



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

Article from:

# International Section News

February 2004 – Issue 32

## Editor's Note:

### Ambassadors Host the Around-The-World Tour

by Randy Makin

**M**any actuaries are, either by nature or by dint of sitting for so many exams, very competitive. I certainly am. As one of my bridge partners announced as we got out of our car for a duplicate match years ago, "Minimum stakes—blood." It seems that whatever gene that is has been passed on to my children, and I have realized that "No quarter" is the order of the day in board games or card games unless I want to be slaughtered. Much of this newsletter, it should be noted, is a result of competition.

The lead articles are the result of a friendly competition among the International Section ambassadors, each contributing a piece about actuarial work in their country. As Shumei writes, we had a hard time picking the winner for this contest. So, once again we offer you an around-the-world tour, this time hosted by our ambassadors. You will find articles from Vietnam, Australia, China, Israel, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Taiwan

and the United Kingdom. Thanks to everyone who contributed!

Added to these articles are August Chow's report on the 4th Congress of Actuaries and Stuart Wason's report on the East Asian Actuarial Conference, held in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of Actuarial Society of the Philippines. Also, Norm Crowder has written an article about a recent trip to Kazakhstan, a country whose actuarial milestones have been marked several times in this newsletter.

Recently, Bill Horbatt has helped initiate a research project on experience studies around the world. A summary of the results of a pilot study on mortality and persistency appear in this newsletter. You will also find information about meetings from Rejean Besner; a note from our new chairperson, Yiji Starr; and the minutes from our September meeting. Now, where can I find a fourth for a good bridge game? □



*Randy Makin, FSA, MAAA, is the chief pricing actuary at Generali USA Life Reassurance in Kansas City, Mo. He can be reached at [rmakin@GeneralUSA-LifeRe.com](mailto:rmakin@GeneralUSA-LifeRe.com).*

## Chairperson's Corner

by Yiji S. Starr

**I**would like to thank Shumei Kuo, our outgoing chairperson for her wonderful leadership this past year. I would also like to thank August Chow and Jorge Noronha for their services from far away distances. The council has benefited tremendously from their volunteer effort during the last three years.

I would also like to welcome Bill Horbatt, Tom Leonard, Anna Louie and Ronald Poon-Affat to the council. We are very fortunate to spread the work among the four incoming council members instead of the usual three. Have any actuaries figured out the probability for a three-way tie for a council election?

I would like to ask you to consider volunteerism, by giving back to the causes that are important to you. In the last newsletter, you may have read about the "rewarding experience of a volunteer." Hopefully these rewarding experiences may be a gift to you as you give back to the SOA.

As I begin my term as the chairperson of the International Section Council, I would also

like to take this opportunity to let you know of the few "controversial" items on the council's agenda and solicit your input.

- How to best serve our SOA members and specifically International Section Council members? A recent survey indicated many SOA members reside outside of the United States. How do we balance the fact that we are a North American organization and the fact that our members reside all over the world?
- Would it be appropriate for the council to focus on a specific region, a newsletter issue, a seminar or for any other initiatives? As an example, many companies are currently focused on Asia. Would it be appropriate for the council to have an Asian theme for the upcoming year?

I welcome any opinions on these two topics. Please feel free to write to me at my address in the SOA directory. □



*Yiji S. Starr, FSA, MAAA, is senior vice president and chief actuary at John Hancock International Holdings, Inc. in Boston, Mass. She can be reached at [ystarr@hancock.com](mailto:ystarr@hancock.com).*