

# The Debs Foundation Newsletter

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



FALL 2008

## The 2008 Banquet

### *The Eugene V. Debs Award*

Cecil Roberts, President of the United Mine Workers of America, is the recipient of this year's Debs Award. 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.

Roberts grew up in coal country, in West Virginia, a sixth generation coal miner. 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 Richard 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 Technical College in 1987 and in 1997, he received an honorary Doctorate of Humanities from West Virginia University of Technology. He and wife Carolyn have a son and a daughter, two grandsons and two granddaughters.

Roberts was featured as Keynote or Presentation Speaker at the 2005 banquet. You will want to join us October 4 for this year's celebration.



CECIL ROBERTS  
*President, United Mine  
Workers of America*

## Banquet Day Special

At 3:30 p.m., banquet day, guests will have the opportunity to enjoy a special program on Debs provided by Voces Novae Chamber Choir of Bloomington. Titled "Eugene V. Debs: An Indiana Original," and briefly described as a dramatic narrative with music featuring the life and words of E.V. Debs, the program is slated for the Scottish Rite Hippodrome Theater (the oldest vaudeville house still standing in the U.S., opened in 1915) at 727 Ohio Street. Banquet guests will find it convenient to park in the new parking garage and walk the two blocks south to the Scottish Rite building.

This program is generously underwritten by IBEW Local 725, Laborers Local, Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 157, Unite-Here (Midwest Region), and Central Wabash Valley Building Trades, with support from American Federation of Musicians Local 25.

The show lasts an hour and fifteen minutes and includes opportunities for the audience to sing along to labor songs and Debs campaign songs. Throughout the program are woven the powerful words of Debs. An exciting opportunity! Free and open to the public.

FALL BUSINESS MEETING

Sunday, October 5, 2008 - DEBS HOME

## Banquet Parking

Banquet regulars will recall that last fall the parking lot across 8th Street west of the Hulman Center entrance was closed for the construction of a parking garage. The new facility is now complete, but, surprise, parking is not free. It costs \$1.00 per hour. The free lot is still open east of Hulman Center, accessed from 9th Street (one-way north). If there is inclement weather, you likely will choose the parking garage, which is accessible from Cherry Street (one-way west).

## A Stamp for Debs

Your support is essential to have first class postage stamps issued for Eugene V. Debs and Mother Jones. These two were among the most influential early advocates of improved working conditions and agitating and educating for social justice for all.

The postal service is persuaded to issue a stamp not by eloquent appeal but by the number of supporting letters received, so it is a simple matter. Just state briefly whom you want to be honored by a first class stamp and why you consider that person worthy. Be sure to give your name, address, and date. Address to: Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee, Stamp Dept., U.S. Postal Service, 1735 North Lynn St., Rm 5013, Arlington, VA 22209-6432.

## Democracy's Prisoner: Eugene V. Debs, The Great War, and the Right to Dissent

by Ernest Freeberg

Not for decades has a new book on Eugene Debs focused with such clarity on the contribution Debs made to American society, especially in the area of our First Amendment rights. It is Ernest Freeberg's thesis that Debs' remarkable charisma, his impassioned speeches, and his insightful critique of American society forced the nation to rethink the limits of dissent.

In 1918 Debs was convicted under the recently minted Espionage Act for questioning the U.S. entry into World War I. Before this, free speech protections were more a matter of custom than of high legal principle, thus easily dispensed with during wartime. Freeberg shows that in the end it was Debs' popularity, not a knockdown legal argument, that compelled politicians, the mainstream media, and eventually federal judges to reconsider the government's power to jail dissidents. Freeberg's analysis of all this is exciting and revealing. Published by Harvard University Press, the book can be purchased from your local bookseller or from Harvard University Press, c/o Trilateral LLC Customer Service, 100 Maple Ridge Rd, Cumberland, RI 02864.

### DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2008

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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*

Mick Love, *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.

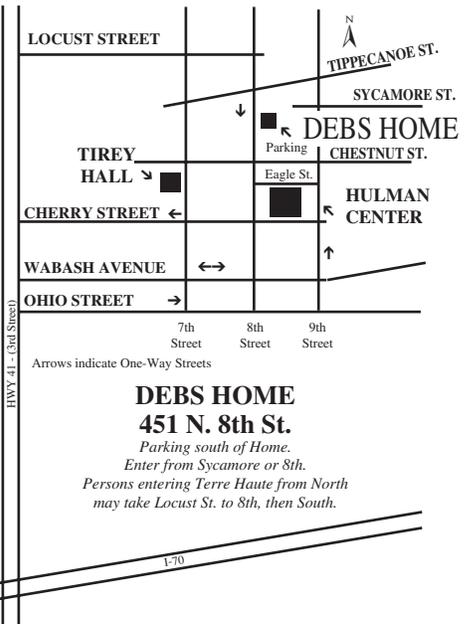
## Guilty But Not Charged

It is just now coming to light, hopefully more so in coming months, that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the two largest lenders of home loans, have been major culprits in preventing legislation which would provide a regulatory framework to protect players, especially home buyers, from risky practices.

