



Newsletter

A monthly publication of the Personnel Testing Council of Metropolitan Washington
Volume XXIII Number 1
January 1999

January 1999 PTC/MW Luncheon

- Date:** Wednesday, January 13, 1999
- Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Lunch is served at noon and is included in the registration fee.
- Place:** **Pier 7 Restaurant.** 650 Water Street, SW, Washington, DC (1 block left of Hogates).
- Price:** \$16.00 members, \$20.00 nonmembers. Free parking up to 3 hours.
- Menu:** Medallions of New York Sirloin, Breast of Chicken Tarragon, Chef Salad, Broiled Filet of Sole and Scallops, Seafood Newburg with Rice, Vegetable Plate, or Fruit Plate.
- Reservations:** Call Emma James at HumRRO in Alexandria, (703) 706-5692. The **deadline** for luncheon reservations is **2:00 p.m., Monday, January 11th.** Cancel by 2:00 p.m. Tuesday or else you must pay for your meal. Members are welcome to come for the program only without having lunch. (The program begins at approximately 12:45 p.m.)
- Topic:** **Voluntary National Skill Standards: Myth or Reality?**
- Speaker:** **Dr. James Hogan, National Skill Standards Board, Washington, DC**

The National Skill Standards Act, passed by Congress in 1994, lays the groundwork for a grassroots, industry-led effort to create a voluntary, uniform system of national skill standards, assessments, and certifications suited to the needs of employers and employees in the increasingly competitive world economy. The Act established a non-partisan National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) to serve as a catalyst and information clearinghouse for the standards development process. Dr. Hogan will present a summary of the mission of the NSSB, challenges it has faced, and accomplishments to date.

As Director of Standards and Assessment for the NSSB, Dr. Hogan supports the development of standards and assessment policy, manages technical assistance provided to NSSB grantees, and coordinates standards and assessment research activities. Prior to joining the NSSB staff in February of 1998, Dr. Hogan was a senior program director with The Chauncey Group International/ETS in Princeton, NJ where he managed client certification programs. Dr. Hogan obtained a Ph.D. in I/O Psychology from the University of Georgia in 1988.

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President's Message

by Deirdre Knapp

Human Resources Research Organization

Welcome to a new year of business for PTC/MW. I want to begin by thanking you for electing me to be your president this year. I am honored by this opportunity to help lead an organization whose goals and mission I value so highly.

Before talking about plans for 1999, I want to extend appreciation on behalf of the membership to our 1998 elected officers and committee chairs for their hard work last year. In particular, Beverly Dugan helped to assure that we made progress despite the limited amounts of time everyone had to offer.

A major initiative of 1999 will be to conduct a needs analysis survey of our membership. Such a survey was conducted in 1995 and a variety of new services and activities resulted from it. I am looking for volunteers to work on conducting the survey. This would be a particularly good opportunity for one or more of our student members to get hands-on experience in survey research. Please contact me if you are interested in helping out.

In a related activity, we plan to continue our efforts to increase our membership base. For example, we will use feedback we have gotten from non-renewing members to identify ways to make PTC/MW membership more attractive to existing and potential members. Of course we will also look to our needs analysis to explore avenues to more effectively meet the needs of our membership.

We are not only looking for new members, but also for ways to get our existing members more actively involved in PTC/MW activities. This is indeed a challenge given the many competing demands that we all have on our time, demands which seem to have been particularly excessive over the last year or two for so many of us. This makes it difficult simply to get to the monthly luncheons, and it makes it even more difficult to find members who are willing to run for elected office and chair our committees. The end result is that we twist the arms of those we know and we end up with lots of people from the same employing organizations. In order for PTC/MW to be healthy and vital, we need to make it so that a broader range of our membership is active and engaged in our business.

This newsletter contains a PTC/MW Activity Interest Form. Please complete the form and return it to me (or send me an e-mail) to indicate your interest in participating in any of our ongoing committees and activities. Even if you don't have much time to devote, your participation could be extremely valuable to our success this year. It could also help you get a little more out of PTC/MW.

At this, the beginning of a new year, please take the time to encourage your colleagues to join PTC/MW if they do not already belong. Particularly for people who are fairly new to the area or to the testing profession, PTC/MW can be a very helpful resource. PTC/MW is a great source of timely information related to our profession and it offers many opportunities for education and networking with our colleagues. It also offers terrific opportunities for people to take leadership roles and to gain the visibility and experience those roles produce. Besides...it's fun and the more people who get involved, the more fun it will be.

