

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

Volume 34 Issue 5 June 2009



GREAT TURNOUT FOR MAY MEETING



May Chapter Meeting at Henderson's Music: Ben Wiant, David Stang, Ron Kenreich, Marilyn Ritchie; Bob Grubb, Phil Walters, Chris Burget, Darren Jackson, Victor Wolfe, Mark Ritchie.

From the President

First, I want to thank everyone for a great turnout at the May Meeting and also a big thanks to everyone at Henderson's for hosting our meeting. We really appreciate all the dealer support for the Chapter!

Second, thanks out to Phil Walters for a fine technical on the Stanwood System and key weights. That is certainly an area that is getting more and more attention in the rebuilding and restoration of fine pianos. There is always something new to learn in that department.

Third, thanks to all the members present who gave suggestions for meeting technicals for next year. I'll be getting some of those together over the summer and should have meeting techs set up at least through January by the time of our "season opener" in September.

And thanks in advance to Rick Miller and family for agreeing to host our annual Chapter Picnic in June. Check your mail for details!

I know some of you are planning to attend the National Convention in Grand Rapids and some are, as yet, undecided. I know it may be easier said than done to quip that "you can't afford not to go", but there is some truth to that, especially if you are just starting out in your career in piano work. There is so much to learn about our business and going to a National or a Regional convention is a great way to jump start the learning process. For those who have been around the block more than a few times, there is always some new tool or technique to add to the tool bag that will make it worth your while. And of course, come tax time next year, you'll have a nice, big, undeniable deduction.

- Kim

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

MEETING MINUTES MAY 19, 2009

The meeting was held at Henderson's Music.

Attendance: Kim Hoessly, Chris Altenburg, Ron Kenreich, David Stang, Mark Ritchie, Marilyn Ritchie, Victor Wolfe, Ben Wyant, Richard Miller, Bryan Hartzler, Bob Grubb, Chris Purdy, Phil Walters, Chris Burget, and guests Federico Gambina and Darren Jackson.

Treasurer's Report

We presently hold \$2000 in CDs and \$902.94 in checking, totaling \$2902.94.

Ron has been taking care of making sure we are properly registered with the IRS as a 501(c) organization.

President's Report

From the "Leader Letter": Recent editions of the PTG Journal are now available online. Also graphics standards are available online at the PTG National website.

Old Business

Rick Miller will be hosting our chapter picnic Sunday June 28 at 4pm. Invitations will be sent out by way of paper mail.

There were suggestions for technicals next year: String repair and replacement; Looking at rebuilt pianos (possibly Bryan's Steinway and Baldwin); Bridge repair; Regulation; Tilting, moving and shipping; Finish touch-up.

New Business

Instruction for Delegate to Council (Chris Purdy).

We discussed the Proposals that will be brought to national council this July at the convention. This was an informal discussion, not a formal vote. The group was in general agreement with the recommendations of the By-Laws committee as printed in the May 2009 Journal Supplement. Proposals 6 and 7 are noteworthy as they involve new categories of membership. We felt that these were not bad ideas, but the proposals as written do not provide enough detail to deserve passage. The Chapter gave Chris the right to use his discretion after hearing discussion at Council on these issues.

Our chapter will place ads in the annual directories of the OMTA and the AGO, as we generally do every year.

Chapter Elections

Mark Ritchie moved that our present officers remain in their respective offices for another year, and it was passed unanimously.

David Stang mentioned that the positions of Newsletter Editor and Web Master are appointed and not necessarily held by the Secretary. Volunteers to help are always welcome.

Upcoming Meetings

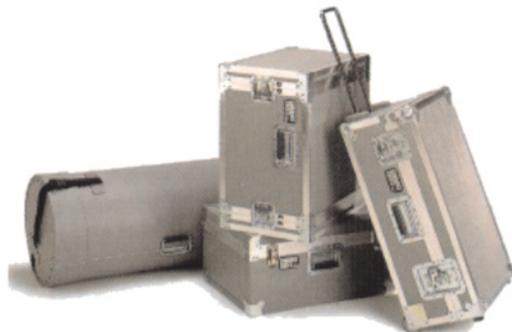
June 28: Chapter Picnic, at Rick Miller's home.

Sept 15: Tentatively at Bryan Hartzler's workshop.

There will be no chapter meetings in July or August.

Butts and Flanges - From Kim: Cabbage Cases

For those of you who don't know, my husband, Bud, works for Cabbage Cases, Inc., a company that makes custom carrying and shipping cases for just about anything and everything (you can check out their website at <http://www.cabbagescases.com/>)



The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

Technical Presentation: Key Touch Weights

At the May Chapter Meeting Phil Walters spoke about key weights and the Stanwood TouchWeight system. There are many ways to improve an action and many levels of refinement.

A first quick check anyone can do at a customer's location is to depress a key and place 4 nickels on it. The key should be able to lift them (approximately 20 grams.) Do this on a sample of keys over the range of the keyboard and if keys can not lift 20 grams (Up-Weight) there is likely a friction problem.

