



## **Annual President's Report, July 2023**

**By Rod McKenzie, President, PLATO Board of Directors, 2022 – 2023**

The last fiscal year has been filled with growth for PLATO. Membership continues to recover from the losses that we suffered in 2020-2021. For most of us, the scepter of Covid no longer hangs over us, but some still seek to really recover a greater sense of normalcy. PLATO members are again able to attend lectures, travel to plays and concerts facilitated by the Special Events Committee, and to participate in courses organized by the Curriculum Committee, which are available in a variety of formats such as in-person, virtual, or hybrid. We've learned the convenience, as well as the limitations of "virtual" events. In June we held an Annual Meeting for our membership, for the first time since 2019. About 100 attendees enjoyed fellowship, refreshments, and a presentation by Dr. Amy L. Rosebrough, Interim State Archeologist, on the "discovery, recovery, and preservation of the Lake Mendota canoes".

*The Agora*, Volume 8, will be published this fall with another fine assortment of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and visual arts from members of PLATO. Almost 80 submissions were received, and *The Agora* board juries honed them down into a wonderful volume to share creative literary and artistic talents for members to enjoy. The high-quality, glossy magazine will be mailed to members in the fall, offering the eighth installment of this well-loved biennial publication. *The Agora* board welcomed three new members to its fold this year, adding to a group already dedicated to maintaining the quality of this journal.

FY 2022/23 was extremely successful for the Fund Development Committee, through the very generous donations from our PLATO members. Eighty-seven members donated \$34,012, a record amount. This made it possible to disperse \$46,000 to UW and community agencies, also a record amount. All of our donations are used to support programs that provide educational opportunities for low-income/marginalized persons in our community. Hopefully, we will be able to do even better this next year.

We were deeply saddened by the death of Louise Fowler in early 2023. She was well known to many at PLATO as the voice on the phone at our desk in the UW-DCS offices. She had postponed full retirement in order to help us as the administrative support from UW-DCS diminished. We really came to appreciate her many talents, and the amount of detail needed to run the office, and help the committees carry out their functions. In the months after Covid hit us, she helped with the transition that brought Stephanie Steigerwaldt into the PLATO office. While she did transfer a lot of her institutional knowledge, sadly we can no longer drop her an email with our latest question.

## **PLATO Board of Directors**

Thank you to those who served on the PLATO Board 2022 – 2023:

### **Officers:**

Rod McKenzie, President  
Mike Kernats, Vice President  
Jatinder Cheema, Treasurer  
Patricia Herrling, Secretary  
Kathy Brown, Past President

### **Standing Committee Chairs**

Kathie Burman, Curriculum Committee Chair  
Carla and Mike Dilorio, Special Events Committee Co-Chairs  
Hedy Lukas, Membership & Communication Chair  
Scott Kolar, Technology Committee Chair  
Tim Otis, Fund Development Chair  
Kathy Michaelis & MaryJo MacSwain, Diversity Awareness Committee Co-Chairs

### **At-Large Directors**

Alan Capelle  
Dory Christensen  
Sue Ellingson  
MaryJo MacSwain  
Jack Mitchell

### **PLATO Board Members Completing Service this Year**

Patricia Herrling, Secretary  
Scott Kolar, Technology Committee  
Carla and Mike Dilorio, Special Events Committee Co-Chair  
Hedy Lukas, Membership & Communication Chair  
Kathy Michaelis, Diversity Awareness Committee Chair  
Alan Capelle, At-Large Director  
Sue Ellingson, At-Large Director

### **Election Results**

Congratulations to the following officers and board members who were recently elected and will take office on July 1 for the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year.

Rod McKenzie	President
Mike Kernats	Vice President
Jatinder Cheema	Treasurer
Edie Urness-Pontillo	Secretary
Marian Fisher	At-Large Director
Toby Marsceill	At-large Director

## **PLATO and the University of Wisconsin And now Oakwood West**

Following some reorganization at the Division of Continuing Studies, PLATO was asked to provide for its own administrative staff, and also to find office space as the operational base for that staff. We continue to have a connection with UW-DCS at several levels. A link to the PLATO website is available on their UW-Continuing Studies website, and we feature the UW-DCS website on ours. Maintaining the relationship has allowed us to continue to maintain the PLATO Education Fund account at the UW Foundation, who invests and disperses the funds as requested by motion of the PLATO Board. We made the move to Oakwood West over a year ago. This move has been very satisfactory, with rooms available for meetings, lectures, and other programming.

### **PLATO Staff Stephanie Steigerwaldt**

We are pleased to have Stephanie as our administrative services and office coordinator. She is a valued administrative professional who helps keep the PLATO operation on the rails. Besides updating much of the website content, and maintaining communications with the committee chairs, she is frequently the primary contact that members, and prospective members will have with PLATO.

### **PLATO Contact Information**

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***PLATO** IS A COMMUNITY OF INTELLECTUALLY CURIOUS ADULTS, TYPICALLY 50 & OVER, WHICH EXPLORES  
SUBJECTS OF INTEREST THROUGH MEMBER-LED DISCUSSION GROUPS, LECTURES, TRAVEL, & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES.*

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