

# The Buckeye Backcheck

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*Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild*

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## ***President's Message***

Doug Brandt brought this instrument to my attention from a For Sale poster at Capital University. It is a Conover Vertical Grand (commonly known as a giraffe piano, nearly eight ft. tall) made by the Cable Company of Chicago, IL. You may see additional color photos on the [Chapter web page www.ptgcolumbus.org](http://www.ptgcolumbus.org) in [Tech Photos](#). A matching bench is also pictured.

The description included is:

One of 50 built for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition / St Louis World's Fair. Mahogany case with hand carved frontispiece appliques and legs, ivory key tops and ebony sharps. Very good condition, one family owner. Call Jan evenings after 9:00 pm EST 740.362.6631 if interested in purchase.



## ***Chapter News & Notes***

### **Meeting Minutes (excerpts)**

Old Business: Chris is confirmed as our delegate to council.

New Business: A thank you note was received from the Ohio Health Foundation for the donation made in Ruth McCall's memory.

Dale Logan, a piano technician who recently moved to Marysville, died suddenly March 10 of a heart attack. A card was passed around for members to sign.

The Home Office requests a copy of our by-laws to make sure they are in compliance with the National by-laws. Kim will send a copy.

From RVP Richard Bittner: Kim is confirmed as a TEC (Technical Examiner). \$21,00.00 has been approved in the budget for the Webmaster Project; members should check out changes on the website. The 2006 National convention site is being changed from Philadelphia because the Adams Mark hotel is closed. Columbus OH and Rochester NY are 2 cities the committee has looked at. The PTG Board is looking for members to serve on National Committees; interested people should contact Richard. And last, our chapter dues reimbursement check should arrive in April. We have 21 members not counting 3 who are delinquent.

Ben led a discussion on the merits of old bridges and soundboards vs. new ones. Thanks to Ben and Jon for the great refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kim Hoessly, Secretary

**Next Meeting** - April 19, 2005

The April meeting will be held at The Piano Gallery 2829 Festival Lane in Dublin, Oh. at 7:30 pm

The technical portion of the meeting will feature Mr. Mark Wisner, National Service Manger for Pearl River Piano. [The Pearl River Piano Group](#) is one of China's largest piano manufactures with over 4000 employees and over \$90 million in revenues in 2003, as reported by The Music Trades magazine.

Technical topic:

I'll plan on offering a technical presentation on Keyframes: diagnosing problems, quick and easy repairs, and comparing some old and new methods of bedding. I'll look forward to candidly answering any questions about the Pearl River Piano Co.

Mark Wisner  
National Service Manager  
Pearl River Piano Group, America

## **Chapter News & Notes**

In Memory

Dale Richard Logan, 54 owner of Cornerstone Piano Service died of a heart attack on Thursday March 10, 2005 at his Marysville home. Survived by wife Sharon and daughter Corrie and son Benjamin. Dale had worked for Hauer Music upon coming to Columbus, and was also doing service for Columbus Piano Leasing, along with his private business.

Pictured below: Benjamin Wiant at the Steinway D for his piano recital in February. Ben played

a program of the late piano works by Johannes Brahms in front of an enthusiastic audience. Ben said it was his first public performance in 38 years. Well done Ben!



The piano belonging to Ruth McCall will be for sale by her daughter, interested parties may contact:

rlene Belter at 614-436-3161

1924 / 5'8" Knabe grand with Ampico reproducer #96830 Walnut / Louis XV carved art case, ivory keys, restored and refinished in 1985 by Raye McCall. In excellent condition. Included 87 player rolls all in original boxes. Raye was an excellent player technician and wrote many articles for the PTJ under the title of "The Vacuum Line".

### **Tech Tips**

from Thomas Harr

On Whitney, and similar spinets, where it is difficult to get a screwdriver on the butt-flange screw heads without pulling the action due to the regulating rail being directly in front of them, back off the 5 or 6 screws holding it on the forks and drop the let-off rail down on the wippens. Now you can remove the butts or tighten the butts with the action still in the piano. Just be sure to put the rail back exactly where it was or it will change the let-off.

*From the newsletter of Steinway & Sons "The Steinway Technician"*

John Patton - Director of Technical Services, announced some changes being made to Steinway pianos. One change is in the model 1098 pianos to aid in ease of tuning, such as removing the casting mound in the tuning pin area. John also stated they have started using a new plate pattern for the scale B. As a result there has been a slight change in the cabinet dimensions, the treble bridge bevel and contour, and an increase in the interior cavity width.

### ***From Rick Miller***

*Here are a few thoughts and notes from fellow Chapter member Rick Miller and his experiences up north at the University of Western Ontario. I thought they were worth sharing with our readers. - Mark*

October 1, 2004 Greetings from the Great White North! Earlier this year I finally made the decision to walk away from the security of a twenty-five year career to become a novice (ouch!) piano technician. Wanting to shed the “novice” part of this job description as quickly as possible, I enrolled in the Piano Technology program at the University of Western Ontario.

Anyhow, I am now living here in London, Ontario and going to school sixty to seventy hours a week. London is a city of about 320,000 people and the university has 28,000 full time students. London is called the “forest city” because of its abundance of green space. There are five parks within walking distance of my apartment and a bike trail that follows the Thames river all the way to campus. Most days I ride a bike to school because it is faster than driving. Life is good.

Ok ... Now for the curriculum. Class meets Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm. We have one hour for lunch, but mostly we eat while we work in the shop. There are no scheduled breaks. This is WORK. On Tuesdays, we have Physics from 7:00 pm until 10:00 pm. This course is actually taught by a full professor from the Physics department. He only teaches “The Physics of Sound and Music” because he is passionate about music. The rest of his time is spent doing research into things that us mortals don’t understand and teaching stuff like quantum mechanics. But now, as a result of hours of pain-staking study, should you ever need to calculate the speed of sound waves through media like hydrogen or helium at varying temperatures (does this come up often while you are tuning???), I’m your guy. Call me. Now, if my unisons would just quiet down...

Each day is roughly divided between tuning instruction and practice, and working in the shop or on the pianos that are designated for our class. There are fourteen people taking the course, and we have fourteen pianos in practice rooms for our use. The music students can use them when we are not, but we always have priority.

December 17, 2004 I just finished my final exams for the semester. They were as follows: Physics: Three hour written exam. Lots of math. Damn difficult. I used two hours and fifty-eight minutes of the allotted time. Tuning: Three hours to tune the piano you draw by lottery. The instructor “custom tuned” all pianos before the exam. Not easy. Piano tech: One hour written exam. What does it cover? Anything and everything that was ever said during three

months of class, whether it was important or not. No way to B.S. your way through this stuff. Piano tech: One hour of bench work. It was somewhat like being given a few test tubes and some random chemicals and being asked to “create life” in one hour. No problem. Piano Tech: One hour of trouble-shooting pianos.

One final thought. ... Learning to tune a piano is easy. Learning to make it stay in tune for more than one day while the piano students pound on it seems next to impossible. I am on a mission. I will get better at stability, or I will start breaking their fingers.

I will update you (if anyone is interested!) on our progress next semester.

Regards,

Rick Miller- The wandering piano tech (in training)

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