



SOCIETY OF DECISION  
PROFESSIONALS

World Forum on Decision Making

# NEWSLETTER

Issue 31

December 2023

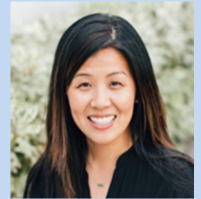
## President's Corner

By Jennifer Harrington, David Matheson, Jeremy Walker

*"I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach."*

### Past President Jennifer Harrington:

Two years ago, it seemed like a fantasy that SDP could be recognized as the "world forum on decision making." While still a work in progress, it is astonishing how far we have come. We continue to work as a highly relevant hub of decision innovators at the center of vibrant communities. We influence decisions of all shapes and sizes and in any sector or industry at an impactful scale. Over the last two+ years, we activated and empowered leaders across the SDP to innovate and experiment to participate in this vision's evolution. We are seeing some of these initiatives bear the fruit of your actions.



"Every traveler has a home of his own, and he learns to appreciate it more from his wandering."

### Current President David Matheson:

We've thrown ourselves into an agile and experimental approach to evolving the vision and the organization. Experiments with shifting to focus on and define ourselves by the problems we contribute to have paid off tremendously. The Decision Intelligence conference exceeded expectations for attendance and new revenue. Our innovation interest group (iigy) has opened partnerships with the PDMA, created new products for SDP, and developed better ways to communicate with outsiders. This shift is also expanding to other interest groups, such as youth decision skills and ESG decisions. Experiments based on a growth mindset have unified diverse groups in the EU under the SDP umbrella and have revealed tremendous opportunities to add more value to our members' organizations (continued....)



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## President's Corner (cont'd)

By David Matheson, Jennifer Harrington, Jeremy Walker

Experiments in outward focus are improving our communications and channels, such as LinkedIn. I've learned to explain SDP in a way that generates tremendous interest - "Where have you guys been all my life? We desperately need something like this." The pieces are coming together!

"Come in, -- come in! and know me better.... Look upon me as you have never seen the like of me before!"

### Future President Jeremy Walker:



The legacy of SDP leadership has created the building blocks to grow this society – for the future, let's now concentrate our collective efforts on bringing the immense value of this focus on improved decision-making to a bigger audience. We are surrounded by events and circumstances which bring great uncertainties to the horizon.

As individuals, parents, business leaders, organizations, and agencies, we all have clear challenges ahead. The time is right for our community to rise and mobilize around helping to address the critical decisions we will all face with the passion, experience, wisdom, and techniques that unite us and make us a community.

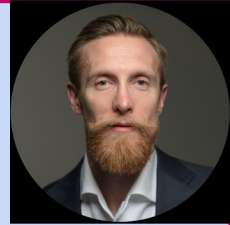
In 2024, let's see how many other common souls share our vision. Let's bring together our energies to embrace them and make them feel that they have found their place, home, and future.

"There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor."

Note: Thanks to Charles Dickens (A Christmas Carol) for the quotes!

**From your Office of the President (past, present, and future): Jennifer, David, and Jeremy wish everyone Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year.**

## Member Profile - Trygve Botn



As a new graduate from my MSc in Business back in 2004, I accepted a position within the Finance department at a company called Chevron. Located in Oslo, Norway, this company was not very familiar to me at the time, nor was the oil and gas (O&G) industry. Little did I know that this move would change not only my career path, but how I would look upon challenges and opportunities, listen to other people's perspectives to search for understanding, and seek reasons for my and other people's gut instinct. I worked for Chevron for fifteen inspiring years in Norway, the US, and Kazakhstan. During my time there, I worked as an analyst, advisor, and as a team leader for one of Chevron's biggest assets in Kazakhstan.

At Chevron, I was introduced to Decision Analysis (DA) and was inspired by Brian Putt, Larry Neal, Frank Koch, and the fantastic DA community. Financial work ended up being the least interesting work of my career (apologies to all the finance folks out there). The most interesting part has been my exposure to the breadth of DA application from business development and M&A to exploration strategy, producing assets and portfolio, technology development, emerging energy, and major capital projects, projects. I have had the pleasure of applying and helping to improve and take part in developing improvements in how we frame opportunities, propose alternative approaches to value of information, multi-objective DA, and finding new ways to add value to the organization. This has been my favorite part of my DA career and is something I'm actively involved with to this day.