I want to conclude by wishing everyone a safe, happy, and prosperous New Year!



Announcing the 20th Annual IOOB Conference

hosted by

George Mason University

March 19 - 21, 1999

With guest speakers:

Michael Champion

Richard Klimoski

Benjamin Schneider

20th Annual IOOB Conference Call for papers
deadline: January 22, 1999

For more information, please visit our website

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~ioob>

Where Is the December Luncheon Summary?

Suzanne Tsacoumis

Human Resources Research Organization

Did you realize that the summary of the luncheon speaker's presentation has to be prepared within two days of the luncheon to meet the deadline for the newsletter? In order to ensure that you receive the newsletter in a timely manner, it is not feasible to modify the deadline for submission of articles to the newsletter. Therefore, at the PTC Board meeting on December 10, the board decided to delay the summary of the luncheon presentation by one month.

So, the summary of Dr. Beverly Dugan's presentation at the December Luncheon will be provided in the February newsletter. This will help us ensure that you receive an accurate description of the material presented during the session, without overburdening our PTC volunteers.

By the way, if you have any ideas for luncheon or workshop speakers or topics that you would like to have presented, please contact Suzanne Tsacoumis at stsacoumis@humrro.org or 703.706.5660.

Next PTC/MW Executive Board Meeting

The next Executive Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 12th, at 5:45 p.m. at the American Institutes for Research. Contact PTC/MW President Deirdre Knapp via telephone at (703) 706-5662 or e-mail at dknapp@humrro.org for more information.

Call for Stephen E. Bemis Award Nominations

Shane Pittman

The Pittman McLenagan Group

Since 1985, the Stephen E. Bemis Memorial Award has been given annually to an individual who exhibits the qualities for which Steve Bemis is so fondly remembered. For those of you who don't know, Steve was the founder of PTC/MW who lost his life in a tragic car accident.

Potential candidates should demonstrate (1) commitment to the principles of merit and fairness, (2) practical contributions to the field, and (3) assistance to fellow practitioners. PTC/MW will review potential candidates and nominate one or more individuals for the 1999 Bemis Award. The winner will be selected by an evaluation committee composed of representatives of the five major sponsors of the award: IPMAAC, PTC/MW, PTC/NC, PTC/SC, and WRIPAC. The award will be presented at the 1999 IPMAAC conference.

Please consider nominating a candidate for this important award. To do so, send the individual's name, address, telephone, e-mail, and resume, along with a summary of reasons why the individual meets the Bemis Award criteria, to: Shane Pittman, PTC/MW President-Elect, The Pittman McLenagan Group, 6626A Wilson Lane, Bethesda, MD, 20817. If you have questions, please contact Shane at (301) 320-9500 or shanep@pittmanlc.com.

Reading Disabled Law Student Receives Accommodations for the New York State Bar Exam

Maureen P. Toner and David W. Arnold

Reid Psychological Systems

The New York State Board of Law Examiners ("the Board") will have to revise its policy on accommodating learning disabled applicants to the New York State Bar in response to a recent opinion delivered by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ("Second Circuit"). In *Bartlett v. New York State Board of Law Examiners*, the Second Circuit affirmed the judgment of a district court, which found that the Board had violated the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") by refusing to grant accommodations to an applicant with a reading disability, even though an expert witness for the Board had testified that the plaintiff was not sufficiently disabled for the purposes of the ADA.

The plaintiff, who earned a doctorate in education administration from New York University before she pursued a law degree from Vermont Law School, has a cognitive disorder that impairs her ability to read. Since 1991, the plaintiff has taken the New York bar exam five times and has yet to pass the exam. After taking the exam twice before requesting accommodations, Bartlett repeatedly petitioned the Board to allow her to take the test with various accommodations, including unlimited or extended time to take the test and permission to tape record her essays and circle her multiple choice answers in the test booklet. The Board denied her requests each time, contending that the evidence presented did not support a diagnosis of reading disability or dyslexia. After her failed fourth attempt to take the bar exam without accommodations, the plaintiff brought action against the Board for violating the ADA by refusing her reasonable accommodations when taking the bar exam. (N.B. The plaintiff filed her complaint against the Board immediately prior to her fifth attempt to pass the exam. She and the Board reached a stipulation in which she was granted accommodations during her fifth attempt, including extended time and the use of an assistant to read test questions and record her answers, on the condition that the scores would not be certified unless she prevailed in this lawsuit. Despite these accommodations, the plaintiff failed the exam.) In her

complaint, the plaintiff sought injunctive relief in the form of reasonable testing accommodations and compensatory damages for fees paid in connection with the five failed attempts to pass the examination, which total \$12,500.

