

PLATO PERSIMMON

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PLATO Fall Courses

Highlighted at the

Preview! By Nancy Schultz



Come and join other PLATO members as we learn of course offerings at the **PLATO preview, Wednesday, September 21st at the Senior Center, 330 West Mifflin Street from 1:30 – 3:00pm.** The format is like a fair with tables set up in rows. You will have an opportunity to meet the coordinators of the various courses, ask questions and get more information regarding those courses. There will also be lots of goodies and a party like atmosphere. Be sure to bring a friend who may be interested in joining PLATO.

Committee chairs will also be available to answer questions about upcoming events and opportunities to volunteer or become a course coordinator.

Look for them at a table near the welcome table.



Come and go anytime between 1:30 and 3:00. Meet old friends and introduce yourself to new ones. After you have learned everything you want to know about the courses, there will be a brief session upstairs where questions about the structure, the committees and the charitable arm of the organization will be answered. Learn about the PLATO Fund, the Agora, PLATO's literary journal and the Art's Café which showcases members' artistic endeavors.

Please join us and especially if you are a new member. Come, make a name tag and obtain information about the courses at the welcoming table, learn about the many courses PLATO has to offer and enjoy a bite to eat with other PLATO friends.

Special Events Update by

Carla DiIlorio, Chair



Kaffeeklatche at Memorial Terrace

The Special Events Committee kicked off summer in Madison by bringing back last year's popular Kaffeeklatches at Memorial Terrace and adding two new event concepts: trolley tours exploring the length and breadth of campus with university guides, including an ice cream stop at Babcock Hall, and walking tours exploring the trails and parks of Dane County. **There is still time to join fellow members this month at a Kaffeeklatche (August 12), Trolley Tour (August 26) or walk at Indian Lake County Park (August 16.)**

At the July mid point of summer, 214 PLATO members and guests participated in nine events. When summer comes to a close, Special Events will have planned and held 16 events — eight field trips, three walking tours, three

Kaffeeklatches and two local events.

The Committee's goal is to offer events that appeal to members' varied interests. With that in mind, fall activities will feature three gardens, an organic dairy and an aviation museum with trips to Janesville's Rotary Gardens and Rockford's Japanese Gardens, Olbrich Gardens' GLEAM: ART IN A NEW LIGHT, Organic Valley and Kickapoo Reserve and the EAA Museum in Oshkosh.

Theatre lovers will be treated to another excellent season at the Milwaukee Repertory. Get ready for bus trips to these 2016 shows:

- Oct 12 Man of La Mancha
- Oct 30 Lady Day at the Emerson Bar and Grill
- Nov 2 The Royale
- Dec 11 I Love A Piano: A Celebration of Irving Berlin,

Since the beginning of the year the Special Events Committee has welcomed six new members: Carole Blemke; Mike Roy; Barb Rust; Sharon Scrattish; Bob Shaw and Irene Zimmerman. We'd be happy to welcome even more volunteers to help research and plan events. Meetings are held monthly (except July and December) at different locations throughout Madison. Every meeting includes an optional lunch beforehand at a nearby restaurant so members can socialize and get to know

each other better. For more information about Special Events, email Committee Chair Carla DiIlorio at carlad@tds.net.

President's Corner: Looking Forward



By PLATO President Scott Kolar

PLATO provided many great offerings along with challenges last year. This coming year is shaping up to be just as exciting. The big event of this year is PLATO's 30th anniversary. The small group of less than 30 that got together in 1997 has grown to a vibrant organization of over 1100 members providing a variety of enriching activities. Planning has begun on a 30th anniversary celebration, so be looking for more information on that in the coming months.

Of course PLATO is all about the courses. Long-time Curriculum Committee Chair Lauren Blough stepped down this year. We want to express our appreciation for all her hard work. The new co-chairs Kathy Brown and Barb Friberg have taken up the reigns and are providing

47 courses for the Fall Semester.

The Special Events Committee continues going gang busters providing more and varied events for your enjoyment. Last year they brought you over 60 lectures, tours, field trips, and socials. New this spring Mike and Carla DiIlorio have started a set of walking tours and hikes around Dane County. The tours are accompanied by an expert on the area, so PLATO members now have the opportunity to exercise both minds and bodies at the same time.

