gift. Hammers, keys, they all work, but something unique that also has utility value would be the best. I am also turning old or new hammer heads into key rings with the school logo on one side and mine on the other.

### **The Future of the Piano**

*We have work if people buy, play, and maintain pianos.*

The world economy is in stress. Many people are make budget choices that do not include piano care. Technicians/stores/performers should be in crisis mode working hard with teachers, families, and institutions to revive piano playing by everyone in America. One way to get new ideas is through social networking. For example, myptg.org., Overtones, etc. To connect with (and perhaps influence) piano aficionados outside our circle, try "[LinkedIn](#)"/"Groups"/"Piano Tuners & Technicians".

*Sample LinkedIn discussion thread for Piano Tuners & Technicians*

[LinkedIn](#) group: Piano Tuners and Technicians

*Nobody in this discussion group is in the piano tuning business... What are your thoughts?*

*You Are Not In The Business You Think You Are In. YOU ARE IN THE MARKETING BUSINESS. All those other things you do just happen to be the products that you are marketing. To some point, you need to do what you love, and what you are good at. Somethings are just better taken care of by someone else that loves those things to allow you to do what you do best. Find a good company that can take care of compliance issues, taxes, and payroll. The price you pay will more than be returned to you in increased productivity. Unless you can afford a large marketing firm, (even those focus mainly on the standard media types of marketing such as TV, radio, newspaper, etc..) you need to be involved in your marketing efforts. [More on this..](#)*

Roy Howard • I always remind the tuners and future piano tuners: you are not tuning if you are not scheduling appointments. If you don't like scheduling (marketing) then you must hire

## Wichita PTG chapter meeting highlights

### January 13 Agenda

The 01/01/12 meeting will be at 7 pm at [Pianos Unlimited](#) in Hutchinson at 900 North Main.

Agenda is the business meeting, technical, snacks.

Wichita PTG Chapter meeting  
December 8, 2011  
Marty Hess residence

8 Members present

Pres. J. D. Hershberger reported the date for the upcoming national convention in Seattle, Washington on July 11-15, 2012.

Vice Pres. Joe Wisner will be assigning members dates and topics for the rest of the year for our chapter tech sessions.

Roy Howard reported on the progress of the piano tech school he is trying to establish in Ecuador. There is still a need for piano parts new and used and old tools to be used by the school. Donations received so far include an upright action model, a box of old hammers, an electronic tuning reference, and a referral to a family who donated an old upright to strip for parts. If you have anything to send, Roy is leaving 10 January. Christmas treats followed the business meeting and members visited Marty's workshop to investigate the installation of turbo whippens into a piano he was rebuilding.

### PTG Exam Study Session

Current project: rebuilding a Steinway upright that was donated to the chapter for this class.

Thursdays 7:30 pm at the Piano Man Shop:

Larry Ray  
1018 N Buffum  
Wichita, KS 67203

316-644-9241

someone to do it for you, or you are not tuning. I always make more money tuning when someone is hired to schedule for me.

Bob Maret (Piano Technician) • I am in the business of SELLING piano tunings.

David Schonfeld • I would like to think my customers are buying piano maintenance to preserve a beautiful instrument for a lifetime of making music from someone they can trust. I hope that I can sell that. Most people don't even know for sure if their piano needs tuning or what a good tuning sound like, they have other reasons they think it should be tuned. Is it really tuning that we need to sell?

Bob Maret (Piano Technician) • Nope, selling tuning gets me in the door, then I can sell other things.

Dan Silverwood • Well, to a certain extent I would agree and disagree with the article. In a sense, we as technicians are marketing ourselves as business people, and selling service schedules for musical instruments. Many clients will buy into the enthusiasm expressed by the technician, or perhaps the technique used. I have often had my wife remark that people not only buy into the restoration of vintage instruments here in my shop, but they also buy into the enthusiasm I express in doing the work, and the finished product. Long time back I used to train Xerox employees in a sales technique called S.P.I.N. which was developed by the Huthwaite Corp for Xerox sales people. This technique can be applied to many situations and is used more than most realize;

S= situation

P=problem

I= implied need

N=needs payoff.

Situation is that the piano has not been tuned for a year. The Problem is that now the instrument is out of tune. Implied need is the instrument requires tuning. Needs payoff is the instrument will sound better and the music played will be enjoyed more

Curriculum:

<http://www.ptg.org/members/certificationExams.php>

[RSVP](#)



than previous. The idea with sales is to open the client up in conversation and begin to get the client saying yes in agreement. Once this happens, you are in the door and can then address Bob's assertion; the extra work required more commonly called the "bump". Bumping sales is another learned technique, when done correctly can result in further, and at times, significant remuneration.

Don Burke • I've always used piano tuning as a way to find repairs, rebuilds and action regulation jobs. This has been true for over 20 years. It didn't take long for me to figure out that the average piano tuner doesn't do much more than tunings. I believe this is a deplorable situation and that every piano teacher, student and listener suffers because of it.

