



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

Article from:

International Section News

September 1998 – Issue No. 17

Filipino Actuaries Attend Management Seminar

by Angelica Michail

Once every three years, I visit the Philippines—my native country. Most of the time I visit friends, family, and new tourist spots. This year, I had a big bonus. On March 4, 1998, a large group of Filipino actuaries attended a management seminar at which I was a presenter. The event was facilitated by Mabini Juan, our SOA Ambassador to the Philippines.

At last year's SOA meeting, I told Mabini I was planning a trip home in 1998 and asked if he would arrange a meeting with Filipino actuaries during my visit. He agreed and gave me his e-mail address.

My plans turned to reality and I sent Mabini an e-mail message with my vacation dates. I also informed him that while on vacation, I planned to give some management seminars. After corresponding with Mabini and Edna Ledesma, a former classmate and also an actuary, we decided that I would give a three-hour seminar under the sponsorship of the Actuarial Society of the Philippines (ASP). I was delighted—this was a great opportunity to see Mabini and Edna again and meet Filipino actuaries in the Philippines.

On March 4, I was pleased to face an audience of 59 insurance professionals—42 ASP members and 17 guests. In the audience was Professor Inez Belleza, the University of the Philippines math professor who introduced many of the Filipino actuaries to the profession and encouraged their efforts to study actuarial science.

For me, the seminar was a wonderful experience. I achieved two objectives—meeting Filipino actuaries at home and talking to actuaries about the importance of developing nontechnical skills to enhance professional skills. It was a wonderful gathering, with the usual



Filipino actuaries get acquainted at the meeting of the Actuarial Society of the Philippines held last March.

“merienda,” a sumptuous afternoon snack of Filipino delicacies. The seminar covered a variety of topics—public speaking, stress management, and time management.

The ASP regularly sponsors professional development seminars, most of which are insurance-related. This is the first time it sponsored a management seminar. I was born and raised in the Philippines but almost all my work experience is in the United States, so I do not claim to be familiar with their day-to-day struggles. I have found out, however, that Filipino actuaries deal with the same issues of lack of time, too much stress, and fear of public speaking.

As to the reaction of the audience to the seminar, I prefer to quote from a letter sent to me by Mona Lisa de la Cruz, the current president of the ASP. “The seminar has certainly opened our eyes to the nonactuarial issues that affect us in our day-to-day work. It is interesting to note that despite the two-week notice given for the seminar, it was

well attended. The participants found your topics interesting, gauging from the participation that occurred. After your session, we have had some requests to give more expanded seminars on some topics which you covered.”

The ASP is an active actuarial organization and I am thankful that our Philippine ambassador, Mabini Juan, made it possible for me to have a memorable and productive visit with ASP members. I encourage International Section members to get in touch with our Ambassadors when they plan a trip to countries that may have actuarial organizations. With e-mail technology and better telephone and fax capabilities, making arrangements with foreign-based actuaries can be easy, simple, and fast.

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