

# The Buckeye Backcheck

*Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild*  
Volume 36 Issue 1 January/February 2011



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello to all. It was nice to see so many of you at the holiday dinner. I really enjoy informal gatherings for a chance to relax and talk with everyone. It's always funny that no matter the setting, when we get together the conversation eventually steers itself to pianos and music. I guess that doesn't come as much of a shock to most of us though. We all have very different backgrounds but what we all have in common is an interest in music and a passion for the piano.

Everyone that I have spoken with lately is struggling with being extremely busy. Being busy is good... right? But when a busy work schedule is complicated by family issues, illness, weather, and other complications, it can all get really overwhelming. I think there is another reason that we enjoy our meetings. As piano tuners, we share a lot of the same business problems. But also, we share the everyday trials of being human. When we meet, I may learn about a new tool or technique, or I may learn from someone else's experience with everyday life.

So I hope that you can join us this month for the February meeting. We will be meeting at OSU to hear a presentation on the Wapin bridge pinning technique from Roy Peters of the Cincinnati chapter. We will be on the stage of Mershon Auditorium where Mitch has a Steinway D with the Wapin system. It is really going to be nice to not only see the technique but to hear the results. Hope to see you there.

The meeting will be at 7:30 February 15. The Mershon Auditorium is at 1871 N. High St. Access will be through the back stage door on High St. (NE corner of the building by the loading dock). Park in the Ohio Union parking garage, 1759 High St. or the Arps garage, 1990 College Rd.

Other news:

Thank you to Chris Burget for agreeing to take on the responsibilities of publishing our monthly newsletter. We also want to thank David Stang for the great work he has done with the newsletter in the past. We have been very fortunate to have his expertise and thank Chris for filling this need.

We are still discussing who could oversee our chapter web page. This is possibly our most visible exposure to the general public and of great benefit to all of us. Please consider volunteering for this position. David assures me that the web page is very low maintenance and will require a minimal amount of time. We will discuss it further at the February meeting. (Note from the President, you'll want to be sure to attend the meeting. Recent history has shown that truancy is rewarded with being elected in absentia!)

Chris

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## NEW YEAR DINNER

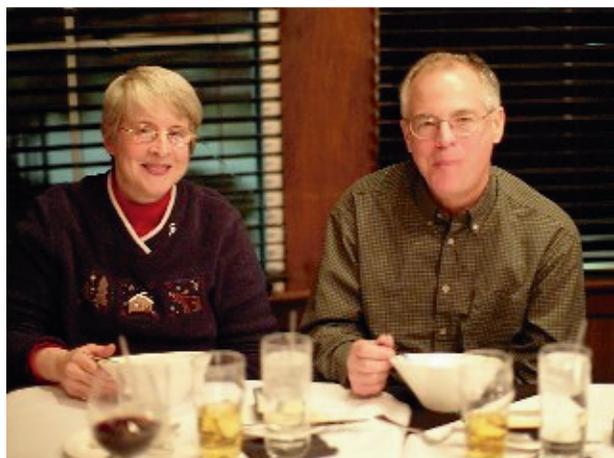
*Thanks to Mike Hill for these photos from the Jan. 15 dinner*



Mike and May Hill



Mark and Marilyn Ritchie



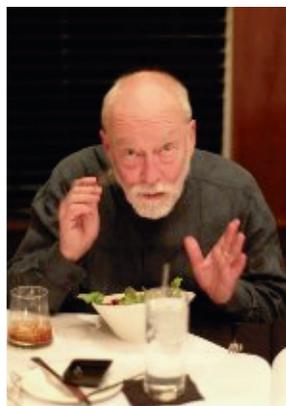
Kim and Bud Hoessly



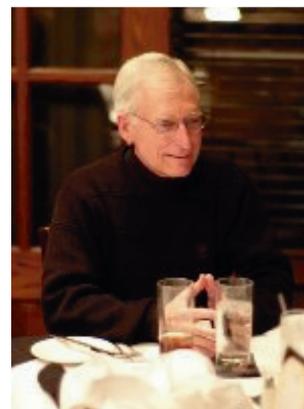
Barbara and Chris Altenburg



John and Judy Schmoll



Ben Wiant



Ron Kenreich

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## FROM THE PIANOTECH LIST

*Here are a couple of recent excerpts from the PTG "PianoTech" discussion list. They were part of a large thread about aural tuning. (As always, the disclaimer at the end of the newsletter applies!)*

