

GOOD Vibrations

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND CHAPTER OF THE PIANO TECHNICIAN'S GUILD, INC.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wade Johnson, RPT

In this my final column as your Chapter president it is high time for me to say THANKS:

...To David Flanders for his multiple supportive efforts on our behalf and most recently his inspiring leadership towards NEECSO 2010...To Ruth Van Dine for her superlative handling of our newsletter and her eagerness to lead us in continuing education of our members...To Pat Selemon for her enthusiasm on our Executive Board and her example as a model technician in the John McDonald tradition...To Arthur Sacco for his friendly encouragement to all of us and his faithful service as Treasurer these past several years...To Tom Roy for his unhesitating support and help with all our Technical Exams...To Joe Luca, Jr. for his years of hospitality at Avery Piano and his recent invitation to share his new workspace...To David Dragone and Michael Shaw for the courage and motivation to move up, be examined, and accept responsibilities on our Executive Board...To Barbara and Jack Renner for sharing their special knowledge and their beautiful digs...To Larry Brown for hosting meetings at his commodious new showroom in Middletown...To Mike Morvan for hosting our last meeting and for sharing his mentor, Chris Brown...To Joel Levine for joining us so frequently and being our librarian...To all of you, good luck and a wish for more success in even these crazy times.

Would love to see you at our annual meeting May 21 at my digs!

MAY MEETING

Business Basic - In the Office

Wade

Ruth Van Dine, RPT

The office is not just room in a building, it is wherever you are. I'll chat about different ideas to help you keep your piano service office work interesting and efficient.

MAY 2009

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Business Mtg

&

Technical

May 21, 2009

7:00 pm

Meeting at

Wade Johnson's Home

269 Snake Hill Road

Glocester, RI

Phone: 401-934-3049

PARK IN DRIVEWAY!!!!

Remember to join us for dinner

5:30 @ Chelos Bar & Grill, 495

Putnam Pike, Greenville, RI

Phone 401-233-2340

Directions for May 21st meeting:

7pm - Wade Johnson's, 269 Snake Hill Road, Glocester, RI phone 401-934-3049

5:30pm - Chelos Hometown Bar & Grill, 495 Putnam Pike, Greenville, RI phone 401-233-2340

Directions to Wade Johnson's Shop

From Rte 295, take exit for "Route 44 West - Greenville". When you get onto 44 West, proceed past Apple Valley Mall, past the traffic light at Route 5, and to the fourth traffic light after that, where you should be in the **left lane** and turn left onto Route 116 (Smith Ave.). There's an Episcopal Church on the far left corner where you turn. Your total distance on Route 44 will have been about 2 1/4 miles. Proceed 1.3 mile to **stop sign**. At that point, Rte.116 goes to the left but **you continue straight**, past Knight's Apple Farm, on Snake Hill Road, for 1.3 miles, to two light-blue vinyl-sided houses on the right, one behind the other, separated by a circular driveway. Wade's is the rear house. Just before the driveway you will have passed a black mailbox with "269" on it. **Parking:** For safety's sake, do not park on the pavement of Snake Hill Road. There's enough room around the driveways for the cars.

Directions to Chelos Hometown Bar & Grill

Rte 295 exit 7 for "Greenville — 44 West," you pass the entrance for the Crossings at Smithfield, followed by a smaller mall and a Dunkin Donuts and a Wendy's, and then there's an entrance into Apple Valley Mall, with Chelo's very prominent at the back of that entrance.

Tid Bits.....

It was on my fifth birthday that Papa put his hand on my shoulder and said, 'Remember, my son, if you ever need a helping hand, you'll find one at the end of your arm.'

- Sam Levenson (1911 - 1980)

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Newsletter: Ruth Van Dine, RPT

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www.RI-PTG.org

Protecting your Business Data

by Rob Mitchell – “In Tune”, Newsletter of the Piano Technicians Guild, San Francisco Chapter

Although 3x5 cards are probably still a common means of tracking customer data, I doubt there is anyone among us who doesn't depend on computers to store at least some of our business data. Where would you be if your accounts receivable for the last year were lost? Or all your customer's names, phone numbers and email addresses? Loss of this information would be devastating to any business.