The Board repeatedly denied the plaintiff's requested accommodations at the guidance of its expert on learning disabilities. The expert's opinion, that the plaintiff does not have dyslexia or a reading disability, is based on the plaintiff's performance on two subtests of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-Revised ("the Woodcock"), which is a battery of tests commonly used to assess learning disabilities. The plaintiff achieved scores above the 30th percentile on two of the subtests, the Woodcock "Word Attack" and "Word Identification", which are designed to measure a subject's "[w]ord identification and phonetic decoding or word analysis (ability to 'sound out' a word)". As the incidence of learning disabilities in the population is estimated at between 5% and 20%, the expert estimated that a cutoff of 30% on the test is reasonable to capture all disabled applicants. Accordingly, the expert recommended against providing accommodations to the plaintiff, since her score was above the 30th percentile.

The plaintiff challenged the Board's expert's testimony with the testimony of her own experts. The plaintiff's experts challenged the Board's expert's interpretation of the plaintiff's scores on the Woodcock subtests by arguing that her reading disability could not be measured solely by her scores on the Woodcock. The Board's reliance on the Woodcock was faulty, they argued, because "a reading disability is not quantifiable merely in test scores.... [Rather] diagnosing a learning disability requires clinical judgment".

For the following reasons, the district court agreed with the plaintiff. First, the Woodcock could not measure the plaintiff's lack of automaticity; that is, her ability to recognize a printed word and read it accurately and immediately without thinking. Second, the Woodcock was not a timed test and thus could not measure slowness of reading, an important characteristic of adult dyslexia. Third, the Woodcock was designed principally to test children and did not have enough items in the difficult range. Finally, the plaintiff's results on the Woodcock exhibited discrepancies, revealing high reading comprehension scores in comparison to low, but average, Word Attack and Word Identification scores. In addition, the court found that the Board's expert's use of the 30th percentile cutoff "arbitrary and flawed" because it contradicted other studies which demonstrated that one-third of adults with dyslexia scored above the 30th percentile on similar tests.

Ultimately, the district court held that the plaintiff's impairment substantially limited her ability to work because she could not compete on a level playing field with other bar applicants. The court did not find that the

plaintiff was substantially limited in the major life activities of reading or learning. This stemmed from her history of self-accommodations which caused some of her skills to be roughly average.

Upon review, the Second Circuit affirmed the district court's holding that the plaintiff was disabled under the ADA and is entitled to reasonable accommodation. However, the Second Circuit disagreed with the district court's finding that the plaintiff was not disabled in her ability to read or learn because her history of self-accommodation had allowed her to achieve "roughly average reading skills (on some measures) when compared to the general population". Citing the precedent of several circuit courts as well as Justice Department guidance, the Second Circuit found that a person's ability to self-accommodate does not preclude a finding of disability. Accordingly, the Second Circuit determined that the plaintiff is indeed disabled in her ability to read or learn under Title II of the ADA and is entitled to reasonable accommodations in taking the bar exam.

Mark Your Calendars!

Ms. Sharon Fletcher and Mr. Jess Robinson, both of the *Federal Aviation Administration*, will serve as guest speakers at the February Luncheon. Their topic is "Two Step Hiring Process for Electronics Specialists – Airway Facilities Centralized Applicant Pools and Basic Electronics Screening Tool". Hope to see you there!

Information for Members

Cheryl Hendrickson

American Institutes for Research

Happy new year! Below are some important pieces of information for members:

- As indicated on the PTC/MW 1999 Activity Interest Form (found in this issue of the newsletter), we would like to construct a new strategy for archiving historical PTC/MW materials. If you have any such materials, please forward them to Deirdre Knapp. Deirdre can be reached by telephone at (703) 706-5662 or via e-mail (dknapp@humrro.org).
- To ensure prompt delivery of your newsletter (and other PTC/MW communications), please forward address change information directly to the PTC/MW Secretary. Ann Quigley can be reached at (202) 268-3952 or aguigley@email.usps.gov.
- The PTC/MW newsletter is a great resource for our members. Please submit articles, job announcements, and member news you believe would be of interest to the membership. We are also interested in your suggestions for regular

features. Please contact Cheryl Hendrickson with your ideas. I can be reached at (202) 342-5092 or chendrickson@air-dc.org.

