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Bob Shapiro
Editor responsible
for this issue

Editor

Michael J. Cowell, FSA
usunm8yl@ibmmail.com

Associate Editors

Robert H. Dobson, FSA
bob.dobson@milliman.com
William C. Cutlip, FSA
76443.1471@compuserve.com
Robert J. McKay, FSA
Robert D. Shapiro, FSA
73231.102@compuserve.com
Marc Twinney, FSA

Assistant Editors

Sue A. Collins, FSA
102714.2361@compuserve.com
Curtis E. Huntington, FSA
chunt@math.lsa.umich.edu
J. Bruce MacDonald, FSA
jbm1mac@ac.dal.ca

Puzzle Editors

Louise Thiessen, FSA
L.THIESEN@access.awinc.com

Dan Reichert

Dreicher@colybrand.com

Society Staff Contacts

847/706-3500

Cecilia Green, APR, Staff Editor
76041.2773@compuserve.com

Peter G. Potamianos, Ph.D., Managing Editor

102234.2542@compuserve.com

Linda M. Delgado, CAE

Director of Communications

102234.2543@compuserve.com

Correspondence should be addressed to
The Actuary

Society of Actuaries

475 North Martingale Road, Suite 800
Schaumburg, IL 60173-2226

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Sam Gutterman, FSA, President

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EDITORIAL

A new world

by Robert Shapiro

This issue of *The Actuary* does not have a traditional theme, such as education, research, health care, pensions, or life insurance. Instead, it contains a group of articles and letters that illustrate the ever-widening playing field of the actuary. A number of these new areas of practice are still in their developmental stages, and some are controversial. Articles on viatical settlements and accelerated benefits, selling insurance products on the Internet, pet insurance, and even letters to the editor on a previous article on "actuarial counselling" compel us to look at new opportunities with an open mind.

Change brings new demands from our current employees and clients, as well as from new (nontraditional) employers, as they develop an awareness of the value of actuarial services. It is reassuring to see, as we prepare for a new and different future, that our current employers and clients are generally happy with our services. Bob Myers' article provides gratifying evidence here as he analyzes the increase in actuaries working in Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans.

Angelica Michail, in her "Complete Actuary" article, shares some change management techniques to help us overcome our natural fear of change and to actually become change agents. Actuaries becoming involved in new products and new distribution channels and filling new roles have the responsibility not only to blaze new trails, but also to illuminate those trails for other actuaries.

Even John Palmer's overview of strategic issues being considered in the Life Insurance Practice area, a traditional actuarial environment, takes a broad, big picture approach. He suggests some possible solutions to addressing the stagnation in North America's traditional life insurance business. I urge you to consider John's ideas and give his committee the feedback he requests.

The actuary's role is changing at all levels — in terms of businesses served, roles played, and perspectives applied. The articles you will read in this issue will give you a glimpse into the exciting new world that is unfolding for actuaries.

Fiction contest winner announced

Jim Toole, editor of the Computer Science Section's newsletter *CompAct*, has announced the winners of the first Actuarial Speculative Fiction Contest, sponsored by the Section. Winners include:

- **Best All-around** and winner of a \$250 gift certificate and a one-year subscription to *Actuaries Online*: David Kroll for "The Actuary and Alfred Anderson"
- **Runners up**, who get a one-year subscription to *Actuaries Online*:

Most Inventive: Christopher J.

Fievoli for "The Last Actuary"

Best Action/Adventure: Marilyn

Dunstan for "An Actuarial Heist"

Most Creative: Amy Whinston for

"219"

Most Humorous: Timothy

Orcutt for "The 500th Anniversary

of the Ferengi Actuarial Institute"

- **Editor's Choice:** Ellen Torrance for "Life Annuity"

Entries, except for the Editor's Choice, were judged by Dr. Bob Mielke, Northeast Missouri State University.

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