

2004 Conference – Networking and Learning

As we write this, we've just returned from another exciting Adventist Virtual Learning Network (AVLN) Conference! This year, we met at Pacific Union College in the lovely mountains above the famed Napa Valley, California. The conference offered opportunities to network with old friends and make new ones. The participants displayed an incredible vision and commitment to Adventist education. It was inspiring to see so many educators who are enhancing and extending their K-20 classrooms through the use of the Internet and other technologies.

If you are new to the AVLN, you might like to know a bit about us. We are a volunteer group of Adventist educators who met for the first time in Florida in 1999. We came together with a sense of urgency. Public institutions were developing consortia with business groups to offer education online. Participants at the Florida meeting believed it was critical for Adventist educators to find ways to collaborate. They also believed that the church's education system could be substantially enhanced through the use of technology and the Internet. At that time, the group affirmed its belief that every school is a "light" and should be kept burning and that every young person desiring an Adventist education should have access to the best schooling possible.

The AVLN's mission "to promote global online collaboration for lifelong learning among Seventh-day Adventists and other faith-based organizations" has three primary emphases:

1. Hold annual conferences to help people network and develop new skills.
2. Provide online courses meeting the North American Division technology requirement, as well as training for K-20 online course development.
3. Encourage communication and collaboration throughout the Adventist system of education.

The 2004 conference's keynote speakers, Rena Palloff and Keith Pratt, are pioneers in the world of

online education. Their research and publications have helped to enhance our understanding of effective online teaching strategies.

The full AVLN Conference report (including presentations, proposals, and recommendations) will appear on the AVLN's Web site. You'll find PowerPoint presentations, Web sites to visit, papers, and more! By visiting the conference home page, you'll feel as if you were there! (See <http://www.avln.org/jae/>.)

Joyful learning! ☺

Marilyn R. Eggers is an AVLN board member and an Associate Professor in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at La Sierra University in Riverside, California. She develops and teaches online courses, promotes the effective integration of technology into teaching and learning, and encourages collaboration in all areas of education. You can reach her by E-mail at meggers@lasierra.edu. **Shirley Freed** is Chair of the Leadership and Educational Administration Department at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. She is currently President of AVLN and one of the organization's originators, and teaches all of her courses online. You can reach her by E-mail at freed@andrews.edu.

By Marilyn R. Eggers and Shirley Freed