

PTG Wichita Chapter

The Voicing Tool



Wichita Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild. Newsletter. 4
Monthly Chapter meetings the second Thursday at 7 pm.

THE VOICING TOOL

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](#)**



The Future of th

*We have work if people buy,
pianos.*



re Piano

, play, and maintain

Wichita PTG chapter meeting highlights†

December 8 Agenda.

The 12/08/11 meeting will be at 7 pm, at Marty Hess's house†
3900 N Parkwood Ln, Bel Aire, KS 67220-2023†

†
Agenda is the business meeting, technical, snacks.

There's always more than enough to go around like fudge, banana nut bread, eggnog and such.... Happy Holidays!

Wichita Chapter of PTG met at Wichita State University in Alan Crane's office and shop on **November 10th** at 7:00 pm with nine in attendance.†

The world economy is in stress. budget choices that do not Technicians/stores/performers s working hard with teachers, far revive piano playing by everyone to get new ideas is through so example, myptg.org., Overtone (and perhaps influence) piano a circle, try "[LinkedIn](#)"/"Group Technician

Sample LinkedIn discussion thru Technician

Does anybody do any fun w groups, scouting groups, after other clubs to introduce them of sound and how a p

Lawrence Sudweeks • You might service to piano teachers as a sp their students. I would tell them are going to see a whippen! All add value to your relationship w more loyal and send you more r

Bob Maret (Piano Technician) • presentation for a group of seco were ooh's and ahh's when I pu Baldwin 243. I brought along sc give out to the kids. It was fun f on it producing a great deal of a

Roy Howard • The Wichita Cha major collaboration with the loc of the things we did at their two page 6 of this newsletter:

Many people are make
include piano care.
hould be in crisis mode
ilies, and institutions to
ie in America. One way
ocial networking. For
s, etc. To connect with
aficionados outside our
os"/"Piano Tuners &
s".

*ead for Piano Tuners &
ns*

**orkshops for school
r school programs, or
1 the amazing science
piano works?**

ht even offer that
ecial field trip reward to
if they don't listen, they
in good fun! When you
with others, they become
eferrals.†

• I did a piano
nd graders once. There
illed the action on that
ome old action parts to
or all, but don't count
dditional business.

apter of PTG did a
al music teachers. Some
day recital are listed on

Rory Howard reported on the need for member input to the chapter newsletter.✦

J. D. Hershberger (president) reported that he would like to know if an agenda published in the newsletter ahead of meeting time would be helpful along with future events for members to be aware of both locally and nationally. This was favorably received by those present. Alan Crane said the Kansas City Chapter sends out postcards to members before each meeting and thought we might consider this option. No action was taken.✦

David was asked by the membership to try to schedule a meeting at Pianos Unlimited in Hutchinson for January or February and report back at the December meeting.✦

Marty Hess invited chapter members to come and observe the installation of turbo whippens in a piano he was restoring during November.✦

Alan Crane reported that a Nebraska chapter assigned tech sessions to individual or groups of members for each month's meeting and wondered if that is a possibility for our chapter. Discussion will continue in December.✦

Alan Crane reported that all of his tools were stolen from his truck. He said it should be a warning to all members and we should photograph all of our tools and put identification numbers on them so it helps the police and others who try to recover them.

The next meeting will be at Marty Hess's residence on Thursday December 8th . The address of his home is 3900 north Parkwood.✦

✦
Tech session and refreshments followed.

PTG Exam Study Session

David Norman • presented "Host student recital at the "Pianos Unlimited in Hutchinson, Kansas. The presentation minutes and was open to the students.

Rory Fader • I've done a similar teaching in an elementary school of an upright, passed around space grand & upright action models & spellbound. Did it for all grades repair & a tuning out of it, too. (Canada)✦

Tonny van den Hout • I along with for two times, for a noon game (at his piano business. In between told with enthusiasm about how materials he uses. He also told you can exert influence on the show just because all the materials course. All attendees young and this very nice. Because you're in piano plays the main role will you other things. The presence of the therefore frequently made use of instruments. It was nice and level example of how to get people excited instrument can make. In this way things. You as a piano teacher can the piano technician can be instructed and sell. So if you help each other at a piano factory and then a piano

Roger Hayden • As my joints suffer of tuning I returned to part time As a result my added association

w the piano works” at a
limited” store in
station lasted about 15
dents and their parents.

r activity when I was
l. I took the action out
re parts, demo'd on
& generally had the kids
(K-7). Got a bridge
(Rory Fader, Kelowna,

with a piano technician
organized. It took place
n the piano technician
r a piano works, what
about the sound. How
ound. All this he could
al was present, of
l old, 80 in total, found
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ou not be distracted by
e many pianos was
f four hands on two
el of play. This is an
xcited about an
y we achieve two
an let students act and
uments, piano, market
ier. Likewise, you can
no concerts.

ffered from long years
private piano teaching.
n with teachers

Thursdays 7:30 pm at the Piano Man Shop:†

Larry Ray†

1018 N Buffum†

Wichita, KS 67203

316-644-9241

Curriculum:

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

†

[RSVP](#)



Piano Technician and Music Ed to get in front of people and encourage piano playing. Anything you do frankly help hold up the backbone western culture of music that can an acoustic piano. Do it.

