

November 2011

# News & Notes



## Newsletter of the Boston Chapter *Piano Technicians Guild*

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November MEETING—Chris Brown's Shop  
FEATURING: **Chris Brown**

When: Tuesday Nov 15th  
Where: Chris Brown's Home Shop  
362 King Street  
Littleton, Ma 01460  
Schedule: **6:00 PM.** Gather, Converse, Eat  
**7:00 PM.** Chapter Business Meeting  
**7:30 PM.** Demonstration of Chris's  
Redesigned Regulation Station

Chris is a North Bennet graduate and longtime Craftsman member of our Boston chapter. He has experience in all phases of piano service from College work to in home service and rebuilding.

Chris currently designs and makes tools for piano technicians . You may visit his web site at: <http://www.tprtools.com>

He will be demonstrating his redesigned Regulation Station with its new hammer hanging capability and the custom honeycomb panelled key bed .

I've had the pleasure of seeing the new designs and they are quite impressive in both attention to detail and function.

Tom Driscoll RPT



## "PREZ SEZ"

Doug Tybor, RPT  
President, Boston  
Chapter PTG

So what would you like to see presented at a Chapter meeting?

Every summer, the chapter officers and a few other people gather to talk about the year previous, and begin planning the year forthcoming - the budget, the proposed meeting dates and technical presentations, etc. We use our best judgment in deciding, usually based on past experience, what presentations are more popular than others; what holds the most interest to the chapter membership. What's missing, however, is more input from the membership at large.

So, I'm putting the call out.....

What would you like to see presented at a chapter meeting?

There must be some topic that would like to see presented that would make you want to say to yourself "Yeah, I think I will go to that meeting...."

**Just email me. [cybertybor@comcast.net](mailto:cybertybor@comcast.net)**

Because there will be no chapter meeting in December, and no newsletter, I want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, and a season of happy and prosperous holidays!

All the best,

Doug Tybor



## Member Spotlight

### Tom Driscoll

My introduction to piano technology came in 1974 as apprentice to the late Paul Hegent RTT in Sebring Florida. I worked part time with Paul and with his encouragement joined the SW Florida chapter of PTG as a student member. My initial experience with Mr Hegent , my new source of information in the Piano Technicians Journal and the technical programs given at the chapter level brought me to the 1975 PTG national convention in Hollywood Florida.

I slept in my Rambler the first night and by the end of the first day my new best friends took me in . Life was good! The instructors at that convention read like a who's who of PTG . Jim Coleman, Fred Drasche, Laroy Edwards, Cliff Geers, Virgil Smith, Steve Jellen , Dr Earl Kent and more. -I had no idea what I was doing but I was hooked!

Back in Sebring I continued on a part time basis with Mr. Hegent . It was a requirement then to take the PTG test within one year of becoming a student member and I passed at the apprentice grade . ( I suspect this was awarded pretty much by just taking the test)

The work was still a struggle for me and It became clear that I needed a more comprehensive program of instruction so I jumped in with both feet and enrolled in the Grayson College Piano Technology program in Denison Texas. The program was one year and my instructor was Lawrence Geotsch RTT. My guild membership was transferred to the Dallas Chapter and after graduation from Grayson I passed as Registered Craftsman.



It was time for the real world and I got a job with Wadley Piano and Organ Co. in Dallas as a full time staff piano technician at \$600 /month!

There were two more experienced tuners there and my job was mostly floor tunings and prep on new Baldwin's , occasional work at the downtown hotel function rooms and some supervised repair-reconditioning in the shop.

After a year at Wadley's I decided to bring my vast experience back to my home state of Massachusetts . It was 1980 and just in time for a nice little recession ! Moving to Marlboro, I placed an advertisement in the local paper and watched the phone .I did some floor work for Rob Bushell at his piano store in Framingham , bought and sold an occasional upright and slowly built a clientele .

I bought a home in 1987 (great timing –NOT!) and married my lovely wife Donna in 1990 (great timing – YES ! ) We have two children. Emily is a sophomore @ Roger Williams University in the architecture program and my son Jeffrey is a freshman in high school.

My pastimes -- other than sending my money to RWU – are spending time with my family, woodworking, playing pocket billiards and men's league softball despite becoming the player to be named later.

It's been my pleasure to take a more active role in the Boston chapter . With much help from our talented membership I've realized that the duties of program chairman consist of asking for help and staying out of the way . Perfect!

Tom Driscoll



### Ivory keys - making them "well, white again sort of".

Recently I just refinished a grand piano for a client. Part of the job I offered was to clean up the keys so they were white again. I have done this over the years in one other refinishing job and more often when doing action work for a client. Many times I was asked if I could clean the keys and make them white again without replacing the key tops.

In the past I have tried the whitening tooth paste which is a useless procedure. More often I found that a 300 grit wet dry sandpaper going to 600 grit and finally buffing them out on a buffing wheel with butchers wax did the trick.

However this time the Ivory was so thin and badly discolored, the Yellow brown color seemed to go the entire way through the key tops. There was no way my standard method would do anything. After researching online I found an article by Barrie Heaton. ([http://www.acrylikey.co.uk/bleaching\\_ivory.html](http://www.acrylikey.co.uk/bleaching_ivory.html)) He does the following: He uses hydrogen Peroxide and a Ultraviolet light (black light). -Yes I know what is next a Witches Broom?