The next volume of PLATO's arts journal, *The Agora*, will be published in 2017. Look for a call for submissions in the fall. Congratulations to *Agora* managing editor Patricia Becker who received a \$2000 grant from the Madison Community Foundation. The grant won't cover all costs so the *Agora* Board will be soliciting contributions from the membership. If you value this outstanding journal, please give generously. With the *Agora* also comes the Arts Café, a showcase of past contributors to the *Agora* coming in October.

For several years now we have been concerned about the lack of diversity in

PLATO's membership. We have been searching for how to increase minority involvement in PLATO. These efforts received a boost last year with Rick Orton's "Racial Injustice and Inequality in Madison" course. He arranged for six leaders of minority communities to speak at his classes and recorded their presentations. [The videos are available on our website.](#) The PLATO Board of Directors established a Diversity Committee which will work to make PLATO more welcoming and our offerings more appealing to minority communities. Its first initiative will be PLATO's participation in UW's Big Read this fall.

One of PLATO's missions is charitable activities. In the past we have been contributing to scholarships for returning adult students. We are now expanding our reach to include contributions to organizations supporting K-12 learners. When you receive a fund raising appeal, show your support for future lifelong learners by giving generously.

Our membership could reach 1200 this year. Our growth gives us the ability to provide members with more services. However, increased size does present its challenges. The

Board of Directors took steps last year to manage the stresses resulting from our growth and will continue to do so this year. The Communications Committee has been revitalized with the addition of Michael Stevens, Chair, and Hedy Lucas. They will help assure consistent communications with branding and messaging guidelines. Realizing the increased role of technology in achieving PLATO's goals, the Board has created a Technology Committee that will assist other committees in the adoption and use of new technologies. In the coming year we will be reconfirming our strong relationship with the UW in negotiating our Memorandum of Agreement with our UW sponsor, the Department of Continuing Studies. Having seen an enormous amount of change in the last few years, and expecting that trend to continue, the Board will develop a long range Strategic Action Plan. We want to ensure that all PLATO members have fair access to our offerings. After an issue with the distribution of "Hamilton" field trip tickets and recurring problems with courses that are full before the start of the semester, the Board will be working on a Fair Practice

and Access Policy in the coming year.

PLATO provides great value for its members with modest annual dues and no charge for courses. We are able to do that because we rely mostly on volunteers. Louise Fowler, our wonderful and capable office assistant is a UW employee who provides the foundation for our administrative support. But she is contracted for only 20 hours a week. Everything else - setting up courses, teaching the courses, organizing and running trips and events, and most of the administrative work - is done by volunteers. Without volunteers PLATO wouldn't happen. Please consider getting involved and help PLATO continue to be a great place to be.

PLATO Membership by Mary De Wolf, Chair



Members enjoying classes and fellowship

The annual PLATO membership survey is here again. I know how tired you are of surveys. Not a day goes by that you are not asked to stay on the line for a brief survey after your phone call, or have Amazon ask you to rate the product you just

received. It seems someone is always asking for your opinion of their service. If you wonder who follows up on all these answers, well in the case of PLATO, it is the Membership Committee. We look at each and every response. And then we report the findings to the PLATO Board.

The survey you fill out tells us two things. One, it is an indication of how things are at this time and two, it tells us how things have changed since last year. It tells us what you feel is important to you about PLATO, and what you value most about your membership. Your answers help guide the direction for future classes and special events. And your suggestions make the committee chairs job that much easier. So please take a few minutes and fill out this year's survey. I promise we will read each one and take your ideas to heart for a better PLATO in the coming years. You can find a link to the survey on the PLATO Website!

Fall 2016 Courses

We have a bumper crop of courses, continuing favorites and brand new ones, for you this fall. The term begins the week of September 26th but the schedules vary so be sure to check for complete details

posted on the [PLATO website](#) under the "Courses" tab. There are classes that will meet before the September 21st Preview and some don't start until October. Also note that Thanksgiving's interruption will extend a few of the sessions into the second week of December. NOTE: Please call or email the Course Coordinator to register for those classes that request pre-registration.

The Curriculum Committee approved proposals for eight new courses covering a wide range of themes from Bill Eisinger and Craig Davis' *Wisconsin Origins of Modern Conservation to Modernism at the Chazen Museum of Art* offered by Judith Mjaanes.



