

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

Volume 31 Issue 7 October 2006

President's Message

Chris Altenburg

Welcome back from summer vacation and leisure time! It is about time to begin our busy season as piano technicians. I, for one, await it with very positive anticipation.

Our group is made up of members with a diversity of talents. On Tuesday, October 3rd, Ben Wiant accompanied Christopher Purdy for a half-hour concert at the First Congregational Church at Broad Street. Then, on Sunday, October 8th, Matt Scavo put on an organ recital at Zion Lutheran Church in German Village, during which he also played the Viola and piano, assisted by Brad Hall (tenor) and Eric Scarbrough (horn). Both recitals were wonderful to listen to. I feel privileged to have been able to attend and honored to belong to such a talented group.

The Rochester Convention was informative and well worth attending. Barbara and I also enjoyed touring the city. Elsewhere in this issue are highlights of the Council Meeting, and recent issues of the Journal have other details of convention activities.

Of course, we're always looking for technical topics to discuss at our monthly get togethers, and for projects we might investigate as a chapter. Please bring up any ideas you have at a meeting or by e-mailing me or another officer.

See you all at the next meeting.

The National Convention

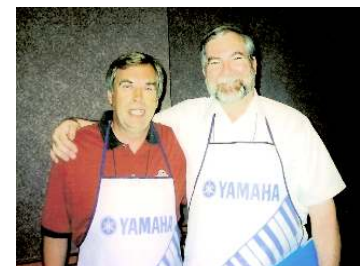
The PTG's national convention was held June 21-25 in Rochester, New York. Four members of our chapter were there: Chris Altenburg (serving as delegate), Dwight Hansen, Mitch Staples, and David Stang.



The rebuilders showcase was a hit with the conventioners.



Chris, Dwight, and Barbara Altenburg joined in the Barbarshop Chorus.



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What I Learned This Summer at the Convention

David Stang

The National Convention in Rochester June 21-25 was the second I have attended, and, like the first, it was well worth the time, money, and effort for me. The most rewarding parts were the lectures because each one taught me something new and fascinating. It's great that the PTG is able to assemble some of the best people in the business, and it's great that those people are willing to openly share their knowledge. It was an invigorating experience overall also because of the trade show and the rebuilt pianos on display, as well as the lectures. Also I had the opportunity to chat with some friends I had met at the convention two years ago and some new friends with interesting things to say.

Here are a few bits of information from the talks I attended which were particularly interesting and instructive:

It was a privilege to hear Anders Askenfelt talk about piano acoustics. He mainly covered the information in his paper which can be found at http://www.speech.kth.se/music/5_lectures. He has recently made some slow motion films of piano strings and hammers in motion. A piano string does not really behave like a jumprope when vibrating, as I had naively pictured before. The hammer strike initiates a moving pulse which reflects from the termination points. A number of examples were shown to illustrate how this pulse and its reflections can vary with string tension and length and hammer velocity. Another enlightening illustration was that of the relationship between partial content and strike strength. Fewer partials exist at pianissimo because the hammer-string contact time is greater. It was surprising that the main difference between a soft and loud sound is

the harmonic content and not the strength of the fundamental.

A talk by Ron Nossaman also covered the subject of acoustics. He explained soundboard construction methods, which has always been a mysterious subject to me. He is an advocate of the Rib Crowned and Supported method because it creates the most stable and predictable crown: the crown is completely supported by the structural integrity given by the ribs. He also discussed the myth that the crown is like an end-supported arch, as seen in his article in the April 2006 Journal. He displayed illustrations of soundboard stress which showed that overall there is a great deal of stress in the section around the 5th-6th octave. This explains why boards often go flat and produce bad sound from this "killer" area. His talk was wrapped up by a mini-recital on a Steinway B furnished with a Nossaman board.

On the practical side, Greg Hulme demonstrated his restringing techniques and gave the class some hands-on experience; and Debbie Cyr discussed everything you ever wanted to know about Ivory keytop restoration. I can make a copy of her very detailed class for anyone who would like.

I attended two classes on tuning which were especially relevant to me as someone preparing for the RPT tuning exam. Dean Reyburn showed off his latest version of the Reyburn Cyber Tuner (R). Learning more about how this software works is instructive to me because it uses similar principles as a human aural tuner. Dean believes his device should not be used as a "crutch" but as a helper and that all tuners should understand aural principles. Then, Kathy Smith gave a great practical class on temperament tuning. She made the case that it really doesn't matter what particular procedure one uses to tune a temperament, but the important thing is to be familiar with as many different tests as possible and to use them!

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The Estey Console Action

Tom Harr

If you recall from the April 2006 issue the "Master Touch" article, reference was made to "cranked keys". Here is a fairly extreme example: an Estey Console showing (Fig. 1) the cavity in which the compressed action sits, and (Fig. 2) a profile of the cranked key. (Shades of the Weaver Bi-level Rocker Arm, eh, Mark?) In this case the key has to come entirely out to adjust the capstan.



This particular piano which was made in 1941 had a peculiar action problem which had nothing to do with the keys, viz. jack springs would break from time to time. After replacing about a dozen over the years, enough was enough and the whole set was changed out. Inspection showed no sign of mouse-induced corrosion, but the spring wire was not plated. This may be an indication of some sub-standard material creeping in due to the demands increasing armaments production. Or it may just be a coincidence and this lot of wire wasn't properly annealed. Incidentally what are cataloged as "spinet" jack-, butt-, and damper springs are for compressed console actions. Nearly all spinet actions use standard upright components.

From Joel and Sheryl Reeve

Some of you didn't know Joel Reeve, but he was a PTG member for many years until he suffered a brain tumor. I hadn't heard from his wife, Sheryl, for a while and received this update while I was out of town. Thought those of you who knew Joel would like to read the latest word on his condition.

- Kim

Hi Everyone.

We have had a busy summer. Tyler went to four camps and Aaron went to two. We had a two week vacation in Canada and got back just in time for Joel's appointment at Duke last week.

Unfortunately, we did not get a good report at Duke. He had been experiencing a slight weakness in his right leg and a little trouble with his speech. When the doctors reviewed his MRI, there was a little shadowy area that has been there from the start that was just barely enhanced. Before talking to Joel the doctors would have called it stable, but in light of his symptoms, they ordered more testing. The PET scan showed that the enhancement was indeed a "hot spot" and that there was some activity in the tumor. He will be starting a new round of chemo on Monday that will last at least a year. Each cycle is a 28 day cycle, and we will go back to Duke for check-ups every four weeks for the first two cycles then every eight weeks for the remainder of the year.

I'm crushed, but Joel told everyone at church that "It's no big deal". He has such a positive attitude - he's sure that this is just a little glitch that will be handled soon. I'm so glad for his optimism. I don't think we could make it through without that. The boys have picked up on his attitude and are fine with it, and I'm putting on the best act I can. I'm glad for the friends that let me vent to them when I need to so that I can stay positive for my family!

Please put Joel on your personal prayer list and any others that you know of. Prayer worked miracles the last time, and I'm sure it will again.



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www.ptgcolumbus.org

Upcoming Events

Next Chapter Meeting: Tuesday October 17, 7:30 pm

Columbus Piano Leasing (Mahlan Ray)
6493 Proprietors Rd., Worthington, OH 43085

October 13 - 15, 2006: Central East Regional Seminar

Marriott Cincinnati North Cincinnati, OH

The Early Registration Deadline has been extended

Please Note !! A Banquet ticket, breakfast, lunch and snacks are included in the registration fee !!

Contact: Jon Ralinovsky

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Can you spot our chapter member in the A-440 Swing Band?

Disclaimer:

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