

Panic in the sound booth: The importance of having a backup plan

By Roberta Molaro

Editor's Note: Roberta Molaro, owner and operator, along with her husband Don, of The Skatery in Pillow, Pa., wrote the following article as an advice column to other rink operators on the importance of being prepared in case of audio malfunctions. According to Roberta, "We were one of the earliest rinks to latch onto computerized music. We are probably also one of the first to experience the problems of an aged computer in the sound booth giving out!"

Starting out with our six-month-old office computer and one of the earliest versions of Music-Match Jukebox, we were probably the first rink in Pennsylvania to jump into computerizing music in 1997. This setup worked, until Windows crashed about 12 hours before the computer warranty expired! Fortunately, we still had support, but all the music we'd laboriously uploaded to the computer was irrevocably lost!

What a nightmare it was to re-load all that music, convert the wav files to mp3s and re-tag each and every one again!

As soon as the equipment was up-and-running, we added a second hard drive to the computer and transferred the music to it. A couple of years later, Windows crashed again, but it was a simple matter to re-install Windows and the necessary programs. How reassuring to see that thousands of songs were safe and sound, stashed away on the second hard drive!

The setup functioned without a hitch for 15 years, so we never upgraded anything.

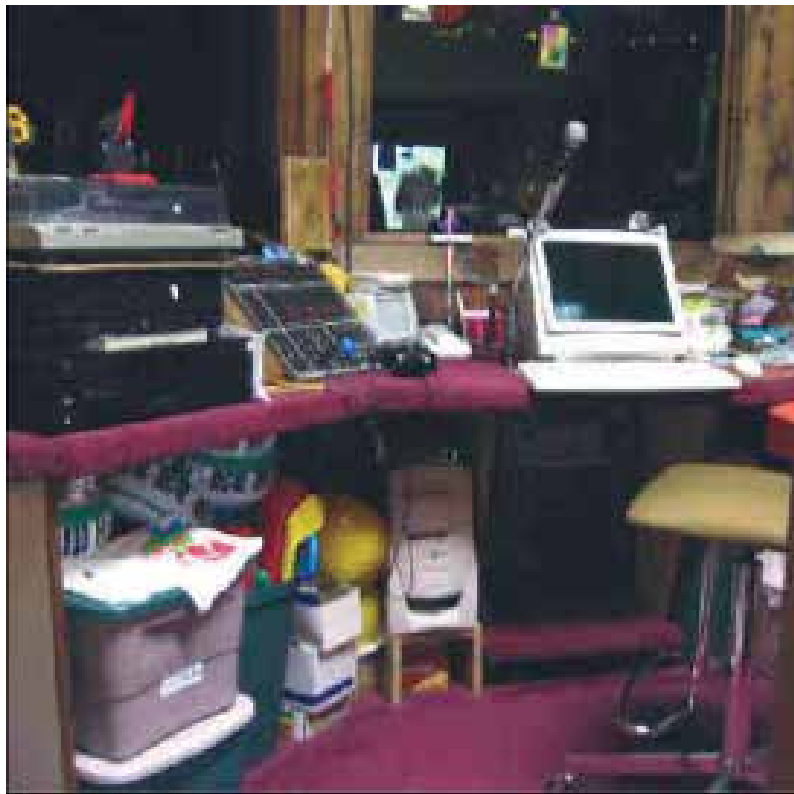
Fast-forward to one Saturday afternoon last year:

Don was listening to music in the sound booth, when he lost sound. Calmly (at first) he checked the wires and cables – everything seemed to be alright. He tried the tape recorder and CD player - dusty old things that they are – and their sound made it to the speakers.

All the while our evening session was getting closer and closer. Creeping panic began as we commenced to test all the connections, finding nothing out of order.

And ... we had no backup plan!

Even if I could have remembered how to work with the CD player, I had been downloading music from the



The sound booth at The Skatery in Pillow, Pa.

Internet for over a year, so there were no hard copies of the latest tunes. I'd have to use the old discs.

a prayer of thanks that the problem was (at least) discovered before we

As 7 p.m. crept up on us, we said

cont'd on page 33

serious software for a fun business

...FACILITY MANAGEMENT ENEMY #3:
LABOR PAINS

Banish them from your agenda with CenterEdge Software:

- At-a-glance labor reports *zap* cost-control issues
- Cutting-edge timeclock features *halt* early clock-ins
- Easy-to-use online tools *crush* scheduling tasks

Watch CenterEdge dismantle the enemies YOU face, managing costs, delivering higher profits and saving the day!
centeredgesoftware.com/pain

Set up an online demo at centeredgesoftware.com

Point of Sale | Group & Birthday Party Reservations | Time Clock & Employee Scheduling
Redemption | Online Ticket Sales | Online Party Bookings | Inventory Management | Ticketing