



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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A FOND FAREWELL TO OUR EDITOR

(AN INTERVIEW BY RONALD L. KLEIN)



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There are currently 18 Sections of the Society of actuaries with over 36,000 members according to the Society of Actuaries Web site. Each of these 18 Sections publishes a high-quality newsletter that is distributed to its membership.

The Reinsurance Section of the Society of Actuaries currently has over 2,400 members which ranks it sixth amongst all sections. I do not know of any section that is more pleased with the quality of its newsletter than the Reinsurance Section — all thanks to Dean Abbott.

After more than four years of dedicated service in making 2,402 actuaries happy (a daunting task in and of itself) and an additional 40 non-actuaries happy, Dean has decided to step aside in his role as editor. I felt that it would not be fitting to let him go without asking him a few questions. I had the opportunity to catch up with Dean recently. Here is what he said:

Q: What were you responsible for during the past four years?

A: Most of my time was spent editing the Reinsurance Section newsletter and also as Web site Liaison for the section.

Q: I didn't know that you were the Web site liaison. What was your biggest accomplishment?

A: My biggest accomplishment clearly was creating the advertisement for my successor. I obviously did a great job since Richard Jennings volunteered for the position and he is doing a fantastic job!

Q: Tell us more about the newsletter. How many did you send out? What was your longest issue?

A: In all, I edited nine newsletters during my tenure. Supposedly, in successive issues a couple years ago, I had the longest Reinsurance News ever and followed it up with the longest section newsletter ever (of all the sections). It was not my goal to do that, instead my goal was to have more articles committed to than I ultimately needed, figuring that a number of them would not materialize. However, I was fortunate in that I always had a high "articles actually submitted to articles committed to" ratio.

Q: I am sure that being the editor had its good times. What was the best part of the job?

A: I love dealing with people and this position afforded me the opportunity to work with a large and diverse group of people while preparing each issue. It was also interesting to think of ideas for articles that the membership would enjoy reading. I would often sit back and think "what is it that I really want to know about what's going on in reinsurance" and then I would try to find people to write articles on those issues. I got more questions answered that way.

Q: Being an editor had to have its tough days too. Would you like to discuss some of these days?

A: I generally don't like to complain and I would have to name names — and that would just get me into trouble! If any of the readers are really interested in my struggles, please give me a call.

Q: Are there any humorous stories that you would like to share with us?

A: Graham Bancroft asked me to volunteer for the position of newsletter editor while he was chairperson of the Reinsurance Section Council. At that time, I

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had been in reinsurance for barely one year. How could I possibly take the position without an in-depth knowledge of the reinsurance industry? How could I get volunteers to write articles when I did not have any contacts? These were just some of the questions that I posed to Graham even though I was excited about the opportunity. Of course, Graham assured me that as chairperson he would be able to make up for my shortcomings — no problem (for those of you who do not know Graham he has this way of making you feel more comfortable when you have a concern). Based on Graham's assurances, I signed on as Reinsurance News editor. My first official assignment was to attend the Reinsurance Section Council meeting not two weeks after speaking with Graham. At the meeting, the first order of business was to thank Graham for his term as Chairperson and to wish him well as he was leaving the council! So much for assurances! I will never let him forget that. In fact, I hope he is reading this article now.

Q: Do you have any final comments as outgoing Editor?

A: I very much enjoyed being the reinsurance section newsletter editor and I would like to again thank the many contributors to the newsletter. I would also like to thank the staff at the Society of Actuaries for assisting me every step of the way. Meeting so many good people and learning so much made this a great experience. I highly recommend it.

I hope that you will all join me in thanking Dean for his exemplary service to our section and wish him well in his future endeavors. ✨



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