



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

Article from:

The Independent Consultant

January 2003 – Issue No. 1

Chairperson's Corner

by George W. McCauslan

First, I want to welcome all of the members of the new Smaller Consulting Firm Section. I appreciate your willingness to sign on to a concept, where the details were yet to be filled in. We are now up to almost 300 members.

A few folks have asked about how this all started...

Who would have thought that stopping to talk to Judy Anderson at an Enrolled Actuaries (EA) meeting would lead to being the chair of the newest section in the SOA? But, in a way, that's what happened. In discussions that Judy had with Rob Brown after he became president-elect, the idea arose of trying to start some sort of group for actuaries working in smaller pension consulting firms. Whether it was to be a new section, or something less formal, was not clear. So, at the EA meeting in 2001, Judy had a list for folks to sign if they would be interested in such a group. I stopped to talk with Judy, and she "encouraged" me to sign the list (my firm, with two actuaries and a total of four employees, clearly qualifies as "small"). I made the "mistake" of talking more with Judy about the idea. So, when it came time to set up a group to formalize the idea into a structure, I was one of the folks who was invited to join.

Formally, this group was the "Organizing Committee" for the new section. One of the first things that happened in our discussions was eliminating "pension" from the working name. While smaller pension firms may have been the starting point for the idea, it was clear to the organizing committee that there were actuaries working in all practice areas who were in smaller firms, and that the main issues to be addressed by the new section went beyond any one area of practice. In a series of conference calls and e-mails, the organizing



committee put together a statement of what the section would do and prepared the petition to the board of governors to establish the Smaller Consulting Firm Section, as well as our by-laws.

The board approved the petition. Once we had 200 SOA members who had paid the \$10 dues, we were a new section. (Because we had to wait to meet the membership hurdle and reached it mid-year, we are rather a "stealth" section for 2002 as few SOA members have heard of us. In 2003, we will make sure that more members know about us!) After that point, the last job for the organizing committee was to run the initial section council election. That's how we got here.

This section is still a work-in-progress. The main work of your first section council is to get things started and to find out what you, the members of the section, want and need. We will be asking you those questions more formally in the new year. In the meantime, if you have ideas of things that we could be doing, or if you would like to volunteer to help with any aspect of the section's activities, please contact me. ☎

George W. McCauslan, FSA, MAAA, is a consulting actuary and works in San Francisco, CA, and is chairperson of the Smaller Consulting Firm Section. He can be reached at georgewmcc@aol.com.