



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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NOTE FROM THE OUTGOING CHAIR:

Volunteerism is Rewarding!

By Ben Wadsley

As the council year ends, so does my tenure as the Forecasting and Futurism Section chairperson. The Society of Actuaries (SOA) annual meeting is behind us now, and the great sessions that our council put together represented the fact that we were one of the fastest-growing sections in the SOA last year. It's been a great year and a half, and while I'm sad that my time is over, I am also excited that the council that leads us into 2012 is well positioned to stay strong.

We have elected our officials for next year. Our chairperson is Donald Krouse, who is a great leader and will make sure our section stays on track and continues to provide value to our members. Clark Ramsey is our new vice-chairperson. In his first year as a council member he has already provided a lot of good ideas and guidance. Also, our returning secretary/treasurer is Mike Lindstrom. He held this position last year, and his archival quality minutes and notes provide us the information we need to sustain our continuity. Dave Snell, who also just completed his last year as a council member, is going to continue to be the newsletter editor. On top of his trailblazing research in complexity science, he has taken the newsletter from a discontinued publication to a semi-annual (and very well-read) one. Along with the help from our SOA staff, we're poised for success!

Even though I'm leaving the council and joining the Actuary of the Future council, I am planning on staying on as a friend of the Forecasting and Futurism council, and hope to still contribute to our section. While continuing work on genetic algorithms, I look forward to keep looking at new and underused techniques to apply their uses to actuarial science. One of the ventures I'm undertaking in order to accomplish this is taking an "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence" class sponsored by Stanford University. Some of the most interesting subjects in the syllabus are hidden Markov models, Bayes filters and adversarial planning. I have always been a proponent of discovering new technologies while not forgetting the lessons from traditional techniques, and I'm hoping some of these new (to me) subjects will complement some of our actuarial work.



At the annual meeting this year, the SOA emphasized volunteerism. Volunteerism is what drives our section and many other parts of the SOA. Be sure to thank those who volunteer their time for our profession, and consider contributing time yourself ... it can be very rewarding!

Thanks for the opportunity. ▼



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