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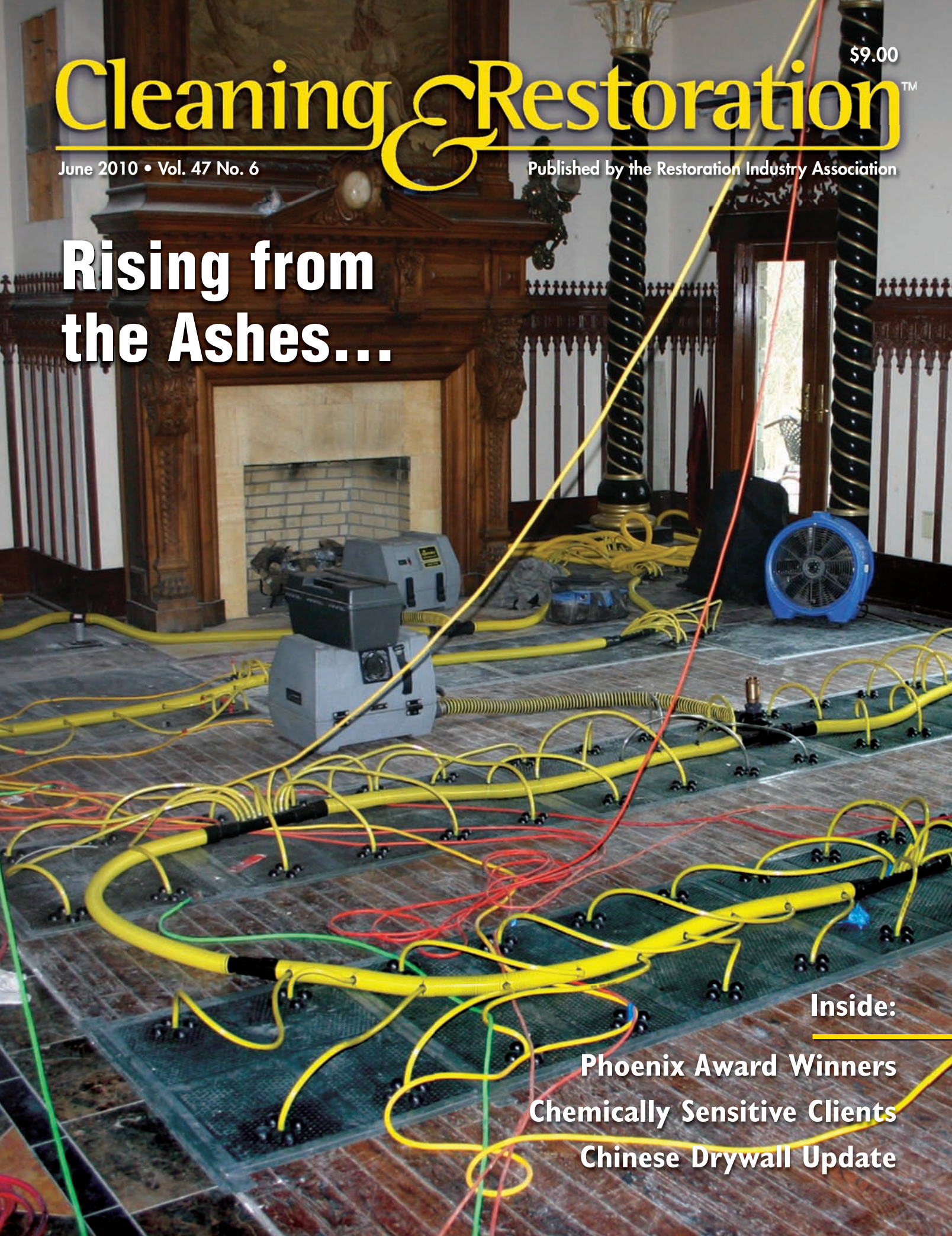

Rising from the Ashes...

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Phoenix Award Winners

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Chinese Drywall Update

Performing Under PRESSURE

By Casey M. Geisler

Located on the Murray River in Moama, New South Wales, Australia, is the premier Moama Bowling Club. Employing more than 160 part- and full-time employees, this club is steeped in the heart of the area, annually donating $300,000 back to the community and its members. Moama Bowling encompasses a variety of rooms such as indoor and outdoor bistro dining areas, an entertainment/piano lounge, sporting venues/bowling greens and business conference rooms, and has hosted its fair share of business functions, weddings, and sports award events.

A fire broke out in the club around 4:30 a.m., just after the building had been newly renovated, damaging the bistro, bistro terrace, the café, bottle shop and the reception area. It took fire departments from the cities of Moama and Echuca almost two hours before the blaze was finally brought under control. Though these areas were the only ones directly impacted with visible fire damage, there were other areas of the club such as the kitchen, pavilion bar and gaming lounge that were impacted by smoke and heat damage.

Brought in by QBE, Johns Lyng Group was tasked with the challenge of reconstructing enough of the club within 10 weeks to allow it to reopen for business. The deadlines were crucial "with business interruption costs of $50,000 per day for the insurance company, we had no alternative but to succeed," says Johns Lyng project manager, David Cameron.

Being such a tight knit community, there was a lot of speculation about having an outside firm from Melbourne handling the reconstruction work, but after running the numbers, Johns Lyng was able to put together a plan of action that in the end would save $4 million and be finished six months sooner than their closest competitor. This was a difficult situation for all of the parties involved. The club needed to be completed as soon as possible and the outsiders had no first-hand knowledge of what the club looked like before the fire. Locals were upset that a Melbourne company had won the bid over the local builder who had just recently won an award for building the club.

