

Property Insurance Section Newsletter

Report from Indian Wells



It was great! While I love this part of the country, the meeting was special, for a lot of additional reasons. The events, especially the Polo Match on Wednesday night, were exceptional. The plenary program, including our Green Building Primer were lively and well received; our Section Meeting was evoked lots of discussion; and the Spa was great, the Golf was great, the local shopping and restaurants were great. I hope you all enjoyed the program, and appreciated the time and energy expended by the Cordells, the Nelsons (Convention Chairs) and Bruce Celebrezze (Program Chair), Lee Farrar (Registration Chair), Joyce Wang (Property Insurance Section Moderator for our Plenary Program), and Barclay Nicholson and Steve Goldman, Section Meeting presenters. If you missed Indian Well, hopefully we will see you in Williamsburg.



The meeting theme is appropriately, “Looking Back”, in Celebration of 75 years of The Federation.



For members of the Property Insurance Section Williamsburg is a special treat. It is not only living history, but history related to our industry—the research, restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures. While you may not be as crazy about the topic as I am here is a little of the history of the restoration itself.

From 1699 to 1780, Williamsburg was the political and cultural center of Britain’s largest colony in the New World. Colonial Williamsburg is the nation’s largest living history museum, and encompasses 301 acres including some 500 buildings, homes, stores and taverns reconstructed and restored to their 18th-century appearances; dozens of exhibition sites; tradesmen practicing 30 historic trades and domestic crafts; historical interpreters and character actors; and 90 acres of gardens and greens. An interactive, live-action drama Revolutionary City® is offered daily from mid-March to the holiday season.

The restoration of Williamsburg is a mammoth undertaking that began in 1927 and continues today. The prime mover behind this enterprise was Dr. William A.R. Goodwin, then rector of Bruton Parish Church. Dr. Goodwin had first come to Williamsburg in 1903. Fascinated by the town’s old buildings and historic past, he launched a one-man campaign to restore the old church, a feat that he successfully completed in 1907. In commemoration, Goodwin published a short book titled *Bruton Parish Church Restored and Its Historic Environment*. He expressed his concern for the historical ambience of the entire town, pleading that citizens should halt what he regarded as “the spirit of ruthless innovation which threatens to rob the city of its distinction and charm.” He conceived of a grand vision of *restoring* not just a few key buildings, but all of Williamsburg to its eighteenth-century appearance. Restoration on such a scale was unprecedented, and would require enormous financial resources. Goodwin solicited Henry Ford about funding. He was not interested, but after meeting and inviting John D. Rockefeller to Williamsburg, he became the patron of the restoration. He authorized hiring an architect who would prepare sketches of Williamsburg as it might appear following restoration. The Boston architectural firm of Perry, Shaw & Hepburn was engaged. By 1927, preliminary drawings illustrating restoration of the *entire* town were complete, and Rockefeller instructed Goodwin to proceed with the acquisition of some key properties. The restoration of Williamsburg was underway! An amazing amount of historical research was undertaken and 18th century maps, estate inventories, and other archeological resources were researched and uncovered locally and in the archives of the Virginia State Library. From intact fragments of masonry, the architects deduced the bonding pattern, rubbing details, and joint treatment used by Palace bricklayers more than 250 years earlier, in order to insure authenticity.

Goodwin and Rockefeller were well ahead of the times. The National Register of Historic Places, the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation was first authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. Today there are more than 80,000 properties listed in the National Register including 1.4 million individual resources - buildings, sites, districts, structures.

Since we are meeting in such a unique historic venue, we thought we would touch on this subject and provide a brief overview of Historic building designations on a national, state and local level, and explain what such designations may mean during repair of an historic building. We will also point out some of the gaps in traditional property coverage which may arise during such repairs and look at policies that specifically offer "Historic Building" property coverage. Look for the program in your brochure:

"Repairing National Treasures-- Overview of Issues Involved in Repair of Historic Buildings" -William Bracken, International Building Code Instructor, Tampa FL; Greg Varga, Esq. Robinson & Cole.

Andy Downs and James Kelly will lead a discussion policy conditions, sub limits and warranties are drafted in a manner which makes them difficult to monitor or enforce. What are the consequences of violations of these provisions after a loss, and how can they be enforced and defended? They will also lead an interactive discussion of coverage issues arising from the Japanese earthquake and tsunami last month, including supply chain business interruption claims.

Meeting Highlights include a theme party at the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, home to the "USS Monitor"; a trip to College of William and Mary to check out the Center for Legal and Court Technology; a colonial tavern "dine a round", family trip to Busch Gardens, a fishing tournament (along with golf and tennis, and a non black tie closing dinner.

Check out the brochure and register at

http://www.thefederation.org/documents/WilliamsburgPreview_2-3-11.pdf

Other helpful sites for planning:

Travel sites for Williamsburg

http://www.colonialwilliamsburg.com/?WT.mc_id=663

<http://www.visitwilliamsburg.com/index.aspx>

<http://www.williamsburg.com/>

Mariner's Museum

<http://www.marinersmuseum.org/>

Williamsburg Official History site:

<http://www.history.org/>

A Colonial Dictionary- Adventures in the Idioms of Our Mother Tongue

http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/summer02/puttin_on_the_dog.cfm

Reminder- among the swear words of the day were “Egad” and “Zounds”- start practicing now!

See you all in Williamsburg, July 24-31, 2011

Rebecca Levy-Sachs