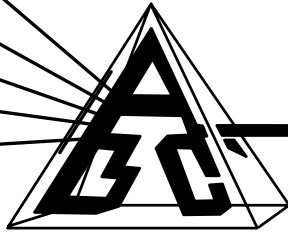


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Certification News

Volume 7 Issue 1 Winter 2000

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE It's About Recognition

Recognize: (v) 2: to acknowledge the legitimacy or reality of
Recognition: (n) 3: favorable notice

(*Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary; Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1984)

There has never been a better time to examine the word *recognition*, and its application to the ABC mission and status. *Recognition* (n) of the highest form was recently bestowed on Richard E. Tontarski, Jr., D-ABC. The year 2000 Paul L. Kirk Award was presented to Rick at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences annual meeting in Reno, Nevada.

The Kirk Award – presented annually by the Criminalistics Section of the Academy – recognizes those few who have uniquely contributed to the advancement of the field of Criminalistics over the course of many years, and/or who have fundamentally changed the field through their actions and service to others. In bestowing this recognition, the Academy recognized Rick's championing of certification for criminalists, and the fundamental improvement that this program has had on legitimate professionalization of the field.

For over a decade, Rick tirelessly advocated extension of professional certification to all eligible criminalists. He worked with a dedicated group to gain federal grant funding, incorporate the American Board of Criminalistics, adopt

and modify for national application (as the ABC General Knowledge Examination) the CAC Certification of Professional Competency exam, and design and implement the Specialty Examinations that ABC continues to offer today.



The fact that Rick Tontarski – a founding father of national certification for American criminalists – has been awarded the Kirk Award is a particularly fitting tribute. Paul Kirk himself noted in his foundational publication “The Ontogeny of Criminalistics” (*J. Crim. Law, Criminol. Police Sci.*, 1963, V54: 235-238) in 1963, regarding the professional stature of criminalistics, that “A Profession requires established competence... There is a great need for serious consideration of this problem, and for the application of more uniform criteria of qualification.”

Another way that *recognition* is an appropriate word for ABC activities involves completion of the year-long piloting program for

the Technical Specialist (TS) Certification exams in Molecular Biology and Drug Analysis. The availability of the TS certification pathway

President's Message – continued

demonstrates that the ABC can *recognize* an opportunity to extend its objective professional qualification to two distinct groups of forensic practitioners for whom other ABC certificates do not perfectly apply. During this pilot year, we have also *recognized* the need to carefully construct the evaluation of the piloted exams (see the Open Letter to Applicants in this newsletter).

In addition, those holding ABC certificates have helped the organization to *recognize* (v) that a strong web presence is critical. The delivery of our service with easy access to study guides, organizational materials and other important information, through the website, allows significantly greater flexibility than the ancient (you know, the way we did things two years ago....) snail-mail, telephone and FAX access previously provided.

We have been able to advance this web presence through the hard work of Examination Committee (and CAC representative) member Peter Barnett. Peter has recently started working with David Epstein (ASCLD At-Large Board member) to now construct a contractual relationship with a professional webmaster

in order to insure that fully updated information is always available, and to move the website into its next phase of development. The ABC believes that the future of professional competency assessment will include significant use of the internet. The obvious vision includes distance-learning models, on-line and self-paced study guides and chats, and automated reporting and tracking of professional development.

The ultimate internet applications for the ABC are surely beyond our comprehension today. But we want to be the first and best at the use of this tool, while continuing to *recognize* that the helpful interactions among our certificants – at meetings and in other informal and professional situations – are one of the important benefits of ABC certification.

Ultimately, your participation in, and support of, the ABC programs of professional certification insures that you are *recognized* for your accomplishment and commitment to lifelong professional development. Thank you for providing the daily demonstration of professionalism that makes this *recognition* appropriate.

The Changing Face of the ABC Board of Directors and Examination Committee

We have several important new additions and changes to the ABC Board of Directors and the Examination Committee membership.

We would like to welcome Mike Healy, F-ABC, as the SAFS Board of Directors member. Mike replaces Terry Mills III after many years of dedicated service. In addition, Susan Blankenship, D-ABC, will be replacing Ted Anderson as the MAAFS representative and Carol Hunter D-ABC has replaced Margaret Kuo as the AAFS/Criminalistics Section representative.

