

SPRING 2012

DEBS FOUNDATION: 1962-2012 Fifty Fruitful Years



From the Spring 2002 Newsletter



New Indiana Historic Landmark Sign, 1992, Noel Beasley on left.

New Ownership Sign, 1963. L to R: Ned Bush, Robert Constantine, Marguerite Debs-Cooper

This special edition of the newsletter is devoted mainly to commemorating the foundation's 50th anniversary. The history of these fifty years is presented in three periods. First is a summary of the most recent decade. Then there are reproduced two articles which cover in order the 1987-2002 period, and then the foundation's first twenty-five years.

The 2002-2012 Decade

This decade began with, among other details, the creation of the paid position of Museum Director-Curator. It was expected that this would advance our mission to preserve and make more accessible the home itself and all memorabilia related to the Debs legacy. Achievements of this sort include the digital recording of all artifacts in our possession. This includes those on display as well as others in our holdings. Another was to join with Indiana State University's Cunningham Library in its newly developed Visions and Voices project, which makes available online all our digitized Debs materials along with those of other Wabash Valley notables. Karen Brown played an indispensable role in all this.

The year 2011 can be seen as one of the most eventful and expensive years. It was necessary to replace the entire sewer line system, costing \$16,000. At least now the line is PVC pipe, which is not penetrable by tree roots as were the vintage clay pipes. Another preservation project intended for 2011 dragged over into 2012. The porch roof was replaced late in Debs' lifetime, and not with the slate shingles covering the basic structure. Apparently moisture has seeped in and deteriorated this section's structural support, which left no choice but to replace the entire porch roof. Fortunately, a high quality shingle now is available which has the appearance and durability of slate

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Debs' Letters Added to ISU Library Collection

Cinda May, who is Special Collections Chair at Cunningham Memorial Library recently participated in bidding on the sale in New York of 20 Debs letters. They were sent by Eugene to his favorite nephew, Robert Heinl, between 1893 and 1925. Heinl grew up to become a newspaper columnist and editor in New York and Washington. In one of the more interesting letters dated September 26, 1918, two weeks after Debs was found guilty of sedition, he tells his nephew that such a verdict was "inevitable." He continued, "if my position is right, nothing else matters, and I am absolutely sure that it is... What the world in its present madness says or thinks or does is nothing to me."

These Debs letters add to the approximately 6000 items already in the Debs Colletion at Cunningham Library, and available there for researchers to view.

Regarding the 2011 Financial Statement

The financial statement for 2011 has headings for major types of expenditures. The totals for each type were not included due to space limitations, but here are some subtotals. Banquet expenses totaled \$18,772.22, Museum Director expense totaled \$20,963.13, utilities totaled \$6673.38, and sewer line expenses totaled \$12,020.92. The big non-recurring expenses were sewer line-related, but unfortunately, for 2012, the cost for roof replacement on the Debs Home porch will be double the sewer line expenses.

DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER SPRING 2012

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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.

It is painfully obvious that we are having difficulty meeting fixed operating costs. In 2011, we had to draw \$29,500 from the Endowment Fund. We are heading in the same direction in 2012, given the \$24,000 for porch roof replacement. It is obvious that we absolutely must, at the risk of sounding like Republicans, find ways to balance our budget.

2011 FINANCIAL STATEMENT for the Eugene V. Debs Foundation

Mick Love, Treasurer

Expenditures
<u>Utilities</u>
Duke Energy
Vectren 1,719.10
Indiana American Water
Frontier
Cell Phone (long distance)
Banquet:
Hall Rental
Farrington House Catering
Bruce Raynor Travel
Danny Glover Travel
Printing Tickets & Program
Anne Feeney Honorarium
Woodburn Graphics (T. Debs plaque)
Moore Photography
Indiana Statesman Ad
Museum Director
Salary
Indiana Department of Revenue
Internal Revenue Service
Workmans Compensation Insurance
Sewer Line Work
Harrah Plumbing 4,030.42
S & T Construction
Sewer Line Digging
Parts & Materials 200.00
Other Expenses
Garden Supplies & Wall Paint
ISU Controller (Icon Copy & Bulk Mail Service) 1,600.00
Kay Newkirk (clerical)
State Auto Insurance (Home)
Jewett Printing Newsletters
5

