

PLATO PERSIMMON

Volume XXVII, Number 3

August/September 2014

President's Corner: Looking Forward



By Incoming PLATO
President Mary Boyd

As PLATO's incoming president, I welcome you to a new year. I continue to find my years of involvement with PLATO very enriching. The courses, special events, and opportunities to help with committee work and on the board have added new insights. But more important than these experiences is the opportunity to meet new people from varied backgrounds. I am learning from them and with them, and am grateful for their friendship. My hope is that each of you is equally enriched by your participation in PLATO.

Thanks to our volunteer course coordinators and committees, PLATO will offer a record number of courses and activities. We will kick off the year with our Fall Preview on Sept 17 at the Madison Senior Center. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet and talk with coordinators and committee chairpersons and learn more about PLATO. For new members, this a great time to discover the breadth of what PLATO has to offer—courses, lectures, day trips, and opportunities to express one's self through writing and the arts.

However, remember, nothing happens in PLATO without the enthusiastic participation of members who step forward every year to do the work required to make PLATO opportunities possible. What do our volunteer members do?

They participate as course coordinators. They teach, lead discussions, prepare materials, obtain speakers, and organize the syllabi for our courses. In doing so, they share their passion for learning.

They serve on our five standing committees, which are always looking for additional help and welcome people with new ideas.

- Curriculum Committee members organize and provide support for all of our classes throughout the year. They are constantly recruiting course coordinators, assisting with finding course venues, and gathering information from the coordinators to share with the membership.
- Membership Committee volunteers do outreach into the community to share information about PLATO and to recruit new members. They also organize membership information for the board and assist with the previews and Annual Luncheon Meeting.
- Communication Committee members publish the Persimmon and maintain the PLATO website. They also conduct periodic surveys for the board's long-term planning efforts. They have taken the lead in the planning effort to update our electronic operations.
- The Special Events Committee organizes day trips and special lectures and assists at our preview events. They are a busy group that welcomes people with new ideas.
- Fund Development coordinates charitable giving activities. Volunteers this past year participated in fundraising for the PLATO Fund at the UW Foundation. This resulted in PLATO's sponsorship of four scholarships for needy, returning students at the university.

They also serve on our ad hoc committees in support of the arts

- *The Agora* is a juried literary journal. Through the efforts of its volunteer editorial board and the many members who have submitted entries, PLATO has published three editions of this remarkable, professional-quality journal. But before a fourth edition can be published, we need additional members to volunteer to be on the editorial board.

- *The Arts Café* was new in the spring of 2014. It was conceived as a venue showcasing the artistic talents of PLATO members. The idea was to hold exhibitions and performances in a relaxed, social environment. We would like to see the Arts Cafe continue in the coming year and need a few people to come forward to help with the organizational responsibilities.

They serve as office and website support. We occasionally need help with data entry during peak event times. We also occasionally need help with mailings or with website data entry. We also anticipate future needs to provide office support once new office space at DCS becomes available.

Again, my message is: *Nothing happens in PLATO without someone volunteering to make it happen. Consider volunteering in whatever way you can.* Note your interest to help on your membership form or by calling the PLATO office at 608-262-5823 or emailing lfowler@dcs.wisc.edu.

With the help of our members and the support provided by the university, we look forward to a stimulating new year. I hope to meet as many of you as possible during my time as PLATO's president. Have a great year!

PLATO Fall Preview

Wednesday, Sept 17

1:30 to 3pm

Madison Senior Center

PLATO

With support from Continuing Studies at UW-Madison

21 N Park St, 7th Floor, Madison, WI 53715-1218 • 608-262-5823 • plato-slp@dcs.wisc.edu • www.PLATOm Madison.org

PLATO Annual All Member Luncheon

By PLATO Secretary Lauren Blough

The PLATO Annual Luncheon was held on May 21, 2014 at the Nakoma Golf Club in Madison.

After welcoming everyone to the luncheon, PLATO President 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.