What these quasi-governmental agencies have been doing is to spend millions on lobbyists in Washington and state houses to prevent the enactment of legislation which would make lending companies more responsible. The case of Georgia is most instructive. As reported in the August 25 issue of Newsweek, Georgia's Governor, Roy Barnes, pushed through a law providing accountability. Barnes was besieged by lobbyists from major lending agencies and national regulators, as well as by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Early in 2003, under Barnes successor, the legislature gutted his law, after a dramatic debate in which one Republican senator warned that Freddie Mac was about to cut off most of its business in Georgia. This intense anti-regulator lobbying continues. Witness California, which has become ground zero for subprime defaults. Last May the California Assembly's efforts to resurrect Barnes' idea of responsibility was killed by a major "jihad" by the free market, anti-regulatory lending industry. This shows what formidable hurdles a new administration in Washington will face when trying to enact consumer friendly lending laws.

<b>ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET TERRE HAUTE</b>	
<b>October 4</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Honoring CECIL ROBERTS</b>	
<b>SCHEDULE OF EVENTS</b>	
<b>Afternoon</b>	
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.:	Debs Home Open
3:30 p.m.:	E.V. Debs, an Indiana Original
<b>Evening</b>	
6:00 p.m.:	Social Hour and Reception (cash bar), Hulman Center, ISU. Enter West Doors.
7:00 p.m.:	Banquet Honoring Cecil Roberts
The fall business meeting will be Sunday, October 5, at 9:00 a.m. at the Debs Home	



*The new parking garage across from Hulman Center is now open and accessible from Cherry Street. The parking fee is \$1.00 per hour.  
Parking is free in ISU lot south of Debs Home.  
Another free lot is directly east of Hulman Center*

## 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 this year's Award Recipient and the Debs Foundation as well.

## Dinner Ticket Order

**\$35 per ticket, Table of 8 is \$245  
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 \$35 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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).

# The Ethanol Fallacy

## T. Boone Pickens Is Right

The Texas oil man T. Boone Pickens is on the mark when he advocates wind and solar energy development to solve our dependence on foreign oil. Leave the corn for food, and use natural gas to power trucks and trains! As pointed out in the February 2008 *Popular Mechanics*, it is too good to be true that we can reduce if not eliminate our dependence on domestic and especially foreign oil by replacing it with clean, homegrown, all-American corn. Already, about 15 percent of our total corn production is consumed by over 130 ethanol plants.

Some in Washington seem determined to force still more ethanol into the system. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, passed by the House in December, would mandate corn ethanol usage of 15 billion gallons a year by 2015. This would be more than three times today's consumption. Politicians seem ready to declare ethanol the winner over all other alternatives, in which case we have a product which is enormously expensive to produce and which barely saves a gallon of oil, given how energy-intensive its production is. Some critics estimate that it takes approximately 1.3 gallons of oil to produce a single gallon of ethanol. It would take 450 pounds of corn to yield enough ethanol to fill the tank of an SUV.

There are several forces that are energizing the push for the ethanol solution. One is the politicians from the Corn Belt states (Pickens correctly observed that a total of 21 cornbelt states benefit economically from high demand for corn. That means 42 senators who can be counted on to support solid government support for ethanol.), but an equally powerful one is the agri-businesses, such as Archer Daniels Midland, which dominate ethanol processing, and whose fat checkbooks wield enormous influence in Washington.

What should government be doing? Provide incentives for conservation: make our homes, businesses, and vehicles more efficient. And encourage the development of solar and wind energy.

This form is provided for new members or for late payment of 2008 dues. The 2009 Dues Notice will be included in the December Membership mailing.

NOTE: Please check here if this is a:

RENEWAL

NEW MEMBERSHIP

ADDRESS CHANGE

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**Membership Dues: The Eugene V. Debs Foundation**

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 not-for-profit organization, so your dues and contributions are tax deductible. The Foundation owns and maintains the Debs Home and offers several educational and cultural programs.

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