



Article from
Taxing Times
June 2017
Vol. 13, Issue 2

From the Chair “Interesting Times”

By Don Walker

I love Wikipedia. No matter how esoteric the subject, I can usually find out something about it by trolling around the free online encyclopedia. As I sat at my computer today (I still use a desktop) contemplating what to say in late March for an article in a newsletter to be published in June that would inform an audience of tax actuaries, all I think of initially was that so-called “Chinese Curse” about living in “interesting times.” So I did the only logical thing—I wiki’d it.

Turns out that the curse may not be Chinese at all. While the usual formulation is attributed to Bobby Kennedy in 1966, the wiki article redirects to British parliamentary speech from 1898 and appears in 1936 correspondence of Austin Chamberlain (brother of Neville, British PM leading up to WW2). It was also used by Hillary Clinton in her 2003 memoir *Living History* and was used in *Star Trek Voyager*, season 1, episode 6. All of which isn’t helping me with my problem—what to say about how we in the Taxation Section propose to help YOU, our reader of the June issue of *TAXING TIMES*, deal with 2017 changes to U.S. Tax Code and associated regulations.

So putting aside an interesting digression, what ARE we going to do to help you deal with all of this (assuming it happens in a timely manner)?

The good news is we have multiple ways to keep you informed, and we plan to use all of them. The challenges will be that each of these methods have lead times. We have to anticipate and we have to react fast.

First will be sessions at major SOA meetings. We are continuing our tradition of sponsoring multiple sessions at each of the “big three” meetings—the Life and Annuity Symposium, the Valuation Actuary Symposium, and the SOA Annual Meeting & Exhibit. There will be section breakfasts, introductory sessions, and update sessions covering product tax, company tax, and principle-based reserves. You can be sure that the presenters will be prepared to comment on any major developments in Washington, as well as providing their usual fine professional education experiences.



Second will be a webinar, once we have the information that will make holding one worthwhile. It takes about six weeks for the SOA to plan and market a webinar and there is already a calendar for section-sponsored webinars, so it is difficult for me to promise an exact time frame. However, you can be assured that once we have material to share, we will move on this expeditiously.

Third could be a podcast. Dan Theodore does a great job in narrating our podcasts. They are usually based on materials we’ve already presented in other forms, but we have the option to do one based on newly-developed material if that is the best way to get important information to our members quickly.

And let’s not forget this wonderful newsletter, *TAXING TIMES*. The challenge here is lead time. But you never know, the powers that be in Washington could act on such a schedule that works into our triannual publishing cycle. And, we could opt for a special edition, if deemed appropriate by your section council.

The council is also looking at the possibility of a Company Tax Seminar in the near future. Don’t forget to check the SOA website and the new Taxation Section webpage for late-breaking developments.

Yes, we live in interesting times. ■

Don Walker is the retired chief life actuary at Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company of Michigan and can be reached at dwalker@aol.com.