

# News & Notes



Newsletter of the Boston Chapter  
of the Piano Technicians Guild

## FEBRUARY MEETING

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**February 10, 2009**

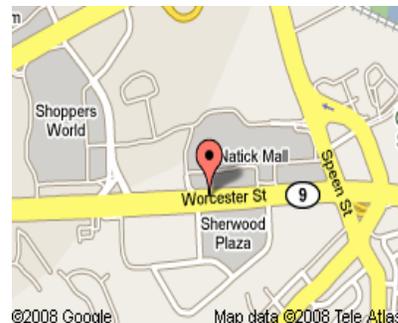
**Steinert's Pianos**  
Sherwood Plaza Mall  
1298D Worcester Street  
Route 9 East  
Natick

**6:30 pm:** doors open

**7:00 pm:** Business Meeting

**7:30 pm:** Technical Presentation by **John von Rohr**, "Regulating the Piano in Front of You" (see page 7)

**Directions:** All roads lead to Rt 9 in Natick. And it's just across from the Natick Mall!



**View from the Route 9 Eastbound Lane:**

At the light is the "Natick Business Park" sign and a "Starbucks" sign is under that. After the light go 400 feet and turn right into the Sherwood Plaza Mall. Steinert's Pianos is 8 doors east of the Christmas Tree Store.

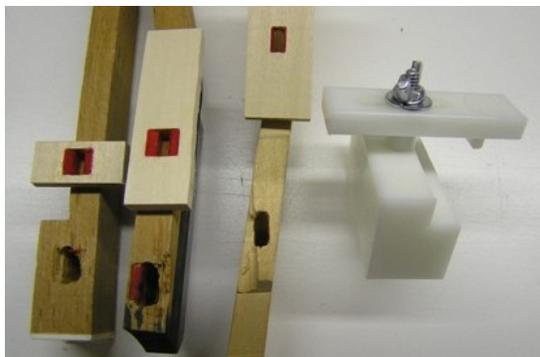


**View from the Route 9 Westbound Lane:**

"Natick Collection" on your right. Get into the left lane, go left at the light. Go into the Sherwood Plaza Mall. Steinert's Pianos is 8 doors east of the Christmas Tree Store. (Don't be fooled by snow completely covering these scenes...)



## THE SHAMELESS SELF-PROMOTION SPOT!



### The Blackstone Valley Piano button and mortise replacement fixture.

Blackstone Valley Piano has invented a button and mortise locating and replacement jig. Simple to use, this fixture allows piano technicians to quickly, easily, and accurately replace individual buttons and mortises. This new fixture represents a modern, pragmatic, and cost effective approach to an old and bothersome problem. Blackstone Valley Piano is also working on an add-on kit to the base of the fixture for accurately replacing balance holes.

Figure 1 shows a key button and two front key pin mortises (one for a natural and one for a sharp) that are damaged beyond repair and need replacement. The Button and Mortise Locating and Replacement Jig is pictured on the right (tilted up so you can see its profile better) and the inserts to be added are above their prospective areas of damage.

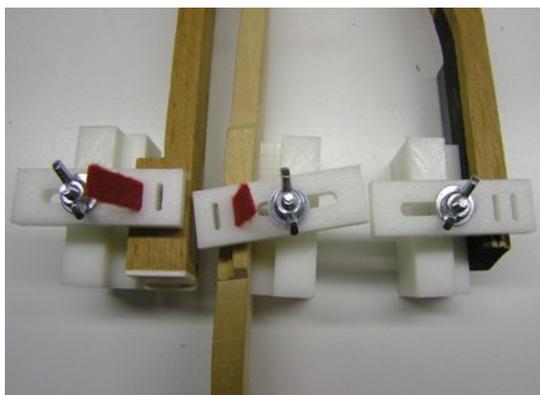


Figure 2. The first step is to locate the original position of the button or mortise to be replaced.

This is done by placing the caul portion of the jig into the damaged mortise area, tightening it down, and drawing a line on the key along one or both sides of the fixture base. Notice that there is cloth inserted through the top of the caul on the "natural" mortise and "button" to be replaced, but not on the "sharp" mortise to be replaced. This is because the natural mortise and button do not have any bushing cloth in them, but the sharp does. If the technician does not compensate for the missing bushing cloth during the locating and replacement process, then the mortise or button being replaced will be out of position by the thickness of the cloth.



Figure 3. The damaged button and mortises have been located and removed, making way for the new ones.



Figure 4. The new button and mortises have been put onto the caul portion of the fixture, the base of the fixture has been centered between the lines drawn earlier, then glued and clamped.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## BOSTON MEMBER BIO

### Barry Rosenberg, RPT

I have been drawing since I'm 2 years old, playing piano since I'm 4, singing more than casually since 13, writing music & lyrics regularly since 24 and tuning pianos since 30. My income in these areas is almost inversely proportional to my experience. If there's a lesson to be learned here it escapes me.

