

# The Buckeye Backcheck

*Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild*  
Volume 34 Issue 6 September 2009



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT: The 2009 Convention**



Once again, even though I had to set aside money. (and even more valuable, time) I attended the 2009 PTG National Convention. Although Grand Rapids isn't quite as glamorous a "Location Destination" as such places as Chicago or LA or next year's Vegas, I found the city to be a great location for our convention. The weather was pleasant, the hotel and facilities excellent, lovely areas to walk around outside along the Grand River with close, varied and reasonably priced eating venues. All in all, a very positive experience.

There were some great classes that I had not seen before and lots of interesting stuff in the exhibit hall. So, without further ado, here are my a few of my favorite classes:

My absolute favorite class was the hands on New Damper Installation and Trouble shooting sponsored by Renner and Schimmel and taught by Rick Baldassin, Richard Davenport, Michael Spreeman and Carl Teel. Renner and Schimmel provided an octave or so action model for each person in the class (there was no cost, but you had to sign up ahead of time, limited number of participants). I sure would love to have one of those models for the chapter. We corrected damper problems and installed a new damper in the models. Mitch and Dwight also took the class (can't remember if David or Chris did) and we talked about doing an abbreviated version for a chapter technical this coming year. You can never learn too much about grand dampers (or vertical ones for that matter).

I have become more interested in the touchweight analysis discussions in the past year, partly due to a couple of technicals we have had with Byran and Phil, so I attended the all day session with Bob Marinelli and Anne Garee on Friction and Touchweight. Great class as well, especially since it was also pre-sign up, hands on. I will say that these folks certainly put the anal in analysis, but it is useful information and really should be taken into account when replacing parts in actions. I will be reading up on that some more and can hopefully take some more classes at future conventions.

Robert Murphy from Oberlin did a fine class on Harpsichords and Pianofortes which I took just from general interest in them. I had a chance to play on the pianoforte they had there which was very cool, I must say, and I wish there was time and opportunity for me to learn more about them. Is there any interest in that as a chapter technical? Perhaps we could entice Robert to come down to Columbus, Oberlin is not that far and maybe we could do it in conjunction with one of the local schools of music?

There were many other good classes, but I won't go into them all. Next year is Vegas (baby) and I hope you will all consider going. I'll admit, Vegas doesn't have that much appeal to me, but flights are cheap and there are lots of great destinations nearby; and, as always, the classes are sure to be worth your while!

So, lots to see and do and lots of things to add to my "toolbox" and perhaps things that will show up in our technical line-up this coming year. Speaking of which, we have our first meeting coming up in Sept and it will be on a different night, so mark your calendar for **Weds. Sept 16th @ 7:30**. We are doing this to accommodate the scheduling of the location, Worthington UMC in Worthington on High Street. Doug Atkins is coming over in the morning and we will be doing a master tuning on the chapel piano and then doing the meeting technical on the

Tuning Exam

Kim Hoessly

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## PICTURES FROM THE 2009 CONVENTION, GRAND RAPIDS



The DeVos Convention Center



Inside the hall



The exhibit hall



Mitch Staples at the Renner/Schimmel damper class



Some interesting keytops



Steingraeber bridge agraffes



Reproduction pianoforte



The Golden Hammer award (with the recipient's name taped over until the banquet!)

photos by Kim Horssly

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## **DELEGATE'S REPORT from the 2009 Annual Council Meeting July 13 & 14**

by Chris Purdy

Election of officers and committees:

Board Elections: President: Alan Gilreath. Vice President: Jim Coleman. Treasurer: Chris Solliday.

Regional Caucuses: Re-elected Richard Bittner as our Regional Vice President. Richard asked chapters to consider hosting regional seminars.

Committee Elections: Ethics Committee: Terry Zimmerman, Clark Sprague. Members' Rights Committee: Jim Geiger, Ashley Turner, Jeanie Grassi. Nominating Committee: Bruce Dornfeld, John Blessing, Wim Brees, Gracie Wagoner, Patrick Drain. Advisory Committee: Bill Monroe

Dues Raise: I voted yes on a \$20 dues raise. The motion was passed unanimously. Council made a convincing argument for the increase. We have been receiving only small incremental increases and this larger increase is needed to "catch up" with raising costs. Also, the PTG home office is offering additional grants for testing and grants to help pay for examiners travel expenses.

Bylaws Proposals:

1. Disciplinary Code Changes. Voted yes, motion passed.
2. Chapter Dues Distributions. Voted yes, motion passed.
3. ETSC Regulations: Voted yes, motion passed.
4. Graphics Standards: Voted yes, motion passed.
5. Volunteers, Resumes, and Advertising: Voted yes, motion passed.
6. Allied Piano Trades Membership Category: Voted no, motion failed.
7. CAUT Endorsement: Proposal was sent back to committee.
8. Logo Use in Marketing: Voted yes, motion passed.
9. Advertising Old Membership Classifications: Voted yes, motion passed.
10. Clarification in Graphic Standards Manual: Voted yes, motion passed.
11. Application Processing Procedures: Voted yes, motion passed.
12. Criteria for Denying Applications: Voted yes, motion passed.

Some explanation of the above bylaws proposals.

While many of these proposals were basic housekeeping, some issues were debated at length. The allied trades membership category and the CAUT endorsement were both hotly debated. While many people support the basic ideas, many are hesitant because they feel that other classifications and endorsements "dilute" the RPT status.

