

# CASTLE CHAT

A NEWSLETTER  
FROM  
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**Castle Claims Service®**  
*Serving Western Pennsylvania*



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## Message from the President:

*Mark Blackburn*

Hello to all of our clients reading this! This is not the year to be a skier; snow in western Pennsylvania is sparse and the weather has been agreeable. With such great weather, I'm on the lookout for surf shops to open in Erie. We are experiencing a slow time, but despite that, we want to make sure we continue to serve the needs of our customers and their insureds. Please be on the lookout for an upcoming survey from us, we would appreciate your input so we can continue to meet your needs.

Look for us this year at the PAMIC Claims Seminar on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Gettysburg, PA. How many of you knew that this year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that great battle between the North and the South? If you have time, try to visit this humbling battlefield.

We are considering adding the Symbility Software to our estimating options for our clients. We are in the beginning stages of learning about the software and hope to introduce this software before the end of 2013. This will help us to better estimate losses and give our clients an alternative to the Xactimate Software.

Last, please make sure you read our employee spotlight article. In this edition we are featuring an employee who not only has years of experience, but a great work ethic as well. Also, stop by our booth at the PAMIC Claims Summit and enter our gift card give-away. Have a safe spring and watch out for the surfers on Lake Erie!

*Mark*

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Steve Johnson, an Adjuster from our Erie Office, attended a CE Class with Rainbow International on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The class was on Ethics in Insurance, Business, and Life.

Steve Johnson, Don Schleicher and Mike Karalewich will continue to take CE classes throughout the year to stay current with their RPA (Registered Professional Adjuster) designation. Be on the lookout for them at the next CE class.



Part of the social media network LinkedIn – connect with our employees!



## THE SPOTLIGHT'S ON...

# Don Schleicher

GENERAL ADJUSTER  
PITTSBURGH OFFICE



Don Schleicher, an adjuster from our Pittsburgh Office, has been with Castle Claims Service for over 30 years with a total of 48 years of experience. Don graduated from St. Mary's College with a BA degree, afterward pursuing his graduate

education at Duquesne University in their Master's Program studying Philosophy of Science. He began his insurance career at the Insurance Company of North America as an adjuster and continued in the adjusting field working for other companies like Mizerak Adjusting Company and Castle Claims Service. Don continues to keep informed and current in the industry; last year he received the Registered Professional Adjuster (RPA) designation which requires yearly continuing education hours.

We asked Don what the biggest change in the industry has been. Don's response was "The updated use of technology. When I first started, all reports were hand written; then dictated on records or belts, then cassettes, digital recordings, now emails; from writing appraisals by hand from a sheet of costs, to computer generated reports". Also, from every insurer having a local office, and visiting it, to customers across the country known only by name or email address, personal interactions have changed.

He also states that the most difficult aspect of adjusting is balancing time between field work and office work. Time management is a skill learned only through trial and error. His favorite part of the job is the different experiences new claims bring: a new type of loss, a town he had not been in before, a change of scenery on a drive. Lastly, his most memorable claim is "the first one I inspected with my trainer. A church in Natrona Heights had a car lose control and drive through a curtain wall front into the basement. I still think of that every time I drive through the area."

Mark Blackburn added that Don has a wealth of knowledge which companies can utilize when assigning claims to him. He never passes on a claim and always looks forward to his next assignment. He has a work ethic that is hard to find and he is a wonderful asset to Castle Claims Service.

Look for the next issue to spotlight other valuable employees!



## SUBMITTING - New Loss Assignment

There are many ways our offices will accept new claim assignments. We will still accept assignments over the phone or via fax, but now you can send by e-mail, Xactimate Address (BLACKBURN.ERIE.PA) or submit information through our website at [www.castleclaims.com](http://www.castleclaims.com).

When submitting a new loss via our website, go to FORMS, and select Assignment Form.

Please fill out claim information and submit.

# Color Your World

We know that studies have been conducted regarding how color affects our behavior. For example, at [www.colormatters.com](http://www.colormatters.com) you can learn how certain colors can cause fatigue, stress, hinder visual perception, or even damage eyesight.

Are you one of the many consumers considering the purchase of a new car? We tend to consider many different aspects that affect this decision, like gas mileage, safety features, ratings, test results, and price. These are all important features that can make or break a decision. An afterthought and sometime unimportant feature of a car is its color. Now consider how this applies to cars and driving. Colors can affect the way we react, as well as reaction time. There are specific colors we associate with specific actions, for example red means stop and green means go. But, what if the stop sign were green and said stop? How quickly would we be able to alter our routine to rely on reading the word and not noticing the color?

Work place accidents can also be more frequent depending on color. Have you ever walked down the hallway of a hotel and felt that the design on the carpet was so busy it looked mobile? Busy patterns that "play" with your eyesight can attribute to more tripping and falling. A bright yellow color can eventually impair and damage one's vision. For example, if an employee's desktop background on their computer is bright yellow, they may experience repetitive headaches and even fatigue due to the strain this color puts on one's eyes.

Another way color can hinder us is by distraction. Bright colors tend to catch our attention and momentarily distract us from our current task. This could happen in truly any situation and with varying degrees of severity. For example, if a fuchsia sports car speeds past us on the freeway, it would distract the driver and take their eyes away from the road in front of them. With driving, even the smallest distraction can be deadly. The same can be said for factory work or any work that entails the use of power tools. A bright color that enters our line of vision can distract long enough for injury and mistakes to occur.

Being more cautious can surely help with eliminating accidents such as these, but also we can work on training our brain to create a distinction between color and words. For example, the Stroop Test, (example below) concentrates on saying the color you see, not reading the word.

## Blue Pink Grey Tan

Learn more about the Stroop Effect and test by visiting  
[www.Snre.umich.edu/eplab/demos/st0/stroopdesc.html](http://www.Snre.umich.edu/eplab/demos/st0/stroopdesc.html).

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achievements and  
designations. We  
encourage all  
employees  
to continue their  
education so that we  
provide the most  
progressive service  
for you!**



## Upcoming Events



Are you familiar with our Claims Management Program, FileTrac®? We've been utilizing FileTrac® since 2009. It has helped our adjusters immensely with organizing claims, setting up reminders/diaries, billing, and storing documents electronically. FileTrac® has improved our everyday work efficiency.



- PAMIC 2013 Claims Summit – April 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 - Gettysburg, PA
- PIIAI Spring Meeting 2013 – May 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 - Annapolis, MD
- Email us at [jessicakarotka@castleclaims.com](mailto:jessicakarotka@castleclaims.com) to enter our \$50 gift card drawing by answering the trivia question correctly. – In what city/town did Don Schleicher's most memorable claim occur? Email us by 4-5-13.



Pictured above; Mark on his 2011 PAMIC trip to Gettysburg. He's standing in front of Little Round Top.

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