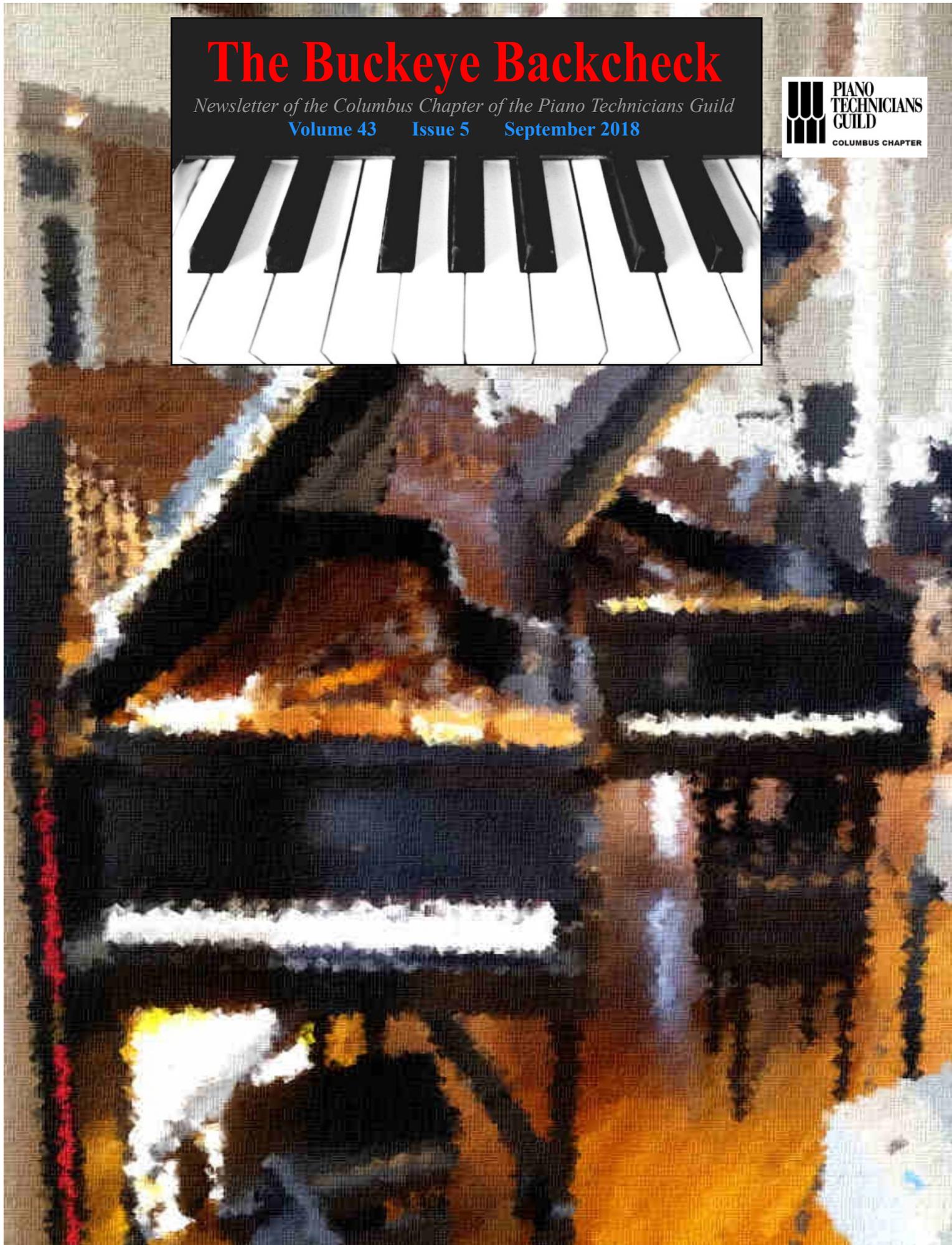


# The Buckeye Backcheck

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

**Volume 43    Issue 5    September 2018**



# The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

## Chapter Meeting Minutes May 22, 2018

The meeting was held at Solich Piano

### Attendance:

Mitch Staples, Chris Altenburg, Ron Kenreich, Chris Burget, Kim Hoessly, Phil Walters, David Stang, Dwight Hansen, guest Shue Ho, speaker Tim Barnes, and Solich Piano staff.