Dan Silverwood • From time to time from the UBC music program. Many had not had the opportunity to see a pneumatic player in operation, a straight strung upright, or viewed one dismantled. When people enter the room they get involved right away. The enthusiasm referred to by Roger At one time I had thrown up eight videos of some of the micro-session player in operation and playing a vintage grand. Most of the stuff was my own compositions but some was by and Tom Waits; a few years ago Sony/BMG and other copyright issues after the copyright issue I pulled them though I played less than sixteen. When time permits, I still offer free or new technicians who want to. Most of the restorations I complete completely involved in the decision to cabinet colours and trim felts, strings under my guidance.

Lawrence Sudweeks • The National Music Merchants ([NAMM](#)) also programs and resources to help the parents of the kids is important why their kids should learn to play. My children have to make their

education areas. It's good
courage above all else,
to stir up playing will
one of this fabulous
one from ten fingers on

time I have students
drop by for a shop tour.
city to see an old
or a square grand, a
d a piano completely
into a shop environment
his creates the
and others here.†
ight or ten YouTube
sions showing the
a just completed
I was playing were my
s Joplin, Elton John,
after Vevo,
holders began to go
l them all down even
1 bars of each tune.†
ree seminars for folks
“sit in” on jobs.†
ete here have the client
sion making with regard
hammer sets and

onal Association of
has interesting
the cause. Educating
ant to understanding
lay. In my household,
beds. do the dishes. and

practice the piano. It is just part of the culture. They don't question it. I think if they realize what a little Beethoven would walk by, it would change

Lawrence Sudweeks • Compose [Schmidt](#) have done a lot for inspiration to play. He is especially well known

Future of the Piano

Bob Maret (Piano Technician) • Hopefully John Schmidt is promoting the acoustic piano. Digital pianos are the spinets of past years. I haven't tuned many digitals lately. Some teachers held out for students that had a "real" piano, till they started losing too many students. 50% of the students are learning on a digital. I ask again, tuned any digitals lately? The next generation - exposed to digital and MP 3 quality will conclude that a digital is a better value than a real piano. At least that's my prediction. Tuned any digitals lately?#

Lawrence Sudweeks • You will usually see John Schmidt playing a Fazioli or Yamaha. Here is a link to his youtube video of 2 of his more popular songs.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5mqWdc0ZoA>#

Jon DeLong • I haven't had many clients switch to a digital, nor have my teachers reported problems with communicating to their students that a digital piano is not a piano. When a digital can capture all the partials of a chord I'll start worrying. Meanwhile, a decent digital with weighted keys and let-off runs about the same as a crappy Chinese piano or an excellent used Console.

Business has slowed across the board. Outside of those in the fabled 1%, no business that I've had contact with is doing well right now. A very slow economic recovery is predicted.#

Bob Maret (Piano Technician) • They are not switching they are buying digitals as a

of what they do, and
teenage boys would
would do when the girls
their desire to learn.

ers such as [John](#)
iring teenagers to learn
own in my area.

first piano. 100,000 digitals vs about 55,000 acoustic pianos on an annual basis. Much of those 100,000 digitals used to be spinet pianos.‡

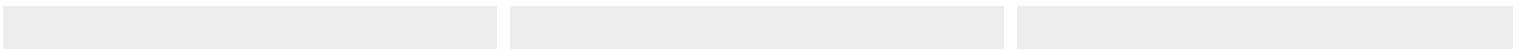
Danny Creech • Bob that is not the case down here in Missouri. Clients that have switched to digitals are returning to acoustics because they are not 100% pleased with a Piano wannabe. Don't get me wrong. Digitals are fun and they have their place in serious music. But Piano players here find that the best of them somehow does not measure up. Yes Acoustics need tuning periodically (sometimes very often) but when they are tuned by a good tech, they are perfectly tuned. I have yet to find a digital that is perfectly tuned. That is why they have these little auto vibro and other fun sounds applied to mask the tuning sequences. Try the circle of 3rds on them and you will find this true.‡
Then there is the longevity factor. I regularly tune pianos prior to the 1920's. Think there is a digital that will last even 60 years?? My nephew purchased a very nice Roland piano and 5 years later he had to have a new keyboard installed because of some key balance and contacts went bad. hmmm another \$ 2400 on top of his original purchase. Just my thoughts for what it's worth.‡

