

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

Volume 44 Issue 3 May 2019



President's Message

Greetings Members and friends,

I have experienced a surge in client activity in the past month mostly for tuning and minor issues. I ask you, does this have anything to do with the arrival of the warmer days and springtime activities?

There is an adjustment in our post winter patterns that command us to a more outdoor experience. In the business of piano technicians, our habits and routines start to reflect this seasonal change in a way of expression to and from our customers. The way I am dressed, the way I talk with my clients about the emerging floral and colorful front yard landscaping receiving the welcome of a new spring. I try to keep my talk about the weather brief but it's always nice to see my clients smiles when complimented.

I enjoy the greeting ritual immensely, but there is no good way that I have found to segue to the instrument for getting information about known irregularities. This is helpful information upon opening the piano's cabinet which is now exhibiting its total silence.

Usually when asked, we are told about some minor issues with a key that doesn't repeat as it should or there might be some string ringing after the key release. From this point I have a good idea what to look for and/or listen to what needs attention.

With the piano pitch raised, fine tuned and solved the sluggish issues, I might do a quick adjustment of back checking or a light voicing or something that will improve the status of playback. I'll explain this to the owner who is now smiling and grateful for my extra efforts. Then, discussing the findings of other needed repairs that need attention which will enhance the overall musical experience, this will usually be a booked date for service to follow.

As I leave the home, church, business or any place I have been hired, the departure is just as cordial and enjoyable as when I walked in the door 2 hours before. The emerging of springtime is remarkable!

David Chadwick, RPT

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Chapter Meeting Minutes

April 16, 2019

The meeting was held at Solich Piano Columbus.

Attendance:

David Chadwick, Ron Kenreich, Chris Burget, Kim Hoessly, Dwight Hansen, Chris Altenburg, David Stang, and new member Justin Swain.

Treasurer's Report:

\$1,880.06

Old Business:

Chris Burget and Kim Hoessly are planning to meet over the summer to go over the by-laws and make sure they conform to the national ones and make some housekeeping edits, if needed, then bring the changes back to the Chapter for a vote. They were last revised in 2014, and can be viewed on the Chapter website at: <https://www.ptgcolumbus.org/bylaws.html>

New Business:

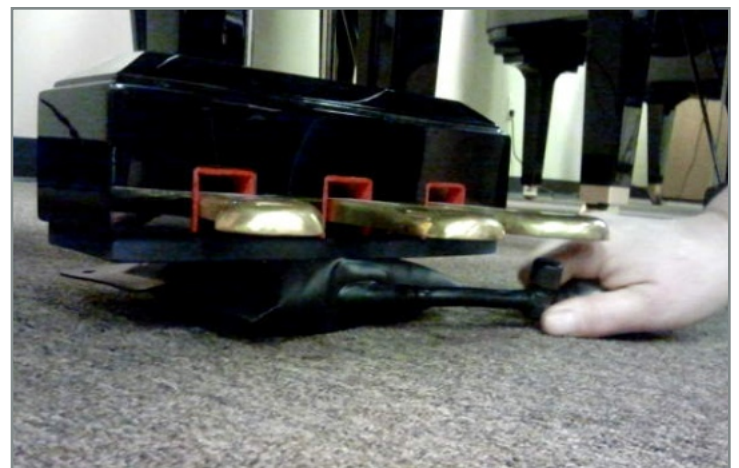
The May technical will be given by Bryan Hartzler and will cover action geometry. He will also be hosting the meeting at his shop in Galena.

Future technicals were discussed, and David Chadwick said that he has a couple of pianos that may work for technicals. One is a Mason & Hamlin BB grand that he is rebuilding. He has been thinking of doing a partial/sectional pinblock replacement a la Chuck Behm, where the tuning pin field is cut out, a new piece fit in and then drilled for tuning pins. This could possibly be a daytime technical on a Saturday, perhaps? He also has a Steinway console that has seen some extensive mouse damage, so he was thinking of a "de-mousing" technical. Some tuning oriented technicals were also discussed, including various people's temperament sequences, or comparisons of different temperaments, as well as a tuning test simulation, or primer, of some sort.

Butts & Flanges

Kim Hoessly showed us a nifty item she recently purchased that comes in handy when installing grand lyres. It is the "AirShim Inflatable Pry Bar & Leveling Tool" available at Lowe's and Home Depot. According to the product website, "It is powerful enough to support up to 300 pounds and soft so it won't scratch surfaces. The AirShim spans gaps from 3/32" to 2-1/2" and eliminates the need for shims and wedges... Just squeeze the easy-to-use hand pump until you get the object you're working on into position. Use it as an inflatable pry bar to lift, shift, align, level, plumb, adjust, or just hold materials still." There are several sizes available. Kim places hers underneath the pedalbox on lyres to act as a third hand when reinstalling the lyre supports, which can be tricky at times. For more information, go to:

<https://www.calculated.com/products/24/AirShim.html>



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Yamaha Hammer Return Spring Cord Replacement

The April meeting was held at Solich Piano Columbus, and Kim Hoessly gave the technical presentation on replacing Yamaha vertical hammer return spring cords. Thanks to Solich as well for the generous Italian buffet style dinner that was offered.

Yamaha, as well as some other Asian and European manufacturers, use a hammer butt return spring design that is different from American and older European verticals. Traditional designs have the springs mounted onto a separate rail in the action, and Asian style springs are mounted directly into the hammer butt which are, in turn, hooked onto cords that are attached to the hammer butt flanges. Over time, these cords deteriorate and break, resulting in hammers that may not reset consistently. If you see a couple of them broken, it's usually only a matter of time before more start going. Kim showed us her method of replacing whole sets using a jig that saves considerable time and effort.

