

**PTG Benefits**  
Dave Stocker  
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David started by talking about our history and future. The original home office was in Seattle. A lot of the first presidents were from here. Associate members now can vote on all matters, and can even hold offices. However, certain committees and regional vice presidents must be RPT's. Technical and tuning examiners must also be RPT's. The board can meet more often and by-laws can be changed more frequently. While it has taken sixty years to narrow down the by-laws, now we pretty much have it to where it will remain.

Dave started as a student member in 1982, apprenticing under John Grace. John graduated from the Piano Hospital -- his first integrated experience. Our industry is declining. The number of RPT's has dropped from 40,000 to 35,000. The number of associates is down. Forty percent of our membership has been in business for 25 years or more. Many of the older tuners will be retiring. In another ten years, things are going to look a lot different. Nevertheless, people are stepping up. New people are showing up to events who want to join. Other new people are stepping up to help change and continue our organization. Change is inevitable and necessary; if there is no change, there is no life.

*“All change is perceived as loss, and our immediate reaction to that loss is anger.”*

Our customers' pianos are changing. How can we make the change look good for them? We must look at the positive side of things that are going to become the reality of the future. What used to be may be no longer.

For example, we no longer write on paper or talk on telephones. The cell phone has become our basic information interface. The Gutenberg press was the first time there was moveable type, so you could change the press quickly. Before, if you didn't have money you couldn't buy a book. Printing enabled people to access books, which increased the knowledge level. Cell phones have changed everything. People are closing out their accounts for printed ads, for land lines, and for encyclopedic references and technical information.

When aural tuning was described by William Braid White, this style was considered “tuning by the numbers” and was rejected by the *status quo* because such a tuning didn't sound the way it should sound by ear. Sixty years ago when the guild was formed there were two things of importance: a printed journal and a national convention. In this way, knowledge could be spread across the entire country. Now, sixty years later, these two things are still the biggest things for the guild. Somehow we need to get information available so people can acquire it instantly when needed. Busby is working on getting e-books on line.

A chapter just closed in the middle of Idaho. Three of the six members were over eighty, two were almost as old, and one was an apprentice. Some people live so far from their chapter meeting areas that they are seldom able to attend due to the distance and travel time. Other people have schedule conflicts. Can meetings be held without people being present? Already we can meet live in a Facebook group. Live music

lessons are being taught on Facebook. Virtual meetings and webinars have become quite common. It's a matter of changing the culture of acceptance.

George Defenbaugh, one of the great teachers of piano technology, was talking in the hall at a convention. Dave heard him say, "Excuse me, but there is a class starting that I would like to hear." Dave realized at that moment,

*"Oh, there is still more to learn."*

What are the advantages of attending events? We get face-to-face interactions, instant answers, extra tips and shortcuts, close-up demonstrations, hands-on experiences, and a chance to watch the top experts at work in person. We also learn that there are certain things we don't care about doing or learning, like rescaling a piano or constructing a grand case.

There are few remaining places to learn our craft anywhere in the country. A few of the piano manufacturers offer rare classes. The home office offers classes. The former Little Red School House now offers three sessions a year. One of them is GAR-37 that LeRoy Edwards put together for Yamaha. If you want hands-on help with regulation, sign up for next year and go to Kansas City.

Besides changes in our profession, there are changes in the piano industry. New piano sales are dropping. The number of piano stores is diminished. Yamaha went from 500 to 100 stores in the U.S. For every new piano sold, there were ten new pianos changing hands. Back then, the salesmen would look down at the technicians who made far less money tuning and repairing than the salesmen made from sales. Now this trend has reversed, and technicians are probably making more money maintaining and moving around old pianos than the store sales people are making. Now there are about forty used pianos for every one new piano purchased. In addition, all these older pianos need more repairs and work and moving than the new ones do.

Dave has been buying and selling used pianos, fixing them and selling them for more money than the stores ask. The business has changed, but it is still there. People are coming to technicians for acquiring pianos. If we do not get involved in buying and selling pianos, we are missing money. People use us for a source.

Within the guild we have people doing online training. We have access to technical educational You-tube videos that can be watched over and over.

### **There are five forces involved in tuning.**

1. Rotation of turning the pin in the pin-block: TURN
2. Torsion that the wire is pulling on the pin: TWIST
3. Deflection: LEAN
4. Friction: STRETCH
5. Elasticity, stretching between friction points: SLIDE

Dave had everyone stand up and physically go through the motions of turn, twist, lean, stretch, and slide. Why? We are looking for equilibrium and balance.

*When tightening the string,  
push down and away on the pin just enough to overcome the deflection.*

Go to WestPAC. You will learn, and your attendance supports our organization. Go to Lancaster for the National this year. You will learn something in five minutes that will make you thousands of dollars. In 2019 the National will be in Tucson in a luxury resort for only \$120/night.

PTG is currently hiring people to re-write the PTG.org web site. The focus is to work our way toward a new membership access. There are now fewer people rather than more working on everything within the guild, which streamlines efficiency.

*“Democracies tend to engender stable power structures.”*

Being board-driven makes it easier to make changes. When the delegate presents something to the chapter, the chapter members can react immediately. Show up at a committee precinct where the platform is modified, then to the council, then the state and then the national. Our delegates can now say, “these are the things we think are important,” and the council can acknowledge them. Changes will be reviewed by the lawyer and will be published online.

The idea is that we are supposed to be improving ourselves as technicians. There are groups that will say what you are doing is valid. Now that associates can vote, we have gotten past that point. Several group discussions are posted regarding long-range planning. We can now login and make statements and comments. Each will be posted and commented on, because we are in the midst of changing right now.

Four people on the east coast are riled up about these changes. Those on the west coast are thinking that it's about time we are changing. Bill Davis, SE Regional, is full of ideas and is actively writing ideas; he has posted 450 ideas on the site. It's all about getting a response out of people. Go to <http://www.my.ptg.org> Region 7 (Pacific NW), and check the email settings. Feel free to contact Dave any time.