

# The Buckeye Backcheck

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

**Volume 45    Issue 2    March 2020**



Greetings Members and Friends,

At our last meeting we looked at and discussed the use and purpose of some unfamiliar and unique tools. The Down Bearing instrument with it's reading for the front and rear down bearing is very useful in calculating readings but I still have questions as to its ultimate purpose regarding its front and rear angles. I will be researching its optimal use for another meeting's topic. Also, Chapter member Chris Burget has found online very good information for the Erwin Action Ratio Gauge, its use as an ultimate diagnostic tool that can help precisely determine the desired weight of new hammers in a grand piano action. will also be brought up in another meeting sometime soon.

One tool we use on a daily basis is our perception of all key static and motion parameters. As we proceed through our pattern of tuning we have the luxury of touch to access movement, friction, lost motion, let-off, back check and a great number of points of contact, which, in most cases are well set or have touch and/or tone related issues. Depending on the instrument and it's owner this is important to explain how discrepancies in the marriage of keyboard and action can be regulated for a more refined touch and tone.

I have, on many occasions, improved only the hammer blow distance which was too wide and I set the blow distance. Once the client plays the keyboard they are amazed by the change. This brings us to discuss with the client the entire regulation and hammer voicing for another appointment in the future.

On a voicing note... I have, with the clients permission, filed the hammers and then performed mating the hammers to the strings. The result is usually transforming.

Altogether, the many parts that move and aid in touch and tone can be discussed with the client. Most people welcome the discussion and this brings the interest to invest in the overall improvement in their family heirloom and the music it makes.

David Chadwick RPT

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## Chapter Meeting Minutes February 18, 2020

The meeting was held at Solich Piano.

### Attendance:

David Chadwick, Chris Burget, Ron Kenreich, David Stang, Walter Bagnall, Phil Walters, and guest Taylor Zachary.

### Treasurer's Report:

\$1,449.41

### Old Business:

Ron Kenreich made our annual contribution to the Ohio Music Teachers Association Summer Scholarship Fund in the amount of \$200.

### New Business:

David Chadwick inquired if any one may be interested in becoming a Chapter Officer for this next year. Elections are in May.

Mark Ritchie notified the Home Office of Ben Wiant's passing and acknowledgement will be posted in the April issue of the PTG Journal.



**PTG MARC 2020**

Piano Technicians Guild  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention

Thursday, April 23 - Sunday, April 26

[ptgmarc.org](http://ptgmarc.org)

## Butts & Flanges

David Stang mentioned that he recently worked on a Samick vertical that had a damper trap lever issue where it had completely separated from its pivot mount. The trap lever itself is basically a shaped metal tube that is welded to a central pivot, as opposed to a more traditional wooden lever that has a U-spring of some sort that it pivots on. He was inquiring about ideas to fix it. Chris Burget mentioned that many modern Yamaha verticals have a similar set up, but have tiny set screws instead of welds. These screws are really small and are prone to failure after rigorous use. As the damper pedal is engaged, the trap lever moves up and down, but also may have a slight rotational motion that eventually cuts into the screws, eventually shearing them in half. We surmised that a similar scenario may have weakened the solder joints. It was suggested that he drill a hole all the way through the trap lever tube, as well as a hole in the bracket of the pivot mount at the appropriate spot, then feed a bolt 2-3 inches long up through the bracket and through the trap lever and fasten a locking nut or wing nut on top. The 2-3 inch length facilitates ease of feeding through the holes and gasping as the trap lever is attached to the pivot. Then place a washer then the desired nut on the bolt and tighten.

## Thank You!!



Sincere thanks and gratitude for the cards, condolences, words of kindness, and flowers sent from the Chapter to my mother's memorial service. It is very much appreciated by myself and my family. Thank you and much love to all of you in return!

Chris Burget

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## Advisory - COVID-19 and Piano Care

The following is a reprint of an email advisory sent from the Home Office.

The Corona Virus (COVID-19) is having a major impact throughout the world and that includes the world of the piano technician. The Piano Technicians Guild is making the following suggestions for its members as they work in homes and other buildings and facilities.

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has specific tips for preparation, protection and care. You can view this information at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/index.html) or at <https://tinyurl.com/yx28qzx7>
2. Special care should be taken when using disinfectant products on a piano. Our thanks to Greg Cheng, RPT, for his invaluable assistance in developing these recommendations.

### General Recommendations

- Use alcohol-based disinfectants, do not use bleach-based disinfectants or any product containing citrus.
- If using a spray or liquid bottle, use a disposable towel like WYPALL L30. Put the disinfectant on the towel and not the piano.
- After use, immediately put the towel or disinfectant hand wipe in the trash and wash your hands as the CDC recommends. Do not use reusable towels or cloths which could spread germs to your kit or the next customer.
- Always follow up with a dry towel and never leave any liquids on the piano or keys.

### Keys

The keys are the most important part. Generally speaking, most disinfecting wipes or sprays should be safe to use on the keys. If the keys are dirty, Cheng suggests using Cory Key-Brite to clean and then follow up with the disinfecting wipes or sprays.

### Case Parts

Always test the disinfectant in a discrete area before moving forward to ensure there is no adverse reaction. Check to make sure the finish does not come off on the wipe or towel, the finish discolors or changes sheen. If none of this happens after a few minutes, you should be able to proceed.

High gloss polyester is the most durable to almost any store-bought disinfectants. Always do the test first. If the finish is dirty, Cheng suggests Windex or Cory Pre-Polish Finish Cleaner, followed by the disinfectant, then for the final step use the Cory Super High-Gloss Piano Polish. Make sure to always follow up with a dry towel.