Friction and key balance can be quantified, as Phil demonstrated using an action model and a set of weights. Down-weight (D) is what it takes to push the key down, and Up-weight (U) is what key will push back up. Friction = $(D-U)/2$. So, a large difference between U and D means lots of friction. Addressing friction by improving key bushing and/or hammer center pins can dramatically improve a piano's playability.

The next step in refinement is looking at the key balance weight, $(D+U)/2$. Different players like different key weights, and key leads can be removed or installed to make the keyboard nice and consistent all the way across.

The Stanwood TouchWeight system is a method to go beyond friction and balance, to quantify strike weight and action ratio. Phil demonstrated these measurements using a scale to weigh the individual components of the action.

Strike weight is the weight of the hammer and shank. Action Ratio is the ratio of key movement to hammer movement and can be measured through precise weighing.



Gram Weight set

Stanwood publishes charts which illustrate how these quantities can be optimised. For instance, rather than adding weights to the front of a key, a target balance can be achieved by removing weight from the hammer. Also, action ratio can be optimised by changes in geometry. A felt punching cut in half placed at the center pin changes the key balance point and therefore changes the key ratio. Capstan movement and even changing its angle can significantly change the action ratio.

For more information, see Stanwood's web site at www.stanwoodpiano.com, where there are links to his PTG Journal articles.

Photos from the May Meeting are by Kim Hoessly.

ADDENDUM

Last month *The Buckeye Backcheck* published pictures of a folding table that Ron May uses for transporting actions. Here they are again with a very important picture that was left out: the table as it looks folded up so you can see how compact it is!



The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

FROM THE PIANO WORLD FORUM

The World's Longest Piano

Dan Silverwood writes:

Have a look at this:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x57kcRdojrY>



I have seen a couple of other links for this one already. At 5.4 meters it is a long one for sure, almost 20 ft.

(I could be mistaken on this point but I thought the Beijing Piano company constructed a 25 footer for some inaugural event over there a while back.)

I have not seen many details or technical information about this piano yet.

By having a closer at the video you will see inside shots of the plate and the strengthening bar (looks like a 2 X 6 in the middle of the frame structure) the bridgework, and also there is an action model that is shown which looks like a direct blow action he built. I have also learned that he made 4 sets of keys before he was satisfied with the results.

Adrian Mann writes:

Hi Dan,

My name is Adrian Mann builder of the giant Alexander piano.

I was just on the net as it is interesting to see all the commotion and to see the comments and interesting arguments. I saw your comment and was pleased to hear it. There many critics and someone with an open mind can be hard to find especially, as I have found out over time, in the piano world.

The recordings that I hear on the net are what I consider to be crap as the quality and size of the article are reduced (as many people are downloading it). TV people are not interested in the sound so much and are always after a good story.

The piano is not perfect in any way and there is much development to be done. I was talking to a sound enthusiast in Auckland and he was talking all about in harmonics and overtones. He said that the bass strings are closer to their natural speaking length and should produce a much clearer tone or a more pure vibration with less overtones and there is something distinctly different about the sound in the bass, that and the soundboard is so big and displaces such a huge column of air something has to change. It's the sheer volume and the distance that the sound will travel.

The bass string is 4.662 meters long from bridge to bridge. The string scale is the same concert grand scale till you get down to the 21 note and it just continues getting longer. The maximum length for a bass C or A I can't remember, is 22'6" bridge to bridge for gage13 at normal tension. Also I heard if a Chinese piano that is about 15' Xanchi or something, I can only find a photo of the keyboard (that tells me nothing) the Rubenstein 12'2" the klavins12'1" and Challen11'8".

There will be a professional DVD available of the entire inaugural recital of the piano and it will have decent sound.

Cheers,

Adrian Mann



The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

www.ptgcolumbus.org

Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

President Kim Hoessly, RPT
Vice-President Chris Altenburg, RPT
Treasurer Ron Kenreich
Secretary David Stang

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

- David

Thank you to Kim Hoessly and
Mark Ritchie for their contributions
in this issue.

The *Buckeye Backcheck* will be on
vacation until September. Have a
great summer.

Upcoming Events

Chapter Picnic

Sunday June 28, 2009, 4:00pm
Rick Miller's home
799 Colony Ct.
Check your (paper) mail for an invitation
Check the web site for directions

No Chapter Meeting in June, July, or August

Annual Convention and Institute

July 15 - 19, 2009
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Visit www.ptg.org/conv/2009
Bookmark it and check often for updates.

Chapter Meeting

September 15, 2009
Tentatively at Bryan Hartzler's workshop.

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

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 Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild unless such statements or opinions have been adopted by the chapter or the guild.

Articles and illustrations may be re-printed by other PTG newsletters with proper acknowledgment, unless otherwise indicated in the article.

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

David B. Stang, 286 E. Kelso Rd., Columbus, OH 43202 stang_db@yahoo.com