Not to be too grim, but the possibilities for loss are many: non-recoverable hard disk crash, stolen laptop, building fire. Need I go on? With the cost of backup solutions falling all the time, there really is no excuse for anyone to have a business-crippling loss of data. (I'm going to be speaking mainly from my base of knowledge: the Microsoft / PC environment. I'm not as familiar with the MAC or other computers, but similar solutions should be available.)

A key to successful data backup is that, once configured, it needs to be very effortless if not automatic to run. Your basic options include:

1. Local Backup
2. Remote backup server
3. Offsite “hard copy” storage

I'll review the pro's and con's of each of these.

Perhaps the simplest way to improve your data security is to add a second hard drive to your home system. This is easier than you think. Some home computers have a slot where you can add a second drive (HP calls this the Personal Media Drive). But most of the external hard drives use USB, a connection that is widely available on PC's (make sure your computer has an available USB connection if it is a much older model). Look for drives that come with synchronization or backup software to help you configure this process.

One variation to consider is an external drive that connects to your home network through a router (instead of plugging directly into a computer). These tend to be slightly more expensive and a bit more effort to setup, but provide easy access from any computer on your local home or business network.

A limitation with Local Backup is that you still need to consider some type of Remote or Offsite storage for maximum protection.

An alternative or adjunct to Local Backup is to use a commercial remote server. These are widely available (just Google “remote data storage” and you'll get many listings). Some provide free storage for the first few megabytes and then charge on a per-megabyte basis after that. The advantage to these is that you get secure, remote storage and you can access your data from anywhere. The disadvantage is that now you need to sort of manage your storage requirements to hold costs down. (Google Docs is a good option if you only have a few critical files).

Since most computers these days come with either CD or DVD burners, perhaps the cheapest option is to periodically make copies of your important files. Unfortunately, this fails the “transparent ease-of-use” goal so it's hard to recommend this by itself. But if you go the Local Backup route, then you should still burn copies of your important files once in a while and store them someplace physically distant from the computer (e.g. spouse's workplace or a relative's home).

Protecting your Business Data cont.

My recommendation (and what I do) is Local Backup combined with making a hard copy for offsite storage once every six to twelve months. Also, you only need to be saving *user data*, usually located under My Documents (or “C:\Documents and Settings” at the highest level). There is generally no need to back up all the programs, drivers and other files in your system.

Finally, let’s not forget about the information on your PDA. You know that when you slip the PDA into the sync-recharger, your contacts and appointments get updated. But it’s also easy to include any important files. Just open ActiveSync, click on Sync Options and check the Files box.

One last piece of advice – test your backup system occasionally. Speaking as someone who came from the corporate world, it’s easy to get a false sense of security that your data is safe. Be sure to check this once in a while: Delete an unimportant file and see if you can recover it from your backup media.

Customer Management Software – (from www.PTG.org Resources)

ExecuKey A consolidated office solution for piano technicians including Scheduling, Service History, Invoicing, Project Management and Scheduling, Reminders, and Attachments

PianoDB by D C AL CODA Customer management software based on Microsoft Access

PowerTech A complete office management program for piano technicians. Handles clients, pianos, services, reports, reminders, and much more! Download a complete working copy.

PeakeWare Manage Customers, Invoices, Estimates, Inventory, Reminders, and more. Based on Filemaker designed specifically for piano technicians.

Reckon Wiz Your Data Reckon Wiz makes it worthwhile to key in your daily work, notes for future work, and all your financial transactions. It gives you the most results in the most ways to maximize business and minimize driving: detailed Client Records Management with complete accounting. Trade school students get the commercial license FREE.

Time & Chaos an Intellect Customer Management and scheduling software from Chaossoftware, plus other useful utilities.

String Covers – 2 new resources

Instrument Covers by Jill, contact Dennis Haley at 800-274-4543. He either answers the phone, or if you leave a message, will call you back within 24 hours. An order is usually filled in about 2 - 3 weeks.

Dawson’s String Covers contact Clark Dawson at 941-809-6129 or www.dawsonstringcovers.com. Free shipping and 7-10 day turn around.

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Upcoming Meeting Dates:

MAY 21st – Ruth Van Dine, RPT – Business Basic @ Wade Johnson's, 269 Snake Hill Road, Glocester, RI

June 18th – Harpsicord Clearing House, Rehoboth MA

July & August – No meetings until September



Rhode Island Chapter
www.RI-PTG.org

**52nd Annual PTG Convention
& Technical Institute**



July 15 - 19, 2009 • Grand Rapids, MI