Polyurethane and lacquer finishes require a more careful approach. Disinfectant wipes and sprays may be harmful to these finishes. Test an area first. In these cases, Cheng recommends a few drops of hand/dish soap with warm water on a towel. Make sure to always follow up with a dry towel.

For satin pianos always wipe down the piano in the direction of the 'hand rubbed' finish or grain. Going in the opposite direction may result in hazing or scratch marks.

Aged, alligatored, and damaged finishes are a challenge. It is difficult to know what is best to keep the integrity of the finish and still clean thoroughly. Always test an area and proceed with caution.

Cleaning pianos is a gentle process not a scrubbing process. Pressing hard or vigorous scrubbing may lead to scratching or removing the finish. Always proceed with caution and use common sense. Remember to wash your hands after you have thrown away the towels or wipes.

More discussions about COVID-19 and other piano related topics can be found at [www.my.ptg.org](http://www.my.ptg.org).

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## More Tool Time With David Chadwick

The February meeting was once again held at Solich Piano with David Chadwick showing us a couple of his tools: a down bearing gauge from Schaff (#3138); and an action ratio gauge made by Dale Erwin.

The downbearing gauge is a variation of a traditional dial depth gauge with the addition of two extra feet on either side of the plunger. The dial itself has a rotating face with markings denoting measurements to .001 inches. The face rotates as needed to "zero" out to a desired measurement, from which all subsequent measurements can be compared. A traditional downbearing gauge will rock back and forth on the bridge and requires the use of additional automotive feeler gauges to be placed between the foot and string segment being measured if you are trying to find an exact measurement. This tool combines those two tools into one, so to speak, as it displays the measurement on the dial as it is rocked back and forth. These tools are extremely sensitive and require some practice using. It may be attached to a stand or holder if needed to minimize shaking. It is useful during rebuilding when trying to establish plate height in relation to the bridges. It can also be used in the field to diagnose various bridge or soundboard issues, such as excessive or negative downbearing. Following is a youtube link that, while not showing the use of this exact tool, does show the basics of reading dial gauges in general:

<https://youtu.be/TrRcEg0NB9A>

The other tool was a gauge to help measure action ratio, which can be useful during action regulation, modifying action geometry, as well as the selection of new hammers and what weight to use. It consists of a depth gauge as well as a block placed on the keys with a foot that extends exactly 6mm lower. On one side of the block are various measurements corresponding to different ratios. When used, a key is depressed 6mm, then the hammer that has risen is measured in mm against a neighboring hammer with the depth gauge. That measurement is then divided by 6, resulting in the ratio of key travel to hammer travel. This measurement can then be used with additional measurements of friction, up and down weight, capstan location, and other such specifications that may influence what weight of hammers to order, or how much weight to take off an existing set. This version of the tool was made by Dale Erwin, and present models of the tool, as well as instructions, are available from Supply 88.com at:

<https://supply88.com/collections/featured-products/products/erwin-action-ratio-gauge>



Dale Erwin

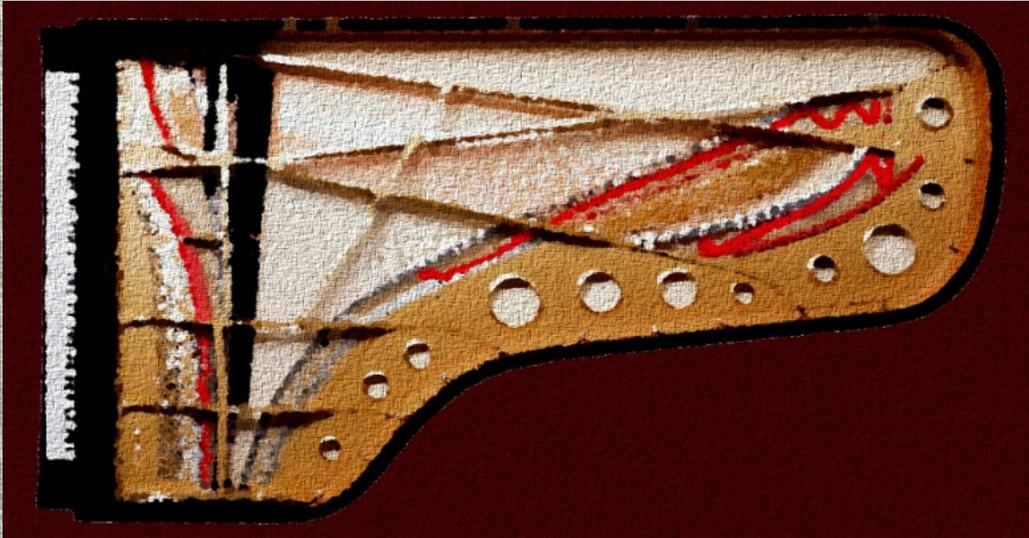


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[www.ptgcolumbus.org](http://www.ptgcolumbus.org)

## Smashing! Movers drop Canadian virtuoso's \$194,000 piano



<https://tinyurl.com/uxvhnoh>

### Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

- Officers -

<b>President</b>	David Chadwick, RPT
<b>Vice-President</b>	Chris Purdy, RPT
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ron Kenreich
<b>Secretary</b>	Chris Burget
<b>Imm. Past Pres.</b>	Mitch Staples, RPT

**Chapter Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 17**  
**7:00pm**

**Cancelled**

#### Disclaimer:

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