President—Mary Boyd

President—Elect Frank Power

Secretary—Sybil Better

Treasurer—Tim Otis

Director-at-Large—Gail Gordon

Director-at-Large—Mike DiOrio

Gail Gordon had just taken over as chair of the Communication Committee and thus became an ex-officio member of the board; that left a vacancy for one director-at-large, which will be dealt with later. The slate of nominees was elected to the board by unanimous vote.



New Board Members 2014

Newly elected board members: Mary Boyd (president), Mike DiOrio (at-large), Gail Gordon (Communications Committee chair), Sybil Better (board secretary)

Martin Jenich Photography

Recognitions—Distinguished Service Awards: Tim Otis introduced the honorees: Marv Beatty and Fred Ross. Marv and Fred are the first recipients of the new award called *The PLATO*.



Distinguished Service Award Recipients:

Fred Ross and Marv Beatty

Martin Jenich Photography

Marv has been a member for 25 years, serving as co-chair of the Curriculum Committee, as a member of several other committees, and as president in 2009-10. He was instrumental in negotiations with OLLI, and a driving force behind the establishment of the PLATO Fund.

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.

Patricia Becker recognized Wendy Kerr, who has served PLATO as the Continuing Studies 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 Continuing Studies has changed and she is working full-time for Dean Russell now.



Wendy Kerr

Martin Jenich Photography

Tim Otis introduced the two PLATO Fund scholarship winners: 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 Continuing Studies scholarships, four were funded by PLATO.

Keynote speaker Susan Riesling, chief of the 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.



Chief Riesling, keynote speaker

Martin Jenich Photography

The meeting ended with Mary Boyd thanking Patricia Becker for her inspiring leadership over the past year.

Enjoying PLATO

This column features articles/blurbs by members, highlighting their enjoyment of PLATO! We want current and prospective members to see what PLATO has to offer.

"Tried my first PLATO course this spring—Novels Old and New—and was not disappointed! Not since the 1970's when I was an English major at UW-Madison have I so thoroughly enjoyed reading and discussing novels." —*Kathryn Dike*

"I had, and still am, enjoying my drawing class with Mary Morgan. Mary makes learning fun and she is soooo patient with this 'newbie.' All the others in my class are so friendly ... and there's lots of laughing too! I will be signing up for more classes in the fall. It's so much fun meeting people in 'my' age group." —*Linda Blessman*

"Richard Steeves' series on nuclear energy and all kinds of energy issues has been a very full presentation of critical information, well-designed in his 'free time' for us to digest. His audience has been a mix of professional people giving steady attendance. What a goldmine!" —*Peg (Margaret) Vaughan*

"My favorites have been the Wednesday and Thursday movie showings. Trips have been exhilarating too—Goodman Theater in Chicago, Milwaukee Art Center, Great Lakes Training Center, which I'd heard so much about in WWII, local museums for guided tours. Just enough activities to stir and shake me." —*B. J. Ihlenfeldt*

"In the fall of 2012, I was perusing the PLATO class list. One class especially caught my eye—The Science of Happiness taught by Jan Fulwiler. I took that class and have since taken two more classes with the same title but a variation in content from Jan. These classes have literally changed my life. I learned that each of us has a happiness set point, similar to a weight set point. Just as overeating can change one's set point, engaging in activities that make one happy can increase the happiness quotient. Honestly when I went into the class I thought of myself as moderately depressed. I finished the class (after practicing some of the techniques for gaining happiness) feeling like I was in the 70-80th percentile of happiness. That first class

focused primarily on information, but in Jan's class this fall we read a chapter a week from *LOVE 2.0* by Barbara Fredrickson. The information was once again mind-changing, but we took a slower pace. We digested the material better, and even more importantly, took the class time to talk together about the book. Jan has become a star at creating a safe environment and a feeling of cohesiveness in the group. We related the book to our lives and shared many important and personal things with each other. We came to the class strangers and ended as friends. We all vowed to sign up for Jan's next class. My classmates asked me not to write this essay about Jan Fulwiler and her extraordinary abilities to teach content and create bonding because they didn't want too many people to sign up for Jan's next class. But I decided to write this because the classes that I have taken from Jan Fulwiler have changed my life, and she deserves to be honored." —*Bill Rettig*

