

# The Tuner's Beat

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May, 2002

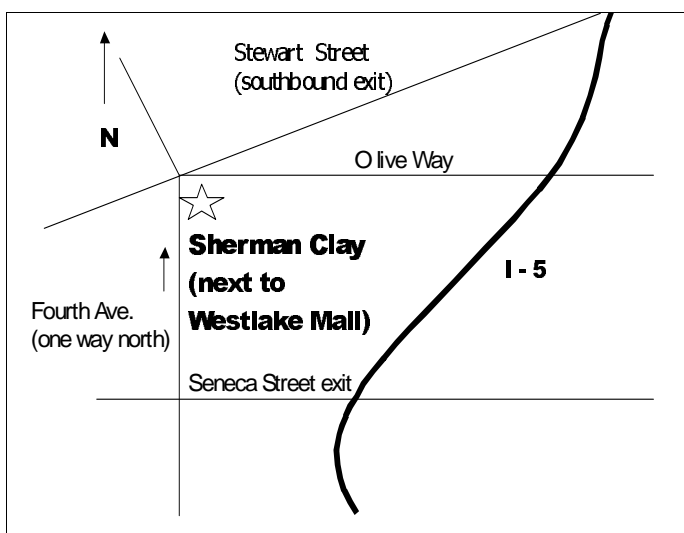
## May Program

# Teaching The Teachers

Presented by Steve Brady

### Randy Rush

The May program at our Seattle Chapter meeting will feature former chapter president, current U. W. technician, and all around piano - related entrepreneur Steve Brady. Steve has graciously consented to present a class (sponsored by the Seattle chapter PTG) for piano teachers at their annual state - wide convention in June, and this May 20th program will be a dry run of that presentation. Basically an "all about" and "how to" class for the non-technically oriented teacher and musician, the program will give Steve a chance to talk about the



profession in a manner quite unlike what we are used to hearing. Plan to come check out the class with an open mind and a different perspective. I'm sure at

some point during the evening, Steve will welcome comments and critique to help him fine tune the presentation for its June debut.

### NEXT MEETING:

Monday, May 20th

Board Meeting at 7:00 PM

General Meeting at 7:30PM

*Sherman Clay Music*

*1624 Fourth Avenue*

*Downtown Seattle*

Technical Program:

*Technical Class For Music Teachers*

### Dates To Remember:

*May 20th, 2002  
Chapter Meeting  
Sherman Clay downtown*

*June 17, 2002  
Chapter Meeting  
Location TBA*

*June 26-30  
PTG Annual Convention  
Chicago*

Please visit our website:

<http://users.iglide.net/dpetrich>

## June Program Features Temperament Tuning

June's technical program will be a presentation by Joe Goheen (one of our chapter tuning examiners) on temperament tuning. Whether you are just beginning your fascination with taming the temperament beast, or have

decades of experience and your own ideas about how a temperament should be wrestled out of a piano, plan to come and experience the excitement that is the foundation of the "tuning thing". (location to be determined)

## Elections This Month

Please plan to attend the meeting this month-it's election time again and your body is need to contribute to the decision making process that is our officer and board election. As a bonus, you get to choose the alternate delegate to the Annual Convention (Ooooh!!)

# Outstanding All Day Seminar Provided By California Technical Wizards

## Randy Rush

Members of the Seattle chapter and their guests were treated to an All Day Seminar in April that was probably unparalleled in its thoroughness. David Vanderlip led off in the morning session with "The Action Starts Here: Great Keyframe Work". What followed was a soup to nuts elabo-



ration of how to assess and proceed with preparing the grand action for rebuilding as a prelude to action rebuilding. Noting that not all keys and keyframes need attention to all items, David provided a handout with a step by step checklist for key rehabilitation. One of his most interesting observations was that in cases where extensive work is required, it is often more cost effective to

order the building of a new set of keys instead. This has become a more likely scenario in recent years as technicians such as Rick Wheeler in Oregon have begun providing quality key manufacturing as a regular service. David accompanied the detailed explanation of his checklist with slides taken in his shop, where he and his employees do keyframe restoration on a regular basis.

