

# MERLOT From the Vineyard



*Issue 3, February 2005*

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## CONTENTS

- \* [From your Wine Steward - Thanks for a Great Mid Year Meeting](#)
- \* [One of the Pioneers - Jim Bidlack, Biology](#)
- \* [Volunteer Corner – Get to know our Volunteers](#)
- \* [Editorial Board Changes](#)
- \* [Out and About with MERLOT](#)
- \* [Update on MERLOT](#)
- \* [MERLOT Statistics](#)

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

We had a productive and fun Midyear Planning Meeting in New Orleans. Thank you very much for your time, efforts, and insights. Through your leadership and generosity, we are a learning community learning to serve our community better. The New Year is bringing a number of enhancements - from the discipline community portals to the Carnegie snapshots to the "15% solution" strategy. Growing MERLOT's community of partners brings strength to our ability to serve the needs of students and faculty. Your advocacy and doing the good work for MERLOT is a powerful strategy for growing MERLOT's community. Thank you again for all that you do.



## ***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**

**Judy Serwatka** – Peer Reviewer – Information Technology Editorial Board – Professor of Computer Technology – Purdue University, North Central

Dr. Serwatka 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.

Judy brings an extensive array of experiences as well as a wealth of knowledge to the Information Technology editorial board team. 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 where she has led the move toward more online education through the implementation of WebCT Vista. Judy was also actively involved in developing, teaching, and promoting distance learning at Purdue – Calumet for 6 years where she was the Distance Learning Coordinator. She was the Purdue – Calumet representative to the Indiana Partnership for Statewide Education and created and maintained the campus distance learning website.

Judy has authored more than 40 articles and conference presentations on distance learning. She received the Certificate of Recognition for Innovative Teaching in the 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. 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. See Judy's most recent article on MERLOT *Improving Retention in Distance Learning Classes*, at: [http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Jan\\_05/article06.htm](http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Jan_05/article06.htm).



### **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 at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of California at Davis. Currently, he is an Associate Professor in 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, second language acquisition and using computers and the Internet in education. His website, Learning Chinese Online <http://www.csulb.edu/~txie/online.htm> is extremely popular among Chinese teachers and learners.



### **Out and About with MERLOT**

#### Appointments

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

#### Publications

Judy A. Serwatka: *Improving Retention in Distance Learning Classes International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*. (2005). (2) 1. [http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Jan\\_05/article06.htm](http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Jan_05/article06.htm)

## Upcoming Workshops, Presentations and Seminars

### **February 16**

The SUNY TLT Cooperative in partnership with the SUNY Training Center is offering: **Using Learning Objects in your Instruction: MERLOT (4 - Week Course)**. Instructor: Lisa Pirinelli, Niagara County Community College, at a reduced rate for MERLOT partners. For more info and to register: <http://www.tc.suny.edu/>

### **February 24**

The TLT Group has an Online Institute of workshops and webcasts. Be sure to check out the OLI webcast series that starts on Feb 24; it has implications on technology for the shape of a college education: <http://www.tltgroup.org/Registration/DescriptionPage/GenEdSeries.htm>. TLT also supports a growing website on the topic at: <http://www.tltgroup.org/resources/GX/Home.htm>.



## **Update on MERLOT**

### MERLOT International Conference

#### **March 14**

The deadline for proposals to the MERLOT International Conference, July 25 – 28, in Nashville, Tennessee. Call for proposals: <http://conference.merlot.org/conference/2005/callforproposals.html>

### 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' labeled *From the Author* that are 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](mailto:mcmartin@merlot.org).

### Portals, Contribute 3 and Macromedia

Portal Editors are hard at work developing the new portal pages for each editorial board. **Watch for the new portals as they come online in March!** 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](http://www.macromedia.com/cfusion/showcase/index.cfm?event=finder&productID=1523&loc=en_us)

### 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 for release of the first issue in June 2005. If you have an article 'in the making' be sure to contact Tracey or Ed to learn about how to publish in JOLT at: [tracy@temagami.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:tracy@temagami.uwaterloo.ca) or [eperry@memphis.edu](mailto:eperry@memphis.edu).

### The MERLOT *Partner Reserve*

Just finished a successful workshop or seminar promoting MERLOT? Remember to add your materials to the MERLOT *Partner Reserve*. It's simple, login to MERLOT as you always do, and go to the Communities page. Scroll to the bottom to find the link to the *Partner Reserve*. Catalogue the item (assuming it is an online resource) just as you would any learning object.

### The MERLOT *Faculty Development Handbook*

Additionally, Flora McMartin ([mcmartin@merlot.org](mailto:mcmartin@merlot.org)) and Glenda Morgan ([gmorgan@calstate.edu](mailto:gmorgan@calstate.edu)) are collecting examples of successful activities to include in a revised version of the MERLOT Faculty Development Handbook. Please be sure to let them know about your addition to the collection or send them a copy of your materials.



## **MERLOT Statistics**

The statistics reported here are totals to date, as of February 1, 2005

### **Collection**

11,274 # items in Collection  
1,535 # of Peer Reviews  
22,820 # of Registered Users

### **Usage Statistics**

358,838 # unique visitors  
23% Visitor repeat rate  
25,658 Avg. # visits/month  
8 Avg. # pages/visit  
5.5 minutes Avg. duration 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. Send your submission to [webmaster@merlot.org](mailto:webmaster@merlot.org) by the first Wednesday of the month in which you wish it 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 the issue, we promise to try to get it into the next!