

# The Buckeye Backcheck

*Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild*  
Volume 36 Issue 4 May 2011



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



### Request for Council Delegate's Instructions:

I received the delegate's council book today and it looks like a pretty light agenda. There are only two proposed bylaw amendments. The first is a simple wording change concerning chapter dissolution. Basically, if a chapter goes under, it's assets are used to pay any outstanding obligations or returned to members. However any assets not obligated under either of those situations would be conveyed to the PTG Foundation. Formally those assets were assigned to the Library, but since the Library is funded entirely through the Foundation, this streamlines the process. The Bylaws Committee and the Board both recommend adoption.

The second issue is the proposal of a LaRoy Edwards Dedicated Instructor Award to be awarded to a qualified instructor at the national convention each year. The Bylaws Committee and the Board both recommend defeat of this proposal. Though they are both in unanimous respect for Mr. Edwards, neither sees a compelling reason to create yet another award in addition to the Golden Hammer Award, Hall Of Fame, Member Of Note, etc.

Other issues that may concern the Columbus Chapter are the officer elections. They are all uncontested with one exception. Jim Coleman Jr. is running for President unopposed, as is Norman Cantrell for Treasurer. The exception is the VP race. The nominating committee recommends Chris Solliday, however Laura Olsen is also nominated.

Of course there is the annual request for a raise in dues of \$20. (our RVP is one of only two to oppose this proposal) I quote from the request for action, "The Board recommends that the PTG continue on track to become a dues-based organization. With the economy showing signs of improving, and convention and merchandise sales not showing any signs of gain, it is important that we continue on this track to provide better member services and benefits." If you have an opinion about this proposal, please make your voice heard at our chapter meeting this month. Additionally, if you have specific questions about this issue, forward them to me and I can ask directly at the council meeting.

Finally, the Regional Caucus will be meeting and elect a Regional VP. Our current Central East RVP is Richard Bittner, and he is the sole candidate nominated for election. If you have a personal preference for this position please let me know.

The entire Council Agenda is published in detail in the Forms and Documents section in the Member Area of [www.ptg.org](http://www.ptg.org). Please take a moment to look over any portion that you have a personal interest in. These decisions will be discussed at the May meeting. I will receive your instructions and vote accordingly.

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## Message From The Editor

On behalf of everyone in the Chapter, I would like to welcome Doug Meszaros, our newest member, to the group. We hope you find it an enjoyable learning experience where you can share in common your interest in this curious instrument, the piano... with people who may be curiosities themselves!

Also, thanks to Chris Purdy for the job he's done as our President. You know, Chris, if you were tired of being nominated for things in absentia you could've just said something. It's not like you have to go and move to Tennessee on us. Jeez! All kidding aside, good luck in your new endeavors! Our loss is Tennessee's gain, you will be missed!

## Chapter Meeting Minutes April 19, 2011

The meeting was held at Graves Piano & Organ Co.

### Attendance:

Chris Purdy, Mark Ritchie, Marilyn Ritchie, Ron Kenreich, Chris Burget, Chris Altenburg, Bob Grubb, Doug Meszaros, John Schmoll, Phillip Walters, Ben Wiant

### Treasurer's Report:

At the time of the April meeting we had \$2,200.00 in CD's and \$101.93 in checking. This will go up soon as the Chapter's portion of member dues are sent in from the Home Office.

### Old Business:

The Chapter still has not heard a final decision on grant money from the Home Office for the Piano Forte Event planned for this Fall.

Scott Jones will not be able to present the technical on the TouchRail System in May. It will have to be postponed for a later date.

### New Business:

The Chapter voted to approve Doug Meszaros' application for membership in The Chapter.

Chris Purdy volunteered, if no one else could, to be the Chapter's Delegate to the PTG National Convention in Kansas City.

Chris Purdy formally announced that he would be moving out of state and could not serve another term as Chapter President.

The Chapter voted to have a dinner meeting in May in lieu of a technical presentation.

## Chris Purdy's Moving Sale!

I'd really like to unload some of the pianos that have been stacking up here. I am willing to sell them for what I have in them which in most cases is not much. I'll make quantity discounts if you are interested in more than one! Call for more info or to come see them. I need to move these pianos very soon so if you are interested in something, please contact me immediately! Pianos are in Athens, OH. I may be able to help arrange moving.

