



*Photo 61: Project for the day. All the buckskin and felt, except the center pin bushings, will be stripped from the old hammer butts in preparation for new. This stack of parts, by the way, represents a victory over my obsessive /compulsive nature. Five years ago, these parts would have all been neatly stacked in ranks and columns. Looking at the stack as I write this, I notice it is very symmetrical and neat. Hmmm.*



*Photo 62: Taking a hammer assembly from the pile, I begin the process of removing the old felt. Instead of just snipping the original bridle strap, I will be cutting the old strap flush to the hammer butt. The new braided strap will be cut to the correct length and glued to the underside of the catcher shank.*



*Photo 63: Piece by piece, the felt and buckskin are removed with a chisel or razor blade. The necessity of this procedure becomes more and more evident as I proceed. The hammer butt felts and the felt squares on the inside of the catcher are the worst, but also the red and white felts under the hammer butt buckskin are in very bad condition, so much so that on some hammer butts, daylight can be seen under the buckskin. The result would be that support for the jack would be spongy at best.*



*Photo 64: Removing the hammer butt buckskin by pulling it free from the slot that it is inserted in. This piece is glued on either end and pulled tight over the underlying felt. The white felt is glued in place, and is removed by using a small, flat-bladed screwdriver to scrape it out of its recess. The red felt is glued on the slot end only, and is removed with a sharp chisel.*



*Photo 65: The spring felt is easily removed by hand.*



*Photo 66: Residue of the felt and glue is removed with a rat tail file. In all, seven individual pieces of buckskin and felt are removed from each hammer butt. The process takes a couple of minutes per butt.*

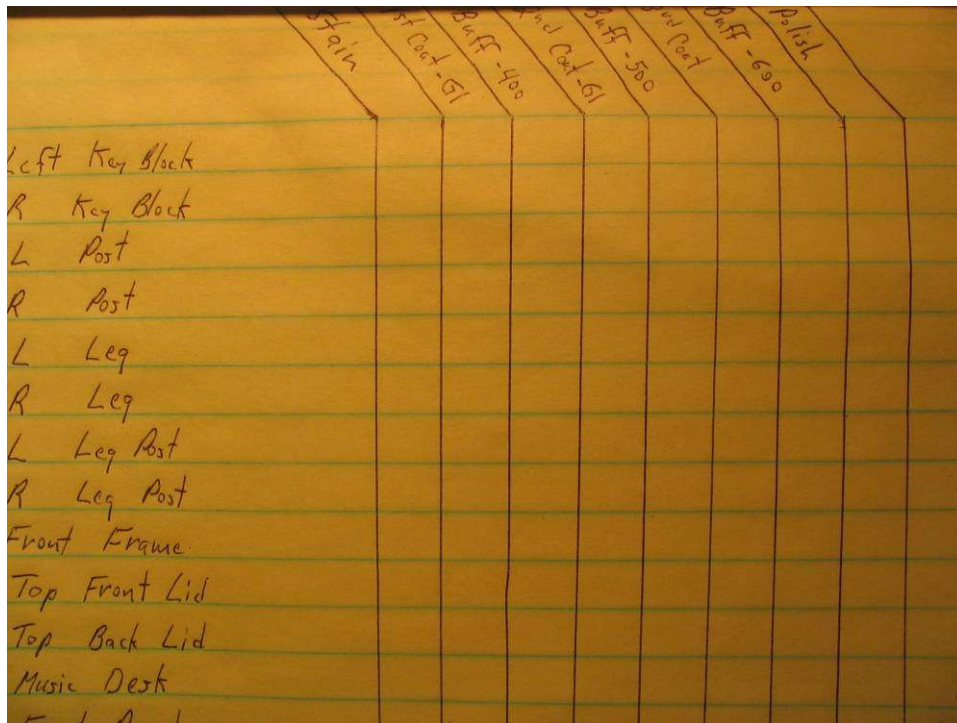


Photo 67: While I'm busy at my bench, Dave begins the day on an optimistic note, but making out the refinishing checklist for the various parts of the piano. Since the first item to be checked off is staining, and he's still got the body of the piano to strip (and the keybed, which he leaned against the wall in the other room, and has forgotten about), there's little chance that he actually will be using this checklist today.