Bob Maret (Piano Technician) • I agree with everything you said, Danny. It's up to everyone in the piano community to help upgrade all these digital buyers to acoustic pianos - or as you suggest, convince them to buy acoustic in the first place. Piano tuning in next generation depends on it.‡

Lawrence Sudweeks • Although digital pianos have cut into piano sales, they have also introduced many people to the piano that would not have gotten involved any other way. Many piano sales are lost to people who just want to keep their "sentimental" upright that their great grandmother hauled across the plains in a wagon. Sales are also down because a tough economy makes many people look at a new piano as a luxury that they can put off.

Digital pianos have their place. If someone asked me which I prefer, I would say that I would rather have both. If I only had to choose one, it would be an acoustic piano. With the optimal lifespan of a digital only being 4-5 years, planned obsolescence provides a good opportunity to upgrade to an acoustic.

There are plenty of areas we as technicians can improve that can increase loyalty, retention, and improve referrals. Being negative about digital pianos will not stop the sales of them, and will just leave a bad impression with anyone you speak to. When I talk to a store owner about how business is I am not overly excited to do purchase from



someone who has nothing good to say about the economy, the competition, or their lousy day. However, when the individual confidently tells me how good they are, I am drawn to spend more money with them. It's all about how you look at things.✦

Jordi Parera i Rodríguez • I'd like to tell my personal experience, maybe hopefully that is the same case for some other people, like Danny and Bob suggest. I bought my first piano 12 years ago and it was a high quality digital piano (that still plays very well) for some reasons: mainly an affordable price, as I just wanted to try what could I do as an amateur pianist, and I could play in my flat in the late afternoons and evenings without disturbing anyone around. However, I played an acoustic upright piano in the music school and I could appreciate the difference in any way: touch, sound, colours, so 18 months ago I bought one for me, which I enjoy very much, however with a silent system that allows me to play when I have free time, which is usually late at the end of the day. So I have both in one, acoustic and digital, for any occasion.✦

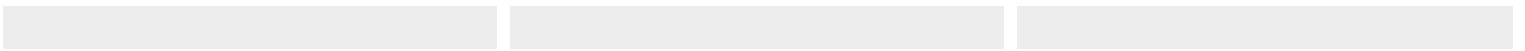
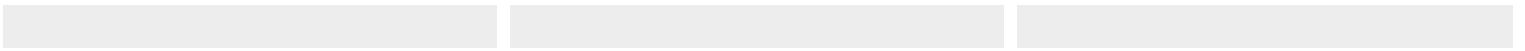
Bob Maret (Piano Technician) • I would have to point out that there are digital pianos in acoustic piano stores, but there are no acoustic pianos in digital piano stores.✦

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CHAZMAN . • Apples and Oranges...✦
There's the real thing and then there's the copy.

Toni Van Loan • Increasingly, I think that the change in choice of keyboard is not just about convenience, but reflects an ongoing decline in the teaching and practice of what used to be known as "classical music". People who play Chopin, Liszt, and even



PIANISTS DO NOT WANT TO PLAY ON DIGITAL PIANOS. NOW, SO-CALLED CLASSICAL RECORDINGS ARE JUST A TINY PERCENTAGE OF THE MUSIC BEING SOLD AND TRADED. THE ROCK/POP GROUPS OF MY YOUTH, FROM THE SUPREMES, AND BEATLES THROUGH LED ZEPPELIN ARE BEING THOUGHT OF AS "CLASSIC" NOW ----- NOT BEETHOVEN.. THIS IS AN OVERALL SOCIETAL SHIFT, AS WELL AS A PRODUCT OF TECHNOLOGY.✦

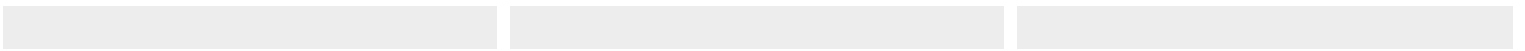
AS FOR THE ACTUAL STATE OF THE NYC AREA BIZ, AT THIS MOMENT, IT IS PRETTY BAD. A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE , WITH A LARGE SHOP AND DEEP POCKETS REPORTED HAVING TO PAY HIS SHOP RENT FROM HIS RETIREMENT ACCOUNT THIS MONTH., AND I AM JUST SCRAPING BY. [AFTER A BUSY SPRING AND SUMMER 2011] LAST YEAR AT THIS TIME, I WAS VERY BUSY, SO WHO KNOWS.

