Article from:

The Actuary

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COMPETITION No. 2

This Competition Column was inspired (as, indeed, was *The Actuary*) by Ralph Edward (sic). In his article (*The Actuary*, March, 1974) on names in the Social Security file, Mr. Edward suggested certain firm names, among them: Double & Trouble, Income Taxes. Others more appropriate to the profession are:

> Killem and Countem, Mortality Tables
> Fund and Vest, Pensions
> Ux and Kx, Cash Values

Readers are invited to submit *not more than two* suggestions for actuarial firms, insurance specialists, brokers, etc. The prize is Clifton Fadiman's *Mathematical Magpie*.

*   *   *   *

Rules

1. All verse must be original (and printable).
2. The Editor and Competition Editor are *Ex Officio* not eligible.
3. Only one copy please, to be sent to

> Competition Editor
> *The Actuary*
> Mail Drop 13-2
> 1740 Broadway
> New York, New York 10019

4. Entries must be postmarked not later than February 28.
5. Competition Editor's decision will be arbitrary, capricious, and final.

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Results of Competition No. 1

There was an absolute outpouring of high quality doggerel, confirming the Competition Editor's position that actuaries are a deucedly clever and witty lot. Independent, too. Some threw scansion to the winds, while others, like Matthew Rodermund, FCAS, ignored the rules and submitted verse without a mathematical line. In MR's case, "free anapestic trimeter (with anacrusis)". Let him be warned that reversed dactyls will not be tolerated in the coming clerihew contest! Puns abounded, including Walter Merriam's "Mathterpiece", Rea Hayes' "My cusp runneth over", Jerrold Scher's "2b or not 2b" and, combined with a good rhyme, Al Spooner's "No one could-Makeham". Another rhymer of note in Eugene Foge, CLU, FLMI, who rhymed "+'s and −'s" with, "Lucy and Linus is."

The letter *e* took a mauling in one or another of its forms, followed closely by *i,* either as an iMAGiNARY (John Moyse) or an interest rate.

There were two entries with ZPG as the subject, including William Lums-den's using biological symbols. Malcolm McKinnon wrote his poem in computer language, which produced the following output, "A Rose is a Rose is . . . a Rose." End.

Frank Zaret submitted some adventurous spelling in "My preference is rather

toward $\int e_x$

As a change in diet, Madge Bollen has us

munching on "A³ steak, $\sum P's + \sum \pi$

Demonstrating that actuarial facility with rhyme is no new phenomenon, William Burling and Walter Klem sent in the toweringly superior product of "one of the Society's ablest and brightest members", the late Charles Spoerl:

> Thou art the fairest of all thy sex
> Let me be thy hero
>
> My love's like $\lim\limits_{x \to 0} \frac{1}{x}$

Mr. Klem, playing Raleigh to Spoerl's Marlowe, penned the following reply from the lady:

> The passion of thy mathematics
> Fills my soul with pure ecstatics
> But thou must wait to be my mate
>
> My love is $\frac{0}{0}$

(It rhymes, honest!)

Robert Hohertz responded as follows to the limerick on pi quoted in the announcement of the Contest:

> A project more worthy to me
> Is a modest curtailment of *e*
> Three also must do
> As it's closer than two
> Since you can't drop .7183

Challenging the whole proposition is William Crosson's:

$$\pi \neq 3?$$

> Foolishness, now, this must be!
> Let's not be absurd,
> Let's look at God's Word,
> I Kings 7:23.

(We looked it up: *And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other; it was round all about . . . and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.*)

Now for the prize winner. Mr. Spoerl's wit survives him and we freely acknowledge its superiority. We have nevertheless decided, perhaps arbitrarily, to award "The Lure of the Limerick" to a living entrant:

Prize:

> The earth is in an awful mess
> Because it's round instead of square
> The mass of horrors could be less
> If E would equal cM².

Charles Greeley

Honorable Mention:

> Given that *i* is 4%
> And *d* and *v* are your intent
> Then $i \div (1 + i)$
> Is 039, rounded high,
> And $d \div i$, you know,
> Is 961, rounded low.

Thomas Hummel

> A learned Society of men
> Made extinction impossible when
> They clouded the issue
> With notational tissue
> Like $\ddot{a}_{x:\overline{n}|}$

Peter Tompa

> A student who had to rely
> On his memory said with a sigh,
> "What is the fun
> Knowing $a_{\overline{n}|}$
> $= \dfrac{1 - v}{i}$

H. J. Brownlee

> *i* never shall know, though *i* try,
> why one so humble as *i*,
> when squared, should become
> not just zero less one,
> but *e* to the *i* to the π.

William T. Clifford

> I once told a man without thumbs
> How he might accomplish his sums —
> You have base 8 in sight,
> First your left, then your right —
> And 64's twice round your gums.

D. J. vanKeuren

> To reach a state that's really dead
> A cat must nine times lose its head.
> It's therefore plain for all to see
> That $q^9 = 1 - p$.
> The problem that may trouble you
> Is how to find a feline MEW!

Sidney H. Cooper

> There was a young lady named Bess
> In a moment of high consciousness
> Who summed $\sum x + t$
> To infinity
> And the answer came out as M_x.

Theodore D. Seager

C. E.