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SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES
Technology
Section

CompAct

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

by Jeff Pomerantz

Greetings!!! It's hard for me to believe that the year is coming to a close and that this will be my last "Letter from the chair." It has been a pleasure serving the Technology Section as chairperson. I am very pleased with what we have accomplished this year, and I'm even more excited about what the future may hold for some of the initiatives that are underway.

I have enjoyed working with all of the council members the last three years. I want to thank our other two retiring council members, Tim Deitz (2010 chairperson) and Frank Reynolds, for their contributions. I wish Tim and Frank the best as they move on to other opportunities. Even though I will no longer be on the council next year, I am excited about what's next. Eddie Smith will take over as chairperson in 2012. Eddie brings a lot of enthusiasm and knowledge to his role; he has already had a big impact on the council, and I know that he will continue to do the same in 2012.

I want to mention a few highlights from the past year that will continue to be major initiatives for 2012. The number one topic for our council this year has undoubtedly been "Apps for Actuaries." The topic is an almost constant brainstorm on what apps might be useful for actuaries. There have been sessions and discussions at meetings, ongoing columns in our newsletter, member survey questions, as well as the actual implementation of a mobile app for actuarial meetings, beginning with the Health Spring Meeting this year. If you have suggestions on apps you would find useful, please send them to any Council member. Also, be sure to check out the

[Links of Interest](#)

[Fiction Contest](#)

[Richard Junker, Co-editor](#)

[Andrew Chan, Co-editor](#)

SOA Staff

[Meg Weber, Staff Partner](#)

[Sue Martz,](#)

[Section Specialist](#)

[Sam Phillips, Staff Editor](#)

"Apps for Actuaries" session at the Annual Meeting (Wed., 8:30 - 9:45 a.m.). There is also a Technology-sponsored session on "Model Management" that you may find interesting (Tues., 3:45 - 5 p.m.).

Another hot topic this year has been LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com). The LinkedIn group for section members, "Society of Actuaries Technology Section," is continuing to grow. I am happy to say that we now have 192 members, up from 120 members just a few months ago. I would love to see this number go to 500 or more in the near future. This online forum for networking and information sharing is only what you, the members, make of it. So, please join, read and participate in discussions that interest you. If you have any reservations about joining the LinkedIn site, please let us know what those are so we can address them. Addressing how this forum, as well as others, such as Twitter, can best serve the members will continue to be a priority for the 2012 council.

I won't go into any detail on the rest of our activities in 2011, but here is a non-exhaustive list:

- actuarial club presentations
- actuarial meeting sessions
- co-sponsoring of speculative fiction contest
- table manager updates
- newsletter articles writing and editing

On the topic of the newsletter, I would like to thank Howard Callif and Eddie Smith for serving as co-editors of **CompAct** for several years. Howard has served as editor of the newsletter for the past four years and Eddie has served as co-editor the past two. Howard and Eddie have done a terrific job in obtaining and editing articles for CompAct in what is often a thankless and not at all well-recognized role. It is efforts like theirs that make the Technology Section what it is today, and those efforts are definitely appreciated. Howard and Eddie are both stepping down from their co-editorship role in 2012. New co-editors will be Andrew Chan and Rich Junker. Rich has already been working on the newsletter in a co-editor capacity. Thanks to Andrew and Rich for taking on this critical role.

As I close, I want to thank all of our volunteers for their willingness to get involved, and say thanks again to all of our council members and friends of the council who work hard to keep our section going. Please reach out to any of the council members listed inside the front cover of this newsletter with your ideas or to volunteer.

Additional Food for Thought

I thought it would be interesting to mention some interesting quotes relating to technology, so I looked online. Probably the most interesting quote was the "640K ought to be enough for anybody" quote supposedly uttered to Bill Gates at a trade show in 1981. However, despite Bill Gates' denial and a lack of any solid proof, the quote lives on. Some other interesting quotes I found are as follows:

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.
~Arthur C. Clarke

Lo! Men have become the tools of their tools. ~Henry David Thoreau

The production of too many useful things results in too many useless people. ~Karl Marx

The Internet is so big, so powerful and pointless that for some people it is a complete substitute for life. -Andrew Brown

However, of all the ones I saw, probably my favorite is this one:

For a list of all the ways technology has failed to improve the quality of life, please press three. ~Alice Kahn

I don't know about you, but sometimes, I really prefer talking to a person over pushing a button.

Thanks, and happy reading!!!

Jeff Pomerantz

2011 Section Council Chair

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