

# The Debs Foundation Newsletter

P.O. BOX 843, TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47808-0843



FALL, 2005

## FRANK RECEIVES DEBS AWARD

Thomas Frank has done research and written on several facets of American society and is editor of *Baffler Magazine*. He is best known for writing *What's the Matter With Kansas?* (2004), a book which has placed Frank's work very much in the forefront of the American values, culture wars discussion. The subtitle of the book tells it best: "How Conservatives—read far right—Won the Heart of America." The riddle is how could conservatism, once a marker of class privilege, become the creed of millions of ordinary Americans. Why do so many Americans vote against their economic and social interests? Where's the outrage at corporate thievery? Why do illusory slights to the Ten Commandments trouble some people more than do the prospects of falling wages or monopoly power or the destruction of their very way of life? What we see today are unnatural alliances bringing together blue-collar Midwesterners and Wall Street business interests, workers and bosses, populists and right-wingers.



THOMAS FRANK

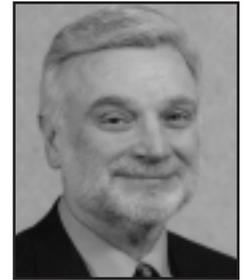
The culture wars didn't start with George Bush, but his ascendancy to the presidency can be explained in no other terms, and if liberals and progressives are to stand a chance of turning the tide in elections in 2006 and 2008, they must come to grips with the basic fact that values can trump economics. Many so-called blue-collar voters—workers in factories and on farms and owners of farms and small businesses—will vote against their economic interests if there is perceived threat to their moral-social values.

Thomas Frank has his supporters and detractors. Such progressives as Molly Ivins and Barbara Ehrenreich consider his analysis insightful, a much needed addition to the culture wars discussion. His critics are, typically, eager to pounce on his analysis as being blinded by liberalism, not understanding the importance of values in American life, etc.

This banquet will give you the opportunity to enlarge your perspective on what's wrong with American society. Hope you can join us for the banquet as well as for the afternoon plaque unveiling ceremony. Banquet Day is October 29.

## Cecil Roberts, Presentation Speaker

Cecil Roberts, President of the United Mine Workers of America, will be the keynote or presentation speaker at this year's award banquet. He has been described as one of the labor movement's most stirring orators, and his record shows him as a highly effective negotiator and union leader.



CECIL ROBERTS  
President of the United Mine Workers of America

Roberts grew up in coal country, in West Virginia. Both of his grandfathers were killed in the mines. After college and military service in Vietnam, he took up work in the mines and in 1977 was elected vice president of District 17 by a 2-to-1 margin, and re-elected without opposition in 1981. In 1982 Roberts was elected vice president of the UMWA, running on a slate headed by Trumka and including John Banovic as secretary-treasurer. In December 1995, Roberts became UMWA President, and in 2004 he became the first President in the history of UMWA to be elected by acclamation for three consecutive terms.

In 2001, Roberts became a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, and he serves on a number of council committees. As President of the UMWA he successfully negotiated UMWA national agreements which included such provisions as a 20-year and out provision for members laid off six months, and a 30-year and out provision regardless of age.

Roberts graduated from West Virginia

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## Banquet Day Events - October 29

The October 29 Debs banquet will have two main features. One will be the award dinner, honoring Thomas Frank, who has researched and written on the culture wars in American society, is editor of *Baffler Magazine*, but is best known for his *What's the Matter with Kansas?* The keynote or presentation speaker for the banquet will be Cecil Roberts, UMWA President. Anne Fenney will entertain with her songs of labor and protest.

On Saturday afternoon a plaque will be unveiled at the Debs Home honoring Big Bill Haywood, who with Debs and Mother Jones founded the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905. The plaque ceremony will be at 3:30 p.m., providing a comfortable time lapse between afternoon and evening events.