Spotlight on PLATO JAZZ

By Course Coordinator Gary Poulson

Jazz is the great American art form. Its origins come from a stewpot of influences including: African, Creole, slave call and response, southern blues, and syncopation. It has evolved with many styles and variations galore. As trombonist, J.J. Johnson once said "Jazz is restless. It won't stay put." Originally coordinated by Bill Mossman, PLATO Jazz has existed since 1991. The class has benefited from great leadership, starting with Bill and followed by notables like Buzz Ostrum, Frank Loeb, Dick Glasrud, and Tom Penn, to name a few coordinators. The class has also thrived with varied presentations by local jazz musicians and media personalities, as well as class members. We have explored the many styles and nuances of jazz. Presentations of the giants of jazz as well as the relatively unknown performers have informed and entertained class members for many years.

My goal as the current coordinator is to continue this rich tradition of a variety of presentations that reflect jazz and its varied forms. Join us for the best jazz gig you will find on a Tuesday afternoon in Madison. We are located at the Wisconsin Bank and Trust. Learning and enjoying from 1 to 3pm.

Serving PLATO!

By Communications Committee Chair T. Greg Bell

- Patricia Becker is now past-president of PLATO, having spent the past year as president. Pat will remain on the board.
- Mary Boyd stepped down as Special Events chair on July 1, 2013 to assume the role of president-elect. She served as chairperson for four years. The Special Events program owes a great deal to Mary for organizing bus trips and lectures, as well as hospitality support for the previews and the Annual Meeting and luncheons.
- Long-time Curriculum Committee volunteers Frank Power and Sydell Power have ended their tenure on that committee. Frank led the preview events for two years and guided the 35 course coordinators through magical one-minute presentations that drew hundreds to these semi-annual events.



PLATO presidents: Patricia Becker (past president), Frank Power (president-elect) Mary Boyd (president)
Martin Jenich Photography

Continued on next page...

Fall 2014 Courses:

Begin the week of Sept 22 unless otherwise noted on the course description.

- Communications Committee Chair Greg Bell handed over the chair to Gail Gordon on July 1, 2014. Greg served as chair for four years. His major goal was seeing a new website developed, and he credits Scott Kolar with directing and guiding the team of PLATO volunteers (with a major contribution from Gail Gordon in 2014) who brought it to fruition. Greg is proud to say, "I helped create platomadison.org."



Stepping down from positions: Greg Bell (Communications Committee chair), Lauren Blough (board secretary), Tim Otis (past president)
Martin Jenich Photography

- Tim Otis ended his term as past-president and remains on the board as treasurer.
- Lauren Blough ended her tenure as PLATO secretary. Lauren remains co-chair of our Curriculum Committee.
- Stephanie Sorenson ended her tenure on the Curriculum Committee. Stephanie also served on the Communications and Membership committees in 2012-13.
- Course coordinators who have ended their tenure: George Rueckert, Global Affairs and the Media; Nancy Schultz, Biographies Eastside; Dick Schultz, Current Events East with Kaffee Klatsch.

PLATO Membership

By Membership Committee Chairman Mary De Wolf

Lots of exciting things have been happening behind the scenes at PLATO this year. One item of news we are proud to share with you, is that PLATO broke the 1,000- member number this March, and we are growing every day. Still another is that PLATO is taking control of its membership roster this year. That is why you were asked to fill out a new membership profile when you renewed your membership; I hope you did. For the first time the PLATO committees will be able to see what the interests of our members are; if you are interested in joining a committee; would like to coordinate a class; what classes you would like to see in the future, and how you found out about PLATO.

The information you share with PLATO, as always, will stay only with PLATO. You may, as before, restrict how much information is available for viewing by other PLATO members.

