



Actuarial Agony with Jen & Jean



Jen (right)
& Jean

As I write it's Christmas day and Father Christmas has made the foolish mistake of supplying the youngest of the family with a drum kit. Escaping to my trendy Manhattan apartment, I set aside the Nintendo Wii version of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Book of So Doku* to pick up my laptop and write my first co-editor's editorial, pausing to take in the full Carrie Bradshaw moment. Having been passed the somewhat heavy baton that is Tristan Walker-Buckton's 'Trisha for student actuaries', I prepare for a Jeremy Kyle-style sprint...

'I wasn't looking for this job, destiny gave it to me.'

This month we're all about recruitment. Please get in touch with your good recruiter/bad recruiter and

good employer/bad employer stories or tell me how you managed to break into the actuarial world. I've always been interested in alternative actuarial science so I'd be especially interested to hear from anyone who has managed to use their actuarial skills in a non-traditional actuarial role, and anyone who has decided to start up their own business.

Before Jean wrestles the *Encarta Book of Quotations* away from me, I'll leave you with wise words from Confucius: 'Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life.'

JEN

While Jen is busy trying to figure out which button makes Harry Potter fire the number 7 into the Dementors'

square, allow me to introduce the new student page. Since the appearance of our names in *The Actuary* last month, we have both been approached by sympathetic colleagues, voicing their congratulations, their looks turning into ones of pity as they say 'You have a lot to live up to after the great TWB'.

The answer to that is: we won't attempt to recreate what Tristan has done. Instead we shall explore the unknown, go where no student page editor/s have been before, and bring you an upbeat, upmarket, one-of-a-kind class act. So, without further ado and with no wise words left to say (Jen is still sitting on the *Encarta*), I give you 'Actuarial Agony with Jen & Jean'.

JEAN

The student page needs YOU!

Apparently everyone has a novel in them – all we ask for is a 400–800-word article on anything that rocks your actuarial world. Please send your ideas/articles on to us, because without you we'll have to start making things up.

Please get in touch with us at the addresses below.

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Your actuarial agonies sorted...

Dear Jen & Jean,
I'm about to graduate from university and I'm desperately seeking an actuarial job. All my friends have jobs lined up from internships during the summer, and I've had no luck with online applications. Help!

Desperate For Money

Dear Desperate For Money, Persevere with the online applications – these contain similar questions, so develop a set of answers which can be used for almost any application. The profession's website has a very useful list of actuarial employers – pick out the ones which require only a CV and covering letter and start posting!

Alternatively, speak to a recruitment consultant – popular recruiters advertise in *The Actuary*. Consider a temporary position –

this will help you to get in, get experience, get paid, and get noticed while learning about the business and looking for a more permanent role.

Dear Jen & Jean,
I love being a student actuary, but I hate my job. I feel that I'm unappreciated and underpaid. What should I do?

Reaching For Recognition

Dear Reaching For Recognition, Speak to your line manager about your concerns. Be clear about what you want, and take a realistic view of the work you have done – how have you contributed to the team? Do you always produce good quality work on time? What skills do you have that are

currently unused? Perhaps you should consider changing departments to try out a different role without the hassle of changing jobs.

With regards to being underpaid – I would be careful here, as the people you speak to at tutorials or in the pub may simply be exaggerating. See if you can get some solid evidence that you are being underpaid, and then approach your manager with your concerns. If all else fails, then it may be time to start looking for another job...

Do you have an actuarial agony you would like resolved? Problem you would like to share? Then drop us a line or two, and we'll attempt to wipe away your actuarial woes...

Actuarial horoscope for January/February

As the new year leaves you several ££ lighter and several lbs heavier, it is time, alas, to return to spreadsheets and actuarial tables. A spot of modelling may be on the agenda for you. February brings your creative abilities to the fore and you find yourself compelled to write in to a well-known actuarial publication, setting in motion a chain of events that will lead you to actuarial enlightenment. Destiny hides your stapler behind the water cooler again. You know what to do...

Caveat corner

90% of actuarial work involves covering your behind. *

Please send in your craziest caveats to feature in next month's Caveat corner.

* NB Views expressed on this page do not represent those of The Actuary, SIAS, the Actuarial Profession, or Jen & Jean.