## A Plaque for Big Bill Haywood

It is highly fitting that on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a plaque honoring Big Bill Haywood be added to the memorial wall. William D. "Big Bill" Haywood (1869-1928) joined Eugene Debs and Mother Jones to found the IWW in 1905. In its heyday, the IWW was a power in American industrial relations, with Haywood its dynamic leader and symbol.

Haywood began mining work in Nevada in 1889. In Silver City, Idaho, he rose quickly to be local head of the Western Federation of Miners (WFM). His excellent administrative negotiating, and organizing skills took him to Denver in 1901 to be secretary-treasurer of the National WFM and editor of *Miner's Magazine*. His role in the WFM ended in 1906 when he was charged but acquitted a year later of the murder of a former Idaho governor. It appears that Haywood's preoccupation with the newly founded IWW was also a factor in his departure from the WFM.

Haywood's dynamic leadership was apparent in successes with groups as diverse as the Brotherhood of Timberworkers (Louisiana-based, 1911-1913), Mesalbi Range Miners (Minnesota, 1916), and the silk workers strike (Patterson, New Jersey, 1913), and there were significant successes among western loggers, copper miners, and farm workers.

Earlier, Debs had quietly left the IWW, disagreeing with Haywood over tactics which included even violence, and in 1913, the Socialist Party recalled Haywood from his position on the party's National Executive Committee.

During World War I, the IWW leadership was targeted under the same Sedition Acts which had been used to send Debs to prison. With no hard evidence, Haywood was sentenced to a fine of \$20,000 and twenty years imprisonment. In March 1921, his leadership diminished and suffering diabetes, Haywood jumped bail and fled to the Soviet Union. He died there May 18, 1928, and was interred in the Kremlin wall.

The plaque unveiling will be banquet day, at 3:30 or 4:00 p.m. The plaque is sponsored by the United Mine Workers, and it is planned that UMW representatives will participate in the unveiling ceremony. Be there if you can!

## DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2005

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The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

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Website: [www.eugenevdebs.com](http://www.eugenevdebs.com)

Foundation Officers:

Michael Sullivan, *President*

Noel Beasley, *Executive Vice President*

Charles King, *Secretary*

Paul Burkett, *Treasurer*

The *Debs Foundation Newsletter* is published twice yearly for distribution to members and friends of the Foundation. The Eugene V. Debs Foundation is a non-profit, private organization which maintains the home of Eugene and Kate Debs as a museum and shrine to labor, and carries on educational and informational programs which aim to honor and promote the goals for which Debs struggled: industrial unionism, social justice, and peace. For those wishing to become members, an application form is provided elsewhere in this issue.

## Transitions: A Change at Treasury



Woodrow Creason



Paul Burkett

An important change occurred in the leadership of the Debs Foundation in 2005 when Woodrow Creason retired as treasurer and Paul Burkett was elected to succeed him. As was Creason, Burkett is professor of economics at Indiana State University. Paul came to ISU in 1991 from Florida. His research and publishing has included Marxian history and a critique of environmental issues from a Marxian perspective. Paul has been an active member of the Foundation for more than a decade. His service as treasurer will continue the tradition of the active involvement of ISU faculty in the Debs Foundation.

For those of us close to foundation affairs, it is hard to imagine the foundation without Woody Creason around. He was part of the small group of academicians and union leaders who started the organization in 1962 in order to preserve the Debs Home and the legacy of Debs. He became treasurer soon thereafter. This writer has come to value the support of Woody as treasurer for the 20 years I have been secretary. We are fortunate to have Paul Burkett to take over the treasurer duties, but there is a sense of the significance of this transition. It marks the first time in foundation history that no original charter member still serves as an executive officer. During the 40-plus years Woody has been around, he has been an eye-witness participant in all foundation affairs, and sharing his recollections of that history has been most helpful.