After I left Chevron, I moved back to Norway, where I met Professor Reidar Bratvold—an SDP Fellow. Knowing how much value DA gives, I thought it would be a breeze to provide this as a service to companies in Norway; they would love it. Maybe it was my naive and optimistic mind at the time, but boy, was I wrong! There was the challenge of providing a service that no one had ever heard about or requested, a sharp contrast to my Chevron days where people "lined up outside my office" for support. I soon learned it is not all about DA or DQ; it's about understanding other people's needs and accepting that applying DA is not a binary state. I continued pursuing my passion for Decision Science by establishing ThinQ Decisions, which gave root to a closer working relationship with Professor Bratvold, where we apply DQ to O&G, renewables, utility companies, and other industries.

I was elected as a board member of SDP this year, and I'm currently working with a great and motivated group of members who want to grow SDP in Europe. In November, the board established a new unit focused on growing SDP in Europe. This is a great opportunity for SDP. The group has identified multiple strategic initiatives that we believe will set up SDP for a new playing field.

Outside of work, my key focus is my family and supportive wife. I spent almost a decade abroad, and I'm now grateful my close family lives in Oslo; we spend as much time together as possible. The rest of my time goes to following politics, embracing my interest in history, hiking, skiing, and partaking in the Oslo food scene, to the extent my wallet agrees. Lastly, I also must take this opportunity to thank everyone who uses their free time to engage and improve the SDP and make it the Global Decision-Making Forum.

## Interest Group News

### Decision Education:

The DEIG has reconvened and the unifying purpose among members is to drive more awareness of the value of decision education (across many different populations), understanding that driving more awareness broadly is a precursor to driving interest in decision education specifically for youth.

The main initiatives for the DEIG this year include: 1) organizing a cross-disciplinary virtual panel that includes folks from both SDP and Society of Judgement and Decision Making, 2) coordinating efforts on social media to amplify posts that drive awareness of decision skills, 3) establishing a presence and resource page on the SDP website where interested individuals can learn more about decision skills.

If you are interested in helping with any of these efforts, reach out to Michelle Florendo at [michelle@michelleflorendo.com](mailto:michelle@michelleflorendo.com)

### Innovation:

The Innovation Interest Group, “iigy” well underway in its second project about improving “Innovation Inflection Decisions”. An Inflection decision occurs when something has been moving along at a low level, then suddenly becomes a real opportunity – the stakes increase! Sometimes this occurs in a structured process like stage-gate, sometimes it occurs in other ways. We have completed five empathy interviews with C-level executives and uncovered some surprising reasons why this type of decision is problematic. Here are a few:

1. It is more fun to advocate for a project than take a sober, balanced decision – so we avoid the decision.
2. Primary inflection decisions can be easy, but it is the secondary and tertiary decisions that are hard.
3. When a core business is threatened by a change, pitching a project to get ahead of it can itself be perceived as threat, resulting in serious problems.
4. Inflection decisions aren’t single decisions, they are leadership actions with many decisions.
5. Executives can get caught in untenable positions in these decision situations and can feel like they are defecting or betraying the very people who are working to support them.
6. It is hard to maintain trust when you are making a decision that rearranges priorities and objectives.
7. As soon as a decision shows up as a point on someone’s quarterly EPS, everyone changes their perspective and pays attention.

At our next meeting we are going to start developing some solutions. I hope you can join us! And, more empathy interviews are in the pipeline.

## Interest Group News (cont'd)

### POSIG (Probability of Success Interest Group)

POSIG is working on two linked webinars, both with superstar speakers deploying their signature inventions. First, in January (date TBD), Tom Keelin will show how meta-logs can be used for Bayesian updating of our probability of success of clinical trials of a drug in clinical development. Then Sam Savage (date TBD) will show how we can calculate the economic implications of the probabilities, using SIPmath.

### Council Focus

#### Hero Awards Council

We will be kicking off thinking of our next round of awards toward the end of the year. Would encourage anyone to think about nominating others for the recruiter award or volunteer award. Should you have ideas on who you would like to nominate – let me know as early as you like!