If you'd like to expand your knowledge of fiscal topics that dominate the news headlines, sign up for Chuck Karabin's *Contemporary Economic Issues* at Capitol Lakes. *Surveillance State: Big Data, Freedom and You* will be the focus of Jean Taffs' group that meets on the east side. Authors in PLATO take note: we've

added Judi K-Turkel's *Tricks for Writing ANY Nonfiction Like a Pro* and Andy Millman has broadened his topic to include more than fiction in his *Writing Workshop*. Do you have a favorite poem or song that you would like to share with an appreciative group? Check out Debbie Bissonnette's *Celebrating the Poetic Voice in Your Life* which will meet on the east side at a new PLATO location, the State Bar of Wisconsin. How about Tim Otis' *History of Rock & Roll* at Covenant Presbyterian Church to get those memories in tune? With all of the publicity surrounding new skeletal discoveries in South Africa, Stan Goldfarb's *Darwinian Evolution* remains a contemporary subject for discussion. Mona Wasow, a retired Clinical Professor in the School of Social Work at UW Madison, will present a course on *Serious Mental Illnesses* which will include descriptions of SMIs, historical background, treatment and the impact on families. Returning fall favorites include: Linn Roth who offers an updated *Sensing the World Around Us* and Annette Felice who takes over *Discovering Art at the Chazen* from Eleanor Albert. Dennis Dresang is back, this time with Terry Shelton, to

consider a timely review of *Whither the State: Campaigns & Media*. Rick Orton's *Racial Injustice and Inequality* will focus on the school to prison "pipeline" featuring talks from local experts Jennifer Cheatham and Karen Reece. Applying practical methods to daily life, Venerable Chodon will offer sage advice in *Transforming Anger*. Les Beecher's group will be reading Virginia Woolf in the fall so that should be a reminder to check the long-running but ever-transitioning courses on the website to learn what they will be reading, viewing and discussing during PLATO's Fall 2016 term.

New Course Proposals for Winter Interim and Spring 2017

It's your turn to share your interests with your fellow PLATO members. You don't have to lecture; the participants can share the joy of investigating an exciting topic or helping the class develop a skill. Just complete the [Course Proposal Form](#) and the Curriculum Committee will work with the Coordinator to select a location and to schedule the course for the next semester. In addition to the one weekday, 10-week semester schedule PLATO has offered

and is open to a variety of other options, such as evenings, weekends and 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 October 1st, we will accept proposals at any time. To request more information or to get paper copies of the Course Proposal Form contact: Curriculum Co-Coordinator Kathy Brown kathyft@charter.net or Barb Friberg barbfriberg@hotmail.com

**PLATO Fall Preview
Wednesday, September 21st
at the Senior Center, 330
West Mifflin Street from
1:30 – 3:00pm.**

The Agora by Patricia Becker



Do you write (poetry, fiction, non-fiction)? Paint? Draw? Take photographs? Now is the time to consider a next step – submitting your creative work to *The Agora*, PLATO's journal of the arts, literature, and ideas. Volume

5 will be published in the summer of 2017, and the Editorial Board is already at work. The Call for Submissions will be issued in September, 2016. In the meantime, we have been successful in obtaining funds towards the publishing costs for *Volume 5* from the Madison Arts Commission, in itself a recognition of the value of *The Agora*, not just for PLATO members but also for the broader Madison senior community. If you can't locate your past volumes of *The Agora* for reference, you can see all four volumes on the website, platomadison.org, under Publications.

So – as you pursue your creative activities, we invite you to think in terms of submitting your work(s) for juried review for *The Agora, Volume 5*.

Questions? Call Managing Editor Patricia Becker at (608)833-5799, or email ptbecker@wisc.edu.

Serving PLATO

This column recognizes and appreciates the members who are ending their terms or ending their service to PLATO. As these people step down we hope others will come forward and volunteer. Thank you for serving PLATO!

Curriculum Committee Member Recognition

Lewis Bosworth and Lauren Blough, two long-term members, have retired from the Curriculum Committee and we extend our appreciation for their valuable contributions.

Retiring Course

Coordinators With Paul Hartwig's retirement as Coordinator of *Managing Your Money* perhaps we should consider emeritus status in PLATO. Many thanks for his years of commitment to enhancing the PLATO curriculum. Recognition for their contributions to PLATO's music and art offerings go to: Gary Poulson, dedicated Coordinator of *Jazz*, and Eleanor Albert, a Chazen docent, who initiated *Discovering Art at the Chazen*. Eleanor moved from Madison.

