



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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on the lighter side

Does it show?

by Ken Anderson

Over a 13-year period, I was actively involved in youth sports in my town. This involvement included coaching soccer, basketball, baseball, and softball as well as serving on the board of directors of youth baseball for 10 years. In addition, my company, an actuarial consulting firm, sponsored teams for several years.

One of the perks of sponsoring a youth baseball team was having your company's name printed on the players' shirts. One season, my team's shirts proudly bore the phrase "K.D. ANDERSON, ACTURARIES." This typo was alarming, but I was consoled by the fact that a local restaurant had

its shirts stenciled "WALDON STATION." Poor Mr. Thoreau (of Walden fame) probably was spinning in his grave.

One of the most time-consuming aspects of coaching youth sports in a recreational environment is managing a three-pronged effort: ensuring that team members have the same amount of playing time during games and over the course of the season; reducing the incidence of injury (e.g., not-so-sophisticated studies show that a person who can't catch should not play first base); and, with all that, fielding a competitive team.

For baseball and softball, I developed a two-dimensional grid with player names on one side and innings on the other. This helped me complete the offensive and defensive lineups with all three elements in mind the night before each game.

More than once, however, I had to scramble at game time when one or more players did not show up. That taught me a lesson. So in a different sport and a later season, I developed a new scheduling system.

I coached a youth basketball team with a woman who had graduated from Penn State. Our basketball games

consisted of two 16-minute halves. We had 12 girls on our team, and never did all attend each game. To balance playing time, I developed timeline charts of a basketball game based on the number of players who showed up. For example, my seven-player chart had seven horizontal lines with darker segments indicating when each girl would be in the game. Just before each game, I would insert the names of the available players in the appropriate places on the chart and would automatically know who would start the game and when to substitute.

In the middle of that season, I had to miss a game. The other coach was concerned about how to substitute. I showed her my charts and explained that it was a very simple process. All she had to do was pull out the appropriate chart for the number of players who showed up and substitute accordingly.

She paused, looked at me, and said, "What are you, an actuary or something?" **Ken Anderson is president of an actuarial consulting firm in Concord, Mass. A southpaw, he is on sabbatical from volunteer coaching while he learns to play golf left-handed after successfully playing right-handed for many years.**

Opportunity to teach and travel in Malaysia

The Actuarial Society of Malaysia is looking for qualified individuals to teach review courses in March and September 1998.

These sessions will focus on Associate-level courses, but Fellowship courses might be taught as well, depending on the teacher's expertise. Ideally, teachers would be available for two to three weeks, and they would have some experience teaching review courses for Associateship and/or Fellowship exams. All teaching will be done in English. Compensation is negotiable, but the society's resources are very limited.

For more information, contact Hassan Kamil at his *Directory* address or by e-mail (hassank@tm.net.my).

Actuaries train Bulgarian social insurance staff

Several SOA members recently participated in a special training session for six members of the Bulgarian social insurance department.

The four-week session, "Actuarial Topics for Social Insurance," was organized by Howard Young, adjunct professor of mathematics at the University of Michigan, at the request of the U.S. Department of Labor, which financed the project, and the National Academy of Social Insurance. Also participating were SOA members Sam Gutterman, Steven Haas, Curtis Huntington, Michael Sze, and Alice Wade. The sessions were conducted this summer at the University of Michigan.

Seminars and hands-on computer exercises covered a wide range of topics. Students kept the computer disks they received for ongoing use and review. Two interpreters from Bulgaria accompanied the students.