Wabash '	Valley Visions & Voices	175.00
	1 AC	
	mputer Solutions	
	Rights Day	
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	ax	
Associati	on of Indiana Museums	35.00
Garden P	lants, Paint, etc.	
	tal Service	
	Secretary of State	
	ding and Gas	
	fe & Lock	
Essay Co	ontest Winner	500.00
	Γables for Home (2)	
	& Cash for Labor Day	
	penditures	
•		
Income		
Dues and	Contributions	16,829.85
Memoral	oilia Sales	1,264.37
Dinner T	ickets	11,400.00
Dinner P	rogram Listings	12,820.00
Endowm	ent Fund	29,500.00
Total Inc	ome	\$71,814.22
	Total Income	\$71,814.22
	Total Expenses	\$71,203.53
	Gain	610.69
	Checking Account Balance (12/31/11)	\$ 6,140.32

EUGENE V. DEBS AWARD RECIPIENTS					
1965	John L. Lewis	1981	Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.	1997	John J. Sweeney
1966	Norman Thomas	1982	Coretta Scott King	1998	Howard Zinn
1967	A. Philip Randolph	1983	Studs Terkel	1999	Gloria Johnson
1968	Walter Reuther	1984	William H. Wynn	2000	Michael J. Sullivan
1969	H.E. Gilbert	1985	Jack Sheinkman	2001	Al H. Chesser
1970	Patrick E. Gorman	1986	Joseph L. Rauh, Jr.	2002	Julian Bond
1971	No Award	1987	Edward Asner	2003	Molly Ivins
1972	Dorothy Day	1988	Joyce Miller	2004	Bruce Raynor
1973	Michael Harrington	1989	Morton Bahr	2005	Thomas Frank
1974	Arthur Schlesinger	1990	Lynn R. Williams	2006	Brave New Films
1975	Ruben Levin	1991	John Sayles	2007	Barbara Ehrenreich
1976	Martin H. Miller	1992	Ralph Nader	2008	Cecil Roberts
1977	Frank Zeidler	1993	Dolores Huerta	2009	Ron Gettelfinger
1978	Jesse Jackson	1994	Richard Trumka	2010	Boby Duval
1979	Pete Seeger	1995	Jim Hightower	2011	Danny Glover
1980	William Winpisinger	1996	Victor Navasky		

Continued from page 1

at less cost, but unfortunately, the cost is steep: \$24,000.

This brings to mind the matter of finances. It was anticipated that the hiring of a paid Museum Director would roughly double annual operating costs, and it was hoped that revenues would increase to meet the need. That was so for about three years, but then income ceased to grow and even declined some years, reflecting no doubt the societal forces which have become an assault on the quality of life and financial well-being of our supporters. Parenthetically, I am not aware of any one percenters among our supporters.

The Debs legacy received extensive public exposure in 2011. In a new "Contenders" series, Eugene Debs was one of fourteen men who ran for president and lost, but nevertheless impacted society in significant ways. Eugene Debs was covered in a ninety-minute program broadcast live from the Debs Home.

Another project begun with our support in summer 2011, was the filming of a Hollywood-class movie in the genre of political satire which portrays a fictional Debs' descendent who, when reminded of the Debsian legacy he should uphold, turns from his drunken ways and, pressing Debsian themes, runs for the governorship of Indiana. Produced and directed by two young men with Terre Haute roots, The Drunk was filmed in one month in Terre Haute, one entire week in the Debs Home. The movie should premiere this summer first to a Terre Haute audience. Its producers

hope that the national distribution of this film will have some constructive impact on political dialogue during the 2012 elections.

