

MERLOT From the Vineyard



From Your Wine Steward - News on the Mid Year Meeting **Gerry Hanley**

Holiday greetings everyone! I hope the semester has gone well for you all, and that you will enjoy your well earned winter holidays. As you folks are gearing down, we are gearing up for our Mid Year meeting to be held this coming January 21 – 23 in (hopefully) warm and sunny New Orleans! We'll start the meeting at 6:00 pm on the 21st at the Hotel Inter-Continental. The meeting will end at 3:00 pm on Sunday, the 23rd. Call the number below to make reservations – to get the meeting room rate of \$169/night, be sure to call before 5:00pm on December 31!

Hotel Inter-Continental New Orleans
444 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70130
Phone: 504/525-5566 or toll free 800/445-6563
Refer to the MERLOT Meeting

Looking forward to see you in the new year – we've got lots of exciting plans to share with you, and we're looking forward to your help in vetting those plans and helping us start the new vintage –Greetings everyone and welcome to *The Grapevine*. Many of you may remember the newsletter from a few years ago and at the same time it will be new to a great many of you. The purpose of the *Grapevine* is to give you an 'insider's' look at what we in MERLOT are doing.



One of Our Pioneers **Feature Article**



Jim Bidlack – Associate Editor – MERLOT Biology Editorial Board and Professor of Biology – University of Central Oklahoma

Jim joined MERLOT in December 1999 and has been a member of the MERLOT Biology Editorial Board since its inception in January 2000. He has submitted over 75 sites to MERLOT, completed about 30 peer reviews, and is one of the most active recruiters for external reviewers. He has traveled throughout Oklahoma to give presentations and spread the word about use of MERLOT in the classroom. Jim has been to all of the MERLOT International Conferences where he and members of the Biology Editorial Board have provided entertaining and informative presentations on use of MERLOT learning objects in the classroom.

“The animations, simulations, and video clips are my favorite components of MERLOT modules,” says Bidlack, “and I enjoy using them in the classroom to inspire and motivate students.” I have been teaching for about 15 years and every year gets better, especially with all the learning materials available on the Internet. As part of his commitment to teaching, Jim has been posting and using materials from the Internet for the classroom since the late 1990s.

Jim is a MERLOT enthusiast and gets his energy from fellow Editorial Board Members and the many external reviewers who have joined MERLOT. He states, emphatically, “We've got great people involved in MERLOT

and it's pretty clear that those who love teaching know about and use MERLOT. With great people, excellent resources, and a little imagination, creative learning does occur. Add a little merlot or even cabernet sauvignon



Volunteer Corner - Get to Know Our Volunteers

An exemplary volunteer peer reviewer... Judy A. Serwatka, EdD, CDP

Dr. Serwatka (or “Judy” how we affectionately call her) is a valuable member of the Information Technology Merlot Team. Judy began her involvement with Merlot over five years ago as a peer reviewer. When the support from her institution ended, she continued on as a volunteer peer reviewer. Her commitment to the project, punctuality in regards to her postings, reviews and submissions (not to mention her active role delivering presentations and always including Merlot as part of them) makes her an exemplary peer reviewer.

Judy brings an extensive array of experiences as well as a wealth of knowledge to the Information Technology editorial board team. She received her EdD in Business Education from Northern Illinois University with minors in Management Information Systems and Instructional Technology. She also received an M.S. in Management, and an A.S. and B.S. in Computer Technology from Purdue University Calumet. Prior to becoming a faculty member, Judy was a Systems Engineer at Bethlehem Steel for 6 years. Judy is currently Associate Professor of Computer Technology at Purdue University – North Central. Judy has lead the move toward more on-line education through the implementation of the WebCT Vista product. She has been a part of the pilot projects for this software and currently uses it in all her courses. She is also currently working to convert existing on-campus courses to ‘hybrid’ courses where part of the instruction is on the Web and part on-campus.

Formerly, she was an Associate Professor of Information Systems and Computer Programming at Purdue University – Calumet. She taught courses in the CIS area for 17 and was Chairman for the Systems Networking Option in the B.S. degree program, at that campus. In addition to her work with networking students, Judy was actively involved in developing, teaching, and promoting distance learning at Purdue – Calumet for 6 years where she was the Distance Learning Coordinator and taught at least one distance learning course each semester. She was also the Purdue – Calumet representative to the Indiana Partnership for Statewide Education and created and maintained the campus Distance Learning web site.