Representation on the Board of Directors and the Examination Committee from the ASTM Committee E-30 will be changing following the February 2000 meeting. Carl Selavka will be stepping down as President and will be replaced on the Board of Directors by the Examination Committee member Larry Presley. Larry's years of experience with the ABC on the Examination Committee, and his demonstrated qualifications with accreditation and standardization efforts make him an exceptional replacement. Taking Larry's place on the Examination

Committee for ASTM will be Elizabeth Ziolkowski, F-ABC.

This is a time of tremendous change, both in our services and within the ABC. But, with each fond farewell, we welcome the opportunities that our new representatives provide for insight, challenges to the status quo, ultimately resulting in improvements to our process and products.

SPECIAL THANKS

After many years of faithful service as the Recertification Chairperson, Marie Samples has transferred her duties to Mary Kate McGilvray. Marie took a process which relied on manual compilations and informal guidelines, and formalized the process to accurately track recertification points for over 500 certified criminalists. We are grateful for her service, and look forward to continued excellence in this

Your (new) Representatives to the ABC

The ABC and the decisions that are made by the people involved in its operation can effect us and our profession. Its important to know a little about the backgrounds and qualifications of the people serving your interests on the Board and Examination Committee. These are the people to call, e-mail, write, or corner at a meeting, to express your views, concerns, and ideas.

Representatives of the American Academy of Forensic Science – Criminalistics Section

Carol Hunter – Board of Directors

Ms. Hunter has over 20 years experience as a Criminalist, including fourteen years experience as a crime laboratory director of California Laboratory of Forensic Science. She obtained her B.S. in Biology in 1976 and began her career in the Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office in Cleveland Ohio in the Trace section. Carol's career continued at the Regional Forensic Laboratory in Painesville, Ohio. Her areas of expertise were expanded into trace evidence, serology/genetic marker analysis, shoe impression comparisons, toolmarks, photography, and crime scene processing.

Today, her experience includes examination of a wide variety of physical evidence and expert testimony. She has extensive experience in laboratory and field examination of physical evidence, crime scene processing, and crime scene reconstruction. She works primarily in the Southern California Laboratory of Forensic Analytical Inc., supervising and performing full case reviews as well as laboratory analysis and other related casework.

Carol has served in many capacities in the California Association of Criminalists, including committee chair of multiple committees, Membership Secretary, and President.

Representative of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists (MAAFS)

Susan Blankenship – Board of Directors

Susan Blankenship is a drug chemist for the Hagerstown Police Department in Hagerstown, Maryland. She has been working in Hagerstown in that capacity for 6 years. As an almost full service laboratory employing 2 people, Susan also performs crime scene investigations, preliminary fingerprint work, and preliminary serology.

Susan got her start in forensic science at the Drug Enforcement Administration Mid-Atlantic Laboratory in 1991. She holds a Bachelors of Science in Chemistry from Mary Washington College in Virginia and in 1998 she received her Masters of Forensic Science from George Washington University. Susan has been very active in the Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists.

Representative of the Southern Association of Forensic Scientists (SAFS)

Mike Healy – Board of Directors

Mike is a Forensic Chemist with the Manatee County Sheriff's Office in Bradenton, Florida. Manatee County is located on the southern shore of Tampa Bay on the West Central coast of Florida. Though the bulk of his casework is drug analysis, he is also an expert in fire debris analysis. Mike is an ABC Fellow in both Drug Analysis and Fire Debris Analysis. Mike has been with Manatee County for eleven years and has been in forensic chemistry for 19 years since earning his degree in Forensic Science from the University of Central Florida in Orlando. Mike is the immediate past President of the Southern Association of Forensic Scientists.

Mike is interested in serving on ABC because he is a firm believer in the program. It is something you do as an individual that you take with you when you leave a particular laboratory, unlike accreditation. It is something that administrators understand and helps them to support the continuing education costs that are associated with our profession. He is hopeful that in the future D-ABC or F-ABC will have the same prestige and financial rewards as CPA in Accounting.