Lindsay Oyola, HERO Award Chair

[Lindsay.Oyola@shell.com](mailto:Lindsay.Oyola@shell.com)

### Membership & Communication

**Update on the SDP Mentorship program:** The Membership and Communication Council re-ignited a mentorship program for SDP members in early 2022.. SDP believes there is tremendous value in connecting members in different stages of their DA/DQ careers and across various industries to enrich the knowledge base and broaden the applicability of our discipline in an apt and timely approach. The recent iteration of the mentorship program offered significant flexibility in the interaction between mentors and mentees. However, many of the mentorship pairs dissolved within the first year – only a handful survived.

The Membership and Communications Council is committed to providing a successful mentorship program to add value for all involved in an effective and resource efficient method. We have engaged with the Chapters Council and the Certifications Council to enhance value for mentees and mentors and to design a program that efficiently utilizes the resources of our generous volunteers and participants.

## Chapter News

### Houston:

Houston Chapter continued to get great activities hosted by our area centers of excellence in DQ this quarter. In October, Chevron hosted a workshop exercise to demonstrate their Minimum Functional Objectives (MFO) approach to major capital investment decision making – through a paper, string, and tape tower building exercise! Thank you Mike Benefiel Jeremy Stommes and the rest of your team. One of our leading members, Sri Vaidyanathan, [posted a write up on LinkedIn](#) connecting the exercise to supply chain issues – we love the synergies! In November, Decision Frameworks hosted a fun afternoon of networking and decision-uncertainty games. We learned important lessons on estimation accuracy, communication clarity, playing the odds and luck, all with good cheer! Thanks Jeremy Walker and the whole Decision Frameworks crew for an engaging and instructive event. We want to thank all our members and wish you all a happy and safe holiday season. Next quarter has more in store, with a high standard to meet. Stay tuned for announcements, come join the fun – and bring a friend!

### Vancouver:

The Vancouver Chapter meets regularly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month. We tend to be online oriented these days but will hold hybrid meetings. We remain one of the more diverse Chapters with representatives of many industries, non-profit, government bodies, and yes, a few consultants. As with some of the other Chapters, we often have a wider reach pulling in attendees from the US and Central Canada. Attendance is usually in the 18-to-25-person range, but if you see a talk or speaker that interests you, anyone is welcome to attend.

Starting in November 2023, we have dedicated every other month's meeting to feature an author from within the larger decision community. November saw the "Authors Series" start with Tony Kenck discussing his upcoming book on portfolio decision support (tentative title "Context Counts"), and in January Somik Raha will have a "fireside" chat about his recently published book "Invaluable".

The Chapter is pleased to take on the informal host responsibilities for the 2025 annual SDP meeting. The Chapter credits the 2018 conference for providing a critical mass to start our little community and we are thrilled to welcome everyone to our region in 2025.

Bill Haskett, 2024 Vancouver Chapter President

### SDP Europe:

We took initial steps in the first formation meeting to discuss the plan going forward, how to prioritize the list of growth initiatives the group previously outlined, and development of a charter document that shall steer the group going forward.

## Decision Intelligence Confronts AI Conference update

This November 10th, SDP hosted a one-day virtual conference on its initiative on Decision Intelligence confronts AI. Gratifyingly, over 90 participants from 71 companies attended, a good number of them new to SDP. The conference built on these themes:

- ☐ Synergy of Data Science and Decision Analysis
- ☐ A common vocabulary
- ☐ Humans at the center
- ☐ Decision Intelligence, a new practice
- ☐ Integrating Predictive and Value Modelling

These themes were identified in last year's invitation-only workshop on Digital Transformation of Decision Analysis, co-hosted with Microsoft. It raised awareness of the vast range of machine learning applications and the current fanfare about AI that open opportunities for decision-oriented fields to expand into new software-dominated areas. The day was built around nine talks:

Two **keynotes** on:

The Value Alignment Problem | Product Decision Intelligence

Two **introductions** on:

The Basics of ML and AI | The Basics of Decision Quality

Two **case studies**:

Augmenting AI with Decision Intelligence | Analytic Thinking in the Era of AI/ML

Three **technical presentations**

Utility in ROC Space | Can Generative AI replace DA | Influence Diagrams, a Universal Modelling

Tool Talks were interspersed with interactive breakout sessions, for smaller groups of participants to share their views.