So I had Ivette pick up some hydrogen peroxide at her hairdressers. It was a 40% solution. In addition I picked up a 4 ft. black light up the street at a lighting store. Once you put gloves on you can mix a solution. I cut the solution by 50% in a spray bottle. Some precautions: keep the peroxide off your skin. Do not stay in the room you doing this in all day. -fumes are toxic and could be fatal. Other than that, it is great stuff to work with. It is better to kill the piano than yourself.

You need to remove all the white keys and set them on a flat workbench. I put the keys on cardboard. In addition I used cheese cloth and covered all the keys. You can then spray the keys and position the light overtop the keys. I just used a few blocks of wood so the light source was as close as possible. (Be sure to remove the light when spraying) -I doubt the light would enjoy a cool spray of "solution" hitting it when on.

I kept spraying the keys to keep the cheese cloth wet with the solution, and would periodically look after the first 24 hours for whitening results. Within 2-3 days the keys will turn white. In addition to this you will also manage to loosen all the ivory key tops. So make sure if you ever do this for someone you have a good 3 hours extra in the job to reglue the ivory. Not to mention, Ivory is transparent particularly when very thin, so any keys that come off and remove the white cloth underneath should be touched up with white paint before regluing otherwise you have a different ugly problem.

I use nylon string and standard key top cement from a piano supply house. The string wraps quickly around and glues the already fitted tops exactly (or very close) to where they were. You can buff them with micro mesh or a buffing wheel.

Is it worth doing? It makes the Ivory white. So I guess if you have a client that wants white and clean Ivory it is worth doing if they want to pay you to do so. The technique works, and makes the keys look white again sort of. -Bill Trotman



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*





## Some Pictures from M&H Factory Tour

-Courtesy of Doug Tybor



*Tension rods*



*Bruce Clark explaining tension rods*



*Soundboard & pinblock ready to fit in a casing*



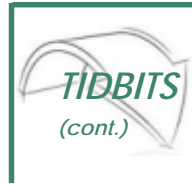
*Soundboard & pinblock in - gluing some veneer*



*Harp cache*



*Humidity controlled drying room for soundboards*



*Bridge gluing press*



*Getting some strings*



*Fitting the harp*



*Bridge Pin Templates*



*Bridge work*





The last PTG meeting was held on October 18, 2011 and hosted by Bruce Clark at the Mason & Hamlin factory in Haverhill. President Doug Tybor first presented the treasurer's report. Next on the agenda was a brief discussion about the Boston Chapter hosting the New England Regional Conference two and a half years from now and possible locations. Previously, the NEECSO was held at the Westin in Waltham, but 2 of the hotel's sister properties - the Sheraton Hotels in Needham and Framingham - are also being considered. It was noted that PTG members seemed to appreciate the location outside the city and being able to attend for just the day and not have to drive into downtown Boston. A tentative date is scheduled for around April or May 2014.

The Board of Advisers is still considering a donation to the North Bennet Street School for the many hours spent giving PTG tuning exams.

It was asked that if you are a new member or you have not written a short biography recently for inclusion in the Chapter Newsletter, please do so. You can email Bill Trotman directly at [service@pianofix.net](mailto:service@pianofix.net)

Submissions for advertisements can be sent directly to Gary Van Dine, webmaster of the Boston PTG website, and the deadline is the first of the month. Mr. Van Dine's email, taken from his website, is [gary@vandinedesign.com](mailto:gary@vandinedesign.com)

The Member Directory has been updated.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday November 15, 2011 at Christopher Brown's shop in Littleton.

Bruce Clark then commenced with the annual tour of the Mason & Hamlin factory, taking questions throughout and explaining how Mason & Hamlin (and the U.S. piano industry) had to move to a new glue for laminating the maple rim due to new environmental regulations.



Nov 1 Dues invoices mailed

Nov 15 Chris Brown's in Littleton, MA: A Revised Regulation Station with new hammer hanging feature.

December: no meeting





Steinway grand piano model A, 6'1".



Fully rebuilt and refinished in 1990 including new soundboard, all new Steinway action. Art case cabinet. A few minor case imperfections. \$14,900.

**Martin Snow**  
**781-837-6531**

[martinsnowpianos@yahoo.com](mailto:martinsnowpianos@yahoo.com)



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



Kawai KG2, 5'10", wonderful tone and a satin finish, excellent original condition from the 1980s. \$6500.



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



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.

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 along 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** 857-919-1532  
\$35,000 [mlogue@pianologue.com](mailto: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 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! \$35,000

Mary P. Logue (857)  
919-1532  
[mlogue@pianologue.com](mailto: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](mailto:cimenti@gmail.com)  
Stowe, MA

Steinway B from around 1900. Completely redone in the mid 80's at Camaleri in NY. Spade legs (not original), black case. Authentic Steinway parts used throughout. Plastic keytops. 88 notes. Well maintained. Piano located in Cambridge. Asking low 30's. Call Christine Lovgren 508 733 2935

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"  
Dampp-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

News & Notes  
[www.bostonptg.org](http://www.bostonptg.org)



### Boston Chapter PTG Officers

Doug Tybor, President  
Chris Storch, Vice President  
Eric Donnelly, Secretary  
Joe Morocco, Treasurer

### Chapter Committees

Tom Driscoll, Tech Programming  
Jude Reveley, Librarian  
Bill Trotman, Newsletter

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## LOCATION MAPS