The application processing procedures proposal also received a lot of debate. Although at the Columbus Chapter meeting Kim expressed her disagreement with the timing involved in getting to know a nDelegate's Reportew potential member, council reminded us the only reason chapters should deny membership to an individual would be if one of the six criteria for denying membership are met. (false information on the application form, failure to submit fees and dues, etc.) If none of these six points are met, chapters must approve the application. If a chapter has other problems with an applicant, they have to go through the members rights committee formally.

Notes about the convention:

This convention this year was well organized and very well attended. There were so many excellent classes offered, the biggest problem was having to decide which classes to take.

I chose to take two all day classes with Kent Webb and Andre Oorebeek plus several other classes, mostly concerning regulation and voicing with Wally Brooks, Roger Jolly, Nevin Essex, and Laroy Edwards. I enjoyed Kent's classes as a warm up for the Steinway seminar at the Oberlin Conservatory that I also attended immediately after the convention. Andre's class was standing room only. Since the release of his new book, Andre has become the new rock star of piano voicing. Despite a minimal language barrier, he is well spoken and explains his techniques very clearly.

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## **Delegate's Report cont'd**

One bittersweet bit of news that I would like to report is that this year we honored Dr. Owen Jorgensen as the recipient of the golden hammer award. Dr. Jorgensen is best known as a teacher of piano technology at Michigan State University and the author of the "big red book" that we all use as the bible of historic temperament. (See his article in this month's journal) Dr. Jorgensen was helped onto the stage where he made a brief but very touching acceptance speech to one of the longest standing ovations I have seen in quite a while. Sadly, I just learned that Dr. Jorgensen passed away Friday, Aug. 7.

My thanks to everyone for the opportunity to represent the Columbus chapter this year. I had a great time attending council meetings and classes. Plus I had the chance to catch up with so many friends and colleagues from around the country that I rarely get to see. I highly recommend next year's convention in Las Vegas to everyone that is able to attend.

## **EDITOR'S REPORT from the Convention**

by David Stang

All the classes I attended were excellent, but my favorite was a morning with Roger Jolly where he illustrated his voicing techniques. He has formulated a method of optimizing an instrument's tone even before thinking about hammer treatment, mainly having to do with string placement and bending. He emphasized not only technique, but also the fact that it is important to listen with awareness to piano music all the time. He urged us to buy lots of recordings and go to lots of concerts and recitals because that's how we develop a sense of good tone.

Another great learning experience was a class by David Hughes, who discussed everything having to do with stringing, including drilling a new pinblock, agraffe replacement, capo bar treatment, aliquots, and hitch pins. Please note the correct pronunciation of agraffe: emphasis on the last syllable!

The exhibit hall had a number of displays that I thought were very interesting. Scott Jones of "Pitchlock" was showing his "Touch Rail" system which replaces the upstop rail with a rail having individually adjustable springs which press on each key. This seems like a simple and accurate way to get to a desired downweight without excessive leading. I was also fascinated with the Steingraeber Phoenix piano, which has a carbon fiber soundboard. This soundboard cannot withstand as much downbearing as standard spruce, so they have invented a bridge agraffe as a coupler (see picture on previous page). The piano sounded great to me, and the chatter around the booth was very favorable, but I have surprisingly not seen a whole lot on the PTG message boards or anywhere else on the web about this radical new technology.

Finally, it was a real privilege for me to be at the banquet when Owen Jorgensen was honored with the Golden Hammer Award, and to hear his gracious and inspiring acceptance speech.

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## TECH TIPS: How to Insert a New String in a Mason & Hamlin Screw Stringer

*I found this on the internet. You don't run into many of these. I still do service a couple. - Mark Ritchie.*

by Victor Belanger, RPT of the Boston Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

To begin with, one must unscrew the nut on the gear lever to the last two or three threads. For a bass string, stretch the new string from the hitch pin through the agraffe (if present) and measure exactly 1 3/8" from the bottom most end of the gear lever (where the string attaches) and cut there. The gear lever is the long piece, and at the top, is threaded for the nut. Now once you measure the 1 3/8" from the bottom end of the lever, take it out by completely removing the nut and hook it on to the end of the string, bending it like the ones already on the piano. Thread the nut back on to the lever after it is replaced back in its place, and pull up the string by tightening the nut. There will be only three-fourths of an inch of threads left on the lever, so the cut must be made accurately.

When tuning a Screw Stringer, the idea is to bring the string from flat to pitch rather than from sharp to pitch, always coming from below rather than above. It was suggested to use a stubby screw driver in the palm of the hand to gently but firmly press the string just below where the string is attached to the lever when the string is brought up almost to pitch. The idea of that is to equalize the tension of that string segment by forcing the speaking section of the string sharp by helping the string over the upper termination point, whether it be an agraffe or a V-bar.



## PTG CHAPTER PICNIC



Here are a few pictures from the picnic in June. Thank you to our hosts Richard and Cathy Miller and thank you Kim Hoessly for the pictures.



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

## Upcoming Events

### Chapter Meeting

WEDNESDAY September 16, 2009, 7:30pm  
Worthington United Methodist Church  
600 High St., Worthington  
Technical Topic: The RPT tuning test  
by Doug Adkins RPT

*"Without the piano there would be no music ...  
(except perhaps for some country and western.)"*

*- LaRoy Edwards*

Thank you Kim, Chris, and Mark for your contributions.

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

#### Disclaimer:

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