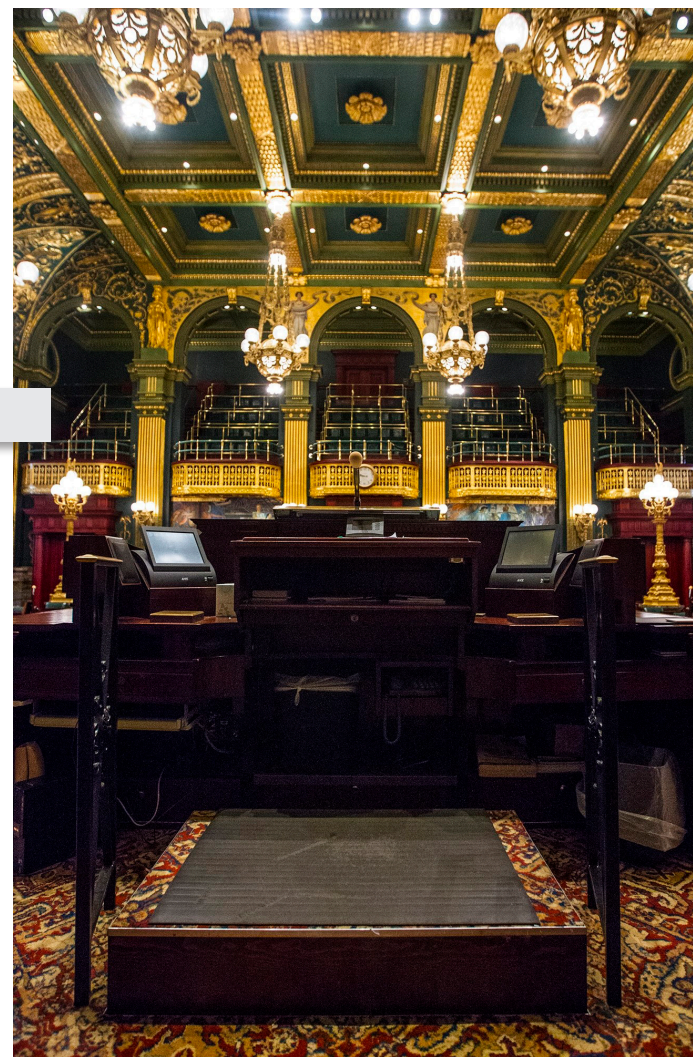




The well-worn brass plate on a gavel block on the Senate rostrum shows a lot of wear from years of trying to call senators to order.



A motorized lift behind the rostrum in the Senate chamber was installed when Catherine Baker Knoll was lieutenant governor, so she could see over the podium.

THE SENATE LEADER'S VIEW



The Senate's mace rarely leaves the chamber.

Visitors to the Senate chamber are treated to the vantage point from the fourth-floor gallery, but the view from behind the rostrum allows you to take in the entirety of the room. From there, you can experience the vicarious thrill of being able to control Senate members with the pounding of a gavel.

Trust me, the well-worn, brass-covered gavel block to the right of the podium reveals it has absorbed quite a bit over the years.

It's obvious that most of the people who have manned the rostrum in the upper chamber have been right-handed because the block to the left looks almost brand new.

Another feature of the Senate rostrum that has remained a fairly well-kept secret is the adaptation made to bolster former Lt. Gov. Catherine Baker Knoll to new heights.

Shortly after Pennsylvania's first female lieutenant governor took office in 2003, a problem cropped up. She could barely see out over the podium, said Carl Henke,

facilities manager for the Senate.

"We thought putting a box would be unsafe and a tripping hazard," he said. "So, we came up with the idea of a motorized lift" that can raise someone by as much as 3 feet.

The lift isn't needed by Lt. Gov. Jim Cawley, but "it's here for future people who maybe need a lift," Henke said.

One feature in the chamber that's a problem for those who are tall is the 6-foot-high doorway at the front of the Senate chamber. Having a doorframe this low tends to cause anyone who is close to that height to naturally duck to avoid hitting their heads when walking through.

Legend has it that Joseph Huston, the Capitol's architect, designed it that way to make people bow as they entered the chamber as a sign of reverence.

Another line of thinking from the Capitol Preservation Committee is that the architect didn't want the doorway to protrude above the marble wainscot and into the space reserved for the murals.

LT. GOV. JIM CAWLEY'S OFFICE



The lieutenant governor's office is one of the least-seen gems in the building.

The prime real estate where it sits, smack in the center of the Capitol, provides easy access to the Senate and House floors with a front porch that protrudes into the Capitol rotunda.

Inside this secure, small suite of offices, which is not publicly accessible, sits the gorgeous private quarters of the state's second-in-command.

The view from Lt. Gov. Jim Cawley's desk chair takes in the ornate mahogany-walled office featuring a red Numidian marble fireplace and a Huston-designed clock, with the state's coat of arms displayed at its center, hanging above it.

Elaborate chandeliers hang from

above, and the eyes of 22 former lieutenant governors stare down from portraits displayed near the ceiling.

The best feature lies outside the office. To the right of the desk is a set of oversized double doors that lead out to a balcony, offering a splendid view down State Street before it falls into the Susquehanna.

Getting to see that view for this project wasn't as simple as turning a knob. It took a small army of Department of General Services employees a couple of hours to unstuck one of the doors that was stuck on a security feature.

So why doesn't the governor pull rank and take over this space? Well, it would mean sacrificing the ability to sneak out of the Capitol on a private elevator and avoid lobbyists, lawmakers and reporters.

THE HOUSE CHAMBER'S 'COCKPIT'

The House rostrum has technology splashed all across it. A large control panel dominates the center of the desk, allowing the House speaker to control the electronic voting boards installed in the chamber in 1961.

As members vote, the control board lights up, so the speaker knows who has voted. After a vote is taken, the speaker pushes a button to clear the board so it's ready for the next vote.



House Speaker Sam Smith keeps Mickey Mouse on the rostrum.

Next to that is a device that allows the speaker to activate microphones on the House floor and another box that displays the view shown on Pennsylvania Cable Network.

The desire to give the chamber leader the ability to monitor the camera view grew out of an embarrassing moment experienced by late House Speaker Matt Ryan.

Session had closed for the day, and the representatives had departed. Ryan, who had gum stuck to the bottom of his shoe, asked to borrow his chief of staff's pocketknife.

"We assumed the cameras were shut off," House parliamentarian Clancy Myer said. "There he was, scraping the gum off his shoe. I got a phone call up here and one of the secretaries said, 'Uh, do you realize that you are still on television?'"



520

feet is the length of the Capitol — about 1 1/4 football fields long.

600

rooms are in the state Capitol.

\$13 MILLION

was the cost to taxpayers to build the adjacent Ryan Office Building cost no more than \$600,000 to construct and furnish between 1893 and 1894.

\$11 MILLION

was the amount of unclaimed property returned to its rightful owners by the state Treasury Department last year.

265 MILLION

pages of records are held in the State Archives.

1493

is when the oldest book, "Nuremberg Chronicle," in the State Library's collection was printed. Christopher Columbus discovered the New World in 1492.