- Finally, I thought it might be useful to provide everyone with the year's newsletter deadlines in advance. I hope this will assist us in submitting exciting new articles for the newsletter.

1999 Newsletter Issue	Submission Deadline
February	January 15
March	February 12
April	March 12
May	April 16
June	May 14
July	June 11
August	July 16
September	August 13
October	September 10
November	October 15
December	November 12

Job Announcements

Research Scientist/Associate Research Scientist/Research Associate. Due to rapidly expanding business, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) has immediate openings for part-time or full-time applied researchers with strong quantitative and methodological skills to support current and future projects.

The openings include, Research Associates (MA or MS preferred), Associate Research Scientists (ABD or Ph.D. preferred) and Research Scientists (Ph.D. with 3-5 years experience). These positions involve working as part of a collaborative research team on a variety of projects that include the development and application of job analysis, measurement, personnel selection, test development, and statistical analysis techniques. Additional tasks include preparation of technical reports, presentations, journal articles, and writing competitive proposals for applied social science research as part of a team.

Candidates selected may be subject to a government security investigation and must meet eligibility requirements for access to classified information. Some periodic travel may be required. Job title and salary are negotiable and will depend on the candidates' education, skills, experience and other qualifications. Positions are available immediately and are located in Washington, DC. Please send resume/vita and writing sample to Elinor Clason at American Institutes for Research, 3333 K Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20007. American Institutes for Research is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Internship Position. Personnel Decisions Research Institutes, Inc. (PDRI), a premier human resources research and development organization, is currently accepting applications for internship positions. These positions require working as part of a team on projects involving selection and promotion system development and validation, performance management and career management system development, training design and evaluation, and other related projects.

Qualified candidates for internship positions should be advanced Master's Degree or Ph.D. students in I/O psychology. Experience with SPSS is desirable. Candidates should possess excellent research, analytical, interpersonal, and oral and written communication skills. Some positions may require obtaining a high level government security clearance.

Internships are full or part-time positions, with a duration of at least nine months. All positions are located in PDRI's Arlington, VA, office. Interested candidates should submit their resume and a cover letter to: Rita Lazzarini, Personnel Decisions Research Institutes, Inc., 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1000, Arlington, VA 22209 or can be submitted electronically to: Ritan@pdi-corp.com.

PTC/MW Newsletter Editor:

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Deadline for submission of articles to the next PTC/MW issue is **January 15th**.

Get Involved in PTC/MW

Opportunities to get involved in PTC/MW activities abound! If you are interested in getting actively involved in this organization, contact PTC/MW President Deirdre Knapp via telephone at (703) 706-5662 or e-mail at dknapp@.humrro.org.

PTC/MW 1999 ACTIVITY INTEREST FORM

Please indicate which activities/committees you might be interested in working with over the next year or two. Return this form (or the relevant information) to Deirdre Knapp via fax (703-549-7854) or e-mail (dknapp@humrro.org)

_____ **Legal/Legislative**

Follow federal and state legislative activities and keep the membership informed of developments through periodic newsletter articles.

_____ **Membership**

Develop and implement ideas to increase PTC/MW's membership base.

_____ **Internet**

Maintain PTC/MW web page and generate ideas for improving it.

_____ **Newsletter**

Obtain, edit, and format articles and information for the monthly newsletter.

_____ **Calendar**

Inform the membership of the dates and titles of testing related meetings, seminars, and workshops.

_____ **Needs Analysis Survey**

Design, administer, and analyze a membership survey.

_____ **Officers Manual**

Develop a how-to manual to help PTC/MW elected officers and committee chairs carry out their responsibilities.

_____ **PTC/MW Archives**

Identify a facility to house PTC/MW historical materials, retrieve and sort through available records, and set up a process for routinely archiving relevant materials.

_____ **Training**

Identify luncheon and workshop topics and speakers; coordinate logistics associated with presentations.