After a tasty lunch break provided by

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Pasco Perspective by Audrey Karabinus

Last I heard, the 2002 Pacific Northwest Conference in Pasco just managed to break even despite some attendance setbacks. While they drew in more of the region's contingent from east of the Cascades, (even Montana!), they suffered some last minute cancellations, and that was before the snowstorm closed the

*"Some instructors constantly update their material so that I learn something every time no matter how often I go to a class by the same name."*

passes. The pass reports kept sliding back the re-opening time. Jack and I debated driving the roundabout route via Portland, something several tired people later reported they had done. We took the gamble and headed east based on the latest pass estimate, and luckily got through with only a little bit of wintry driving

to do.

The convention was held at a comfortable facility with good food offerings in nonsmoking spaces, and quiet spacious rooms. I cruised the exhibit hall (read Bill Spurlock). The banquet was well organized, with entertainment by award-winning students of WMTA instructors. I loved supporting them and hearing imperfect piano recitals. I felt at home.

I've been in the business for 20 years,

*(Continued on page 3)*

## The Fine Print

The Tuner's Beat is the official newsletter for the Seattle chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild. It is published 10 to 12 times a year at a subscription rate of \$6 (free to members and exchanging newsletter editors). All articles may be reprinted if credit is given to the Tuner's Beat, as the Seattle chapter newsletter and to individual authors, when indicated. Please address all inquiries or articles to Randy Rush, 2627 NE 86th Street, Seattle, WA 98115 (randyrush@earthlink.net). The Seattle Chapter PTG usually meets on the third Monday of every month.

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## Are You Giving Your Customers The Best Water?

Like most fine technicians, you probably leave a jar of tap water inside your customers' vertical pianos. But did you ever think about where that water's been? Who *knows* what's in there? You might be releasing deadly metal-eating ions. You might open up that piano in a year and find a stinky, corroded blob where a fine action once was.

Or, you could use Murray's Original Piano Water ®. For fifty years, we've furnished technicians

with the *only* water specifically designed to be placed in a jar inside vertical pianos. Sure, it costs a little more. But are you going to tell your customer, "Yeah, I saved you a few bucks by using cheap, inferior tap water"? *I think not.*

And while you're at it, pick up a case of Murray's Original Piano Water Jars®. They're the only jars specifically designed to do what jars of water do inside pianos, whatever *that* is.

Murray's ®. While you're busy tuning, we're busy making water .

(Courtesy Mark Stivers, *The Valley Technician*)

## Tech Tip: Watch Those Balanciers

While taking in the excellent David Vanderlip and Kathy Smith program last month, I was reminded of a discovery I made some time back that was the proverbial light bulb going on for a problem that had bugged me for years. For the longest time I had struggled mightily with getting a consistent hammer line on certain grand pianos. Sometimes, even the new ones being prepped on the floor wouldn't behave, making it look like I didn't even understand the concept of regulating blow and setting an even hammer line. Then, I read somewhere about pinning specs for repetition levers, and I realized that, contrary to what one might think about having a fairly loose center

(Continued on page 4)

## All Day Seminar

(Continued from page 2)

the chapter, Kathy Smith launched into "Grand Regulation: From Left Field To Center Stage". The starting point of her presentation was an action that is way out of regulation due to rebuilding, misregulation, or a new piano

*"the 'circle of refinement'... is the most efficient way to good regulation."*

with extreme changes due to settling. No less thorough than David, Kathy provided a check list for obtaining the maximum performance and stability in a minimum of time, and accompanied

her talk with slides that demonstrated each facet of the process along the way. Highlights included preparation of the action for the regulation process as well as methods for determining

which regulation step should be performed first and to what degree of accuracy when beginning the "circle of refinement" that is the most efficient way to good regulation.