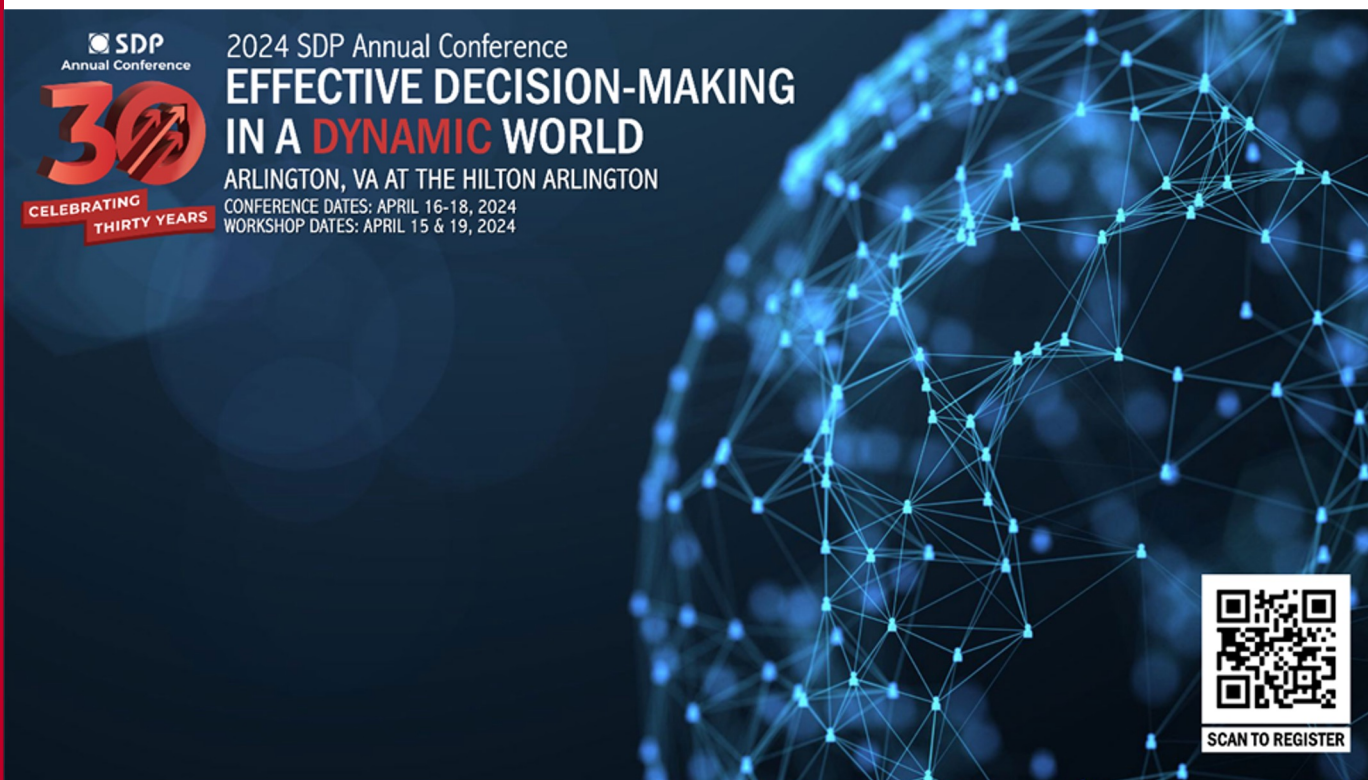
The enthusiasm in this emerging hybrid field driven by the desire to keep abreast of current technology raises the question of what SDP should do to foster this initiative, in terms of research, tools development, additional forums, sessions, and organized challenges.

Learn more here

<https://www.decisionprofessionals.com/forms/yhsgdmje55ibg94?sid=oyr3oqb29mnng2>



# 2024 SDP Annual Conference



**SDP**  
Annual Conference

**30**  
CELEBRATING  
THIRTY YEARS

2024 SDP Annual Conference  
**EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING  
IN A DYNAMIC WORLD**  
ARLINGTON, VA AT THE HILTON ARLINGTON  
CONFERENCE DATES: APRIL 16-18, 2024  
WORKSHOP DATES: APRIL 15 & 19, 2024

SCAN TO REGISTER

## 2024 SDP ANNUAL CONFERENCE OPEN FOR REGISTRATION

### EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING IN A DYNAMIC WORLD

#### CALL FOR POSTERS

**Registrations are open for the much-anticipated 2024 SDP Annual Conference & Workshops!**

Set against the backdrop of the elegant [Hilton Arlington](#) in Arlington, VA, this event promises to be an unparalleled gathering of decision-making experts and enthusiasts from April 15th to 19th, 2024.

