



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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## Survey cont'd

on this analysis, it appears that about 83% of the membership is either serving on committees or prepared to do so.

- The table indicates that most committees have an adequate number of replacements or additional members ready to serve. For 20 of the 37 committees, the number of potential new members equals or exceeds the size of the current committee. The greatest interest is in the "Committee on Life Insurance Company Valuation Principles;" 47 are interested compared to a current committee of 12.

- Although there may appear to be insufficient interest in Educational Examination committees (only 80 members available for about 500 positions), we all have experience with the Society's recruiting methods in this area (they really do mark papers in the sun!) so this should not present a problem.

The following breakdown of the volunteers responding to the survey by year of Fellowship may be of interest:

1950 - 1959	4
1960 - 1969	20
1970 - 1979	78
1980 - 1988	118

Of the last group, 27 became Fellows in 1987 and 4 in 1988.

Committee chairpersons have been sent lists of the members who expressed interest in their committees. Keep in mind, however, that this does not mean that the committee chairperson will contact everyone on the list. Accordingly, if you are particularly interested in serving on the committee, contact the committee chairperson directly.

As noted in the May issue, committee membership can be a rewarding and valuable experience. Also, each of us is a debtor to our profession, and serving on a committee provides an opportunity to repay that debt. Give it a try.

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# Competition editor a real puzzler

Features Editor Deborah Poppel spoke with Competition Editor Charlie Groeschell, who designs the Actucrostic puzzles for *The Actuary*.

**Poppel:** How long have you been making up these puzzles?

**Groeschell:** Since I became the competition editor around 1979 or 1980. I've fiddled around over the years with solving crostic puzzles, and I thought I'd try my hand at designing them.

**Poppel:** Did you have any training in creating these puzzles?

**Groeschell:** No, and I made a lot of mistakes at first by trying to make them much too specific. I thought I had to make everything actuarial. Then I ran out of applicable quotations, and I branched out into more general puzzles. Designing the puzzles is a lot of fun - it's sort of like solving them.

**Poppel:** How do you start to design a puzzle?

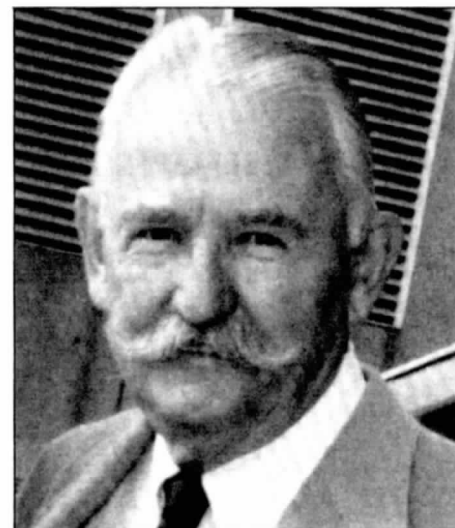
**Groeschell:** The first step is to get a good quotation. I do that in my normal reading of magazines like *Discover* or *Time*. I look for unique quotes that might interest the membership.

**Poppel:** What do you do after you have a quote?

**Groeschell:** I see whether it fits. The anacrostics in puzzle books can be of almost any size. Mechanically, I found it better to have a standard size so the typesetters don't have to vary their procedures much. Right now, I have standard size of 288 spaces: 12x24. I used to black out some to create a tower or something like that, but that got too complicated.

**Poppel:** Each of your puzzles spells out the author and title with the first letters of the clue words. Is that hard to do?

**Groeschell:** I have some flexibility. I can vary the name of the author; use his full first name or an initial. The same is true with the title; if I quote something from a magazine, there isn't a real title, so I make one up. There are some quotations that I would like to have used but could not come up with a very good title.



Charlie Groeschell

**Poppel:** Then you start coming up with words. Do you do all the words and then write clues, or do you do alternate words and clues?

**Groeschell:** I do all the words first. Having determined the first letters, I sit down and try to think of words. I use a dictionary and a thesaurus. Of course, I count all the letters. I know how many A's I have to get and how many B's I need. If I see that I've got a lot of C's, then I'm going to have to think of a lot of words that have C's. If I see I have only two L's, then I better stay away from words with an L.

I try to pick words that mean something to an actuary, maybe something about life insurance or assets or liabilities.

Then I write the clues, which is where I have a great deal of leeway. You can take some ordinary word and make it very difficult by the way you word your clue, or vice versa. I have no feedback to know whether I'm using the appropriate mix.

