



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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## Chairperson's Corner

# The Glass is Half Full!

By Paula Hodges

Those who know me best, realize that I am a hopeless optimist. Even when we're constantly bombarded with the negative news: the low interest rates, high unemployment, and massive challenges in implementing the Affordable Care Act, I like to think about the bright side. This spring, at the Life and Annuity Symposium, I heard that if interest rates stay at their current low level for another 5-10 years, it will be the end of the life insurance industry as we know it! I look at this as a time of opportunity.

History has shown that some of the toughest times bring out the best in people, so I believe that times like these bring about great innovations. In Product Development, we have always been challenged to find ways to meet the competing demands of competitive rates, profitable products, while fitting into the boundaries of increasingly complex regulatory constraints. In my opinion, today's version of these challenges will bring about a new era of protection products to meet the needs of our customers. As an industry, I am hopeful that we take this opportunity to start fresh: by reviewing our customers' core needs and then find solutions that might look different than products that we're offering today. If this means the "end of the life insurance industry as we know it"—then so be it. I am anxiously awaiting the revolutionary ideas that will come about from the current financial environment. Our companies and products may look different in the future, due to today's challenges—but that can be a good thing!

In that spirit, I'd like to share two of my favorite quotes:

- "Optimists are right. So are pessimists. It's up to you to choose which you will be." - Harvey Mackay
- "Whether you believe you can do a thing or not, you are right." – Henry Ford

Finally, as we have just elected new council members, I'd like to use this space to thank the council members who are completing their current elected terms:

- Rhonda Elming has served for three years on the council and most recently served as Secretary / Treasurer for the section.
- Stephen Peeples is also completing his three year term, currently serving as co-editor of our *Product Matters!* newsletter.
- Dave Moran accepted a 1 year appointment to the council when a vacancy opened up. He has helped with various section activities including serving on the committee for the Annual Meeting this fall.

I will be handing over the section chair responsibilities to Tim Rozar, who will be a most capable leader of the section council. With this new leadership, we are in good hands. Our glass is definitely half full! □



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