Join us for a transformative three-day event where you will immerse yourself in sessions focused on AI, analytics, and innovative strategies. Sessions will cover diverse sectors from government, energy, pharma and more. Our curated 'Chair's Choice' session offers unique perspectives and groundbreaking solutions.

Continuing our tradition, SDP will host six in-person workshops at the conference's bookends. These sessions encourage dynamic participation and innovative problem-solving, providing actionable insights aligned with our core themes. Join us on a unique, DC-centric journey that brings together seasoned practitioners and newcomers alike.

**Reserve your spot now. Elevate your decision-making skills.**

**Learn More about the Conference & Registration information:** [www.sdpevents.com](http://www.sdpevents.com)



### BUT WAIT THERE'S MORE!

As we approach the celebration of 30 years of conferencing excellence, the Society of Decision Professionals (SDP) is excited to extend a warm invitation to students and early-career professionals in the field of decision analysis and related disciplines. This call aligns with SDP's mission to educate and engage the next generation of decision professionals.

If you are a student or a young professional with a passion for decision science and a desire to showcase your research, seize this golden opportunity! Our poster session provides a unique platform for presenting your insights, engaging in multidisciplinary collaborative discussions, and contributing to the evolution of Decision Science theory and applications.

**For more details about the poster sessions:**

[https://www.decisionprofessionals.com/assets/CallForPosters\\_EarlyCareer\\_2024SDPConference.pdf](https://www.decisionprofessionals.com/assets/CallForPosters_EarlyCareer_2024SDPConference.pdf).

**And don't miss out on the fun!** The organizing committee has something planned for every day, starting with:

- **Monday Evening** welcome reception
- **Tuesday** 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner + entertainment
- **Wednesday** Spirit tasting and Ghost tour
- **Daily** networking and interactive sessions built into the agenda

***Don't miss this chance to be part of a milestone event in decision-making excellence. Secure your spot at the conference and be ready for an immersive experience that promises professional growth and networking opportunities. Let's shape the future of decision-making together!***

If you have any questions or would like to get more involved in the planning process, please do not hesitate to contact Hilda Cherekdjan at [info@decisionprofessionals.com](mailto:info@decisionprofessionals.com).

## Certifications

The SDP Certification Council is pleased to announce 3 new certifications this quarter. Congratulations to each of you!

### Lead Practitioner

#### Adrian Sikorski

Adrian Sikorski is an experienced decision practitioner with wide experience in applied decision making, economic analysis, and portfolio management techniques. He consults, facilitates and trains using his experience in decision analysis, project economics, strategy development, development planning, portfolio management, and commercialization. With his degree in Engineering from Colorado School of Mines, Adrian worked as an engineer and commercial professional in the international upstream oil and gas business for 14 years before focusing to decision professional applications in 2016, emphasizing development investment decisions. His experience ranges across the entire petroleum upstream, and spans companies of all sizes including Royal Dutch Shell, Santos, Pangaea Resources, and Cooper Energy. His experience also includes notable project development in health technology with ProTom. Most recently he began applying decision practices for BHP in their copper assets. Adrian holds a Master of Petroleum Business Management from the University of Adelaide. He is member of the Society of Decision Professionals, Society of Petroleum Engineers, and the Petroleum Exploration Society of Australia.



### Associate

#### Tina Diao



#### Heather Stang



**We strongly encourage SDP members** who have not yet done so **to apply for certification** – and if you already have, please consider applying for the next level. **For information on the next (or first) step in your certification journey, visit**

<https://www.decisionprofessionals.com/membership/sdp-member-certification>.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS 2023



The University of Texas at Austin  
Texas Executive Education

[www.mcombs.utexas.edu/execed/](http://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/execed/)





*Season's Greetings from*



DECISION  
FRAMEWORKS

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May your holidays be joyful, and  
your decisions be wise.


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We thank you for a wonderful 2023 and wish you a  
prosperous New Year!