Now I'll ask you a question. What if I used as a clue, just "HIJKLMNO"? And then I put out five spaces?

**Poppel:** I give up.

**Groeschell:** It's "H" to "O" - H<sub>2</sub>O - Water!

**Poppel:** How long does it take you to make up a puzzle?

**Groeschell:** I would say, eight to ten hours.

**Puzzler cont'd**

**Poppel:** *What are the biggest problems you encounter in making up your puzzles?*

**Groeschell:** Probably at the tail end, and deciding on the clues. I'm never quite sure whether I'm making them too obscure or too easy.

**Poppel:** *Have you ever reached the end and just not been able to come up with a word and had to throw out the whole puzzle?*

**Groeschell:** No, but it's sort of irritating to erase some of your favorite words and start over again. That's a setback of a half hour or so.

**Poppel:** *Is there anything else you would like to share with the readers?*

**Groeschell:** I'd appreciate the readers' feedback about the puzzles. Would they like them tougher? Are they too tough?

**Poppel:** *I don't think anyone will admit to you that they're too tough!*

**Groeschell:** Well that's a very helpful remark right there.

*(Ed. note: Please send your comments about the Actucrostics' degree of difficulty to Charlie at his Yearbook address.)*

# Dear Editor:

**'Kindergarten' treatment**

I was under the impression that I belong to a profession of relatively highly intelligent individuals, well capable of considering the merits of written documents.

Why then are we being treated as if we were kindergarten age in the matter of the COP's ad hoc task force proposals. I have some doubts about the initial authority of COP to appoint a task force for any purpose. Having done so and finding it making such revolutionary proposals as "favoring the strengthening of the profession" (clearly no mere "motherhood and apple pie" body this!), why cannot we, the actuaries, be trusted to read the report.

I understand that before we are to have that privilege, the board and executive of each actuarial body has to read it, sanitize it, and approve its distribution to the membership. This is grotesque.

Let us be a strong enough profession to demand an end to such treatment, to demand an actuarial equivalent of freedom of information and perhaps even to break the golden shackles of ASB.

Jan Harrington

**Do Canadians earn more?**

If the rest of the information in *The Jobs Rated Almanac* is as accurate as that about actuaries, I know enough now not to use it.

According to the 1986 salary survey of the Canadian Institute of Actuaries, the median salary of a Fellow in Canada is CDN\$65,000 compared to the US\$45,780, and at the third quartile break, it's CDN\$81,450 compared with a top of US\$59,950. The survey also indicates salaries in excess of CDN\$150,000. I know few actuaries who manage only a 35- to 40-hour week, or who have "intervals of inactivity," or who are chairbound.

Or are my U.S. colleagues both underpaid and underworked?

J. Bruce MacDonald

**50-year Fellows**

In the March 1987 *Actuary*, supplemented by one addition in the April 1987 issue, is a list of the six persons who at that time were 50-year Fellows of both the Society of Actuaries and the Casualty Actuarial Society.

Since then there have been one addition and two deaths: John Haynes Miller (FSA 1931, FCAS 1938) became a 50-year member this year, and Russell O. Hooker and Joseph B. Glenn died. Their deaths were reported in the June 1987 and May 1988 issues of *The Actuary*.

The current list of the 50-year members of both Societies, which will remain unchanged for the next 10 years except for the inevitable decrement, follows:

	Year FSA	Year FCAS
Elgin R. Batho	1929	1931
William H. Burling	1930	1928
Gilbert W. Fitzhugh	1934	1935
Daniel J. Lyons	1930	1936
John Haynes Miller	1931	1938

James B. Gardiner

# Dial direct to Society

Because the Society's switchboard often gets overloaded during exam periods, please use the direct-dial telephone numbers listed below to quickly reach certain departments and staff members. Dial (312) 706- before the following extension numbers.

**AFFILIATES**

- 3513 American Academy of Actuaries
- 3535 Conference of Actuaries in Public Practice

**DEPARTMENTS**

- 3526 Book Orders, Subscriptions
- 3579\* Exam Hot Line
- 3515 Exam Materials, Career Recruiting Materials
- 3527 Exam Questions - Nonroutine
- 3583 Exam Questions - Routine
- 3599 FAX
- 3575 Library
- 3540 Meetings
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- 3530 Weiss, Jim  
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\*Operative beginning at noon on Tuesday, following the Friday that grades are mailed.