On a personal level, I wish to say that his assistance and support have been indispensable during my tenure. As a matter of fact, it was he and Bob Constantine who 20 years

*Continued on page 6*

## Debs One Hundred Years Ago Where Would He Stand Today?

Where would Debs stand were he alive today and faced with the current divisiveness in the labor movement? One could use Debs' career as suggesting he might support one side or the other, or might avoid taking sides. He might or might not be a leader of the dissident faction which is withdrawing from the AFL-CIO leadership as it attempts to do what it thinks is best for working people. I doubt that he would consider the matter as of no consequence just because he was not certain of where his personal interests lay. Debs was not inclined to put his personal interests first. Had he been, he might have achieved the presidency of the United States under the banner of one of the two major political parties.

The situation is in many regards similar to Debs' era. The challenge was how to effectively represent workers with changes in modes of production and new dynamics at play in relations between groups in society. The brotherhoods, such as Debs' Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, were forced to transform into other forms of worker representation in order to serve the needs of diverse industrial work groups, and to face the changes in the industrial and political order. The search for new ways to success was unsettling both for mainstream unions of the craft type and for business and government. The latter saw the changes and evident divisiveness as a threat to the status quo. Today, sorry to say, I suggest that the Bush administration sees little threat, especially in the short term, from the AFL-CIO split. After all, it possibly could prove beneficial in the 2006 and 2008 elections to

have labor divided. It could mean less money for labor to spend on elections. Some businessmen, especially those in the service sector and hospitality industries, might wonder if they will face much more pressure from labor activism than they already have experienced.

One thing for certain. Debs would not have been motivated by self-interest in choosing a course of action. He was intent on organizing the unorganized and in making representation more effective when he founded the American Railway Union. The groups he brought together were for the most part not affiliated with the AFL.

By 1905, when Debs joined in forming the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), he again was not intending to divide. As earlier, the organizing focus of the IWW was the unaffiliated, less skilled workers. Indeed, and similar to the challenge facing labor today, their focus was international. Labor today knows no national boundaries. Multi-national corporations can go anywhere in the world to find cheap labor, and there go the good pay and safe working conditions American workers have come to expect. Debs, Haywood, and the IWW were perhaps a hundred years ahead of their time, but that time is now, and the innovators in the union movement today should ask not only how their proposals affect their own unions in the short-term, but also what the impact will be in the long-term for all workers of the world. That would be Debsian.

C.K.

This form is provided mainly for new members. The 2006 Dues Notice will be included in the December Membership mailing.

NOTE: Please check here if this is a:

RENEWAL

NEW MEMBERSHIP

Email:

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2005 Membership Dues: The Eugene V. Debs Foundation 2005

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ 5.00 Student Member      \_\_\_\_\_ \$100.00 Sustaining Member  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 Regular Member      \_\_\_\_\_ \$250.00 Life Members  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25.00 Supporting Member      \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Enclose remittance. Make checks payable to the Debs Foundation.

The Debs Foundation • P.O. Box 843 • Terre Haute, IN 47808-0843

We are a voluntary organization, so your dues and contributions are tax deductible. The Foundation owns and maintains the Debs Home and offers several educational and cultural programs.

## President Bush, You Forgot Again! Or Was It Selective Recall?

It was obvious selective recall of basic facts when, during the 2004 elections, and when Bush's ratings were sagging, Bush took his "charm offensive" to Rome. He met with the Pontiff in what could be considered a cynical ploy to win support from U.S. Catholics and to get some free, positive publicity. It was a photo-op designed to portray Pres. Bush and the Pope as on the same side on key issues. Both stood for the so-called family values which would ban same-sex marriage and abortion. It has come to be called a culture of life. And both extolled human freedom, especially freedom from political tyranny. *But the Pontiff was strongly anti-war and anti-poverty. He commented on this in his meeting with Bush, expressing his grave misgivings over the Iraq war and the growing disparity between rich and poor in the world.* There was no mention of these differences in the press releases coming from the White House.