Hot Points

- Bowling Club was newly renovated before fire.
- First portion of project was completed in only 10 weeks.
- More than 170 people worked to complete the reconstruction.
- The entire project was completed in 24 weeks, a full six weeks earlier then projected.
- The total cost was $17 million.

Learning early on that the biggest challenge would not be the time constraints, workers found the always changing scope of the project made it even more difficult. As they removed debris from various areas, there was more damage discovered that needed to be addressed. This forced workers to make on the spot decisions concerning which actions to take in order to continue working at break neck speeds. The company decided the best way to handle this challenge was to employ any and all local tradesman with an understanding of fire reinstatement who were willing to work on the project. This decision accomplished two things, it provided Johns Lyng with approximately 170 people to work on the project, and gave them first-hand memories to rely on while reconstructing the building. Word of mouth support for the company spread throughout the community, helping everyone to understand that Johns Lyng was contracted simply for its expertise in fire reinstatement and that they wanted the help of all those willing to contribute.

When Johns Lyng took on the project, they were provided with a skeleton scope from QBE Insurance. This scope only consisted of what could be seen with the naked eye. The team spent 24 hours in a planning session working to take a proactive approach to the project. Each part of the team was given its own set of responsibilities and the freedom to make decisions as they moved throughout the process. With the many people and trades

working simultaneously, good communication was essential. This was important to the overall completion of the job because as pieces of plasterboard were moved, more damage was discovered. Project managers had to become creative in their solutions to repair the club.

Workers on the project put in 16-hour days, six days a week, working in two, eight-hour shifts. Workers had to have excellent communication with each other for this method to be successful. A log book was set up for contractors to sign in and out with three full-time employees monitoring the book. When reviewing the project, it was noted that workers booked about 2,000 hours per

day between the separate shifts. They had set clear goals for each stage of the project and worked only to achieve one goal at a time. Training classes addressing safety issues were held locally. With so many people on the site at any given time, it was important that workers be as cautious and careful as possible to prevent injuries. Trainers were brought in from Sydney and Melbourne to teach a course on Work at Heights for those who were suspended from ropes and working on the roof tops. Upholding safety regulations helped to minimize the risks being untaken by individuals.

A major component of the building that required repair involved the roof and trusses. This was the first part of the project to be completed. Following the initial inspection, it was thought that the entire roof would need to be removed. Knowing there was no budget for this option, Johns Lyng employees considered using cryogenic ice blasting to remove the fire and smoke damage. It was a method they had used successfully in the past on smaller projects, and they felt it could be beneficial in this instance as well.

After a day of demonstrations for the roofers who would be helping with this part of the project, the treatment was done in conjunction with replacing only the necessary sections of the roof. It was important that whatever sections were blasted and removed were immediately replaced. This had to be done in order to ensure that the roof maintained its weatherproofing, was sealed tight and protected the rest of the building from further damage.

After the work on the roof was finished, workers moved on to another stage in the plan and began working on the gaming areas in order to have them completed in time for the Spring Racing Carnival. Testing was completed to ensure that the ceiling support systems were intact and that work could proceed as planned.

Once workers moved on to other stages of cleaning, they were faced with the task of ensuring that the bowling club greens were not destroyed by their efforts to repair the club. This area of Australia was prone to droughts and with the environmental issues that chemicals might cause, it was determined that cryogenic cleaning would be the sole method used for cleaning the rest of the club. Everything from the roof to the kitchen appliances were tackled with this method. By using dry ice pellets that evaporated on contact, workers were able to ensure that no chemical residues were left behind and no harmful chemicals would come in contact with the bowling greens, which further protected them.

The second major part of the project involved the server room, which was completely destroyed. This forced workers to replace or rerun cables throughout the entire club without removing the ceiling to make the task easier. While workers sought to reconstruct the room, they were also forced to contend with mandatory upgrades that needed to be completed before being able to pass mandatory inspections. In order to ensure that these upgrades were done properly, the team brought in other experts for this task.

A building automation system was installed in order to control all services throughout the club. From the air conditioning temperature to music volume, it was necessary that this system perform at the highest levels in order to minimize other power usage. Critical to this system was the power factor correction (PFC), a software program that optimizes the amount of power used. Workers also decided to use other energy efficient methods such as mixing valves and installing low energy lights to control power consumption.

The glass throughout the club was glazed to reduce the amount of heat entering the building so the air conditioner would not have to work as hard to keep the club cool. Even the toilets were replaced with low flow toilets.

In order to ensure that quality work was being performed, the project manager, superintendant, consultant architects, supervisors, other representatives and personnel from the club held a weekly inspection. Each of these individuals would begin their inspections on Monday mornings. Working their way through the club, each contractor was asked to explain what work was being done in their area and allow those performing the audit to verify that the staff was in fact

following the job scope. This allowed those performing the inspections to make any notes of the progress being made, as well as provide same day feedback on what still needed to be done or modified. Inspections were then repeated on every Thursday to ensure that any changes were completed.

Each member of the team operated with respect and the understanding of a common goal, to reconstruct and reopen the club as soon as possible. Long hours were required and with so many people on the site each day, each person had to be committed and dedicated to their purpose and easily able to adapt to the ever-changing scope of work. The long hours, hard work and dedication were rewarded by prompt payments from the insurance company through a mutual understanding between the contractors and QBE and Crawford & Co., who were the insurance adjusters. This provided further incentive for personnel to keep working on the project since they would be paid in a timely manner. Cameron notes that "every team member acted with integrity and took full responsibility and pride in fulfilling their specific role… I can honestly say that this is the most gratifying project that I have been involved in."

The entire project, though completed in stages, was actually finished in only 24 weeks, a full six weeks earlier than projected. A final audit was performed and the $17 million project was approved as completed. ■

Casey M. Geisler is RIA's communications specialist. She wrote the article in the April issue on the restoration of the Kentucky Derby Museum.