Representative of the ASTM Committee E-30

Elizabeth Ziolkowski – Examination Committee

Elizabeth Ziolkowski has been a Senior Criminalist at the Boston Police Department Crime Laboratory since August 1994. She became the head of the trace evidence section when the BPD lab moved to a new facility in 1997. Her preparation for work in criminalistics and trace evidence include a Bachelor of Arts

REMINDER

When adding your certification accomplishment to your signature block, the ABC encourages you to use

**D– ABC for Diplomate
and
F-ABC for Fellow**

Let these marks of distinction bring you recognition for the effort you put into meeting the certification challenge.

ABC CALENDAR

PLEASE POST ON YOUR LAB BULLETIN BOARD

Date/Deadline	Event	For More Information, Contact:
April 26, 2001 <i>Deadline February 26, 2001</i>	All ABC Exams, SAFS/MAAFS joint Meeting Williamsburg, Virginia	Mike Healy 941/747.3011 Susan Blankenship 301/790-3700
May 26, 2001 <i>Deadline March 26, 2001</i>	Private Offering – John Jay College New York, New York	Judy O’Conner 718/558-8745
May 7, 2001 <i>Deadline March 7, 2001</i>	All ABC Exams, CAC Meeting Tahoe City, California	Jennifer Mihalovich 510/238-3386
September 26, 2001 <i>Deadline July 26, 2001</i>	All ABC Exams, MAFS Meeting Minneapolis, Minnesota	Dan Bergman 651/642.0700
September 2001 <i>Deadline July, 2001</i>	All ABC Exams, SAFS Fall Meeting Ft. Myers Beach, Florida	Mike Healy 941/747.3011

To arrange to sit for an examination, you must contact the Registrar by letter or fax (715-845-4156) by the deadline listed.

Local contacts are provided for conference information only.

To arrange for ABC Exams to be administered in your laboratory, contact your regional representative.

**American Board of Criminalistics
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degree in Chemistry from Princeton University, a Master of Science degree in Forensic Chemistry from Northeastern University, an internship at the Centre of Forensic Sciences in Toronto, and employment as a forensic scientist at K-Chem Labs, a private forensic laboratory in Boston. The contributions of many colleagues to the ABC and on ASTM standards have helped Liz throughout her career, and she looks forward to working with the examinations committee.

Liz recently became a Fellow (Hairs and Fibers specialty) of the ABC. She is a Provisional Member of AAFS, and belongs to NEAFS, ACS, ASTM, and the New England Section of the IAI.

Members-at-Large

The ABC has three Member-at-Large positions on the Board of Directors. Though each of these members are sponsored by a professional group, they do not represent that group. They are present on the Board of Directors to "vote their conscious" and provide input and opinion not associated with any one group.

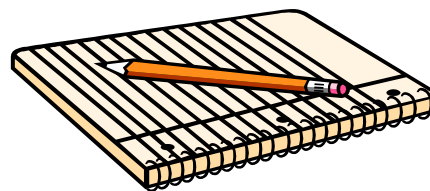
Lynn Henson – Board of Directors Member-at-Large sponsored by Southern Association of Forensic Scientists

Lynn has a degree in Criminology from Florida State University. (Lynn's comment: although I have all the science and math requirements for a chemistry degree, foreign languages and I do not agree. Getting a criminology major was easier for me than 4 quarters of Russian or German. Hence the appearance that I evaded ABC rules with a Criminology degree and not a degree in a physical or natural science. ASCLD says I'm qualified by the fact I have 30+ hours in chemistry)

Lynn interned with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement in 1973 and was subsequently hired. She spent 19 years with FDLE as a Microanalyst (or Trace Evidence examiner) performing shoe and tire track examinations, textile fiber, glass and paint examinations and a variety of "other" trace examinations along with being heavily involved with the training of a number of Microanalysts. She also supervised the Microanalysis, Crime Scene and Serology sections over 10 years.

Following her career with the FDLE, Lynn joined the US Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory (USACIL) in 1995 as a Trace Evidence Examiner performing primarily textile fiber and paint examinations. She has served as the General Program chair for the 1999 SAFS meetings and is currently the Vice-president of SAFS.

Lynn's interest in the ABC stems from 27 years of observing and being involved in the evolution of formal training programs, lab accreditation, examination protocols (or guidelines) and individual examiner certification. She is particularly concerned with the erosion of the trace evidence examinations over the past few years and would like to help find a way to get more Trace Evidence examiners involved in the certification process.