### Treasurer's Report:

\$1,560.55

### Old Business:

The domain name for the Chapter website has been renewed for another five year term. The cost was \$121.13, which now includes privacy protection of contact information for the Webmaster.

So far, no one has committed to attending this years annual international convention, so there is no delegate.

The Chapter will place its annual ad in the OMTA Directory.

Evan Bingham may present a technical on Young Chang grand action bracket replacement for the September meeting ay Graves Piano & Organ Co.

### New Business:

Chapter elections were held and a slate of officers was voted on and unanimously approved:

President: David Chadwick

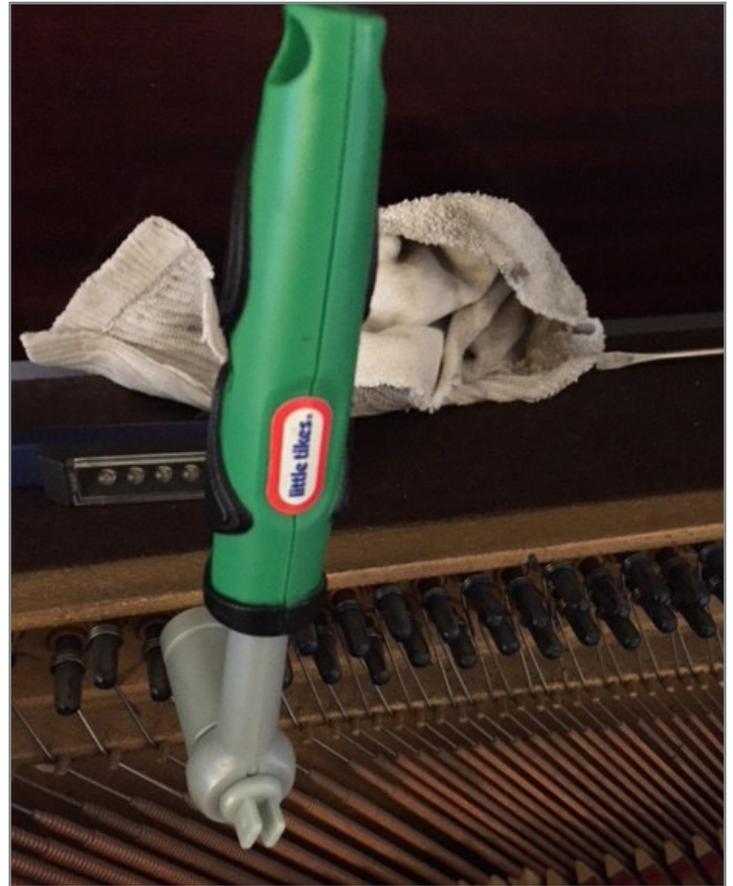
Vice- President: Chris Purdy

Treasurer: Ron Kenreich

Secretary: Chris Burget

Suggestions for future technicals were discussed. Kim Hoessly mentioned possibly doing one on sostenuto systems in Steinway verticals.

## ...For The Children!



The latest in Piano Tuning Technology to encourage an early interest in our trade. I saw this with the owners' children's toys by the piano and could not resist the obvious picture. - Kim Hoessly

## For Sale



Steinway B 7' Grand Piano  
Circa 2004 - serial number available

**\$50,000** firm

[davepowersmusic@gmail.com](mailto:davepowersmusic@gmail.com)

