

Report on 2017 Convention

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The first class was called **“Three Levels of Grand Regulating” by Ed Foote**. The first part of the class was about the first two to three hours. Assume there is no after-touch, the hammers are worn and the pianos are being played a lot. When should one not regulate? When the felts are worn on the let-off buttons, the whippens with the thread cord for the springs, etc. Don't catch dead fish. At this level we don't use a gauge for after-touch, do a quick let-off and capstans and drop, shape the hammers, but don't level or do dip. Instead of repining, do quick fixes. What should we say to customers who are playing bad pianos? It's like giving a basketball player an uninflated basketball player. A child playing a poor piano will learn to play hard.

The next level is a ten to fifteen hour job for a serious pianist. Know your customers and what music they are playing. “If you don't notice a night-and-day difference, you don't have to pay me.” For this level he takes all the whippens off and re-pins all the repetition levers, which is the heart of the action. He swings the action stack to see the tightest and loosest hammers. Re-pin the bad ones. Polish the key pins. Do a complete regulation.

Level three is the best for a piano on the concert stage. Do a good job on Level 2, and then go through everything twice. Set the jacks a little farther back so they don't cheat. Most convention classes are taught at Level 3, whereas most of the work we do is at Level One.

Joe thinks there is a Level between one and two. Bill Spurlock showed movies while he was doing the adjustments, and finished everything right on time. Don Nino did an all-day seminar on regulation for us a while ago.

Dan Levitan taught “Finding Joy in Your Toolkit.” He carries his tools in a back-pack that weighs about 24 pounds. He is in his 60's. He had a big square black fleece he uses for his work surface on top of a piano. His tool pallets are custom-made with perforated aluminum, and with elastic straps stapled on to hold tools in place. If you don't have custom-made earplugs, gun shooters have good earplugs that will cut out the prompt sounds but will allow the after sounds.

- To find the screw under the soundboard on the soundboard, he uses a little magnet, or hold a mirror down and shine a light in there.
- His light is called BrightGuy.com that takes one AAA battery . Other lights are LarryLight, BendaLite, and StreamLight.
- For string carriers, he carries two each 12.5-16 in a CD case. The last digit of the string size is the length in feet that he cuts and coils. The most common wire sizes are 13-15.5. Vada stores hers in an accordion file.

Richard Bitner taught about dampers.

There was an article about how to make a jig with a turn-buckle. Set samples so the spoon lifts when the hammer is half-way to the string.

- Use the turn-buckle to pull up the lift drop to hold the damper lift lever to match the damper samples. Tweek the rest and adjust them.

- Another way is to insert a wedge, but it often moves out of adjustment during the process.
- Sometimes if there are ringing dampers in the bass, it could be that the bridges has splits and the strings are moved over.
- Use PVCE glue for replacing dampers.
- If you have hard felt, put on a couple drops of ProFelt, but it might soften the glue. If you use ProFelt on key bushings, use sizing cauls. ProFelt also works to soften hard hammers.
- Bend spoons without using the tool by pressing down on the whippen, or take the key out and press down on the whippen. Be careful not to break parts with this process.

Jeff Hickey taught a class on Practical Tips

- For old benches with loose legs, place glue in the gaps, and ratchet-strap the bench together while tuning. He puts a 2x4 between the bench and the metal ratchet to prevent scratching.
- When done he takes the strap off and tells them not to sit on it until the next day.
- Auto feeler gauges or artist pallet knives work great for smoothing glue into thins spaces.
- For a stripped screw hole, use a piece of leather half the diameter of the hole, with a little glue. Put the screw in to form the hole, and take it out when dry.
- Instead of replacing pedal bushings, take two strips of bushing cloth, put white glue on one side and CA glue on the other side and it will bond well.
- To remove key fronts, use a chop saw, table saw, burn them off, steam them off, or peel them off with a knife, or sand them off.

Grand Regulating and Voicing by Fred Redekop

- PTG Journal 1996 series of articles
- Vacuum: Lowe's has a \$29 vacuum that blows.
- Light.: Nebo "Big Larry" 3 AAA batteries, bright, magnetic
- Hammer spacing center of unison, shift to all 3 strings. Use a hammer shank to space the strings in the treble by shaving off the end of the shank to use as a unison gauge. Make the sample using the agraffe to sample the width of the space between the outside strings, so when the pedal shifts they are all the same. He likes to have all three strings playing. If you clear a string you may have damper problems.
- Use a magnetic mirror for let-off, dampers, hammer spacing, etc.

Aging and Fitness for Piano Technicians by Bonnie Swafford

- Exercises
 - Partial squats
 - walking backwards
 - Push-ups off the kitchen counter
- Theraband from Amazon: good for upper back
- Planks (RBG, 85-year-old, does these) to help lower back
- Flexibility warm-up (moving), then stretch (still)

- Balance: stand on one foot
- Dancing reduces the risk of dementia by 70%
- Fall prevention: no throw rugs on slippery floor

Abel Hammers

Best are natural felt (Wally Brooks), same as Special Pressing from Piano Tek. Abel hammers are made to be kneaded, not jabbed.

Tone Building : Jim Busby

Which of these 11 items have the most influence when changed?

*Mating hammers to strings

Blow 42 vs 45 mm

Center pin 0-5 grams

Drop 1/32" or 1/2".

Hammer alignment if burning was off, so mating was good even if hammer not straight

*Hammer shape: crown or straight

*Let-off 1/32 or 1/8"

Hammer mating.

*Needling: 1 3mm stitch

Travel.

*String prepping

Jim showed a video of him filing a set of hammers in five minutes using a wide paddle, using the key slip as a support.

Grand Regulating Techniques by David Reed, Kawai

- To pull out a grand action, tie a loop of nylon around the action bracket.
- Check the glides when you push the pedal down.
- For shank twisting, looking at the space of the neighboring hammer, twist the hammer toward the hammer in the direction where the tail gets closer.
- When leveling, to find the high keys, tap the straight-edge and see which ones wink.

First Do No Harm by Steve Brady

- Too much Teflon powder on the knuckles
- Flitz metal polish
- For water rings, use Howards Restore and fine steel wool. Comes in Mahogany, Oak and Ebony.
- Part Two: Don't Harm Yourself
- Steve uses a custom leather craft backpack
- Key easing for hard wood use iron instead of pliers. You can also heat pliers. Burnishes or straight broaches. The best iron has the fittings with a built-in wattage adjustment from Radio Shack. A rheostat can work on a soldering iron.
- Go out in nature. (Take a chapter day hike.)

Joe showed us a foldable luggage cart for carrying heavy equipment long distances.