The slate of executive officers changed during this period. Jack Scheinkman served as President from 1987 until 2003. As with those who served before him—Pat Gorman and Murray Findley—Jack was a constructive force in increasing awareness and support from Progressives both inside and beyond organized labor.

Noel Beasley has served as Executive Vice President since 1983 and Charles King as Secretary since 1985. Woody Creason served as Treasurer from 1965 until 2005. Paul Burkett served for 2005 and 2006. Mick Love has been Treasurer since. Mick's origins are in local organized labor, and he currently holds political office as Harrison Township Assessor. As was the case with Creason and those serving since, having a local person in the position is a valuable asset.

The list of all Debs Award recipients will reveal that the annual award banquets have continued to recognize prominent national figures who are worthy of being recognized as Debsian. Who can say what the next half century will hold for the Debs Foundation, but we can agree that what was started in 1962 by a small band of visionaries has seen <u>fifty fruitful years</u>.



For over a decade Anne Feeney has led in "Solidarity Forever"



The history of this period needs to begin with a bit of background information. As regards this overall period, Woody Creason has observed to me that the story of the Debs Foundation is one of the truly great success stories of "town-gown" relations involving ISU faculty and the Terre Haute Community. There is plenty of support for this assessment. Woody, a faculty member, was one of the early key players who has continued his involvement til this day. Constantine observed that "it seems unlikely that the foundation could have grown as it has without Ned's (Bush) services," and valuable "town" or community support came also from other local labor leaders who were charter members. That list includes Curtis Culver (see his "I Remember When" remarks elsewhere in this issue) and later his brother, Pete, William Coakley, John McDaniel, Virgil Morris, and others. The "gown" or academic cohort of charter members and key players included Constantine (History) and Creason (Economics), as well as Howard Hamilton (Political Science), and Earl Stephanson (Economics), and others who put up the initial seed money. Howard typed literally scores of solicitation letters to colleagues in academia and in labor and socialist circles. Stephanson did likewise and, in Constantine's account, is credited as instrumental in getting Patrick Gorman to serve as first President of the Foundation.

There are key or defining moments in any history, and one of these, without which neither the foundation or the Debs Home might exist today, was when Creason, Stephanson, Constantine, and Tilford Dudley (AFL, labor) walked from campus to the Debs Home and, along with Bush and Culver from local labor, talked to the owner, Mr. Heck, who was intent on further dividing the building into apartments. Heck was by no means hostile to the idea of historic preservation, but said: "Look, I'm in business.



Michael Sullivan Receives Debs Award, 2000.

Show me the money." So, this small group of inspired activists grew rapidly to a list of \$100 contributors to put up the required down payment, and the tedious work had begun of buying the property and undertaking extensive restoration and renovation. Tilford used his legal training to draw up articles of incorporation, and was helpful in soliciting money from his acquaintances at the national level of union leadership, and at state level similar fundraising was undertaken by such key labor leaders as Raymond Berndt (UAW-Region 3). It no doubt is due largely to the historic progressivism of the UAW, but also to the credit of such Indiana UAW leaders as Berndt. Dallas Sells Jr, and Elmer Blankenship, that the UAW has been one of the most faithful supporters of the Debs Foundation til this day. As Culver mentions, support did come from local labor, but sometimes grudgingly, and certainly not encouraged by a negative local press and business community.

Thus began forty years of growth and consolidation, the first 25 of which were celebrated in 1987. The Foundation had two presidents during that quarter century: Patrick Gorman (1965-79), and Murray Findley (1980-1987), three Executive Vice Presidents: Ned Bush (1962-1979), Curtis Culver (1979-1983), and Noel Beasley (1983-present), three Secretary's J. Robert Constantine (1962-1983), Timothy Kelly (1983-1984), and Charles King (1985-present), and as Treasurer, after brief stints by two others, Woodrow Creason (1965-present).