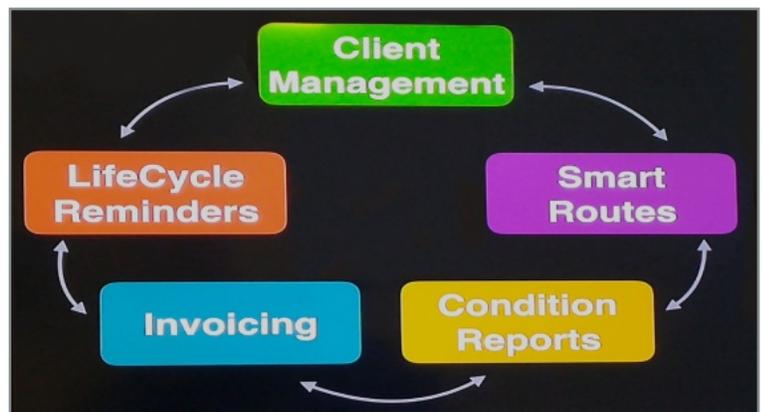
# The Buckeye Backcheck

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

## Tim Barnes, Gazelle Network

The May meeting was held at Solich Piano, and Tim Barnes, RPT, from North Carolina spoke to the Chapter on topics related to running a piano service business. His presentation was given in three parts: The Gazelle Network; The Well-Loved Piano Company; and general tips on running and marketing a piano service.

Tim is a co-founder of the Gazelle Network, which is a software and applications suite specifically tailored to piano technicians. In short, it is like a semi-automated office assistant that can manage invoicing, appointment scheduling, and client management and communications. It can be set up and tailored to each individual business according to the owner's needs and preferences. It can allow clients to self schedule appointments, if desired, and offer them optimal dates based on where you are already previously scheduled. It is fully integrated with Google Maps, and can even account for traffic patterns when scheduling. He spoke at length about this and offered up many scenarios that Gazelle can adjust to based on any preferences set up by the technician. It was pretty impressive, really, to see what it is capable of in this



regard. Any appointment that is self-scheduled by a client must be authorized by the technician, so you still maintain complete control there. Gazelle also can automatically communicate with clients based, again, on preferences you set up. It can automatically send reminders via text, or email, to clients at predetermined intervals, and those can even be tailored for different clients. These messages are easily personalized and don't come across as robotic as one might be inclined to think. He gave examples of several different scenarios where Gazelle does the heavy lifting of client communication, where up to a dozen messages may go back and forth before a client finally schedules, but this can be handled by Gazelle so you're not spending hours on the phone or computer with repetitive messages.

Gazelle can also generate a number of reports as needed. One feature, the Condition Report, looks very useful. When inspecting a piano, a tech can go through a checklist of items the piano may need some work on and Gazelle can generate a report that can be presented to the client in a simple and educational way that breaks down various levels of service for the instrument. The client can then decide what they want to do. This is useful in institutional settings where decisions are often made in separate meetings, and the breakdowns are easier to read and base decisions on. These reports are automatically generated based in the info entered, but they have a polished, well thought out look.

Service histories of each instrument are also recorded. Pitch, temperature, humidity, repair, regulation, maintenance, and other data can be tracked, organized, and filtered as needed. Client communication histories are also recorded as well, and you can tell when emails have been opened and read, or not. Gazelle is also easily integrated into existing websites. Gazelle will also be adding more functionality as time goes on, and with rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence it will only grow more intuitive for the user. For those worried about giving over control of various responsibilities, those can be set to whatever your preferences are. Much of its usefulness comes from automatically handling the repetitive tasks that often eat up so much of our time. There is even more to Gazelle than what is presented here. For more information, go to: <https://gazellenetwork.com>

# The Buckeye Backcheck

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

**(Tim Barnes continued...)**

The next two sections of his discussion were inter-related. The Well-Loved Piano Company (WLPC); and tips on marketing and managing your business. WLPC started out as Tim just talking to marketers about improving his individual business, but eventually led to a total rebranding and collaboration with other piano techs to create a new business. WLPC is an affiliation of techs from different cities in the Carolinas and Georgia, so it is a regional business covering many hundreds of miles. He spoke some of how WLPC is organized but mainly demonstrated their marketing techniques in order to provide examples of how to put these principles into action. Tim covered a lot of ground here, so I'll just point out some of the major points.