Lamberto Calderoni • FACING SAME PROBLEM IN ITALY AND NOW JUST STARTING TO TRY TO CREATE A CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG PIANO BUSINESS ACTIVE MEMBERS, TECHNICIAN, PIANO DEALERS, PRODUCERS, DISTRIBUTORS, TEACHERS. WE SHOULD GO BACK TO THE FAMILIES AND TEACH THEM THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ACOUSTIC AND DIGITAL. ALSO THE FIGURE OF PIANO TUNER IS FADING AND WE SHOULD VISIT SCHOOLS TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT A GOOD TECHNICIAN CAN GIVE TO THE PIANO AND THE PIANIST

Phil Bondi • MY BUSINESS IS STRICTLY SERVICE, BUT KEEP AN EYE ON ALL THE STORES IN THE AREA. LOW END DIGITAL SALES ARE UP (PRICES ARE COMPETITIVE WITH LOTS OF BELLS AND WHISTLES), AND GRAND SALES ARE FLAT/SLIGHTLY LOWER. THERE IS STILL A MARKET OUT THERE FOR THE PIANO. SERVICE NEVER SLEEPS.

Bob Maret (Piano Technician) • WE HAVE A BEST BUY STORE THAT SELLS DIGITAL PIANOS, AND IS OFFERING 4 FREE PIANO LESSONS WITH A DIGITAL. (THE ADVERTISING FLYER WAS IN THE SUNDAY PAPER) . I VIEW THAT AS A POSITIVE IN TERMS OF GETTING THE CUSTOMER STARTED ON THE PIANO AND HOPEFULLY THEY WILL EVENTUALLY BUY AN ACOUSTIC PIANO. I THINK ACOUSTIC PIANO DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS NEED TO CHANGE - I'D LIKE TO SEE ACOUSTIC PIANOS IN SAM ASH AND GUITAR CENTER, AND HAVE SOMEONE MAKE SURE THEY ARE TUNED/PREPARED, AND TRAIN SOMEONE TO SELL THEM. HAVE A LOCAL STORE INVENTORY THE OVERSTOCK, AND DELIVER THE PRODUCT. FLOOR TRAFFIC IN GUITAR CENTER BEATS ANY PIANO STORE I'VE BEEN IN RECENTLY. HOWEVER, THE GRUNTINGLY SLOW TO CHANGE PIANO INDUSTRY TENDS TO CONTINUE SLOGGING ALONG, DOING THINGS THAT ONCE WORKED, HOPING THEY WILL WORK AGAIN. IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE IN THE ACOUSTIC PIANO INDUSTRY - TEACH STUDENTS WHAT THEY WANT TO PLAY, WHICH MAY BE SOMETHING OTHER THAN CLASSICAL THESE DAYS. TEACH THEM THE VALUE OF AN ACOUSTIC, AND THE VALUE OF THE DIGITAL. TEACH THE VALUE OF MUSIC IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRAIN.

INSTEAD, LOCAL NEWS REPORT THIS WEEK: SEMINOLE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM (MY SCHOOL SYSTEM) IS LAYING OFF 50 TEACHERS - FROM MUSIC ART AND PE. IN THE NEWS LAST WEEK: FLORIDA



governor supports math science, and english in schools and doesn't see much use for the arts.

It's a shame.

Getting back to the OP's original comment about business - The key to success in this economy is marketing, keeping costs low, selling high, and retaining customers. You sell high by selling quality. You get customers with a comprehensive marketing plan. (read some marketing books or take a class for ideas). You retain customers by doing excellent work, and doing more than they expect.

Yes, I lose sales to low ball customers who want the lowest price, but those customers are not loyal anyway. In five years, when they want the piano tuned again, they will again search for the lowest price before they ask for yours.

If you're going to try to inspire the "kids" to want to play an acoustic piano show them Elton John, not Beethoven. As was already so correctly noted "classical" music is a very small part of the music business now. As a tuner in the entertainment part of the music business I can tell you that most of the top acts have at least one acoustic piano on stage along with all the other "digital" stuff. The reality is that digital keyboards are here to stay, but that doesn't have to be the end of the acoustic piano business. The top musicians all have an acoustic piano in their homes as well as on stage when they perform. I don't see digital keyboards ever being indistinguishable from acoustic pianos. NO question though that the acoustic piano business is and will be smaller than it was in past years.✪
Posted by Ben

Ben absolutely has it right about introducing the acoustic piano via Elton John [or Billy Joel] rather than Beethoven or Chopin. The "classical sensibility" is truly a waning thing, even though the music schools keep churning out graduates.. The piano can be introduced as a harmonic and percussive instrument as well as melodic. toni✪
Posted by Toni✪

