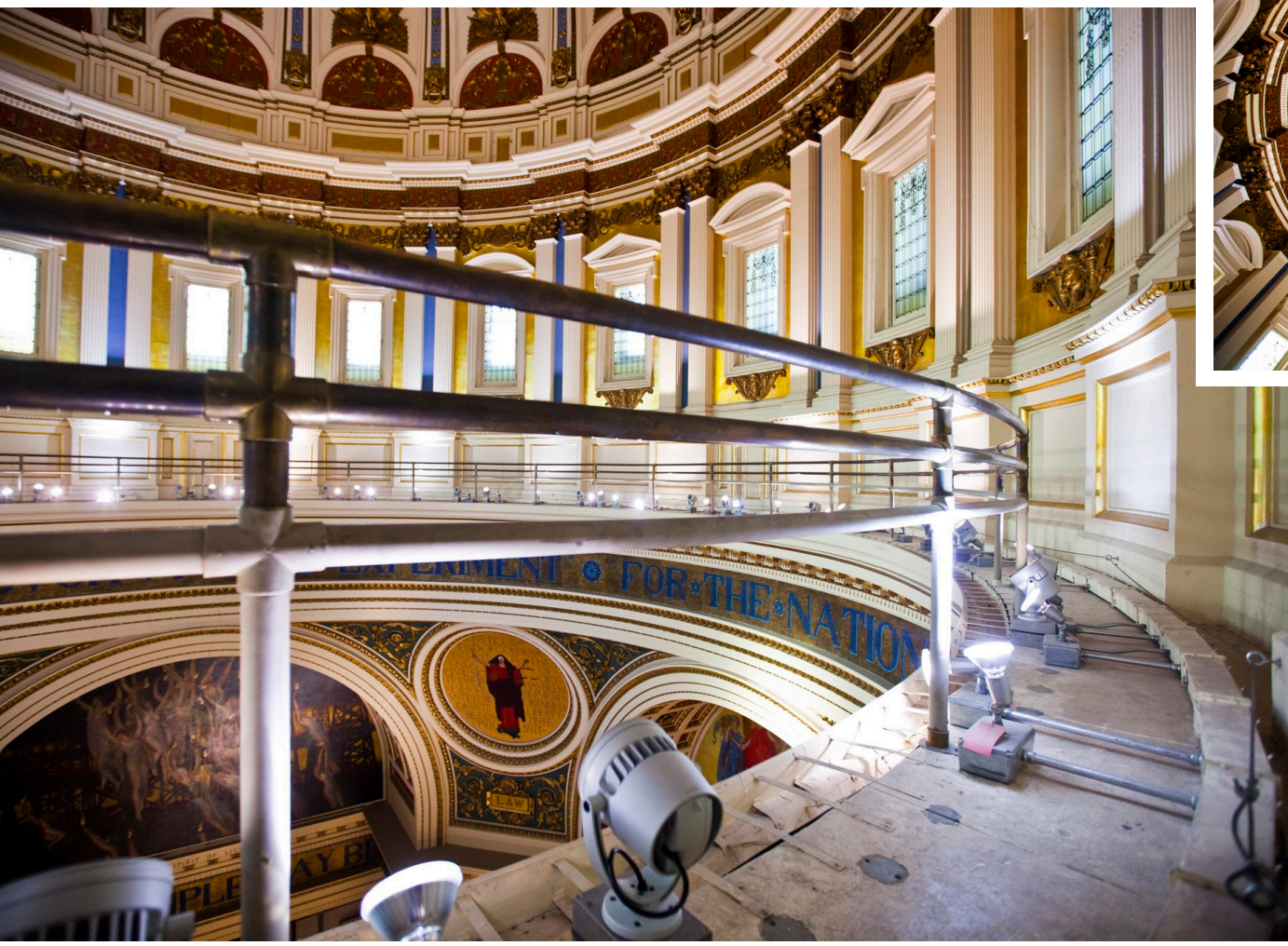


BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE ROTUNDA



The public used to be able to walk around the ledge inside the dome to view the rotunda below, shown on the cover. If you look up while on the ledge, you can see the interior of the dome, show above at right.