First, is the "Grunt Test". When looking at your webpage or marketing materials, can one tell what you do in three seconds? If not, there is too much information or text confusing the viewer. Statements like "KISS", or "Keep It Simple, Stupid", or "If you confuse, you lose!" have never been truer. So many piano service websites throw all of this information about tuning and piano physics at the viewer and let them sort it all out. This also extends to client communications as well. "We, as technicians, all suffer from the curse of knowledge here," Tim explained. "Our understanding is a 9 or 10, we 'dumb things down' to a 4 or 5, but our clients are making decisions at a 1 or 2 level of understanding. So, even a 4 or 5 level explanation is way too complicated." There are a few exceptions, of course, and those clients with a higher understanding can be spoken with accordingly. You can still have that page somewhere on your site, if you want it, that describes things in more detail. Just don't bombard people with it right away. Instead of going into detail about inharmonicity, or how let-off relates to aftertouch, it's often more effective to make simpler, declarative statements like, "Absolutely, I can make your piano play and sound wonderful again. I am qualified, and I'll do a great job!"

He also discussed "bucketing" on websites, where customers pick from a short list of options, which lead to more options that can help define the level of service they need. One page he showed us had a box for options like, " Tuning/Seasonal Service; Repair/Rebuilding; Buying/Selling." Clicking on Tuning might lead to one of the following: "Are you a: Beginning Student; Intermediate Student; Professional Musician; Music teacher; School; Venue; etc...." Clicking on one leads to more lists that are more personalized with each step.

Another concept he often referred to was "agitating a pain", which could be a statement like, "Is your piano hard to play? Life is too short to waste time on a difficult piano. Pianos that are hard to play lead to wasted hours in practice trying to overcome poor playability, which may lead to a loss of love in playing music!" So, identify a risk, then offer a solution. This can be an effective way to sell other services in addition to tuning. Sometimes it just needs to be pointed out to a client that such and such can be so much better.

Tim spoke on pricing as well, and discussed the "Rule of Thirds", where potential shoppers are divided into three groups: Price Shopper; Value Shopper; Swing Shopper. At best, you may get two out of the three, no matter what your prices are. By trying to be the cheapest in town, you most likely will be losing a lot of revenue. Do not undercharge for your services.

He also spoke at length on many other subtopics like: customer reviews; video ads; empowering clients to help sell your services; keeping communications personal and showing genuine interest in clients. Tim also covered what he does on typical appointments and what he tests and listens for in pianos. He discussed "soundboard bloom" and how he plays certain arpeggios and chords with varying degrees of force, so as to get a sense of the piano's potential dynamic range, which can indicate the health of the soundboard and ribs. He discussed how he divides an appointment between tuning and regulation procedures, by using methods that are quick and efficient. On pianos that get regular service, just devoting a certain percentage of time each service call to touch-up regulation can have a great effect incrementally over a period of time. He offered other examples of quick fixes. Tim stressed the importance of complete piano service, and doing what you can to offer that. He also covered how to handle low income and pro-bono work without breaking your bank. Perhaps offer them the discount, but they must conform to some of your own demands, such as flexibility in how and when work is done.

For more, go to: <https://gazellenetwork.com> and <https://www.well-lovedpiano.com>



# The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

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

## Former Piano Mover Now Moves Theatergoers

<http://www.dispatch.com/entertainmentlife/20180818/former-piano-mover-now-moves-theatergoers>

### 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, September 18  
7:00pm**

**Graves Piano & Organ Co.**  
5798 Karl Road  
Columbus, OH 43229  
[www.gravespianos.com](http://www.gravespianos.com)

Topic: Young Chang Grand  
Action Bracket Replacement  
by Evan Bingham

Map Link:  
<http://goo.gl/maps/hoXHi>

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

#### Disclaimer:

All expressions of opinion and all statements of supposed facts are published on the authority of the author as listed and are not to be regarded as expressing the views of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild unless such statements or opinions have been adopted by the chapter or the guild.

Articles and illustrations may be re-printed by other PTG newsletters with proper acknowledgment, unless otherwise indicated in the article.

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

Chris Burget, 1706 Pin Oak Dr., Columbus, OH 43229 [cjburget@gmail.com](mailto:cjburget@gmail.com)