Chris Purdy cell# (740) 590-3842

1. Remington player piano, tunable, has all the player action \$150.
2. Smith & Barnes small grand, needs rebuild \$200.
3. Two Steinway square grands, very early serial #'s \$200 @.
4. Another square grand, very pretty but needs work, \$100.
5. Beautiful german upright, needs restringing, \$200.
6. Chickering upright, old but solid, \$200.
7. Ivers & Pond upright, very well built, \$200.
8. Strich & Zeidler upright, breathtaking case, original carving, very beautiful, \$400.
9. Baldwin C (same as the L) needs everything. \$200.
10. Baldwin C, better shape, needs restringing, \$3,000.
11. Chickering grand, old but solid, \$700.
12. Baldwin upright, very early serial number, beautiful carving and case, \$300.
13. Stultz grand, nothing very special but cheap, \$300.

## ...And Wheels Used To Spin Backwards In 70's Action Flicks...



[www.vimeo.com/4041788](http://www.vimeo.com/4041788)

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## Technical Presentation: Wessell, Nickel & Gross Composite Action Parts

Wessell, Nickel & Gross (WNG) representative Mike Collins gave the technical presentation that highlighted the variety of action parts and tools now offered by WNG. First, he gave a brief history of the company and its different eras under various owners. He then went on to discuss how WNG desired to build action parts that were extremely uniform and consistent in both mass and dimension that were also resistant to changing environmental conditions. For centuries, wood was the most practical material, but its mass and dimension can change as much as 14% over time due to climactic variations. Such a change can totally disrupt fine regulation points like let off, drop and aftertouch, just to name a few. So, WNG came up with some different materials consisting of carbon and nylon fibers, escaine in place of buckskin, as well as some other polymers for things like bushings (the actual bushing material is a trade secret and he'd "have to kill me" if he told me). One advantage of these materials is the ease of duplicating many exact replicas of the same part to exacting degrees of tolerance. This also translates to ease for the technician because such consistency will make regulation that much easier and longer lasting. These composite parts won't dry out or become brittle over time like wood action parts.

It is beyond the scope of this article to expound fully on all the topics covered or engage in the "plastic vs. wood" debate, but one of Mr. Collin's illustrations of the viability of these products is the motion of the hammer shank. The hammer and shank accelerate at roughly five times the rate of key travel, which also happens to be comparable to the "action ratio" between key dip and hammer blow distance. A wooden shank tends to flex backwards slightly at the beginning of this acceleration from the static weight of the hammer on the end of the shank. Then, like a spring, it flexes upward and some of the energy that would otherwise be transferred to the string is lost in this flexing motion due to friction within the wood fibers. And once the hammer and shank rebound off the string the shank will flex again and again, side to side, to and fro, in many different directions. So, on very fast repetitive key strikes, as in trills, further energy is lost. Add to that, each shank is different like a fingerprint with a slightly different orientation and tightness of the wood grains; and this can vary across a whole set. The composite shank, however, is much more uniform and stiff and flexes very little, so energy is transferred more efficiently and more predictably from note to note. These shanks are actually tubes that have the same outer diameter but different "wall thicknesses" to mimic the traditional tapering of the shanks to control mass in the bass, tenor and treble sections. Some technicians may miss having the option to control volume and sustain of a note by shaving and tapering the shank, but Mr. Collins thinks that much of that need would be rendered moot by WNG's approach. This is but one highlight among others that focused on other parts of the action. We also had the opportunity for some hands-on assembly of parts.

WNG produces sample kits to create customized actions with variable knuckle and heel configurations utilizing a "slotted orientation" system to make placement of these parts easier to measure. All repetitions can also be ordered "turbo whipped" with repetition springs. They also produce full "back actions" and sostenutos as well as key rail pins and various pieces of hardware like glidebolts, perimeter bolts, leg plates, and etc.... They also have expanded their line of regulating tools which, to the author, look to be very well made and ergonomically designed. They also have an interesting and clever take on the key dip tool which works for naturals and sharps. Also available are various jigs and drill bits and extensions.

The website is pretty informative, as well, with many articles and high resolution videos demonstrating techniques for installing and using their products. If using their parts, Mr. Collins clearly states that one should read all associated literature and watch all relevant videos because there are some deviations from some traditional techniques. For more information, go to: [www.wesselnickelandgross.com](http://www.wesselnickelandgross.com)





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



## Got A Screw Loose...?

Mark Ritchie recommends this interesting site for all kinds of raw materials, fasteners, cutting tools, etc...

[www.smallparts.com](http://www.smallparts.com)

### 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)!*

*- Chris Burget*

### Upcoming Events

Tuesday, May 17, 2011, 7:00pm  
Chapter Meeting

Donatos Pizza  
861 N State St  
Westerville, OH 43082

Map Link: <http://mapq.st/lbG988>

Topic: Chapter Elections,  
Delegate Agenda,  
Associate Member Assistance  
Suggestions

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

#### Disclaimer:

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

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