

Actuarial Agony with Jen & Jean

Yet again the postman's sack is bulging with agony that only we can soothe. Despite being restricted to these four corners of A4, this month we feature a feast of frustrations for your delectation.

JEN & JEAN



Jen (right) & 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 at the addresses below.

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Caveat corner

CAVEAT (Canadians Against Violence Everywhere Advocating its Termination) is a grass-roots charitable organisation serving as a non-partisan voice for all Canadians, working together for safety, peace, and justice.

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

Dear Jen & Jean,

It's me again. Firstly, I must thank you for the sage and sensible advice in March's issue. I no longer stake out the water cooler waiting for the object of my affections, I have decided to communicate my intentions in a simple text message. I haven't yet heard back from her... so I'm wondering, just where can I meet my actuarial soul mate?

Loved-Up Loss Adjuster

Credit for the wise words in March must go to our editor, as left to us we would probably have advised that despite the trend for continuing mortality improvements, life is still short so you may just decide to *carpe diem*. But we digress... We can think of nowhere better to meet actuarial guys and gals than paintballing, pub-crawling, boating, quizzing, or salsa-ing with SIAS (see the report on SIAS salsa in Local society news). And don't forget tutorials... those place-name cards are the perfect stock for the old tactical asset switch on day 2. However, we do advise that you consider your textual communications carefully; you never know where they may end up!

Dear Jen & Jean,

When introducing myself at parties and to my parents' friends I continually have to explain what an actuary does and if this carries on much longer I will have no choice but to become an accountant. Please help before I do something I

might regret!

Actuary without a Cause

You have obviously misplaced that handy wallet-sized card issued to you on joining the profession which informs us that actuaries provide commercial, financial, and prudential advice on the management of assets and liabilities – especially where long-term management and planning are critical factors. Not to worry. This message would translate equally well to a T-shirt, sandwich board, or ring tone to rival the crazy frog. Alternatively, list the recent films that you have been in, sign an autograph, and let them buy you a drink.

Dear Jen & Jean,

I've started a new job recently and I do believe that I have the line manager from hell. Not only is he constantly stealing my ideas and claiming them as his own, but his changes to my work always seem to make it look worse than when I pass it to him for checking. What should I do? I would love to leave and see how he does without me, but I really enjoy my job too much.

Hidden Talent

Tempting as it may seem, outing your boss as the fraud that he is may not be in your best interests. Perhaps a more subtle approach is required. Employ some blue-sky thinking and slip a copy of Robert Sutton's *The No-Asshole Rule – Building a Civilized*

Workplace and Surviving One That Isn't on a senior manager's desk and label the aforementioned asshole with a Post-It. There's a good chance that this colleague is increasing the Total Cost of Asshole (TCA) of your workplace with disastrous financial consequences for the business. Senior manager may thank and promote you for your TCA savings initiative. Standard advice, of course, is to express your concerns to a more senior manager, or canvass opinions and try to raise support with similarly affected colleagues. The real-world solution is likely to leave you with a simple choice – stay and pass the fellow enough rope to hang himself with, or take your genius elsewhere.

Dear Jen & Jean,

I have been troubled by the implications that actuaries are unsociable creatures. As a budding actuary myself, I am loath to think that I will turn into a hermit once I qualify. Is this impression of actuaries correct, and can I do anything to evade this horrible fate?

Fearful of Disengagement

Indeed, actuaries are a strange bunch of people. However don't let the anecdotes and actuarial jokes fool you – there are actuaries who certainly know how to have fun. For a start, the student actuaries have SIAS, whose social committee is dedicated to fulfilling your every social need. And once you qualify, you will find a sudden abundance of time to spare, with studying no longer forming the major 'love' of your life. You may also find yourself with a predominantly actuarial peer group, and who says you can't have fun with your friends? So embrace the world of actuaries, and if you find anyone around you slipping into 'boring actuary' mode, give them a shake and buy them a drink. Who knows, you may even make a new friend...

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...

Jen & Jean's actuarial horoscopes

Part of an actuary's role is to extrapolate results from seemingly meaningless data – our horoscopes allow you to do just that. Each month, the horoscope for each star sign is described in just five words, and it is up to you to decipher their mystical meanings...

Taurus (21 April–21 May)

Staggering proportions axe inanimate initiatives

Gemini (22 May–22 June)

Enabled body writes honourable earnings

Cancer (23 June–23 July)

Believe villain's skills kill value

Leo (24 July–23 August)

Emphatic pensions dull workaholic heartedly

Virgo (24 August–23 September)

Favoured recommendation – mow your garden!

Libra (24 September–23 October)

Memory encounters alfresco steps again

Scorpio (24 October–22 November)

Mush service passes fair premiums

Sagittarius (23 November–22 December)

Seafarer orientation forces lung ramifications

Capricorn (23 December–19 January)

Smoothed devil surrenders language anxiety

Aquarius (20 January–19 February)

Modest Hollywood upscales breakdown service

Pisces (20 February – 20 March)

Informative ambition crystallises extreme creature

Aries (21 March–20 April)

Substantial performance rummages yellow disease