The Membership Committee reaches out to area businesses and senior homes to tell them about PLATO. We also go to conferences and fairs where seniors gather. If you know of such a venue that would welcome a visit from us, please let us know. And if you are a people person who would like to share your experiences in PLATO, contact anyone on the Membership Committee, or through our website at platomadison.org/membership. We will be more than happy to welcome you to our group. Together, let's make PLATO bigger and better for all of us.

Fall 2014 Preview

By Lewis Bosworth, Curriculum Committee

Mark your calendars to save the date for the Fall Preview on **Wednesday, Sept 17, 2014 at the Madison Senior Center, 330 W Mifflin St, from 1:30 to 3pm.**

Co-chairs Mary Boyd and Lewis Bosworth are gearing up for the event and planning an informative session for those who want to get more details about the courses scheduled for the fall semester. Course coordinators will make brief presentations, which can be helpful for the many attendees who have only been PLATO members for one or two years or who have yet to join the organization. It is also a great way for long-time members to hear about the new courses. There will be an opportunity to meet the coordinators and ask them questions following the presentations. They will move upstairs to designated tables where they can be easily identified and approached. If the enclosed schedule indicates that pre-registration is required, contact the coordinator directly via phone or email. Don't wait for the preview if there is a class size limit. The review will end with a get-together where you can reconnect with or meet for the first time your fellow PLATO learners and adventurers. Nonmembers are welcome to attend. PLATO volunteers will be on hand with membership forms.

Course Proposals

for both the Winter (Interim) and Spring Semesters are due by Oct 1.

Fall 2014 Schedule of Courses

By Curriculum Committee Co-Chair Lauren Blough

In addition to the recurring topics that engage PLATO members each semester, there are several new choices for enrichment. One of the new courses, called Getting to 100: Achieving a Decade Longer Life Span, will be offered by Frank Power this fall at Turner Hall on the east side.

In conjunction with the preparation for increased longevity, it might be wise to register for Don Reeder's discussion of Physics and Society: TIME, to get a deeper understanding of the concept.

While you consider your choices in the arts, note that Helen Aarli and Trent Miller have co-developed Seeing and Creating Art at the New Library, an interactive four-session experience at the Madison Public Library.

Les Beecher will lead an investigation into the timeless classic *Moby Dick*, and George Johnson has designed a course using literature produced by immigrants to relate personal stories to Our Immigrant Roots Past and Present.

Pay attention when you're sitting in the audience at American Players Theatre this summer so you'll be prepared for Don Snyder's exploration entitled *Shakespeare as a Scholar of History*?

As the weather turns chilly and you're donning sweaters to do the reading for your fall courses, Bill Eisinger will be coordinating Biofuels: Sustainable Energy for the Future?—a discussion of the promise of safe, clean, renewable energy.

The indefatigable Helen Aarli has organized another short series called Planning Ahead for the Future to explore caregiving and end-of-life topics, with presentations from Agrace Hospice and the Alzheimer's Association representatives. Go to platomadison.org/calendar/category/courses to obtain the details regarding class schedules and registration requirements.

Course Proposals for Winter Interim and Spring 2015

By Curriculum Committee Co-Chair Lauren Blough

The Curriculum Committee invites proposals for new courses for the Winter Interim period and the Spring 2015 semester. In addition to the regular weekday 10-week semester schedule, PLATO has offered and is open to a variety of other options, such as evening, weekend, and the shorter sessions. As long as the proposal suits the coordinator, participants, and the host site, it will be considered. Although the completed forms are due Oct 1, 2014 for both the Winter Interim and Spring offerings, we will accept proposals at any time. The committee will work with the coordinator to select a location and to schedule the course for the next semester. Contact the Curriculum Committee Co-Chair Lauren Blough at laurenblough@att.net or 608-249-0258 to request more information or to get the proposal form.

Financial Services Report

By PLATO Treasurer Tim Otis

During this past year PLATO has experienced a number of changes in our financial management and in the scope of our fiscal responsibilities.

