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Product Matters!

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Comments from the Chair Continuity and Change

by Abraham S. Gootzeit

The Product Development Section is comprised of involved and loyal members. We are passionate about our work, tireless in our effort to develop innovative and profitable products and generous with our energy to further the profession. Our members have been represented by elected Section Council members who take their responsibilities seriously.

It is under these circumstances that I have the honor of starting my year as the section chair. I am pleased and proud to have this opportunity.

The Product Development Section has had a long history of able and energetic chairs. I feel privileged to have worked with Noel Abkemeier (during my first year) and Kevin Howard (the outgoing chair). They have continued and expanded the work of the section, leaving it in better shape than ever. Thanks to each of you for your wisdom and mentoring.

Over the upcoming year, the section will continue and expand our ongoing activities, which include:

- Creating and sponsoring sessions at the Spring and Annual Meetings.
- Sponsoring the Product Development Actuary Symposium and other continuing education seminars and webcasts.
- Sponsoring practical and knowledge-extending research that benefits our members
- Representing the needs of product development actuaries through involvement with various SOA committees and the Board.



There will be changes this year as well. Most prominent is our section's participation in the SOA's ongoing organizational transition. The goal is to improve services, allowing our members to have more rapid access to appropriate information. This will increase our section's activities in important ways:

- Sections will have greater interaction with the Board of Governors—our input will be carefully considered.
- We will have a greater role in important areas, such as basic education, environmental scanning, experience studies and research.

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What does that mean for our members? It's an exciting opportunity to get involved with new and important activities. Also, it means that your Section Council members will need your assistance—even more than before.

I would also like to encourage our members to participate in a dialog on two important issues.

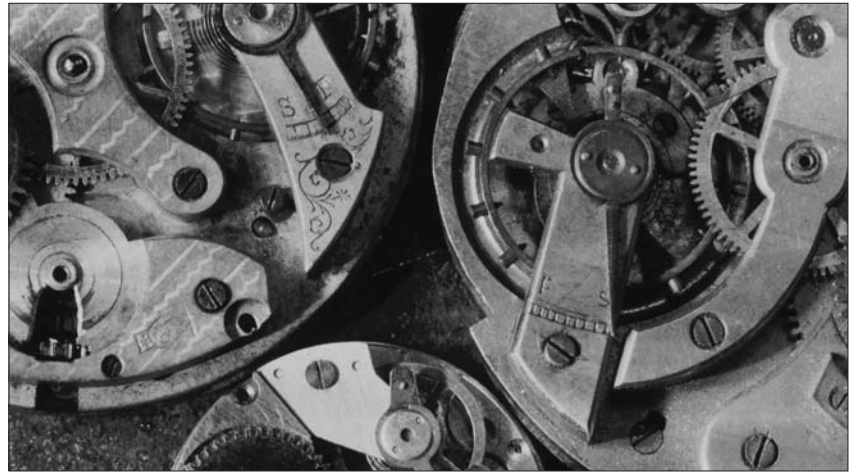
It is no secret that our traditional employers (insurers and consultants) are part of the larger consolidation movement in our industry. One way to expand our employment opportunities, as well as learn more about our industry, is to establish liaisons with professional organizations and groups that represent marketing people. We intend to feature product development actuaries who work for these nontraditional employers in future articles of this newsletter.

I also would like to encourage discussions regarding the responsibility that product development actuaries have to insurers, regulators and the industry. In our passion to develop the most innovative products to give our distributors a competitive edge, we must be aware of all the consequences. And there are times when our appropriate response might be to say "no" to our employers—a difficult task when presidents, marketing officers and others question why we can't match competitor XYZ's product.

I welcome the new members to the council, Jeff Beckley, Mike Kaster and Doug Robbins, who were elected to three-year terms. Each has a strong interest in product development and will provide fresh energy and ideas. Many thanks as well to our outgoing council members, Kevin Howard, Susan Kimball and Paul Haley for their participation and unending energy.

The remaining incumbent members have agreed to serve in the following roles:

- Elinor Friedman – vice chair
- Kelly Levy – secretary/treasurer
- Mary Broesch – program coordinator, 2004 Annual Meeting and 2005 Spring Meeting
- Keith Dall – program coordinator, 2005 Product Development Actuary Symposium
- Nancy Winings – liaison to Board Advisory Group on Continuing and Basic Education



We are fortunate to have active "Friends of the Council" who provide so much support, including Doug Doll, who continues as editor of the newsletter. Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge the support the section receives from the Society staff. At the risk of omitting someone, I'd like to thank the following people: Lois Chinnock supports all sections and councils and is always there for us. Sandy Neuenkirchen supports our continuing education programs as well as the Product Development Actuary Symposium. Narayan Shankar assists with many actuarial and SOA issues. And Ronora Stryker has been instrumental with our research efforts. Many thanks to all of you.

Continuity and change. It will be a great year. I encourage all of you to participate actively. □

Congratulations!

The following are newly-elected members of the Product Development Section Council. They will each serve a three-year term, which will begin in October, 2004.

Jeffrey A. Beckley, FSA
Carmel, IN

Michael L. Kaster, FSA
Conseco Insurance Companies
Carmel, IN

Douglas L. Robbins, FSA
Towers Perrin
Atlanta, GA



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