

PLATO Annual All Member Luncheon
May 21, 2014 11:30 a.m.
Nakoma Golf Club, Madison WI

President's Welcome: Patricia Becker welcomed everyone to the Luncheon at 11:37 a.m. and introduced Tim Otis, Treasurer.

2013-14 Review: Tim Otis began his review of the past year's significant events by noting that PLATO's membership has reached 1,047. He said a decade ago there were 500 members. Course offerings have also increased. There will be 10 offered this summer and possibly as many as 48 for the fall. PLATO is now managing its own website and Tim encouraged people to take a look at www.platomadison.org if they haven't already. In another managerial context, PLATO is administering its finances by taking direct control of revenues and expenses. An experimental Arts Café was launched as a new effort to meet the interests of members. A survey was made available to gather members' feedback and suggestions for making the organization a satisfying experience.

Business Meeting: Patricia Becker introduced the following nominees brought forward by the Nominating Committee for positions of Officers and Directors of the PLATO Board for 2014-15.

Mary Boyd President
Frank Power President-Elect
Sybil Better Secretary
Tim Otis Treasurer
Gail Gordon Director-at-Large
Mike DiIorio Director-at-Large

Patricia explained that Gail Gordon has just taken over as Chair of the Communication Committee and thus becomes an ex-officio member of the Board. So that leaves a vacancy for one Director-at-Large which will be dealt with later. **MOTION:** Miriam Kerndt made a motion to accept the slate of Officers and Directors. Maurice Better seconded it and the motion passed unanimously.

Recognitions – Distinguished Service Awards: Tim Otis introduced the honorees, Marv Beatty and Fred Ross, and noted that PLATO runs on the energy, commitment and expertise of its volunteers. Successful leaders are characterized by their vision, openness to change and willingness to take risks. They also must be willing to get things done. Marv Beatty and Fred Ross have been in the forefront during the last decade of PLATO's change and growth.

Marv has been a member for 25 years, serving as Co-chair of the Curriculum Committee, as a member of several other Committees and President in 2009-10. He was instrumental in negotiations with OLLI, and a driving force behind the establishment of the PLATO Fund. His reasoned and thoughtful counsel has been much appreciated by those who have the pleasure of working with him on PLATO projects.

Fred has been a PLATO member for 18 years, serving as President 2008-09 and as a Coordinator of several PLATO courses. Fred also helped negotiate the agreement with

OLLI, steered the development of the Strategic Plan, and helped make PLATO a “real” nonprofit organization as he was instrumental in applying for our 501(c)(3) status. Like Marv, Fred provides much appreciated wise counsel to PLATO members who rely on his input.

Marv and Fred are the first recipients of the new award called *The PLATO*. It rivals the Oscar but they have been chosen not because they are great actors but because they’re great people. Fred thanked everyone and said it was an honor to be recognized with Marv. He said PLATO was a great organization when he joined but it is even greater now and he noted the profound difference represented in courses, field trips and the website. He said it was a pleasure to work with Wendy Kerr and Barry Orton at DCS. In closing he remarked that PLATO has evolved to meet the aspirations of its members and counseled PLATO to “keep the evolutionary flame going.” Marv said he didn’t know what he did to deserve this but he wouldn’t look a gift horse in the mouth. He said, in addition to Fred’s summary of changes, he would commend the dedication to lifelong learning and as a postscript note the importance of the PLATO Fund. “It’s not enough to get together and enrich our own lives” he said. We also should take some of our money and put it into the PLATO Fund which provides some financial assistance to returning adult students dedicated to finishing their education.

Patricia Becker recognized Wendy Kerr who has served PLATO as the DCS Administrative Assistant for more than 15 years. She has been the office contact and has supported PLATO activities to the extent that many members consider Wendy the “face” of the organization. Her role at DCS has changed and she is working full-time for Dean Russell now. Wendy was presented with an inscribed jewelry box and a check “in recognition of her many years of service.” Patricia introduced Louise Fowler who has assumed the position of Administrative Assistant to PLATO. Louise is particularly suited to the job as she has experience in web-based distance education and continuing studies.

Mary Boyd, President 2014-15, acknowledged the Course Coordinators and the Committee members who she referred to as the “heart and soul” of the organization.

Tim Otis introduced the two PLATO Fund scholarship winners at the Luncheon, Erin Bailey and Sean Kean. Rory Erler and Patricia Moran were not able to be here. He commended all of them for their commitment to their education. Of the 26 total DCS scholarships 4 were funded by PLATO.

Keynote Speaker: Susan Riesling, Chief, UW-Madison Police Force gave us a birds-eye view of the challenges she faced trying to manage the February, 2011 protests at the Capitol. She gave examples of the humorous and serious problems she encountered including taking charge of a force made up of policemen from 200+ state agencies. A measure of her success was peaceful containment of tens of thousands of people gathering for more than a month.

Closing Remarks: Mary Boyd thanked Patricia Becker for her inspiring leadership over the past year.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough