



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Actuary hero of new book

"I tell fortunes," I say matter-of-factly, knowing the woman will be intrigued. "And I'm good at it." That's what I always say at cocktail parties when I'm asked what I do for a living. Pressed further, I admit to being one of the guys who predicts the future for the power hitters of corporate America.

I can tell from her expression that the Capitol Hill matron who's latched on to me is having visions of risk taking and leveraged buy-outs. But her eyes glaze when I reveal that I'm an insurance and pension plan actuary, which means I spend my day statistically predicting when people will die.

How many of you can relate to this scene? This depiction of an actuary trying to explain what he does for a living is the first two paragraphs of a new Pocket Books suspense novel, *Final Answers*, by Greg Dinallo. It may be the first novel to feature an actuary as the main character and could become the first movie to have an actuary as the lead. Ted Danson already has purchased the movie rights, which means in a year or two we may see the star of TV's "Cheers" on the big screen as A. Calvert Morgan, successful insurance and pension plan actuary.

In the book, Morgan, a Vietnam vet, visits the Vietnam Veterans Memorial while in Washington, D.C., to appear as an expert witness before a Congressional committee working on Social Security legislation. He is

shocked to discover his name on the Wall. His "passion for truth and accuracy" makes him investigate the mix-up, which turns into a complex mystery. He uncovers a conspiracy involving the military, MIAs, and drug lords with the help of his laptop computer to develop the probabilities of events. Morgan, "a man more comfortable with a computer than a handgun," has to fight for survival as a hit man pursues him and a female character into Southeast Asia.

Two Society of Actuaries' members, John Vieira and Gordon Gould of Towers Perrin in Los Angeles, were technical advisors to the author. Vieira met Greg Dinallo through a client, and they became close personal friends as the book developed.

"The character is based on my friend John and his colleagues," Dinallo said. "They helped me get a fix on what actuaries do. They're wonderful guys, and the common persona of actuaries is wrong."

"Greg was intrigued with the actuarial profession," Vieira said, "especially the numbers part of it. He came



John Vieira, vice president at Towers Perrin, or Cal Morgan, hero of the new thriller, Final Answers? Author Greg Dinallo based the book's main character on Vieira and co-worker Gordon Gould.

into the office and wanted to see what kinds of programs I had on my PC. He was very meticulous and interested in the details."

Vieira read the manuscript before Dinallo sent it to the publisher. "My job was mostly to make sure the actuarial lingo was proper, and whether

Who gets the actuarial vote?

With the 1992 Presidential election looming near, most readers will have an opinion on who should be our next U.S. President. We'd like to know who you, as a member of the profession who evaluates the future implications of events, will be voting for in November (or would be voting for if

you were a U.S. citizen). We'd also like to know your opinion of what each candidates' chances of being elected are. Please fill out the form below and mail it to us by October 1. We will publish the results in the November issue which will reach you after the election.



If I were voting today in the U.S. Presidential election, I would vote for:

___ George Bush / Dan Quayle (___% probability of winning)
 ___ Bill Clinton / Al Gore (___% probability of winning)

Comments _____

Return by Oct. 1 to *The Actuary*, Society of Actuaries, 475 N. Martingale, Suite 800, Schaumburg, IL 60173-2226. FAX 708-706-3599.

the guy would go to the lengths he did to solve puzzling situations. I think the actuary character works well. After all, problem solving is a big part of what we do."

Gould became involved as Dinallo researched how his character could use actuarial and computer skills to solve the mystery. "John directed Greg to me for the technical details of how to use the information the character gathered to build a statistical model," Gould said. "We didn't get into crunching numbers, only what kinds of methods and techniques he might use to put together a distribution of possible outcomes."

Gould said Dinallo also was concerned with being precise in other areas. "We probably spent a half-hour talking about how the guy could sneak a gun through airport security in the battery case of his PC."

The author said, unlike some of his previous books, this book's hero could have been anyone. "The guy could have been a welder or an auto mechanic," Dinallo said, "but I had to think about what this person's skills did for me later in the book. I needed a higher level, a little philosophy on death, or mortality as you call it. It occurred to me that people who went to Vietnam lost the probability game. Their lottery number came up, and then they had to deal with people dying all around them. The more I learned about what John did, it seemed to raise the level to a higher plane. It breaks the stereotype of who went to Vietnam and gives us a fresh hero."

TSA paper wins prestigious award

For the first time, an actuarial science paper has won the Outstanding Statistical Application of the Year Award from the American Statistical Association (ASA). Professor Patrick L. Brockett recently received the award for his paper, "Information Theoretical Approach to Actuarial Science: A Unification and Extension of Relevant Theory and Application." This paper was the first one written by a non-member to be published in the Society of Actuaries *Transactions* (Vol. 43) under the new submission guidelines. A grant from the Actuarial Education and Research Fund (AERF) supported

Brockett's research for the paper.

This TSA paper was sponsored by SOA Vice-President Harry Panjer. Samuel Cox, a member of the SOA Papers Committee, nominated Brockett for the ASA award. Entries for the award encompassed almost all peer-reviewed published work in the physical, biological, or medical sciences appearing in any journal or non-journal outlet in 1990 and 1991. The award is based on the paper's impact of the statistical application in the substantive field and the ingenuity or novelty of the statistical treatment of the problem.

Exam help

Georgia State University will sponsor examination preparation seminars between September 28 and October 30 on the following courses: 110, 135, 151, 165, EA2, 120, 140, 160, 210, 130, 150, 162, and 220. For more information, call Robert W. Batten at 404-651-2736.

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ACTEX study manuals for the November 1992 exams are available for Associateship and Fellowship courses. All manuals are up-to-date for the current syllabus. Details are available in your Society Study Note package or from ACTEX, P.O. Box 974, Winsted, CT 06098; phone: 203-379-5470; fax: 203-738-3152.

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Exam preparation seminars for the November exam period will be held in October and November 1992, in Chicago, New York, and Toronto for Courses 120, 130, 135, 150, 151, and 160. For details, contact Professor S. Broverman of the University of Toronto at his *Directory* address or call 416-978-4453.

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The Temple Actuarial Institute will offer intensive review seminars for the following courses in Center City Philadelphia from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. each day:

Course 210	October 8-12
Course 220	September 30- October 4
Course 151	October 8-9
Course 160	October 15-16
Course 162	October 17
Course 165	October 10

CAMAR will offer intensive review seminars for the following courses in Center City Philadelphia from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. each day:

Course 100	September 30- October 3
Course 110	September 21-24
Course 120	October 19-20
Course 135	October 21-22
Course 4B	September 21-23

For more information, write Bonnie Averbach, Program in Actuarial Science, Ritter Annex 475, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122, or call 215-787-8153.

Fall Seminar Schedule

Pension Forecasting Boot Camp	September 15	Chicago, Embassy Suites, O'Hare
Valuation Actuary Symposium	September 17-18	New York, Waldorf=Astoria
Multivariate Approach to Duration Analysis	September 21-22	Boston, MIT Faculty Club
Multivariate Immunization Theory	September 23-24	Boston, MIT Faculty Club
Cash Balance Plans (8 hours of EA credit)	October 21-22	Phoenix, Arizona Biltmore Hotel
Annual Meeting (all topics) (12 hours of EA credit)	October 26-28	Washington, D.C., Washington Hilton & Towers
Critical Issues in Contemporary Risk Selection	November 16-17	San Antonio, Hyatt Regency

For registration information, call Continuing Education, 708-706-3545.