The past fifteen years have been years of further consolidation and growth in many ways. In terms of leadership, Jack Sheinkman became President in 1987, and has been involved in constructive ways in increasing awareness and support from Progressives both in and outside organized labor. Noel Beasley has continued to use his leadership skills and his contacts in organized

labor and in other progressive groups to build support for the foundation and its programs. This writer, as Secretary, has applied whatever skills in organizational leadership and human relations he could muster to attend to numerous details of correspondence and other forms of communication, supervision of the Debs Home property and the curators, and just seeing that things get done even down to spring flower plantings. And as Treasurer, Creason, the only charter member still in official position, has become like the proverbial Energizer Bunny, he just keeps going and going. He has done what a Treasurer is supposed to do in keeping accurate financial records and spending money responsibly, but more than that, he has been close friend and confidant to foundation secretaries these 40 years. It by the way was Creason and Constantine who invited the current secretary out and actually gave him a free lunch when persuading him to assume office.

Much of what the Foundation has done the past fifteen years has been to continue and improve what had been done, including initiatives undertaken near the end of the first quarter century. The Newsletter had been initiated in 1986, and has continued to promote member awareness of foundation activities and programs, to promote awareness of Debs' contributions to history, and to agitate a bit for Progressive ideas and causes. It has helped to build the base of involved, dues paying members. The commemorative dinner program, with its "Greetings Section," was initiated in 1987, and has become our single biggest source of funds. It has become an appropriate and dignified means by which to show respect for Debs Award recipients as well as to openly support the foundation financially. The greetings section listings have enabled us to hold at \$25 the cost of a dinner ticket, as we no longer have to rely solely on profits from ticket sales to make a banquet a financial success.

The historical impact of the museum collection has been considerably strengthened by the past fifteen years. Most significant have been the donation of original Debs furniture by descendants of Kate Debs. As the result of these donations, the home's dining room and parlor are furnished with original pieces, and bedroom pieces were donated as well.

A relationship which may be described as informal but supportive has prevailed between the foundation and Indiana State University these forty years. Throughout, two of the four executive offices -- secretary and treasurer -- have been filled by ISU faculty. The academic freedom granted by this institution of higher learning has allowed freedom of expression and freedom to conduct research and write without fear of reprisal or of becoming targets of some witchhunt. A few faculty members have been able to direct the service component of their professorial positions to leadership duties in the Debs Foundation. Without the

contribution of countless hours of work from ISU faculty, it appears unlikely that the foundation could have thrived and could have carried on with no paid leaders. Given the location of the Debs Home in relation to the expanded campus, many people not in possession of the facts assume that the Home is university property. If this fallacy is embarrassing to ISU officials it has not been apparent in working relations between the two organizations. No better example of the truly cooperative relationship can be found than when ISU decided to close a street north of the Debs Home, including also a small parking lot which bumped (sometimes literally) into foundation property on its north side. The university did beautiful landscaping where previously there had been traffic and a bit of an eye sore, and entered into an easement agreement for a property swop whereby we granted the university use of an area outside the east wall, to be landscaped and to include a walk between ISU parking and ISU academic buildings to the north, and in return the University granted the Foundation use of parking space on the south side of the property, a location far more convenient for our visitors.

Mention should be made also of the collection of Debs materials in the Rare Books and Special Collections section of ISU's Cunningham Memorial Library. Being housed here gives these numerous documents a secure, controlled environment, and where they are accessible through the loan services of a modern university library.

Also important in the university-foundation relationship has been the fact that, due to the involvement of ISU professors, conveniently located lecture halls and auditoriums on campus has been available free of charge. The advantage for the university is that foundation sponsored lectures and events have been available to the academic community as well as to foundation members. Speakers brought here under foundation sponsorship have included Tony Benn, Robert Coles, Ceasar Chavez, and of course all the award banquet honorees, not in rent free facilities, but reasonably priced, convenient and attractive. Additionally, ISU professors have had access to an enriching field experience by taking their classes to a museum right on campus.