Photo 68: To his credit, Dave does have most everything stripped and ready for sanding and veneer work (but not staining). The one part near the top of the parts trolley which is not stripped is the underside of the front part of the lid, which has a decal. Whether we strip that or not is up to the owner, who is scheduled for a visit later in the day. Dave's choice is to strip, mine is to save. It will be the owner's call, however.

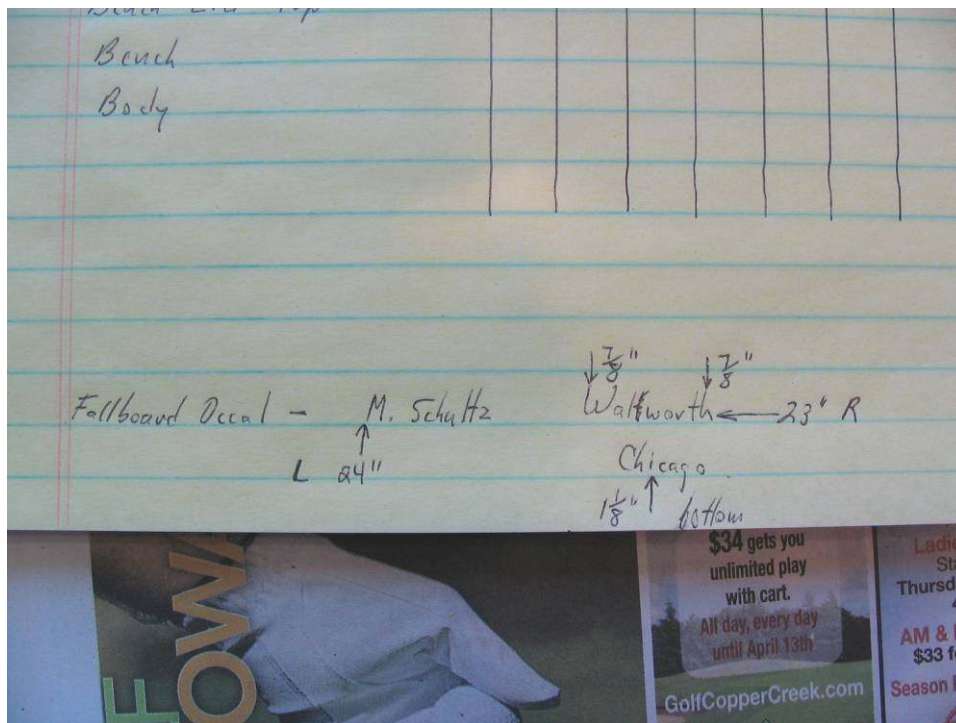


Photo 69: One important notation on the checklist are the measurements for the exact location of the fallboard decal. Although it is centered on the fallboard, being able to place the duplicate decal precisely over the location of the old is important. The image of the old decal is sometimes visible in certain light, even after refinishing, due to the fact that the stain under the old decal was less affected by light than the area surrounding it. If the new decal is not placed precisely, it can look as if there's a shadow behind it.



Photo 70: With his checklist ready to go (sometime in the future) Dave begins stripping the body. The cast iron plate is kept safe from stripper with layer upon layer of old newspaper.



*Photo 71: At my bench, I apply a drop of Titebond to the end of the braided bridle strap. The strap is then clamped in place on the underside of the catcher shank. For some reason, I find that hot animal hide glue does not work particularly well on the braided strap.*



*Photo 72: Clamp in place, the glue is allowed to set. Another technique is to double up the end of the strap, and to use a tiny brad to affix it to the catcher shank. A true purist would, I suppose, insist on removing the catcher shanks to insert the end of the strap in the hole.*



*Photo 73: Hot glue is applied to a spring felt.*



*Photo 74: Using a thumb and two fingers, the felt is creased slightly and placed in the groove.*



Photo 75: Using a hammershank flattened on one end, the spring felt is clamped into place. To work, the rubber band stretches from the catcher to above the position of the felt.



Photo 76: The assembly line begins, as the morning ends.

(Later in the afternoon the owner stops by for a look at the progress and for making decisions concerning stain and keytop coverings. The scope of the project becomes greater, as the decision is made to shim the soundboard, and install new pinblock panels.)