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Chairperson's Corner

By Steve Bryson

“In the Public Interest.” The first words you read when picking up our section newsletter. I've been thinking about that message lately. What does it mean, and what does it say about our section and about us as section members?

An acquaintance recently told me that it's arrogant to pretend to act in the public interest. Is that what we're doing? Pretending? I don't think so.

I joined this section because I saw an opportunity to join with like-minded actuaries who wanted to unselfishly give back to the profession and, at the same time, work for the public good. I had the same motivation when I decided to run for council. During the last two years, I've had the pleasure of working with my fellow council members and the SOA support staff to advance our mission of research, education and outreach about publicly funded financial security programs. We've promoted research about the funding of public pensions and retiree health programs (the latter is just now getting started), sponsored education about the U.S. Social Security and Medicare programs, established forums for collegial debate about public pension funding methods and assumptions, and so on. You get the idea.

The Social Insurance and Public Finance Section is fairly unique in the universe of SOA sections. Unlike many other sections, our primary focus is not on supporting our members' practices. There's nothing wrong with that, of course, and I certainly don't mean to imply that we are in any respect superior or more important than other SOA sections. But I do appreciate



that our *raison d'être* is to do what we can as actuaries to improve the financial health of our public security systems, and, in the pursuit of that goal, somehow make this planet a better place in which to live.

So, where do we go from here? Onward and upward, I hope. I invite you to join us and lend your voice and leadership to our mission. Become a Friend of the Council. Submit an article for our newsletter. Volunteer to speak at one of our meeting sessions or webcasts. Or consider running for council next summer. There's plenty to do. Please contact me or a member of the SOA section staff for more information.

Thanks for the soapbox. ■



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