- Last fall, Tim Otis took over the responsibilities of Treasurer after Mike Lovejoy decided to "retire" after two years of excellent stewardship of PLATO'S finances.
- By January of 2014, The PLATO board began entertaining serious discussions about assuming more direct control for receiving membership and special event revenues, as well as managing our own member database.
- A Finance Committee was established to advise the treasurer about these new initiatives, as well as budget and financial planning issues.

- In January, Gail Gordon, a retired CPA and PLATO member, volunteered to assist the treasurer with reconciling our accounts with Continuing Studies and planning for our expanded financial management initiatives. She continues to provide valuable expertise in this area.
- In April an email was sent to all PLATO members giving a summary report on "How PLATO Spends Your Dollars." An open forum, attended by more than 60 members, was held prior to the annual luncheon, and offered members an opportunity to ask questions about financial matters as well as other issues.
- At the April Board of Directors' Meeting the plan to manage our own member database and expanded financial management of revenues was approved unanimously. A PLATO Workgroup put together the system for implementing the plan and had the new systems fully operational by the middle of June. These new systems will allow us to receive our revenues directly and in a timely manner with a much better ability to accurately reconcile our revenues and expenditures.
- At the May meeting, the PLATO Board of Directors unanimously approved the operating budget for 2014-15. This budget maintains the same membership dues (\$60), continues funding our operational needs at sufficient levels, and has a small projected surplus. Also, PLATO expects to end the fiscal year 2013-14 with a small surplus.
- Beginning late this summer, the PLATO website will begin displaying pertinent financial information, including current budget, revenue and expense reports, and tax-reporting documents. This will allow members to have ongoing access to PLATO financial information.

2014-2015 Special Events Program Report

By Special Events Committee Chair Bob Blitzke

Just a quick update ...

Your Special Events Committee has been busy for the first months of this year developing the 2014-2015 bus trips schedule. There are now 15 trips planned.

2014 -2015 Bus Trips Schedule

Jul 24—Chicago Art and Goodman Theatre (Brigadoon)

Aug 6—Harley-Davidson Museum and Lakefront Brewery Tours, Milwaukee

Aug 20—Magritte Exhibition: The Mystery of the Ordinary, 1926-1938, Art Institute of Chicago

Sep 10—Lynden Sculptural Garden, Milwaukee and Cedar Creek Settlement Shops, Cedarburg

Oct 4—Epic Systems Campus 2: Farm and Training Center Tour, Verona

Oct 9—Chicago Art and Goodman Theatre (Smokefall)

Oct 22—*The Color Purple* (The Musical about Love), Milwaukee Rep

Nov TBA—SC Johnson Company Tour including the recently-opened Tower Research Facility, Racine

Dec 10—*Harvey*, Milwaukee Rep

Feb 11—*Good People*, Milwaukee Rep

Apr 1—*Five Presidents*, Milwaukee Rep

Apr 9—Chicago Art and Goodman Theatre (Two Trains Running)

Apr 22—*Jeeves Takes a Bow*, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre

May 13—*Peter and the Starcatcher*, Milwaukee Rep

Jun 4—Chicago Art and Goodman Theatre (The Little Foxes)

Our next task is developing the Lectures schedule for the same period. We are planning to offer a comparable number of lectures over a wide variety of topics. If you would like to join in the fun, we'd like to have you on the Special Events team. Bring your energy, experience, and ideas to help create the 2014-2015 Special Events program.

Follow our work in progress on the PLATO website. It's as simple as 1, 2, 3.

- 1) Go to: platomadison.org
- 2) Click the "Events" button at the top of the homepage.
- 3) Click on the "List" button at the top right of the Events page.

Scroll through the list and find the bus trips and lectures of interest and mark your calendar. For more information, contact Chairperson Bob Blitzke at bblitzke@gmail.com or 608-271-7741.