And what of the award recipients. The list speaks for itself as regards the stature and the contributions to society of those who have been honored. The recipients have been gracious and appreciative, have said their piece, each in his or her own way, and have inspired and challenged us all. The banquets are a dignified but also entertaining way of honoring those who have contributed to society significantly in ways which carry on the Debs tradition. The banquet program is kept as "clean" or uncluttered as possible in order to keep the focus where it belongs: on the tradition of Eugene Debs and on those who have carried on. For many, the annual banquets have become a spiritual

retreat and a pump-primer for those of us who wear the label, *Progressives*.

In 2000, the foundation stepped into the hi-tech era by developing a webpage to communicate more effectively to a worldwide audience. The web site (www.eugenevdebs.com) is intended mainly as educational, providing useful information both on the life of Debs and on the foundation. It is designed for all ages, but particularly those in middle and high school social studies classes.

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation was started 40 years ago in an almost hostile political climate locally and nationally. To many in the Terre Haute community, those persons trying to start a Debs Foundation were a

bunch of "commies" up at the university. McCarthyism definitely was not dead in the conservative Terre Haute community and in Indiana. This was the George Meany era of Communism bashing in organized labor nationally and internationally, and Terre Haute labor was not immune to these sentiments. Looking back, it is amazing that there were enough men and women of sufficient awareness of history and of Debs' considerable contributions to society, and sufficiently Progressive in their personal commitments, that they could come together, found a society for historical preservation and education, and could succeed these 50 years to preserve an unique historical site and a great legacy. WE CELEBRATE FIFTY FRUITFUL YEARS!

THE 1962-1987 PERIOD by J. Robert Constantine

An attempt to describe the launching of the Debs Foundation in 1962 suffers from a shortage of documentary evidence and from inevitable memory lapses, so at the outset a disclaimer and apology are in order. One useful document is a list of the Foundation's "charter members," i.e. the 58 men and women who contributed \$100.00 each toward the \$9500.00 purchase price of the Debs home in Terre Haute. This charter member list underscores an important fact: The Debs Foundation was begun by an alliance of Indiana State University faculty members, organized labor representatives, and a mixed group of men and women who shared "Debsian" ideals. The same alliance has made possible the growth of the Foundation during the past 25 years.

As I remember it, Tilford Dudley, who was at the time director of the AFL-CIO speakers' bureau in Washington, D.C. played the key role in getting the Foundation off the ground. Dudley steadily pushed the idea on ISU faculty members, drew up the articles of incorporation, and solicited essential "seed money" from his acquaintances at the national level of union leadership (Ted Dudley was, and is, a very persuasive man!). At the local labor level, clearly the most important "charter member" was Ned Bush, who served the Foundation as executive vice-president and as curator of the Debs home for many years before his death in 1979. Looking back on it, it seems unlikely that the Foundation could have grown as it has without Ned's services. Ned was helped, of course, by other local labor officials -- Curtis Culver, William Coakley, John McDaniel, Virgil Morris and others who were charter members.

Among the charter members from the faculty at Indiana State University, two of the most important were Howard Hamilton, in the political science department, and the late Earl Stephanson, in the economics department. Hamilton personally typed scores of letters to colleagues in academia and in labor and socialist circles, seeking and getting charter members for the Foundation from, among others. Roger

CHARTER MEMBERS EUGENE V. DEBS FOUNDATION MARCH 17, 1962

H. A. Abramson William J. Hillis Donald Allen John Haynes Hilmes V. Dewey Annakin Ruth LePrade Roger Baldwin Mitchell Loeb Morris Blumberg Dora Mayer **Ouentin Bone** Louis Mayer Bernard Brommel John McDaniel John P. Burke Marjorie McDonald Ned A. Bush, Sr. Duncan McDonald William Coakley Brad & Lilly Miller Robert Constantine Clyde R. Miller Virgil Morris Marguerite Debs Cooper Rolla Cowger Thomas Mulvihill Curtis Culver Oscar K. Edelman William Davey James O'Connell S. A. Dewitt John Dos Passos Tilford G. Dudley Otto Pragan Eugene Dyche Albert Schweizter Ronald Elperin Clifford Shanks William Fox Mulford Sibley Ruth & Royal France Upton Sinclair Erich Fromm Edward Spann Adolph Germer Karl Stark John & Shirley Grinrod Kate Steichmann Robert Haagerson Earl Stephanson Doyt & Connie Hamilton Irving Stone Howard & Leavitta Hamilton Norman Thomas Albert Frampton Edward Whalen Mary Donovan Hapgood Woodrow Creason