The Capitol dome tour was eliminated in the 1950s for safety reasons, Ruthann Hubbert-Kemper, retired Capitol Preservation Committee executive director, said.

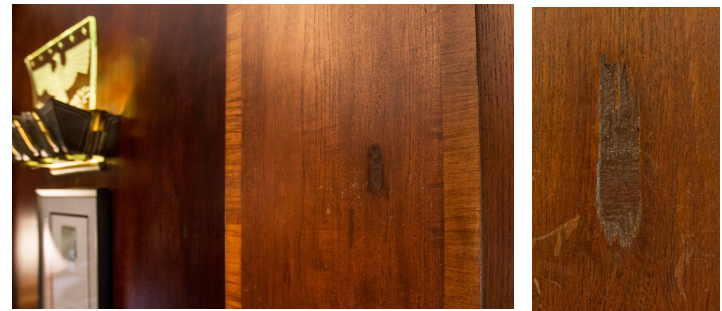
When we went up into the dome with project manager Christopher Ellis, he wouldn't allow us to walk around it to see what it felt like, citing safety concerns. These days, he said, the only people permitted on the ledge are maintenance workers to replace light bulbs or perform other housekeeping chores.

The dome remains the most recognized symbol of Pennsylvania state government, but the rotunda is probably the place that leaves the greatest impression on visitors.

This is where public tours start and end. It's also where tour guides tell visitors that by the time the building was finished in 1906 it cost \$13 million to construct and furnish. Today, the cost would top \$2 billion.

The guides tend to omit the part about how \$4 million of the building's original cost went to pay inflated prices for furnishings because of a bizarre bidding scheme: The state paid for furniture by the pound or by the foot. When this was exposed, it created a scandal in 1906, the year the building was dedicated. In all, 14 people were indicted and six were eventually convicted, including Capitol architect Joseph Huston.

PATCHED HOLE THAT R. BUDD DWYER LEFT BEHIND

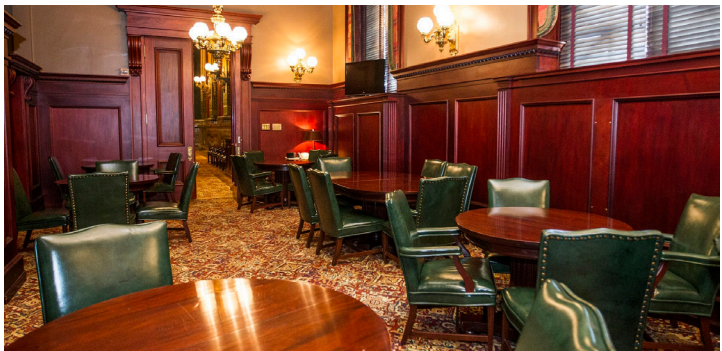


Unbeknownst to the office staff, the patched-up bullet hole left from R. Budd Dwyer's suicide had been hidden by a framed photograph.

Videos of former state Treasurer R. Budd Dwyer putting a handgun to his mouth and pulling the trigger are all over the Internet. But that's not the only haunting reminder of this public suicide that played out at a news conference in his Finance Building office.

There also is the mark it left on the wood-paneled wall. On that snowy January day in 1987, when Dwyer took his life to avoid going to prison for corruption, the bullet exited his head and planted itself in the wall behind him.

EXCLUSIVE SENATE DINING ROOM



Much is made of the gold-standard benefits package that state lawmakers enjoy in addition to their base \$84,000 salary. Senators also have their own exclusive dining room.

"When the Senate is in session, this is open for the members," said Carl Henke, the facilities manager. "It's nice for them. They can get something to eat. They don't have to go down to the Capitol cafeteria, and they can be close to the [Senate chamber] floor."

The kitchen is open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. when the Senate is in session, but meals are not free. Members pay out of their own pocket for the privilege of eating in the dining room, Henke said.



THE VIEW FROM GOV. CORBETT'S DESK

The south end of the Capitol, two stories above the main floor, offers a vantage point rightly reserved for the state's chief executive.