PLATO Office Volunteers

Special thanks to these dedicated office volunteers:

Carla DiIorio
Aleta Murray

Communications Committee Revival

by Michael Stevens

Do you remember the old game of "telephone"? You whisper something to the person sitting next to you in a

circle and when the message gets back to you, you're amazed by how much the story has changed. The game is fun but also shows that good communication can be hard work. As PLATO grows in size (with now more than 1,000 members), delivering and receiving clear information can be a challenge. We're all busy and we now have so many different ways of communicating.

The communications committee is not a public relations office or an "approver" of communications, but rather a resource for PLATO. It will develop tools, templates, and guidelines that make communications easier and more effective. Because people like to get information in different ways, we'll try to set up ways to coordinate information, so members get the information they need, regardless of whether they prefer to read it on a computer screen, a hand-held device, or on paper. The committee plans to explore new ways to get the word out about PLATO using social media, will look for ways to brand PLATO videos, and serve as in-house consultants to PLATO committees.

We're looking for PLATO members to join us in making

communications concise, consistent, and memorable. If you have skills or a background in graphic arts, branding, or advertising, e-mail me at michaelstevens50@gmail.com and I can tell you more about how you can get involved with this project. We need your skills and talents.

Treasurer's Report— Finance Committee

by Tim Otis



Over the last three years PLATO has taken on overall responsibility for managing all of its financial activities. During this same period Special Events has significantly expanded its offerings, PLATO membership has seen significant growth, the number and variety of courses has continued to expand. Because of this the PLATO Board established a Finance Committee as a Standing Board Committee to provide advice and counsel to the Treasurer concerning the development and oversight of the PLATO budget and associated

expenditures, other financial activities, and PLATO business functions and initiatives. The current committee members are: Tim Otis – Treasurer, Scott Kolar – President, Gail Gordon, Kevin Gould, Rod McKenzie, and Jo Ann Meyer.

During this past year the Treasurer and the committee have taken a number of steps to better address PLATO'S financial and business needs. This has included contracting with numbers 4 nonprofits to manage our bookkeeping needs, establishing oversight procedures for trip revenues and expenses, implementing a cloud based Quick Books accounting system for recording revenues and expenses, and beginning discussions about PLATO'S longer range financial and infrastructure needs.

PLATO continues to have a healthy and stable financial situation. We have more than adequate unrestricted reserves. We finished this past year with a surplus of revenues over expenses. Much of this has to do with the careful attention to spending by our committees. In the current fiscal year there will be some increasing pressures on our budget, but we feel confident that our current resources are

sufficient to manage anticipated increases in expenditures.

If you would like more information about PLATO'S current budget, a summary of revenues and expenses for the past fiscal year, or a narrative description about the activities that are supported by member dues, please click on the following link which will take you to the appropriate page on the PLATO website.

<http://www.platomadison.org/Organizational-Documents>

If you have questions about PLATO'S finances please contact me:

Tim Otis, Treasurer:
tierneyotis@gmail.com

New Technology Committee by Scott Kolar, Chair



In the world today technology is all around us. And the pace of technological change is only increasing. To continue to be a strong organization and to best

serve our members, PLATO needs to adapt to and adopt new technologies. With that in mind the Board of Directors has established a Technology Committee. The Technology Committee will research, evaluate, and recommend new technologies for PLATO use and assist other committees in the adoption and use of technology. Adopting technology has greatly benefited PLATO. A case in point is our communications. Just a few years ago our printing, copying, and mailing costs consumed close to half our annual budget. The switch from paper to email and the website for our communications has saved us thousands of dollars per year. Plus information can be kept up to date and distributed more quickly. But the more important reason for PLATO to keep up with technology is that we are ready for the retirees of the future. They will not only want, but expect to access PLATO offerings the way they want. The Technology Committee needs

volunteers. If you have technological skills or a willingness to learn them, please contact me at technology@platomadison.org.

PLATO Fund

Development News

By Tim Otis

During this past year (July, 2015-June, 2016) The Fund Development Committee has been very active in pursuing PLATO'S charitable mission of supporting access to educational opportunities to low-income marginalized students.

The Committee oversaw two fundraising drives, worked on a legacy giving initiative, added an option for making donations during the annual member registration process, and expanded our financial support to include education programs at two youth serving community agencies.