Baldwin, head of the American Civil Liberties Union; Erich Fromm; Mary Donavan Hapgood, who served as secretary of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee; John Haynes Holmes, pastor of the Community Church in New York City; Clyde R. Miller, a journalist whose testimony helped convict Debs in 1918; John Dos Passos, Upton Sinclair and Irving Stone; Norman Thomas; and Albert Schweitzer. Earl Stephanson worked with Hamilton in securing charter membership, especially among labor officials, and was, I believe, instrumental in getting Patrick Gorman to serve as president of the Foundation. Among other ISU faculty members who were charter members of the Foundation, Woodrow Creason has served as treasurer of the Foundation for more than 20 years; this writer served as secretary from 1963 to 1983 and has since 1979 directed the Eugene V. Debs Project at the University; Bernard Brommel has published a respected biography of Debs; and Edward K. Spann has made possible the Foundation's Bryant Spann Memorial Prize, an increasingly coveted and prestigious writer's award. In countless ways, from keeping the Debs home open to the public on Sundays in the early days to trimming the hedges and washing the windows at the home, these and other ISU faculty members -- Quentin Bone, Eugene Dyche, Ronald Elperin, and others -- helped launch the Foundation and kept it going.

In addition to the labor and ISU faculty representatives, the charter membership of the Foundation included men and women from a wonderful variety of backgrounds and interests. Terre Haute businessmen -- Clifford Shanks, Edward Whalen, Morris Blumberg, William Hillis, and others -- were joined by the New York political cartoonist, Mitchell Loeb, and the sculptor, Louis Mayer, and the poet, Ruth LePrade, and the physician, John Grinrod, and the coal miner, Brad Miller (and his wife, Lilly), and the journalist, Ruth France (Norrick), and a score of other men and women whose only apparent common ground was their interest in keeping alive the Debs tradition.

No account of charter members of the Foundation would be complete without special reference to the roles played by Marguerite Debs Cooper and Oscar Edelman. Cooper, who is Debs' niece (and will be celebrating her 93rd birthday on May 24, 1987; Meadows Manor, 3300 Poplar, Terre Haute, Indiana), generously donated much of the furniture and memorabilia which fills the Debs home, and for her gift to Indiana State University of some 7,000 Debs letters, scholars and others will be forever indebted. During the occasional financial crises of the Foundation, Oscar Edelman "of Dayton" was a reliable and generous supporter and one of his donations made possible the curator's apartment in the Debs home. In addition, Edelman donated his vast library of labor-socialist literature to the Foundation and Indiana State University.

I want to emphasize the point that the success of the Debs Foundation over the past 25 years has been the result of contributions made by Charter members and by the hundreds of men and women who joined the Foundation at a later date. One thinks immediately of Hilton Hanna, Dallas Sells, Martin Miller, Noel Beasley, Charles King, Robert Clouse and so many others that it becomes impossible to mention all of them. Together the charter members and those who joined later have set in place an organization which has preserved a unique shrine in labor, socialist, and reform history and, at the same time, through its research and educational programs, contributed to the preservation and understanding of Debs' ideals.



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NEW MEMBERSHIP			CII
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Email Address:

Membership Dues: The Eugene V. Debs Foundation					
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\$50.00 Supporting Member	Other				
Enclose remittance. Make checks payable to the	e Debs Foundation.				
The Debs Foundation • P.O. Box 9454 • 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.					



A Birthday Cake for the Home's 100th Anniversary, 1994.