NOTES FROM THE REGISTRAR

Replacement ABC lapel pins can be purchased from the Registrar for \$10: Make checks payable to the ABC. Additional ABC lapel pins can be purchased by certificate holders for \$10 each. There is not a separate lapel pin for Fellows.

The ABC no longer utilizes the AAFS Offices for maintenance of records. Therefore, changes of address reported to the AAFS for your AAFS Membership will not be forwarded to the ABC Registrar's Office. The ABC cannot track our certificate holders without current addresses, so in order to better serve our certificate holders, changes of address must be reported directly to the ABC Registrar's Office.

Recertification paperwork should be submitted in **triplicate, one original and two copies.**

If certificate holders or certificate-eligible individuals choose not to submit recertification paperwork for any year, for any reason, they are still responsible for paying the \$30 maintenance fees for that year. If payment is made after June 1st of that year, the fees increase to \$50. For each year that maintenance fees are not paid, a \$10 non-payment fee is added to the balance.

The Registrar is requesting the below listed individuals contact the Registrars Office personally so their ABC files can be updated. The Registrar's Office needs to talk to them directly, whether or not they are still in the field. If you know any of these individuals please contact them and notify them that they need to contact the Registrar:

Daniel Boggiano
Brian J. Bouts
James G. Bailey
Joanna M. Culver
Raymond R. Fysh
Michael W. Giberson
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Jane Maria Homeyer
James A. Liberty
Philip Wai Lim Lum
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At Large	David Epstein - ASCLD At Large NFSTC 727/341-4409

Counsel *Thomas Kubic*
516/261-2117

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John Jay College
914/428-8649

Vice Chair *Robert Parsons* - SAFS
Refional Crime Lab at IRCC
561/462-4765

Secretary *Albert Lyter* - MAAFS
Federal Forensic Associates
919/848-3696

Members *Reta Newman* - AAFS Criminalistics Section
Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory
727/582-6810

Charles Barna - MAFS
Michigan State Police
517/336-6371

Peter Barnett - CAC
Forensic Science Associates
510/222-8883

Lawrence Presley - ASTM E-30
FBI Academy
202/324-5604

Frank Schehr - ASCLD
517/337-7383

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Dan Bergman

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Kary Tontarski

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Carol Hunter
Sue Ballou
Bob Parsons

Open Letter to: Applicants and Challengers Technical Specialist Pilot Examinations

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for contacting the American Board of Criminalistics (ABC) regarding the Technical Specialist Examination in Drug Analysis (TSE[DA]) or Molecular Biology (TSE[MB]). The ABC is grateful for your interest in this new certification pathway, as we believe that this extension of legitimate certification for criminalists enhances the field and meets the expressed needs of a large number of forensic professionals.

The ABC Board and Examination Committee (EC) have tried hard to create two new exams which are fair and appropriate in their challenge. However, we recognize that the design of the new exam is complicated and difficult. Therefore, the TSE(DA) and TSE(MA) have been offered as Pilot exams for the period of February 2000 to February 2001. At the end of this one-year period, all those who challenged the new exams will be evaluated together, and the outcome helps to determine whether or not the exams performed appropriately, as measured against internationally-recognized principles for test validity.

If you have already challenged a Technical Specialist Exam, you will recall in the pre-examination instructions that we advised you of a one-year period of evaluation. It is important that there be a statistically significant number of examinations for evaluation. In this way, the scoring fairly assesses the examinations' ability to distinguish among challengers, and validates the test for the intended use. In the absence of a full challenger base, the test may be validated using an expert group ("Blue Ribbon Panel"). Both methods are available and recognized as fair bases for determining test validity by experts in the test design.

Due to the need to pool tests, there is a substantial delay in reporting of results to the challengers. The ABC recognizes that your greatest concern is the fair and valid application of certification standards, and the Examination Committee is making every effort to insure this outcome in grading the Technical Specialist Examinations. Therefore, please be advised that the schedule for evaluation will allow the ABC to inform you of results from Pilot challenges of Technical Specialist Examinations in **Spring 2001**.

It is crucial that the ABC maintain certifications which are credible and fair. Thank you for your interest and participation, and your patience as we work to make the ABC certification process stronger.

Respectfully,

Carl Selavka, Ph.D., D-ABC
President

Insert Copy of
“Certification
Process”