



## President's Message

### Mark Ritchie

This month ends my term as president for the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild. The two years have passed quickly and I would like to thank all

the members, guests, and stores that have been an active part of the Chapter. We have had some interesting and informative Chapter technicals with major manufactures representatives, local and visiting experts, and professionals from outside our field. I also had some fun at the gatherings!

During the past two years the Chapter has added five new associates to our membership, and we have at least three current associates well on their way to becoming RPT's. An important aspect of maintaining a healthy and active Chapter is new members. I'm happy to say that of the requests made to the Home Office, in regards to membership, the persons taking time to attend a few meetings have all followed up with membership applications. I think this speaks well for the Columbus Chapter.

In addition, serving as newsletter editor I would like to thank everyone who contributed articles, and a special thanks to Tom Harr for his contributions. The time has come for me to pass this responsibility on. Thanks to Dwight Hansen and David Stang who have agreed to act as co-editors for the Buckeye Backcheck.

This year marks my 30<sup>th</sup> year as a member of the PTG. I have witnessed many changes in the organization during those years. The one thing that hasn't seemed to change is the willingness of others to share their time and expertise. Thankfully, this is the greatest benefit of the organization. I hope our newest associates, and RPT's, will keep this in mind and continue that tradition.

Thanks,

Mark

## Meeting Minutes

Tuesday May 16, 2006

We want to thank Tony Cason and Worthington Christian Church for the use of the meeting room. Meeting called to order @7:41PM

Attendance: Kim Hoessly, Ron Kenrieck, Chris Altenburg, Mark Ritchie, Mike Varrone, Ben Wiant, Mike Hill, David Stang, Dwight Hannsen, Matt Scavo

Treasure's Report: \$2224.78

### New Business:

Congratulations to Mike Hill and Don Carle. They were accepted into membership.

We reviewed recommendations for the Convention on issues which were in the current Journal. Directed delegate from Chapter members input.

A vote was taken to amend the Chapter By-laws to permit Secretary and Treasurer to serve more than two years.

Elections were held and the results are:

President	Chris Altenburg
Vice President	Bob Grubb
Treasurer	Ron Kenrieck
Secretary	Mike Varrone

The position of newsletter Editor is opened.

Dwight Hansen and David Stang agreed to work as co-editors for the newsletter.

6' A.B. Chase is offered to be given away. It needs to be rebuilt. A Bush & Lane 5' grand is also available, the owner is asking \$500.00.

Contact Mark Ritchie

Meeting Adjourned: 8:45pm



## Name the Piano

The answer to last months decal is the infamous Lester spinet. Really, some were not as poor as reputed.



Kim Hoessly “up to her elbows” replacing the artist bench bushings.



Removing the adjusting mechanism, the entire process required about one hour.



Basic tools required for the job include electric screw driver and #1 & #2 phillips head, hex wrenches, masking tape, replacement bushings, and hex head screws, some cleaning materials.

**Technical**

*Kim Hoessly*

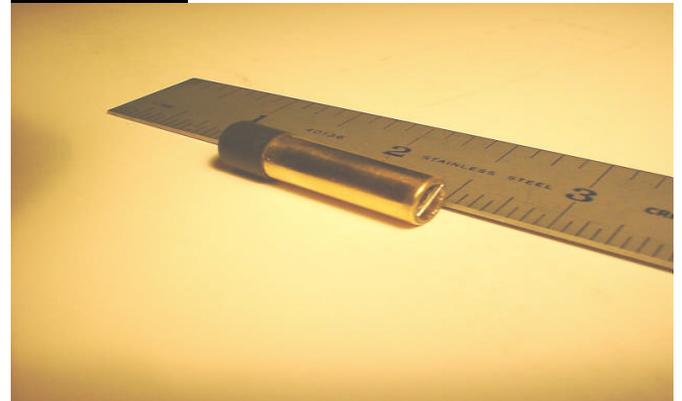
If you have ever sat on an unstable bench, you know how unsettling it is. It feels as though it could break at any minute. To actually perform with all of the rocking and noise associated with that is not acceptable.

*Arrives:* one artist bench from the Ohio Theater.

Kim tackled the project with an electric screw driver, straight blade screw driver, a phillips screw driver, needle nose pliers, 3/32” allen wrench, a 1/8” allen wrench and two 3/16” allen wrench. Kim demonstrated that the “rocking” was due to damaged and or missing bushings. She took the bench apart step by step and replaced the bushings. Extra helping hands were appreciated.

When you order replacement bushings for a bench from Jansen, they will send you the bushings as well as a reproduced article from the Dec. 2000 Journal that is quite detailed in repairing this bench.