Contact Information:

Name:

Telephone:

E-mail:

- Feb 24-25 International Quality & Productivity Center. Conference. "HR and the Law in Mergers & Acquisitions." San Francisco, FL. Contact: IQPC, (800) 882-8684.
- MAR 10** *PTC/MW. SPECIAL EVENT! LUNCHEON/WORKSHOP (11:30 am - 3:45 pm, extra charge). Speaker to be announced. Pier 7 Restaurant, Washington, DC. Contact: Suzanne Tsacoumis, HumRRO, (703) 706-5660.*
- Mar 11-13 American Psychological Association & National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Conference. "Work, Stress, and Health '99: Organization of Work in a Global Economy." Baltimore, MD. Contact: APA, (202) 336-6033.
- Mar 19-21 I/O & OB Graduate Student Conference. George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Contact: Lori Zukin, GMU, (703) 527-8309.
- Apr 12-15 Linkage Inc. & Personnel Decisions Int. Coaching & Mentoring Conference. Boston, MA. Contact: Linkage, (781) 862-3157.
- Apr 14-18 University of Minnesota. Workshops & Symposium. "MMPI-2 & MMPI-A." Huntington Beach, CA. Contact: Dr. James Butcher, (612) 625-2879 or Butch001@tc.umn.edu.
- Apr 19-23 American Educational Research Association. Annual Convention. Montreal, Canada. Contact: AERA, (202) 223-9485.
- Apr 19-23 National Council on Measurement in Education. Annual Convention. Montreal, Canada. Contact: NCME, (202) 223-9318.
- Apr 29-May 2 Society for Industrial & Organizational Psych. Annual Conference & Workshops. Atlanta, GA. Contact: SIOP, (419) 353-0032.
- May 3-5 U.S. Office of Personnel Management. "Solutions '99: Conference for HR Employment Professionals." College Park, MD. Contact: Sandra Payne, (202) 606-0800.
- May 20-22 Educational Testing Service. International Conference. "Test Adaptation." [Translating tests into other languages, etc.] Washington, DC. Contact: Donna Everett, ETS, (609) 683-2774.
- May 26-28 University of North Texas. Symposium. "Individual, Team, and Organizational Effectiveness." Denton, TX. Contact: Melanie Bullock, Center for Study of Work Teams, UNT, (940) 565-2198 or melanieb@unt.edu.
- Jun 1-4 Development Dimensions International. International Congress on Assessment Center Methods. Orlando, FL. Contact: DDI, (412) 257-3952 or cnelson@ddiworld.com.
- Jun 3-6 American Psychological Society. Annual Conference. Denver, CO. Contact: APS, (202) 783-2077.
- Jun 6-10 IPMA Assessment Council. Annual Conference. St. Petersburg, FL. Contact: IPMA, (703) 549-7100 or David Hammil (301) 320-9500.
- Jun 17-18 SEAK, Inc. Expert Witness and Litigation Seminar. Cape Cod, MA. Contact: SEAK, (508) 457-1111.
- Jun 27-30 Society for HR Management. Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA. Contact: SHRM, (703) 548-3440.

Future SIOP: New Orleans, 2000; San Diego, 2001; Toronto, 2002; Orlando, 2003; Chicago, 2004; Los Angeles, 2005.

PERSONNEL TESTING COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON
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PTC/MW Elected Officers, 1999			
Office	Name	Work Phone	E-Mail
President	Deirdre Knapp, Ph.D.	(703) 706-5662	Dknapp@humrro.org
Past President	Bev Dugan, Ph.D.	(703) 706-5681	Bdugan@humrro.org
President-Elect	Shane Pittman, Ph.D.	(301) 320-9500	Shanep@pittmanlc.com
Vice-President	Suzanne Tsacoumis, Ph.D.	(703) 706-5660	Stsacoumis@humrro.org
Secretary	Ann Quigley, Ph.D.	(202) 268-3952	Aquigley@email.usps.gov
Treasurer	Julia Leaman, Ph.D.	(202) 305-0602	Julia.a.leanman@usdoj.gov
Recorder	Dwayne Norris, Ph.D.	(202) 342-5129	Dnorris@air-dc.org
PTC/MW Committee Chairs, 1999			
Legal	Heather Roberts, Ph.D.	(202) 336-6000	Her.apa@email.apa.org
Membership	Anthony Bayless, Ph.D.	(703) 219-4306	Bayless@calib.com
Nom/Elections	Bev Dugan, Ph.D.	(703) 706-5681	Bdugan@humrro.org
Employment	Cheryl Hendrickson, Ph.D.	(202) 341-5092	Chendrickson@air-dc.org
Internet	To Be Announced		
Training	Suzanne Tsacoumis, Ph.D.	(703) 706-5660	Stsacoumis@humrro.org
Calendar	Lance Seberhagen, Ph.D.	(703) 790-0796	Sebe@erols.com

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