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FROM THE CHAIR
COMING AND GOING

By Mary Elizabeth Caramagno

I just returned from the 2012 Society of Actuaries (SOA) Annual Meeting in Maryland. The annual meeting is my favorite SOA meeting to attend, because it's full of the excitement and optimism that comes with a new year and new opportunities. I'm honored to be the new chair of the Taxation Section Council.

The council had its annual face-to-face meeting in National Harbor, and I'm excited about our plans for the coming year. Brenna Gardino will be the new vice chair of the section. I'd also like to welcome the newly elected members of the council: Tim Branch, Kristin Norberg and Jim VanEtten. Kristin is a member of the *Taxing Times* editorial board. Tim and Jim have jumped into the section's activities with both feet, volunteering to be our Life & Annuity Symposium liaison and our secretary/treasurer, respectively.

At the meeting, we reluctantly said goodbye to our outgoing council members Ame Biggart, Dan Theodore and Kristin Schaefer. Among other things, Ame has represented the Taxation Section on the Annual Meeting Planning Committee. Dan has had a multiyear stint as the section's secretary/treasurer, keeping our meeting minutes and handling our finances. Last, but not least, Kristin is the outgoing chair of the section. Under Kristin's leadership, we presented a successful Product Tax Seminar, as well as several sessions at each of the Life & Annuity Symposium, the Valuation Actuary Symposium and the annual meeting.

Looking ahead, we've already begun to plan our educational offerings for 2013. We'll have a number of face-to-face educational opportunities. In May, we plan to offer a hot breakfast and two sessions at the Life & Annuity Symposium in Toronto. Immediately following that meeting, we will offer a §7702/7702A Boot Camp. In the fall, the section will, as usual, be well represented at both the Valuation Actuary Symposium and the annual meeting.

This year we also plan to expand our technology-based initiatives. Webinars are a great way to provide timely updates on "breaking news" from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). We're expecting IRS guidance on some important topics and will schedule webinars as soon as the guidance is released. Podcasts are a relatively new technology for the SOA's sections, and Dan Theodore has kept the Taxation Section on the cutting edge by recording several that are already available on the SOA website. We're looking forward to posting additional podcasts and appreciate Dan's hard work behind the scenes to prepare them. Finally, we've formed a LinkedIn group to generate conversation and keep everyone informed about the section's activities. To become a member of the Taxation Section LinkedIn group, you must first join the broader SOA group.

The jewel in our crown is our section newsletter, *Taxing Times*. We mail nearly 900 copies of each issue to section members and other interested parties, and a comparable number are downloaded from the SOA website. We also plan to record individual articles as podcasts. If you'd like to volunteer to help in that effort, please contact me or Dan Theodore.

Speaking of volunteers, there are many ways to get involved with the section. We need volunteers to write articles for *Taxing Times*, to speak at meetings, to develop webinars, and to suggest or participate in research opportunities. If you want to get involved but don't know how, contact me or another council member and we'll help you get plugged in. Help us make 2013 another great year!

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