A FOND FAREWELL TO OUR EDITOR
(AN INTERVIEW BY RONALD L. KLEIN)

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here are currently 18 Sections of the Society
of actuaries with over 36,000 members
according to the Society of Actuaries Web
site. Each of these 18 Sections publishes a high-
quality newsletter that is distributed to its mem-
bership.

The Reinsurance Section of the Society of
Actuaries currently has over 2,400 members which
ranks it sixth amongst all sections. I do not know of
any section that is more pleased with the quality of
its newsletter than the Reinsurance Section — all
thanks to Dean Abbott.

After more than four years of dedicated service in
making 2,402 actuaries happy (a daunting task in
and of itself) and an additional 40 non-actuaries
happy, Dean has decided to step aside in his role as
editor. I felt that it would not be fitting to let him
go without asking him a few questions. I had the
opportunity to catch up with Dean recently. Here is
what he said:

Q: What were you responsible for during the past
four years?

A: Most of my time was spent editing the Reinsurance
Section newsletter and also as Web site Liaison for the
section.

Q: I didn't know that you were the Web site
liaison. What was your biggest accomplishment?

A: My biggest accomplishment clearly was creating the
advertisement for my successor. I obviously did a great
job since Richard Jennings volunteered for the position
and he is doing a fantastic job!

Q: Tell us more about the newsletter. How many
did you send out? What was your longest issue?

A: In all, I edited nine newsletters during my tenure.
Supposedly, in successive issues a couple years ago, I had
the longest Reinsurance News ever and followed it up
with the longest section newsletter ever (of all the sec-
tions). It was not my goal to do that, instead my goal
was to have more articles committed to than I ulti-
mately needed, figuring that a number of them would
not materialize. However, I was fortunate in that I
always had a high “articles actually submitted to arti-
cles committed to” ratio.

Q: I am sure that being the editor had its good
times. What was the best part of the job?

A: I love dealing with people and this position afford-
ed me the opportunity to work with a large and diverse
group of people while preparing each issue. It was also
interesting to think of ideas for articles that the mem-
bership would enjoy reading. I would often sit back
and think “what is it that I really want to know about
what's going on in reinsurance” and then I would try
to find people to write articles on those issues. I got
more questions answered that way.

Q: Being an editor had to have its tough days
too. Would you like to discuss some of these
days?

A: I generally don't like to complain and I would have
to name names — and that would just get me into
trouble! If any of the readers are really interested in my
struggles, please give me a call.

Q: Are there any humorous stories that you
would like to share with us?

A: Graham Bancroft asked me to volunteer for the
position of newsletter editor while he was chairperson
of the Reinsurance Section Council. At that time, I
had been in reinsurance for barely one year. How could I possibly take the position without an in-depth knowledge of the reinsurance industry? How could I get volunteers to write articles when I did not have any contacts? These were just some of the questions that I posed to Graham even though I was excited about the opportunity. Of course, Graham assured me that as chairperson he would be able to make up for my shortcomings — no problem (for those of you who do not know Graham he has this way of making you feel more comfortable when you have a concern). Based on Graham’s assurances, I signed on as Reinsurance News editor. My first official assignment was to attend the Reinsurance Section Council meeting not two weeks after speaking with Graham. At the meeting, the first order of business was to thank Graham for his term as Chairperson and to wish him well as he was leaving the council! So much for assurances! I will never let him forget that. In fact, I hope he is reading this article now.

Q: Do you have any final comments as outgoing Editor?

A: I very much enjoyed being the reinsurance section newsletter editor and I would like to again thank the many contributors to the newsletter. I would also like to thank the staff at the Society of Actuaries for assisting me every step of the way. Meeting so many good people and learning so much made this a great experience. I highly recommend it.

I hope that you will all join me in thanking Dean for his exemplary service to our section and wish him well in his future endeavors. ♦