Judy has authored more than 40 articles and conference presentations on distance learning. She received the a Certificate of Recognition for Innovative Teaching in a Distance Education Program from the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System in May, 2002 and was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for 2003 presented by the Network and Systems Professionals Association. In addition, she is also the author of the textbook, *Business Data Communications, Introductory Concepts and Techniques*. The fourth edition of this text was published in December, 2003.



Editorial Board Changes

The World Languages board welcomes to MERLOT, their newest member, Tianwei Xie, who will focus on materials for teaching and learning Chinese. Professor Xie, M.A. in linguistics, Ph.D. in foreign language education, came to the U.S. in 1985 and taught Chinese in the University of Pittsburgh and the University of California at Davis. Currently, he is an Associate Professor at the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies, California State University, Long Beach. He teaches Chinese at all levels, Chinese linguistics, Chinese Information Processing, Business Chinese and other Chinese related courses. His publications include books and papers on socio-linguistics, the second language acquisition and using computers and the Internet in education. His web site - Learning Chinese Online <http://www.csulb.edu/~txie/online.htm> - is one of the most popular web sites among Chinese teachers and learners.



Out and About with MERLOT

The History team has been busy the last few months! **Bill Paquette**, History Editor, has been appointed as Chairman of the Committee on Community Colleges in the Organization of American Historians. Congratulations Bill!

Presentations and Publications

MERLOT workshop at the Annandale Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, December 1, 2004, by Bill Paquette.

Upcoming presentations

Spring 2005, Organization of American Historians, Bill Paquette and Tracey Penny – Light will demonstrate how to use MERLOT to develop a hybrid and/or online US history course.



Update on MERLOT

Volunteers Needs for the MERLOT International Conference, July 24 - 28

Seeking volunteers to participate on the MERLOT International Conference Program Committee. Please help us recruit folks for the committee from the editorial boards and your campus communities. The primary responsibilities of committee members are to: solicit proposals, review and rate proposals, participate in selection process, assist in marketing the conference, moderate sessions, and contact the speakers for the sessions they moderate.

If you are interested in participating on the Committee or know someone else who is, please contact Diane Didier, email: ddidier@regents.state.la.us, phone: 225-342-4253.

Snapshots

In conjunction with the Knowledge Media Lab of the Carnegie Foundation, we have begun a pilot project where authors of materials can create 'snapshots' (rich descriptions of the purpose and pedagogies associated with their learning object). The next step in the project is to establish snapshots for faculty who use MERLOT learning objects in their teaching. Still in the pilot phase of the project, we are recruiting both authors and users of materials to develop snapshots. If you know of anyone who might be interested in creating a Snapshot, please have them contact Flora McMartin, mcmartin@merlot.org. We will be demonstrating how to create Snapshots at the Mid Year meeting.

Portals, Contribute 3 and Macromedia

Training for the Portal Editors will be held December 13, 16, and 20. Portal Editors will learn how to use Contribute 3, a Macromedia product to create the portals. Macromedia graciously donated the licenses to the software for this project! MERLOT is highlighted on the Macromedia site at: http://www.macromedia.com/cfusion/showcase/index.cfm?event=finder&productID=1523&loc=en_us. Editors will show off the first drafts of their portals at the Mid Year meeting.

Publicity and Marketing Materials

Recently, we've put together a short 2 page update you can use to help inform people about MERLOT. Briefly, it lists our vision and strategic priorities, information (including URLs) about digital library services, professional development services, enabling technologies (RSS and federated search) and information about the consortium, including new partners and press releases.

JOLT – the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching

Co-editors, Tracey Penny-Light and Ed Perry report that they have received their first articles and are reviewing them as we speak. They invite the Editorial Board for the journal to meet with them prior to the Mid Year meeting to review plans and discuss review criteria. Meeting time/place forthcoming -



MERLOT Statistics

The following stats are all 'to date' as of September 30, 2004

11,198 # items in Collection
1,512 # of Peer Reviews
22,332 # of Registered Users

The following stats represent the status from May 7, 2003 – September 15, 2004

340,202 # unique visitors
23% Visitor repeat rate
25,54` Ave # visits/month
8 Ave. # pages/visit
5.5 minutes Ave. length of visit

Interested in writing something for *From the Vineyard* or adding news and updates? *From the Vineyard* is published every other month (February, April, June, August, October and December). Getting your information in print is easy for once, simply send your submission to webmaster@merlot.org by the first Wednesday of the month in which is to be published. We appreciate copy ready materials – unfortunately, we can't publish all articles/stories in each issue, if you don't see your story in this issue, we promise to get it into the next!