Less than a year later, the pope succumbed to a number of ailments. In his public remarks on the

death of Pope John Paul II, Bush demonstrated the same selective recall. Bush lauded him as a great world leader helping to bring down the tyranny of communism in Eastern Europe and promoting "a culture of life" in the world. Predictably, Pres. Bush did not mention the Pope's stand against war and against capital punishment. Neither did he mention the Pope's frequent and eloquent admonitions to reduce poverty and for wealth sharing.

It would be a gross distortion of the legacy of Pope John Paul II to describe him as standing even figuratively shoulder-to-shoulder with George Bush in waging war against Muslim radicals in the Middle East and in promoting free market capitalism throughout the world. Don't count on much help from the U.S. press in bringing out these major divergences in principles and programs, but history likely will not allow the White House image machine of Karl Rove, Karen Hughes, et al, to get away with it.

C.K.

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## Destroying the National Parks

**(Based on articles from *National Parks and Conservation* magazine and a *New York Times* editorial dated August 29, 2005).**

A recent secret draft revision of the national park system's basic management policy document has been circulating within the Interior Department. It was prepared without consultation within the National Park Service, by Paul Hoffman, a deputy assistant secretary at Interior who once ran the Chamber of Commerce in Cody, Wyo., was a Congressional aide to Dick Cheney and has no park service experience. To National Park Service professionals this rewrite of park rules makes it perfectly clear that this rewrite was promoted largely by a change in political circumstances, namely, the opportunity to craft a vision of the national parks that suits the Bush administration. It is a frontal attack on the idea of "impairment." The act which established the national parks called for preventing impairment of all park resources, including wildlife, vegetation, and landscape. To Mr. Hoffman, this is merely one of the purposes.

His rewrite would open up nearly all parks to off-road vehicles, snowmobiles, and jet skis. These kinds of usage would become a primary purpose in the park's mission. To achieve the changed purpose, Hoffman redefines impairment to mean an "irreversible damage." To prove that an activity is

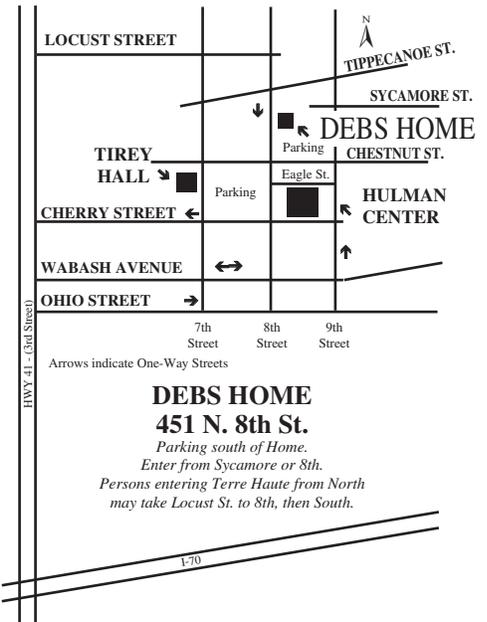
impairing the park, you would have to prove that it is doing so irreversibly. Consistent with the pervasive Bush administration tendency, his rewrite does everything possible to strip away a scientific basis for park management. His rules would essentially require park superintendents to subordinate the management of parks to local and state interests. Bush administration predispositions are reflected in other ways. The document would explicitly allow the sale of religious merchandise and remove any reference to evolution or evolutionary processes. One wonders how irreversible impairment can ever be established under such restrictions.

A *New York Times* editorial gave this assessment:

This document offers a vivid picture of the divide between the National Park Service, whose career employees remain committed to the fundamental purpose of leaving the parks unimpaired, and an Interior Department whose political appointees seem willing to alter them beyond recognition, partly in the service of commercial objectives.

In short, is this a policy for protecting our parks or for destroying them?