I grew up in The Bronx, New York, where those who survive past 20 can claim an unofficial Purple Heart award. I took 5 months of piano lessons when I was 10 (and 4 weeks when I was 30), but I have written and performed in public since 1975. A Pre-Med Biology major whose worst subject was Biology, I pursued a Masters in Social Work after my parents refused to send me to Mexico for Med School. I worked in the field for 4 years and burned out. My then roommate and a mutual friend were both piano tuners, and after George Crawford took half my savings replacing my piano's pinblock, I decided to become a piano technician myself.

I attended the North Bennett Street School 1981-83 where I tested the patience of David Betts and Chris Lovgren (Bill Garlick conceded he had already lost his at this point). I joined the PTG the following year. After getting tired of hustling my own business, I took a job with Piano Forte. They were unable to make payroll the second month I was there and laid off most of their staff a month later. Fed up with being

"mistreated" by the field, I pursued a teaching degree and took a classroom in Dallas, Texas. I soon learned that someone who cannot chew gum and walk at the same time is considerably better suited to servicing pianos



than containing 20 plus children simultaneously. I returned to Greater Boston and piano technology after 10 months.

I have not only made peace with piano servicing and my sometime music career, but am fairly content with it and continue to try to improve my skills in both areas.

I find the Northeast PTG Conventions particularly rewarding (at the last one I actually followed all the presentations). I believe piano technicians as a group are saner than musicians, who are saner than therapists (my own therapist excluded), so my colleagues have improved over the years. So has my personal life, as I left a marriage that never worked well to one that is dandy. And I have a great 12 year old son to boot.

This year I finally created a website for my Piano Tech and Music business. You can read my ludicrous claims at [www.barrymusic.com](http://www.barrymusic.com), as well as learn about the first full all Barry Rosenberg concert (under Gigs) in 11 years. The cup really is half full at the very least.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### March Meeting: March 17, 2009

Location: M. Steinerts & Sons - Steinert Hall  
162 Boylston Street  
Boston

Technical Presentation: David R. Kirkland, RPT,  
Steinway & Sons Technical Services Administrator  
Topics: S&S Patents & History Class \*plus\* A Gallery  
of S&S Decals

### April Meeting: April 21, 2009

Location: NBSS  
39 North Bennet Street  
Boston

Technical Presentation: Chris Lovgren, RPT  
Topic: Preparing for the Tuning Exam

### Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention: April 23 - April 26, 2009

Location: Harrisburg, PA  
Website: [www.ptgmarc.org](http://www.ptgmarc.org)

### May Meeting: May 19, 2009

Location: Concord Piano LLC shop  
362 King Street  
Littleton, MA

Technical Presentation: Christopher Brown, RPT  
Topic: Plug and Play Grand Action Preparation

### 52nd Annual PTG Convention & Technical Institute:

July 15 - 19, 2009  
Location: Grand Rapids, MI  
Website: [www.ptg.org/conv/2009](http://www.ptg.org/conv/2009)



## *THANKS, JUDE!*

Cool house. Lovely family. Great sounding piano. And a warm welcome on a cold January afternoon. The sun went down, the food was plentiful, the music was hot, and

the conversations ranged. It takes a lot of effort and good will to put it on. It was fun. You brought us together. Thanks.

The Boston Chapter

## *THE POEM PLACE?*

### **A GHAZAL FOR MY VALENTINE (with a dozen roses)**

Like the rose, choosing me from my crowd  
to note the dark brown earth and fragrant morning.

Like the rose, in bouquets along wild borders  
transforming desert beaches into Arcadia.

Like the rose, blues-like to the heart,  
repeating with variations the resonant riff.

Like the rose, ubiquitous in all  
promising gardens of romantic sentiment.

Like the rose, few offering as fair  
or favorable riches to the moment.

Like the rose, youth-thatched in statements of thorn,  
re-petaling your delicate mystery.

Like the rose, your jewelry of tears  
kissed away by the rising sun.

Like the rose, through the year's drought now  
but out this starlit evening in the snow.

Like the rose, newly on display,  
astonishing an entire afternoon.

Like the rose, useful to this soul  
surviving another freezing February.

Like the rose, woundingly soft and sharp.  
Like the rose, wooing with subtle art.



Christopher Brown

## THE PREZ SAYS

### Dear Boston Chapter Members,

We all like to get paid on time, and the good news is that the vast majority of you have paid your 2009 PTG dues on time. If you haven't yet, they were due on December 31, 2008, and the folks at the PTG Home Office are eagerly awaiting your check so that they can continue to provide you with your Piano Technicians Journal and various other support functions for you and our organization.

The Home Office has provided me a list of those who are "overdue," and suggested that I get in touch with you.

Is it possible that Vice President Gary Ford would write up a report on his session with Chris Robinson on voicing (held at the Home Office)? I'm sure everyone would be interested.

In mid July, the 2009 PTG Annual Institute and Convention is being held in Grand Rapids, MI, and YOU are invited to attend. It's a fantastic continuing education opportunity that you really should not miss. Registration is available through the [www.ptg.org](http://www.ptg.org) website; you can call the Home Office as well. Making your travel and lodging reservation early is advised, as GR is not a major hub.