Our hats are off to David and Kathy for a well thought out and expert approach to one of the many aspects of our profession. In case you missed it, they will be presenting the classes at the annual convention in Chicago this summer.

(Continued from page 2)

in PTG for 15 of those, and have been to 11 annual conventions, maybe not much compared to some of you, but I've seen quite a few convention classes. One of the problems I increasingly have is that I've already seen either the class or the material, often more than once. To stay engaged, I bring a lot of reading materials (journal backlog),



and usually work with the exam programs. This year there were no test takers, so the exam program had been cancelled. I found myself restless. So amidst renewing friendships and making new acquaintances, I scanned for associates, and attempted more outreach, ever with my eye on the exam horizon. I noticed there weren't very many "young" associates. Is this a fluke or

trend? Now for the plug: The regional is a wonderful way for associates to expand their horizons and get more instruction without the financial and time commitment of an annual convention. Some instructors constantly update their material so that I learn something every time no matter how often I go to a class by the same name. For example, there's Bill Spurlock's stimulating presence whether as instructor or audience. In one very ordinary, introductory level class on

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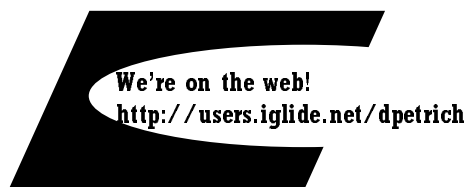
# The Tuner's Beat

Newsletter of the Seattle Chapter of  
The Piano Technicians Guild

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## Pasco Perspective

(Continued from page 3)

action physics, I posed a question I guessed several advanced level instructors in attendance would not be able to resist commenting on. The explosion of conversation about "wippen assist springs" and whether to regulate them with wire cutters or not, was wonderful to behold. Despite my role as rabble-rouser, I had really wanted to know a bit more about them, and I got an earful. The milder Bill didn't want to out-interrupt the others, and so offered me his thoughts over lunch.

My favorite moments were unrelated to the convention. The sandhill cranes migrate over the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge near Othello each spring and we happened to be hiking out there at the peak of their migration. Some birders spotted us at a restaurant "apres hike" one night, and babbled birding tips to us. The next day we went to the appointed lookout over a

chain of lakes, pulled out the binoculars, and at great distance attempted to discern goose from duck, and crane from goose. I was about to call it in when the sun heated the ground up a bit and suddenly hundreds of cranes lifted off from the scrub brush surrounding

the lakes. Ululating at the volume of geese, and rising swiftly, they toyed with familiar arrow formations: we expected them to resume migration and be gone in a few seconds. But instead, their formations loosened, they broke off into 3 clusters, and began to roll and tumble in the "thermals," filling the sky and soundscape in three dimensions. Their long legs cause their cute little feet to stick out past their tails when in flight. It was something to behold. Then the game was over and they disappeared quickly back into the shrub-steppe landscape. In the end, the hotel seriously under-charged us, and we need to call them to offer up some money.

### Tech Tip

(Continued from page 3)

being a good thing (to promote better repetition) is actually the *opposite* of what you want. The balancier center needs to have some resistance in order to support the hammer/shank assembly; if not, the repetition spring, a fickle component if there ever was one, is being asked to provide all the support. Having a tighter balancier center actually helps you regulate a more consistent hammer line by providing extra support for the hammer. Keep that in mind the next time you're hours into a regulation, feeling cranky, and just can't get that hammer line to stay even.

- Randy Rush

*"It's a beautiful instrument, the tool, especially the hand tool. We pick it up and it's so perfect, it's so ideal, it's so utilitarian, so aesthetic, that we turn it, we look at it. If it has been around quite some time, it takes on a certain patina, which is really very beautiful. And it's like an extension of the hand. I always think of the tool as an extension of the hand."*

- Jacob Lawrence