<b>ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET</b>		
<b>TERRE HAUTE</b>		
<b>October 29</b>		<b>2005</b>
<b>Honoring THOMAS FRANK</b>		
<b>SCHEDULE OF EVENTS</b>		
<b>Afternoon</b>		
1:00 to 4:00 p.m.:	Debs Home Open	
3:30 p.m.:	Plaque Unveiling, Debs Home	
<b>Evening</b>		
6:00 p.m.:	Social Hour and Reception (cash bar), Hulman Center, ISU	
7:00 p.m.:	Banquet Honoring Thomas Frank	
The fall business meeting will be Sunday, October 30, at 9:00 a.m. at the Debs Home		



*Parking is free in ISU lot south of Debs Home. There occasionally is a charge for parking in the Hulman Center lot.*

## Individual Greetings

You have the opportunity to participate in sending greetings in either of two forms. For a listing of your name (one or two persons), send \$20. For a listing which includes your personal greeting not to exceed 20 words, send \$30. Indicate if not attending the banquet in order that a copy of the souvenir program can be mailed. This order must be received by October 15. Use space at bottom-right to provide name, \$20 or \$30 listing (include message) and if attending the banquet. Your greeting honors the Award Recipient, Thomas Frank, and the Debs Foundation as well.

## Dinner Ticket Order

**\$30 per ticket, Table of 8 is \$210**  
**Students K-College - 1/2 price**

### NOTE

We offer a choice of entrees. Please **indicate your choice when you order tickets and again at the door.**

Chicken Dijonnaise \_\_\_\_\_  
Number

Vegetable Marinara \_\_\_\_\_  
Number

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ X \$30 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
number of tickets                      amount enclosed

Tickets must be paid in advance, checks payable to The Debs Foundation, P.O. Box 843, Terre Haute, IN 47808. Please check one of the following options.

Hold tickets at the door, in the name of \_\_\_\_\_  
(actually the preferred way)

Mail my tickets to the following address:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Inquiries may be directed to Charles King, 812-237-3443.

Program Listing	\$20.00 _____
	\$30.00 _____
Name or Names:	
_____	
_____	
_____	
(If not attending banquet, provide mailing address across left).	

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## ***From The Mailbox...***

A letter came from a U.S. History teacher in a high school located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains northwest of Charlotte, North Carolina. This high school has a student population of about 1300. The writer is a teacher who holds Debs' life to be worthy of honor and respect. He wrote that he was asked by the 2005 graduating class to be the faculty member to address them at commencement, and his customary presentation of U.S. History has been such that he had to assume that they would expect his address to include references to Debs' legacy. And it did.

He referred to Debs as a labor union organizer and a leader of the American Socialist Party, also as a working-class reformer and a great humanitarian. This teacher's admiration for Debs is not inspired by Debs' record of successes. Because Debs was so much ahead of his time, it was left for succeeding generations to achieve many of his goals. What matters most is that Debs was a

person of noble passions, sincerity, altruism and tenacity. The graduating class was challenged to emulate Debs by each searching for a life purpose which is greater than oneself. Find a cause which will give life purpose and substance. His address concluded thusly:

What Eugene Debs' life teaches us is that true success is the product not of talent and victory, but of passion and nobility. Pursue a noble passion and you will be significant. Indeed, you'll be rich in the only meaningful way.

The speech received a standing ovation. We would add our applause for a history teacher who apparently really knows the significance of various aspects of American history and knows how to communicate effectively with his students.

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## **Roberts** *continued from page 1*

Technical College in 1987. He and wife Carolyn have a son and a daughter, two grandsons and two granddaughters.

It is especially appropriate that President Roberts be with us on this occasion when in addition to the award banquet we unveil a plaque honoring a pioneer mine worker, Big Bill Haywood.

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## **Transitions** *continued from page 2*

ago persuaded me to become secretary. Furthermore, I, a sociologist, have come to consider Woody my genuine colleague and friend, relationships usually reserved to someone in the same academic department.

Those who know foundation history know that we are fortunate that a relatively "youngish"—early 40's—Creason came along when he did, and that he stayed as long as he did. But now he feels it is time for transition, and how could we deny that choice. Here's wishing you the best, friend.

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