Tribute Donations

By PLATO Treasurer Tim Otis

The PLATO board recently decided we should have a section in each *Persimmon* that would acknowledge tribute donations and those being honored. Donations will be to recognize an accomplishment or to honor the memory of a member. Since PLATO received 501(c)(3) status earlier this year, these donations are tax deductible. Going forward, each *Persimmon* will include a list of donors, along with the name of the person being honored or recognized.

The following people gave donations in memory of Eloise Beatty:

Barry Orton
Fred Ross
Mary Boyd
Bruce Dewey
Tim Otis

PLATO Board Approves Website Expansion!

By Communications Committee Chair T. Greg Bell

The PLATO Board of Directors approved the expansion of the PLATO website (platomadison.org) at the April 2014 board meeting. The expansion replaces the membership database and registration processing software that Continuing Studies provided PLATO for the past several years. The new software has the capabilities PLATO needs to provide a fully functioning website for its entire membership which passed the 1,000 member mark in 2014.

The PLATO Website Committee, led by Greg Bell, Communications Chair; Scott Kolar, Website Coordinator; and Gail Gordon, presented their proposal to the entire board, where it was approved enthusiastically. Current treasurer and past president Tim Otis supported the website expansion and helped the committee prepare its proposal. Scott Kolar led the research and development on all aspects of the new software from the initial search over a year and half ago. Scott's dedication to the website-building process has been full-time since we started. He has directed the building and editing of the WordPress software and integrated the newly acquired Wild Apricot software into our new website. Gail Gordon was recruited at last fall's preview to assist in the website's development. Gail quickly proved a very able investigator/researcher and took the lead in finding the Wild Apricot package as the most suitable for PLATO'S needs. The new website will house all functions of the Communications Committee responsibilities.

As of June 1, 2014, Scott and Gail, along with Catherine Masi, have integrated the new software into our PLATO website and membership registration system. In addition, Mike DiOrio, Patricia Herrling (*Persimmon* editor), and John Koch remain on the website team as editors and have maintained, edited, and advised us on the software that carries the website pages you see when you arrive at platomadison.org. PLATO is very fortunate to have these six members volunteering their time serving the membership. Please acknowledge their work the next time you see them.

Gail's work with the website expansion team and her knowledge and grasp of the software's potential for PLATO'S future gave us the opportunity to ask Gail if she would continue to help direct the website expansion as the chair. Gail has agreed and took over as Communications Committee chair on July 1.

President's Look Back

By Past President Patricia Becker



We have much to celebrate as the 2013-14 PLATO year ends. First off, we have grown. Our membership is now at 1,047 and counting! Obviously, you are sharing your

PLATO experience with friends, and they know a good thing when they hear about it.

We end this year celebrating Wendy Kerr's 15-plus years of service to PLATO as our Continuing Studies administrative assistant, and welcome our new office coordinator, Louise Fowler. The familiar phrase, "Ask Wendy" is already becoming "Ask Louise." Louise has extensive experience directing distance education programs, both here at Continuing Studies and at the University of Alaska-Anchorage. Her position is 50 percent; she works Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays, 8:30am to 3pm. She can be reached at the PLATO-DCS number, 608-262-5823, and by email at lfowler@dcs.wisc.edu. We thank Continuing Studies Dean Jeffrey Russell and Associate Dean Laura Ingram for their active support of this position as a vital part of the Continuing Studies-PLATO collaboration, and to our Continuing Studies liaison, Professor Barry Orton, for his role in the Wendy-Louise transition.

Einstein is quoted as saying success should be measured in terms of value. PLATO can celebrate value accrued this year on many counts: a robust menu of course offerings (87 in all), thanks to the Curriculum Committee and the intrepid course coordinators; the successful launch of the new website, thanks to the Web Site Task Force of the Communications Committee; an expanded program of special events, thanks to the Special Events Committee; a new social opportunities initiative that started with three lively Arts Cafes; presentation of PLATO to the Dane County retirement community by the Membership Committee; and

plans under way for the next issue of the *Agora* journal. Through generous member donations, the PLATO Fund Committee increased scholarship support for returning adult students. And finally, donations to PLATO now are tax deductible because, after battling much red tape, the Finance Committee obtained IRS 501(c)(3) tax exempt status.