Few people have had the opportunity to see the inside of this office, let alone sit behind the four-sided Pennypacker desk that Joseph Huston, the Capitol architect, designed.

From the side of the Pennypacker desk where Gov. Tom Corbett chooses to sit, he looks out upon a hand-wound clock — one of the 200 or so clocks hanging in the Capitol — above a grand fireplace where photos of family members and Corbett's dogs, Harry and Penny, are displayed.

Staring down from portraits above are the likes of William Penn, Ben Franklin and others who once held the highest seat of power in Pennsylvania.

Many of its first occupants were smokers, whose habit left behind dirt and grime that still clings to the walls throughout the governor's suite.



The first to use the governor's four-sided desk in the ornate office was Gov. Samuel Pennypacker.

For Ruthann Hubbert-Kemper, who as retired Capitol Preservation Committee executive director in 2010, this was the one project she regrets never completing. Work was done to fix water damage to the ceiling in the governor's office and restore the former governors' portraits.

"But we never got the wood-work done in any of those rooms in the governor's suite," Hubbert-Kemper said. "We hoped to do it in the second term of Gov. [Tom] Ridge, but then he went to Washington [in 2001], and Gov. [Mark] Schweiker didn't want anything done because of budget needs. But one of these days, hopefully, it'll get done."

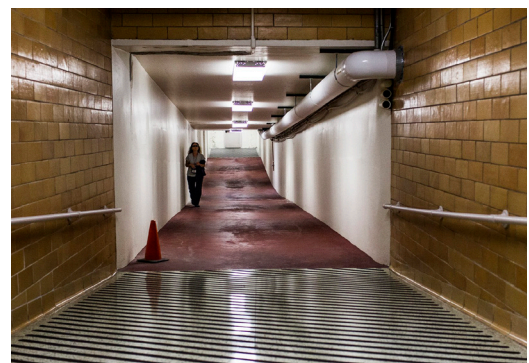
UNDERGROUND NETWORK BENEATH THE CAPITOL

There is a way to get around many of the buildings in the Capitol Complex without going outside. And perhaps those tunnels are one of its greatest secrets.

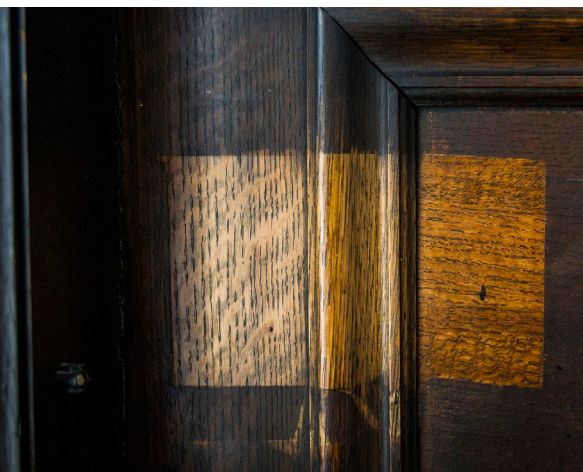
It is possible, if you know the way and have a Capitol access badge, to walk underground from the State Archives to the adjacent Keystone Building and then across the street to the Health and Welfare Building.

The Labor and Industry Building, the North Office Building and the Finance Building also are connected to this web of underground tunnels accessed from the buildings' basements.

Why were the tunnels constructed? I have never been able to get an answer, but it sure is nice to be able walk from building to building in the winter without having to throw on a heavy coat.



THE SMOKE-STAINED WALLS



BY THE NUMBERS

10

Pennsylvania governors had the first name of William, making it the most popular.

24

of the state's 46 governors (47 if you count William Penn's wife, Hannah, who ran the government while her husband was incapacitated as well as a few years after his death) have worked out of the present-day governor's office.

53

years that representatives in the legislature have been voting using an electronic system.

56

portraits of former governors line the walls of the governor's office. Only one is missing: former Gov. Ed Rendell.

87

pounds is what each pair of drapes weighs in the Senate.

202

years that Harrisburg has been the home of state government.

272

feet is how high the gilded bronze "Commonwealth" statue on top of the dome sits above the floor of the rotunda.