



Article from

**Pension Section News**

February 2016  
Issue 88

# A View from the SOA's Staff Fellow for Retirement

By Andrew Peterson

**H**appy 2016! As we finish one year and start another, we often take to time to reflect on accomplishments of the past year and plan for a new year. In that spirit, I would like to try to do a little of both as I reflect on some of the recent accomplishments of the SOA's Pension Section and related groups while highlighting opportunities for pension actuaries.

As I talk with members, I often find that SOA members aren't aware of the different opportunities and resources available to them through the SOA. In this age of information overload, that is understandable. It's not unusual to get a response of, "I didn't know you did that..." So with that background, let me provide a list of some recent accomplishments with the hope that it will pique interest for follow-up on one or two items.

- The Pension Section sponsored another iteration of their one-day seminar, [Investment Boot Camp for Pension Actuaries](#) after the 2015 SOA Annual Meeting & Exhibit. This seminar is aimed at pension actuaries who want to improve their understanding of investments topics in the context of pension investment topics and strategies. The next event is scheduled for Feb. 9, 2016, in Montreal, Quebec, where there will be a particular focus on the Canadian pension investment landscape. Reviews for this event have been very positive with a format that allows for significant interaction with the instructors.
- The Pension Section has sponsored a series of [podcasts](#), including a recent three-part series completed in the fall of 2015, providing an overview of multiemployer pension plans (MEPP) to non-MEPP actuaries. In light of the publicity some of these plans are facing in the United States due to financial challenges, these podcasts are a great primer for individuals who don't work in this specialty. You can listen to the podcasts directly from the [SOA website](#) or through subscribing to the SOA Podcast Channel on iTunes (or similar for Android users).
- Speaking of MEPP plans, in August 2015, the SOA also published, [Multiemployer Plan Stress Metrics](#), a research report by SOA staff that introduces new metrics to measure financial stress in MEPP. Stay tuned for more work in this area.



- The SOA has just completed a publication, [Investment and Retirement Advice – A Guide for Employers](#). While aimed at helping U.S. plan sponsors understand issues related to providing retirement advice to their participants, I expect many pension actuaries in other jurisdictions could pick up some important learnings from reading the guide. Then if you're a consultant, you could pass the guide along to your clients.
- An August 2015, report was published covering risk management in the context of corporate pension plans: [Corporate Pension Risk Management and Corporate Finance: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice in Pension Risk Management](#). Plans are underway to leverage this content into a 2016 webcast.
- There is a four-phase project [Optimal Retirement Income Solutions in DC Retirement Plans](#), that looks at how to create different solutions for providing lifetime income in DC plans. These reports by Steve Vernon, Wade Pfau, and Joe Tomlinson, provide significant analysis that should be of interest to many actuaries, particularly for actuaries interested in finding an actuarial role in DC plan issues.

Hopefully you will have seen something that looks interesting based on the list above to pursue a bit more and further your own learning and development. If you have a specific project (research-based or not) that you think the SOA Pension Section should pursue, please feel free to contact me. ■



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