



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Virtual palace

Worldwide event list is just one new stop on SOA Web site

by Peggy Grillot

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Since the SOA Web site debuted in May 1996, many features have been added to offer members a virtual palace of a Web site. Nearly a quarter of a million visits (hits, in Web jargon) were made in August.

What's new that might be intriguing at www.soa.org?

The International Continuing Education Calendar, for one. This calendar database of worldwide educational events for actuaries can be searched by program name, sponsoring organization, month and year of event, keywords, and event location. Links are offered to Web sites carrying more information, and the SOA site offers names and contact information for events even when a link isn't available. This feature of the SOA Web site was created in conjunction with the International Forum of Actuarial Associations.

The SOA site added interactive discussion forums in the spring. Actuaries and others interested in actuarial topics can easily exchange messages and information with this feature. The forums largely parallel those available for the past three years on Actuaries Online via CompuServe. Conference areas include: the four practice areas — health and disability, life and annuities, finance and investments, and pension; general interest;

education and exams; software and technology; IFAA and international news; and "Cyberchat," where topics often take a lighter turn. Recently, the SOA Technology Committee added the Web Site Ideas and Comments forum to stimulate discussion on the development of the SOA's virtual home.

File libraries were added in May 1997. More than 350 files exist in a variety of sections that mirror the discussion forums. Adobe Acrobat's portable document format (pdf) is used as a distribution vehicle because it runs on many operating systems (such as Windows 95 and Macintosh). Users must obtain the Adobe Acrobat Reader software to read pdf files. The software can be downloaded free through the Internet, and www.soa.org provides links to the site.

August brought 2,124 hits to the file libraries. Also in August, 7,000 pdf files were downloaded from the Education & Examinations area. The fall 1997 FSA and ASA exam catalog was downloaded 1,282 times. Other top files include the November 1997 exam application, the fall 1997 and spring 1998 exam calendar, the actuarial college listing, and study note information.

SOA publications such as *The Actuary* and *The Future Actuary* and transcripts from the *Record* also can



be found in the libraries. They, too, are offered as pdf files.

Other SOA site features include:

- A site map outlining the site's organization and offering links to pages on the site
- Links to more than 130 sites, including those of other actuarial organizations, academic actuarial departments, search engines, and U.S. and Canadian resources
- E-mail links to individual SOA staff members (under Information & Services)

Why not put on that virtual hard hat and inspect the building in progress? The SOA's virtual palace might hold a jewel of information for your treasure trove of actuarial knowledge.

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Former actuarial students of the University of Texas plan 2nd reunion

by Tim Lee

In the past 50 years, some 500 students have passed through the actuarial science program at the University of Texas at Austin. Now, alumni have the chance to gather once again at our second reunion (the first was held in 1987).

All former UT actuarial students from the 1940s through 1997 and their families and friends are invited. Ex-students don't have to be graduates. The reunion

will be held the weekend of Nov. 22, 1997, which immediately follows the Actuaries' Club of the Southwest's fall meeting in Austin.

More information on the reunion is available from me, Tim Lee, at my *Directory* address or by accessing the reunion's Web page at www.utexas.edu/depts/acs/stuannounce/alums/alumshome.html.