Roy Howard • I did not start tuning full time until 1977. At that time I imagined myself in my one man shop rebuilding soundboards and pin blocks, servicing player pianos and reed organs, doing moving and refinishing, sales, etc... but the demand for tuning was so great that I specialized in tuning, repair, regulation and voicing. I brought others into my world to help me do the other specialties. I think we might all be better off if we specialize in something we do really well, then collaborate with others... just like most of us now do with keytops, string manufacture, and refinishing. One technician can spend enough money to equip a shop to do everything, but he only has so many hours in the week... and so many years on the ticker...

Toni Van Loan • The differences in point of view here are interesting. I agree with Dan Burke. I have often come upon a piano that has been regularly tuned, but has a poor regulation, with minimal keydip, harsh treble hammers, or barely functioning trapwork. I am unable to understand why the tuner did not deal with these issues, or, at the very least, [if they were not competent to deal with them] informing the piano's owner of the problem [s]. A couple of hours extra work would have generated more \$ , and the piano would have been much more effective. I truly feel that every tuner cannot be a rebuilders as I am, but could surely be a techie capable of dealing with what I would interpret as minor repair work. This is especially true for institutional work, as virtually every Steinway grand that I tune regularly needs

pedal repair, voicing, regulation touchups etc. constantly.

I get my kicks resurrecting nice old pianos from the turn of the previous century up through WW2. . . The sound , and construction quality simply cannot be duplicated in pianos of current manufacture [with a few notable exceptions] , and bringing them back to life can be truly entertaining.

Unfortunately the 21st century increasingly has little time or patience for such a process, and increasingly, wonderful makes like Chickering are disappearing from the face of the earth.

## Future of the Piano

### PianoBuyer.com Launches New “Piano-Buying Stories” Feature

For many, buying a piano is like finding a marriage partner. In “[Piano-Buying Stories](#)”—a new feature on [PianoBuyer.com](#)—consumers and retailers tell of their experiences in buying or selling pianos that were unusual, touching, surprising, or instructive—or all of these at once.

PianoBuyer.com, host of the free (online) [Piano Buyer magazine](#) by Larry Fine, has launched a new, ongoing blog feature—“Piano-Buying Stories”—in which individuals who have purchased a piano and those who sell them share unusual and touching stories about the piano-buying experience. “Pianos are unique among consumer goods,” says Larry Fine, editor, “in the extent to which buying one combines hardheaded choices about price and features with emotional responses involving art and passion. For many, buying a piano is more like finding a marriage partner than like buying furniture or appliances.”

This theme is well illustrated by the blog’s lead story, “[The Piano Match](#),” by Nancy M. Williams, a creative writer and founder of Reflections on a Grand Passion, an online magazine for students of adult piano lessons. Williams describes her year-long search for a grand piano to replace an upright that no longer meets her needs. In the process she assesses the personalities of dozens of new and used instruments, rejecting some because of their undesirable tonal qualities, others for their unresponsive actions—and one used piano because its owner’s alcoholism reminds her of her father. Visiting the local Steinway dealer, Williams says, “I felt as if I had been set loose in a roomful of eligible bachelors, with [my teacher] Stephen not unlike my brother, intent on fostering a suitable match.” In the end, Williams finds and marries the piano of her dreams. “I commune with my beloved,” she rhapsodizes. “I have found my piano match. I revel in the sensation of being one with its crystalline sound.”

If “buying a piano is like dating, owning one is like marriage,” reminds Perri Knize in her piece, “[The Surprising Thing About Pianos](#).” Knize, author of the book *Grand Obsession: A Piano Odyssey*, writes, “After a brief honeymoon, you find that your piano is far from perfect. She has bad hair and bad breath days. She has mornings when her voice is shrill and cutting, and evenings when she hisses, ‘Not tonight, dear.’ . . . You wonder whatever happened to the beautiful bride you brought home, the dream you fell for and believed you would possess forever.” Her prescription? “Once you’ve found your ‘perfect’ piano, accept its whims, find the good in it—just as you do with your spouse—and when it shows its flaws, look the other way. . . . Then it will be more likely to come back around to giving you those treasured moments of pure transcendence.”

Selling a piano, too, has its special challenges, fulfillments, and memorable moments. In “Piano-Buying Stories,” one piano dealer tells of his encounters with famous clients for whom cost seems no object, such as computer pioneer Steve Jobs and rock star Rod Stewart. Another tells of an instrument that was not sold but donated, and helped launch the career of a promising young musician. Several others share touching or humorous moments involving the importance of a piano in a customer’s life.

[Johnny Costa's start in piano.](#)

[A Three-Year-Old Reminds Me Why We Love Pianos](#)

[What’s in a Name?](#)

[Three Piano Buying Stories:](#) Rod Stewart pays cash; They used to play duets; Steve Jobs orders a special piano

Piano Buyer is a semiannual publication devoted to the purchase of new, used, and restored pianos and digital pianos. Available free online at [www.PianoBuyer.com](http://www.PianoBuyer.com), it can also be purchased in print, in color on glossy paper, from the website and in bookstores. Distributed by IPG. ISBN 9781929145324. List Price: \$24.95.

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