During the year more than 110 members contributed to the PLATO Education Fund. \$14,728 was donated, and \$17,200 was distributed in scholarship awards and grants. The Fund is managed through the UW Foundation and continues to do very well.

Through the generosity of our member donations PLATO is able to provide scholarships and grants to the individuals

and organizations listed below.

• **Odyssey Project:** One scholarship of \$4,200. Assisting high school graduates become ready for college

• **Returning Adult Student Program at UW Madison:** Three scholarships were awarded, each one for \$3000.

Jennifer Bradley: Single mother pursuing a MSSW Degree at UW Madison

Elizabeth Gabrielse: Single mother pursuing a MSSW Degree at UW Madison

Linda Orie: Member of the Oneida Tribe, elementary teacher, returning to pursue an advanced degree in education

• **Community youth Education Programs:** Each of the following agencies have been awarded a \$2,000 grant to support one of their education programs.

Boys and Girls Club of

Dane County: Power Hour Program provides homework assistance and tutoring throughout the school year.

Lussier Community Education Center:

COMETS works with 5th graders to better understand science through hands on activities throughout the school year.

PLATO members who donate to the PLATO Education Fund truly make a difference in people's lives. With your help we can continue to do more. Your participation is much more important than the amount you give. We hope you will consider making a donation during this fall's fundraising campaign.

If you have questions or would like more information please contact Tim Otis. tierneyotis@gmail.com

From the Past President: January to June 2016 and Beyond By Frank Power



Wow, my year as PLATO President is past already. Thank you for the opportunity to help make PLATO thrive in its 29th year. I strove to own PLATO's Vision, Mission, and Core Value Statements that guide PLATO's yearly journey. I thank the board members for their wisdom and cooperation in making our board meetings meaningful and productive in leading PLATO to another successful year. I thank the

four other officers of PLATO that made our Executive Committee meetings effectively handle routine matters and prepare and set up the significant monthly issue for the Board to consider for an hour and make policy decisions, if necessary. Finally, I want to thank PLATO's Office Manager, DCS staffer, Louise Fowler, for keeping our organization humming and helping me juggle my responsibilities.

PLATO runs on its committees. Committee highlights are covered elsewhere in this issue. I will mention some things that mattered much during my term. First, Curriculum: after a long stretch as chair and co-chair, Lauren Blough, stepped down. She served PLATO exceptionally well. Lewis Bosworth, who served well as her co-chair, also left. Fortunately, two members of the committee, Kathy Brown and Barb Friberg, bravely agreed to serve as co-chairs. We are all grateful they rose to the significant challenge of leading this key committee. Special Events: this large dynamic and socializing committee happily keeps challenging the boundaries of PLATO. Janet Cabot, Bob Blitzke, and Carla DiIorio have exercised innovative

leadership this past year. The extensive work of its many members has benefitted PLATO greatly.

The 2016 May Annual Membership Meeting at the Nakoma Country Club featured Charles Franklin of Marquette who brought out a full house. They were not disappointed though even he could not fathom this year's election campaign. PLATO's annual elections for the first time were successfully held online and announced at the meeting. Scott Kolar was elected President, Janet Cabot, Vice-President, Tim Otis, Treasurer, and Sybil Better, Secretary. Two At-large Directors were elected: Kevin Gould and Ed Cothroll to replace Don Reeder and Aleta Murray whose terms ended. Congratulations and best wishes to all.

Next year will be PLATO's 30th anniversary. The Board established a 30th Anniversary and Annual Meeting Committee co-chaired by Aleta Murray and myself.

The Board also set up a Long Term Planning Committee composed of the current officers, past-president, Mary Boyd, and Plato Office Manager, Louise Fowler.

I want to thank Michael Stevens and Hedy Lukas for bringing the Communications Committee back to life. Its future looks promising.

Looking ahead, in addition to fielding the Immediate Past-President's specified duties, I am chairing PLATO's Diversity Committee. We have committed to the Diversity Committee's Big Read Project this year. The book is *EVICTED* by Matthew Desmond, a former UW Madison graduate student now at Harvard. We will be seeking 50 PLATO members to read the book and participate in some of their local library, Central Library or UW's Big Read events. Eviction is a major cause of homeless families throughout the nation including Milwaukee and Madison.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the outstanding commitment and service to PLATO by Past Presidents, Mary Boyd and Tim Otis, our current indefatigable Treasurer. They were my role models as PLATO President. I believe they are for President Scott Kolar as well.