As the festive season unfolds, we are delighted to bring you our unique rendition of the classic "12 Days of Christmas." This year, we've tailored it to reflect the spirit of thoughtful decision-making – the very essence of what we stand for at K Carpenter Associates.



My KCA Decision Professional gave to me  
12 Months of Wisdom for All to See  
11 Paths to Success Unveiled  
10 Tips for Decision Bliss  
9 Plans of Action, Perfectly Crafted  
8 Metrics Moving in Harmony  
7 Solutions, Tailored Just for Me  
6 Stakeholders Smiling  
5 Golden Options, Shining Brightly  
4 Risk Assessments Calm and Steady  
3 Wise Insights, Guiding Me  
2 Projections, Clear and Concise  
and  
a  
Strategy  
that Aligns  
PERFECTLY!  


May your decisions be merry and bright this holiday season! Wishing you a joyous and prosperous New Year filled with clarity, confidence, and successful choices.



## Answer to [September-2023 Brain Teaser](#)

**There were no answers submitted.**

**Question 1:** There are multiple ways to solve. Apply Pythagoras to the outside triangle formed by the ladder, wall and ground, then substitute variables applying Pythagoras to smaller triangles formed around the box and solve by trial and error. Also can setup the same connected equations in a spreadsheet, and goal seek.

There are two symmetrical solutions, but only one provides the highest vertical reach of 9.97 ft and horizontal run of 6.68 ft, rounded 10 ft and 7 ft respectively.

**Question 2:** Using basic trigonometry, for Q1 with the 12-ft ladder per question 1 the arc cosine of the Base/Length ratio = 56 deg. Try longer 16-ft ladder yielding 70 deg angle; try 20-ft ladder yielding 75 deg. Mary is right, 12-ft ladder is too short to achieve the safest 75 degree angle, i.e., the answer is a 20 foot ladder is needed.

**Question 3:** Imagine a triangle from the top for Question 2 setup. The top vertex is at 19 ft, which is 4 ft above the 15 ft height, with an angle of 75 deg. This yields an horizontal base for this triangle of just over 1 foot, which is well within arms length, i.e. safe to reach.

**Question 4:** Is the setup safe? No. Since the ladder is not rigid, weight of the ladder and person mounted will make it sag placing substantial weight on the box contact point. The box reaction will be a force perpendicular to the ladder length that makes it less stable. Decomposing the box force, the vertical component removes downforce from the ladder footrest; the horizontal component pushes the ladder away from the wall. Dangerous combination that can enable the ladder footrest to slide away and the ladder come crashing down. Safest is to have only two contact points: footrest and wall, i.e., no intermediate support.

The following link has the spreadsheet setup for this problem.

[Sept-2023 Brain Teaser Question & Solution](#)



## THE DECEMBER BRAIN TEASER

*Instructions: You can win “bragging rights” by being the first to submit the correct answer of this brain teaser to the newsletter editors ([SDP Newsletter: Brain Teaser](#)). We will announce the winner in the next issue. To encourage participation irrespective of timing, we intend to recognize all correct and complete answers submitted. Our Brain Teaser Editor is Tony Fernandez.*

### Happy Birthday Sharing

It is your birthday and you attend a conference. As you arrive to the registration desk, your long-time friend organizer greets you enthusiastically. You compliment your friend on his excellent organization and turnout. Looking through the doors into the main conference room you are impressed by the people, activity and buzz. Out of curiosity, you ask your friend how many people have attended? Your friend organizer has the exact registration count, but having gone to math school together with you, he decides to give you a math challenge.

"Excellent question my friend! The registered attendance in the conference is such that if all birthdays are distributed at random, excluding Feb. 29 birthdays for yourself and the attendees, your chance of having one person or more with your exact birthday is 90%".

**How many people are in registered attendance in the conference?**

The Co-Editors of this newsletter would like to wish all SDP Members a Happy Holiday season and a productive and rewarding New Year. We have enjoyed working each quarter to improve communications within SDP membership, to be entertaining, and to motivate all towards better decision making. We welcome Srividhya (Sri) Vaidyanathan to the Co-Editor Team.

SDP Co-Editors:

**Emelia Silebi**  
**Brian Putt**

**Sri Vaidyanathan**  
**Tony Kenck**

**Antonio Fernandez**  
**Jack Kloeber**