David Andersen Jan. 27, 2011:

The beauty of our craft is that there are so many things to learn how to do, and so many ways to keep myself learning and keep things fresh. I have a huge drive to get better at things I'm good at; tuning, voicing, regulation, diagnostics, and rebuilding are deep oceans of opportunity to get better, to achieve mastery. It's my belief that humans function in a much healthier, more positive way if they are working toward mastery of something -- and then get there. Excellence breeds peer and self-respect, collegiality, and access to a better class of clients/pianos.

The quality of my work comes from my heart, and gut. I love the attitude of the vast majority of people on this list, because most of us are making a huge effort to be excellent. Part of that is praising each other, and seeing the incredible commonality among all the diversity -- being NICE to each other, as possibly cheesy at that sounds.

Ryan Sowers Thursday, January 27, 2011:

Tuning is mainly a mental activity. We tune with our minds. And the mind is by far the most sophisticated tool we own. And for our minds to stay keen, they need to be exercised, stretched, and given time and space to explore.

Aural tuning is one way I choose to keep my mind active while I work. When I tune, I'm navigating through a landscape of complex sound and harmonic interactions. In the course of a tuning, I'm making a thousand or more quick judgments and decisions. Every note is where it is because of a decision I have made, a decision reached by simply listening, thinking, feeling.

I remember agonizing over an old piano for hours and hours and it still wasn't a great tuning. It was hard

work! Exhausting and tedious. But eventually things began to fall into place. The 4-hour tuning became the 2-hour tuning. 10 years ago I never believed that I would be able to accomplish a solid tuning in an hour.

The new folks need all the encouragement they can get to persevere through the tough learning curve! They need to be mentored, nurtured, and praised for taking this challenge on.

Since we have calculators should our kids not have to learn their basic math skills? Since we have computers should we not learn how to write with pen and paper? Why do we learn to play piano, when we can pop in a CD and listen to a world class performance at the touch of a button?

I think as professionals we should also know something of the history of our craft too. The piano is an amazing intersection of culture, history, science, philosophy, art. The more I learn about it, the more of a kick I get out of this business. Learning to tune "by ear" the old fashioned way is a great way increase our appreciation.

A craftsman implies something more than "just getting the job done". It denotes a depth of understanding and skill that is beyond the generic and superficial. In this mass production, throw away culture that is being flung at us from every direction, I have hope that those activities that celebrate the richness of what we are will prevail.

## FREE TO A GOOD HOME

Free to a good home: Wurlitzer Console, c. 1980s, some water damage to case. Piano is on 315 just north of Worthington Hills (Mt. Air area). Contact Christopher Otaza, 646-621-4570. He is moving within the month out of state.

- Kim Hoessly



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[www.ptgcolumbus.org](http://www.ptgcolumbus.org)

## ON THE WEB

Check out the William Steinway Diary project. Steinway wrote a detailed diary for much of his life, and the Smithsonian Institution has made a searchable version of it available, plus a number of pictures:

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/steinwaydiary/>

## Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

<b>President</b>	Chris Purdy, RPT
<b>Vice-President</b>	Mark Ritchie, RPT
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ron Kenreich
<b>Secretary</b>	Christopher Burget
<b>Imm. Past Pres.</b>	Kim Hoessly, RPT

*Contributions and pictures for the Buckeye Backcheck and the web page are always welcome, (even if they are only peripherally related to pianos)!*

*- David*

## Upcoming Events

Tuesday, Feb 15, 2011, 7:30pm  
Chapter Meeting  
Mershon Auditorium, OSU  
Topic: Wapin Piano Bridge

Tuesday, March 15, 2011, 7:30pm  
Chapter Meeting  
Topic: Wes, Nickel & Gross  
Carbon Fiber parts

This newsletter was created using the open-source program *Scribus* running on the Linux/Ubuntu operating system.

### Disclaimer:

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Comments, articles, and advertising requests may be sent to the editor.

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