



The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technician's Guild

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President's Message

A while ago, I was asked about common-core math, a curriculum that is being taught in many schools that is controversial and very different from the way those of us of a certain age learned math. Why teach a method of solving arithmetic problems that seems harder and takes longer than the good old methods? It turns out there's more than one way to subtract and multiply, and the common core, while not necessarily the quickest way to find an answer, does prepare the student for algebra, calculus and computer science. It's a way to help teach critical thinking and analytical skills, which helps students in many ways later on in their education.

Similarly, the PTG encourages us to learn how to aurally tune a piano. Now that we have sophisticated devices and apps that can help us tune accurately and efficiently, it may seem like an obsolete skill to tune by ear. But just as using a calculator doesn't teach about how numbers really work, using an ETD mindlessly doesn't teach about how to really hear those upper harmonics and their interactions. Aural tuning is not necessarily the quickest way to find an answer, but it does train our ears and brain to analyze sound. Sometimes acutely hearing the beating of partials can come in handy especially in pianos with a problematic break or inconsistent strings. Also voicing is a skill that requires a keen ability to evaluate what's going on up there in the upper harmonics.

Having new ways to solve a problem does not render the old ways wrong, it just gives us more tools in our mental toolbox.

David Stang

Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 21 @ 7:00 PM

First Congregational Church, 444 E Broad Street

The church is located just west of the art museum - plan to park in the lot between Gay Street and the church and to use the 9th Street door on the east side of the church

There will not be food at the meeting, but members are invited to meet at Matt and Tony's across the street before the meeting if interested

Technical Presentation:

David Stang - Talk and Demonstration of the Harpsichord

Next Technical:

Tuesday, April 18 at Grave's Piano and Organ - Bryan Hartzler on Voicing

Chapter Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2023 7:00 PM - Solich Piano of Easton

Attendance:

David Stang, Ron Kenreich, Justin Swain, Andrew Kovaleski, Walter Bagnall, Wayne Strautman, Evan Bingham, Sam Debatin, Chris Purdy, David Chadwick, Jack Johnston, guest Josh Hill

Treasurer's Report:

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Old Business:

It's not too early to start thinking about attending the PTG Annual Convention from July 26-29 - this year's event is in Arlington, VA. More information is available at <https://www.ptgconvention.com>.

New Business:

Wayne Strautman is officially an RPT - he took the tuning test at the previous PTG convention in Orlando, and he took the technical portions at Kim's home. Congratulations Wayne!

Butts and Flanges

Justin Swain has a client with a 1972 clavichord with a severely cracked soundboard - would anyone like to take on the project of repairing it? If interested, send an email to Justin.

Chris Purdy related a story at the meeting - someone in New York read a post that Chris wrote a while ago about voicing Steinway pianos and reached out to ask for advice. Apparently, a previous technician had "brightened" the piano by rubbing lacquer on the surface of the plate and inside the rim. The caller asked for advice on how he can use lacquer to brighten his piano himself, and where to apply the lacquer, expecting to lacquer the inside of the case. Chris did his best to talk him out of it.

Chris described for Walter Bagnall about how to bed the front rail of the key frame, by sanding all sections of the rail which do not knock. For an in-depth discussion of this topic, PTG members can read a lesson from Bill Spulock in the online PTG Journal articles available online, in the May 1995 journal, or in the PACE Manual on Grand Regulation, Lesson #1.



Addendum - Technical Presentation by Walter Bagnall

Hello PTG Columbus,

It appears that I neglected to include any mention of Walter Bagnall's excellent presentation over the RPT Tuning Exam from the February PTG meeting - terribly sorry to Walter! As a member of the target audience of "technicians looking to take the RPT exam soon," allow me to speak for the rest of us when I say that the presentation was informative, interesting, and it de-mystified the procedure for the tuning portion of the exam. Walter provided an in-depth handout, which you can find a .pdf file of [>here<](#), explaining the construction of the exam, how it is scored, and instructions for the examinee.

Many thanks to Walter, and many apologies from me,
Andrew Kovaleski



Justin Swain's client's clavichord with a severely cracked soundboard - the crack is visible directly to the right of the keyboard.

- Officers -

President - David Stang

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