Have you finished taking your exams and upgraded your membership from Associate to Registered Piano Technician in the past year (i.e. since the June 2008 convention in Anaheim)? If so, your **registration is FREE!**

Are you a RPT who is willing to study up on current PTG Bylaws Proposals (these will be published in a few months), arrive a couple days earlier than the Institute (4 and a half jam-packed days of classes and activities), and act as our representative during the Council session? I have served as Boston's delegate many times and it is an experience that I highly recommend to you. In addition to the Delegate, it is good for us to also send an Alternate Delegate. The Alternate studies up on all the issues, and usually sits with the Delegate during the Council Session, and consults with the Delegate as issues (amendments on the floor, etc.) develop. It's an excellent opportunity to "learn the ropes" of our representative form of governance. If the Delegate can't attend for some reason (stuff happens!), the Alternate fills in.

The Chapter usually budgets funds to assist the Delegate and Alternate with lodging, travel, and per diem expenses for the Council session.

If you haven't done so recently, please review the PTG Graphics Standards Manual. It is important for all of our business cards, invoices, letterhead, Yellow Pages ads, and websites to be in compliance. Usage of the PTG logo is now restricted to Registered Piano Technicians (and Home Office and Chapter logos). Associates no longer can use the logo (a somewhat passive motivator for you to take and pass the exams!). Please contact me (Patrick Draine: [draine@me.com](mailto:draine@me.com)), the Home Office, or our Regional Vice President Chris Solliday if you would like further explanation of these policies.

### VOLUNTEERISM!

Gary Ford had some interesting thoughts about getting EVERYONE more involved in the operations of our chapter. Is there an area that you're interested in, while not being eager to "do the whole job"? We often ask for volunteers during the business portion of our chapter meetings to participate more fully in this adventure known as The Boston Chapter of PTG. Evan Ewing stepped forward and volunteered to handle food preparation for our "refreshment period" that precedes the Business Meeting. During the November gathering at Hubbard Harpsichord, we enjoyed Swedish meatballs, cheeses and crackers, and fruits and vegetables with dip. It was great; thanks again to Evan.

Utilize your writing talents and contribute a few paragraphs or pages to our News & Notes. Volunteer to help our esteemed editor Chris Brown, perhaps by calling some of your pals to solicit some tech tips or some musings about our craft.

Today I picked up a copy of The New Yorker magazine (February 9 & 16 double issue pages 42 - 49), and found an interesting article by Dr. Gerome Groopman on tinnitus ("That Buzzing Sound"). Check it out!

Patrick Draine, RPT, President



### News & Notes

newnote@verizon.net  
www.bostonptg.org

#### Boston Chapter PTG Officers

Patrick Draine, President  
Gary Ford, Vice President  
Joe Morocco, Treasurer  
Elizabeth Snow, Secretary

#### Chapter Committees

Christopher Brown, Newsletter  
Larry Buck, Programming  
Jude Reveley, Librarian  
David Nadworny, Tech Exam  
Christine Lovgren, Tuning Exam

What, I'm still the dentist pulling teeth?

Give me a little more help here  
and I'll stop the annoying  
pop-ups on your page.

You can do it—it's  
practically as  
easy as  
tuning  
pianos.

Submit or  
you're a wuss.



## PIANO TECHNICIANS GUILD



(Continued from page 2)

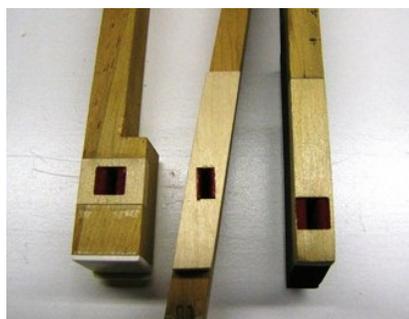


Figure 5. The fixture has been removed, the inserts have been trimmed and are exactly where they should be.

A more thorough instructional slide show of the **Blackstone Valley Piano Button and Mortise Replacement Fixture** and its abilities is available at Mike Morvan's website [www.pianoandorgankeys.com](http://www.pianoandorgankeys.com) on the slideshows page under the name mortise & button jig.

Please contact Blackstone Valley Piano at their new telephone number:

**\*\* (508) 266-0070 \*\***

**BLACKSTONE VALLEY PIANO**

Michael A. Morvan  
76 Sutton Street  
Uxbridge, MA 01569  
[www.pianoandorgankeys.com](http://www.pianoandorgankeys.com)  
[mike@pianoandorgankeys.com](mailto:mike@pianoandorgankeys.com)  
[www.thepianorebuilders.com](http://www.thepianorebuilders.com)

## GRAND REGULATING



This coming Tuesday 2/10/09, **John von Rohr, RPT** will be giving a technical presentation entitled "Regulating the Piano in Front of You". This is a wide ranging discussion of grand piano regulation, emphasizing the intersection of regulation theory, specifications and practical reality.

John grew up in New Jersey and moved to Boston in 1973 to attend New England Conservatory with a major in Applied Piano. An interest in all things mechanical and a love of the sound of the piano eventually led him to pursuing a career as a piano technician. He is currently Head Technician for the Boston Conservatory of Music and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

John lives in Wayland with his wife and two children. His spare time is split between raising two teenagers, the occasional camping trip, and sporadic piano practice.