**More Tools**



This little item is a LaRoy Edwards grand damper underlever set-screw adjuster (the name is longer than it is). I had a heavy walled piece of tubing just the right size for this one, but you could use telescoping tubes just as well. The bit is a piece of steel from a metal-cutting blade tapered on one edge and soldered in a slot. The finger grip is heat-shrink tubing.

**Staib-Abendschien“Mastertouch”Action**

*from Tom Harr*

Herewith some illustrations of an unusual vertical piano action which you may hope never to encounter, at least under the circumstances in which I have usually found it. Namely, in dim and smoky “western” bars in clapped-out old ex-players which have been beat to death by the concrete left hands and right feet of those who keep time thereby. Nothing against the action itself, it just seems to reside in low places. On the other hand, one nice example turned up in a country music “opry house” which bore a passing resemblance to Ryman Auditorium of fond memory. No garrulous drunks or loud jukeboxes there!

The immediately obvious features of the Staib-Abendschien “Mastertouch” action are the absence of bridle-tapes (that is, there *never were* any), and the peculiar location of the back-checks on the butts, instead of on the wippens, which act on the jacks. Or, it could be said that the jack acts as the check and the item on the butt is the back-catch. In any case, the problem arises from the very stiff conical spring, which causes the birds-eye to split right through the center-pin hole. In severe cases you will find the backs of the keys littered with little half-moon pieces of the frazines. And **hope** you find them all 'cause it's easier to repair them than make up replacements (keep them in order if you can). As you may see, the repair consists of drilling holes on either side of the birds-eye, gluing the bit back on, and securing it with a U-shaped piece of wire (about the size and shape of a hair-pin, which you could use if you have any), poked through the holes, the ends being twisted together. In the illustration (.....) is the split in the birds-eye and (\_\_\_ ---) is the path of the wire through the holes and around the piece being secured. (*see fig. # 3 next page*)

A couple of tips: You cannot remove the butts without first removing the hammer-rail. Which is easily done by bending the left-most swing out of the way to the right and shifting the rail to the left to disengage the other swings. And do not attempt to regulate the check-off without seizing the back-

check/catch with a pair of suitable pliers before trying to turn the rusted-up regulating screw lest you have another repair on your hands.

The ostensible objective of this design was improved repetition, for which phenomenal results were claimed. In fact, the simplified version was sold for player piano applications as a non-blocking action. You will note that the published diagram has lots of parts that did not make it into production. For one example the flange screw spring is present only on the butt flange. A previously undocumented change is the addition of a support rail under the sticker-tongues. Which would certainly render bridle tapes superfluous. Piano player mechanisms except for early models such as Melville Clark's pioneer Apollo built-ins all work either directly on the wippens or on the stickers as in the Baldwin Manuello, bypassing the keys and their limiting front rail cushion. Consequently some means of preventing the pneumatics from jamming the hammers into the strings was required. Skipping over a discussion of this matter, the point is that this would be impossible with the “Mastertouch” action which is probably why it only shows up in players or ex-players. Presumably the claimed or actual repetition potential impressed someone sufficiently to warrant its resurrection some 35 years later in a non-player incarnation. Unbelievably the Pratt-Read Co. actually tooled up to produce a near duplicate knock-off as the “Artist-touch” console action. To be fair, P-R may well have purchased S-A's assets at some point and had every right to the design, and they may well have hoped that it would overcome some of the limitations of the severely compromised compact console action (which led to some pretty desperate attempts at evasion such as heavily cranked keys, Weaver's rocker arms, and Baldwin's peculiar half-dropped action). In any event it didn't sell. Or not very well. Examples I have seen are so few that I can't now recall what make of piano they were installed in. Evidently the promise of better performance in a console did not outweigh the cost. *Credit for the original suggestion for the repair goes to The AMICA Bulletin.*





## **The Buckeye Backcheck**

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

*Mark Ritchie, Editor*

### **Upcoming Events**

Regular meetings are on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 7:30 PM

### **June 21-25 PTG Annual Convention & Institute**

Hyatt Regency Rochester, NY details at [ptg@ptg.org](mailto:ptg@ptg.org)

### **There will be no Chapter Meetings in June or July**

### **Central East Regional Seminar Oct. 13-15, 2006 in Cincinnati, OH**

Contact: Jon Ralinovsky 513-524-8863 for details.

#### **Disclaimer:**

All expressions of opinion and all statements of supposed facts are published on the authority of the author as listed and are not to be regarded as expressing the views of the Chapter or of the Piano Technicians Guild unless such statements or opinions have been adopted by the Chapter or the Guild.

Articles and original cartoons may be re-printed by other PTG newsletters with proper acknowledgement, unless otherwise indicated in the article. Comments, articles, and advertising requests may be sent to the editor.