There also are challenges for the coming year, a major one being managing growth. To this end, the Web Software Task Force is launching a new membership-and-financial-management system. Growth also requires recruiting folks to serve on the committees that keep things running, finding more course venues, maintaining open channels of communication between a large membership and the board, and as we transfer more operations to the Web, assisting members in using platomadison.org while protecting member privacy.

In sum, we can indeed celebrate the 2013-2014 PLATO year, with well-justified anticipation of continuing success under the leadership of incoming President, Mary Boyd. Mary is well grounded in PLATO, having served on the board for six years as Special Events Committee chair and this last year as president-elect. Many of you know Mary as a host for the special event lectures. I suspect that she, as have I, will find the challenge of the presidency is more to keep up with than to lead this creative group of retirees, and that in the process, it is immensely rewarding.



Passing the gavel (handshake) to new president: Patricia Becker (past president), Mary Boyd (president)

Martin Jenich Photography

Fund Development Committee Mid-Year Update

By Fund Development Committee Chair Tim Otis

In February of this year the Fund Development Committee approved awarding \$10,000 in scholarship support to returning adult students at UW-Madison who have significant financial needs. This support was made possible by the generous donations made by many PLATO members during the past year to the PLATO Fund.

This contribution by PLATO members resulted in four scholarships being awarded to students for 2014-15. The four awardees have very compelling backgrounds and PLATO is proud to be able to assist with making their educations a reality. (See information on this page for profiles of each of these students.)

This summer and fall the Fund Development Committee is conducting a fundraising campaign in the hope that, with the support of our members, we can significantly increase our contributions in the coming year for this important cause.

If you have not already done so, we urge you to support this important effort. Your contributions will help further PLATO'S mission and provide meaningful assistance for returning students who benefit greatly from the PLATO Fund.

For information about how to make a donation, visit the PLATO website at platomadison.org/donations.

PLATO Scholarships for 2014 Returning Adult Students



Erin Bailey directs cancer outreach and education initiatives for underserved communities in Dane County areas. She is ecstatic about continuing her education

and gaining more knowledge to help the communities she serves. With aspiration born from personal family tragedy (she lost her mother to breast cancer), she dedicates her life to individual and community change, pursuing an MS in civil society and community research. Erin's greatest challenge, inspiration, and joy is her youngest sister, whom she has cared for since the loss of their mother. Readiness, perseverance, and purpose define Erin's new path.



A single father, **Rory Erler** has faced many challenges in returning to school, not the least of which is the crucial balance between parenting and

academics. As an MFA candidate he works in glass, informing his art with the voices and tradition of the Native American community. As a parent, he strives to be an example to his daughter of what it means to be completely alive—how to value and how to integrate the parts of a life. Nothing about his art or his parenting is small. For Rory, one of the most important parts of being a good father is to be a good artist.



A desire to contribute more to the world was a big part of **Sean Kean's** motivation in returning to school to finish his undergraduate degree. Knowing that

academic success would require more than good intentions, he searched for inspiration in a major and found it in the field of anthropology. This semester Sean is a full-time transfer student and trying to adjust his work schedule to the demands of his classes and studies. Despite the challenge that brings, he is determined to succeed. His intellectual curiosity now has new ground to explore, and his new-found interest is providing the inspiration.



Mwapoleni Makwai (Greetings!) is a perfect introduction for **Patricia Moran** who has just returned from two years in Zambia with the Peace Corps.

There she became a part of villagers' lives and homes, giving her the opportunity to become immersed in diverse and fulfilling work. She focused on guiding farmers to transition to organic vegetable production, a role that inspired her next steps and integrated her passion for the environment with the need for sustainable food security. Returning to school is yet another challenge but one that Patricia is eager to meet as she prepares to begin the MS program in conservation biology and sustainable development this summer.