Kim started off by explaining the the different types of hammer butts found in these pianos: those with traditional bird's eyes; and those with butt plates. The butt plates hold the centerpins in place and can be tightened by a set screw. These may also loosen up over time resulting in centerpins walking out.

There are some things to consider here. Are you going to do just a few broken ones, or replace the whole set? Are you going to repair the cords, or rplace the flanges with new cords attached instead? You can just replace the flanges, but bear in mind, that they may have slightly different dimensions than the originals, which may require a lot of regulation work later on. So, whatever time that may have been saved up front, may be lost in the end. Kim has done both enough for her to lean on repairing the cords and returning all the original flanges and screws to their original positions, and the use of this jig makes the difference for her.

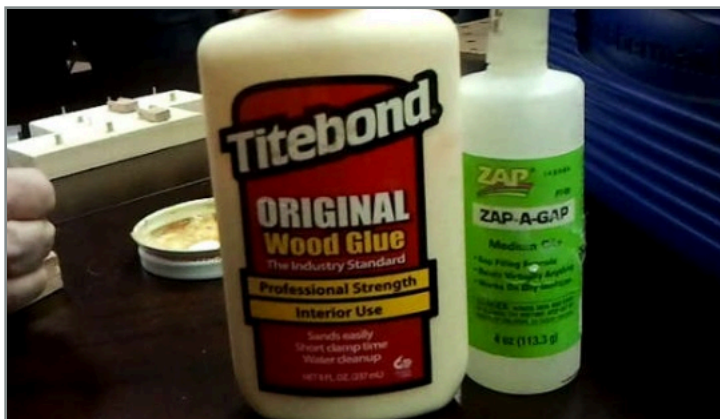
The jig itself is a board with sixteen pegs that allow for easy placement and manipulation of flanges, and sixteen pins for easy placement and wrapping of spring cords. The pins are just short of 1 1/4" away from their corresponding pegs. The pegs are just small dowel rod pieces inserted into drilled holes in the board. They are small enough for the flange screw holes to fit onto without being too tight or too loose; you want them to be able to easily rotate on the pegs without any slop, so sand them as needed. The pins are brads driven into the board, then trimmed. You can also use centerpins, instead.

The basic idea is to place the flanges on the jig, clean the slots of old string and glue, then restring and glue the flanges on one side each, then go back and wrap/bend the strings around the pins using them as guides approximating where the springs would normally hook on, and glue the other end of each string.



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Kim placed some flanges on the pegs and rotated them so the arms were in the 6:00 position. She then took a serrated pull saw/knife, with a blade that closely matched the width of the string slots on the flanges, and proceeded to clean out the slots by lightly sawing back and forth a bit. This is much quicker than trying to use a razor. Once cleaned, the flanges can be rotated to match their pins. Next is replacing the cords.

For replacement cords, Kim used fishing line, specifically, Cortland Greenspot 20 lb test Dacron trolling line. Use Dacron instead of plastic line, if possible. Her spool was 150 yds long, which will most likely be a lifetime supply for most. This cord is also useful for Viennese-style grand whippens. Kim also said that there is a method of using one continuous length of string, going from flange to flange and cutting at the end, but this does waste a lot of string. Kim just cuts hers to a sample flange, or in this case, 2" each. There is also a way that to cut many at once by wrapping the string tightly around an appropriate sized dowel (in this case 2" in perimeter, not diameter), then cut down the length of the dowel in one motion, yielding many pieces quickly. For glue, Kim used both yellow wood glue and CA glue together. The CA sets up quickly, while the wood glue gives lasting adhesion.



Kim then started gluing string segments to the left side of each flange. She used a toothpick to apply some wood glue into the slot, wiped away the excess, pressed a string into the slot, then added a drop or two of CA glue on top of that. If needed, you might use separate toothpicks for each type of glue. You do this for one side of each flange until you've reached the last one on the jig. By this time, the CA glue has set and you can lightly pull each string around its pin and repeat the gluing process on the other side. Don't pull too hard on the string, just enough to make it slightly taut and consistent from flange to flange. Trim any excess with a razor, as needed.



Many of these pianos have aluminum rails and screw hole threads can be easily damaged, so be careful when reinserting the screws and keeping their threads lined up. Backing out a half turn, or so, for every couple of turns in can help to keep everything straight; don't force resistant screws. She told a story of having to retap a hole and that is best avoided, if possible. Kim showed us a peg board with long bolts on the corners acting as feet. Each hole is numbered and can hold a screw so she can return each one back to its original place. It also allows for easily handling of a whole set, and she can hold up the board and spray all the threads at once with McLube before reinserting.

Total time for this job, from removal of action to reinsertion, could be six to seven hours. All flanges matched with hammer butts with bird's eyes do need repinning and, even though replacing the cords will minimize the need for travelling, matting, and regulation, there may still be some touch-up work to do here and there.





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www.ptgcolumbus.org

Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, May 21

7:00pm

Refreshments:

6:30pm

Bryan Hartzler's Shop

1179 S. Galena Rd.

Galena, OH 43021

740-972-9466

www.hartzlerpianos.com

Topic: Changing action leverage with parts selection and moving capstan location

Map Link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/18BJ1NQ6i4hacqqG7>

Parking: Behind shop, in front of shop, and on grass between front fence and road

Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

- Officers -

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

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

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