

# The Debs Foundation Newsletter

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

FALL, 1988

## UNION ACTIVIST TO RECEIVE DEBS AWARD

Such titles as President, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Vice President, Executive Council, AFL-CIO, Vice President and Director of Social Services, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and President-elect, Industrial Relations Research Association, these are the more prominent commitments of Joyce Miller, the recipient of this year's Debs Award. A complete list of her offices and commitments is too long to reproduce here. As a trade unionist, it was because of an already distinguished record of service that she was elected to the AFL-CIO Executive Council in 1980, the first woman elected to the federation's top official body. She already had served from 1962 to 1972 as Education Director, Administrative Assistant and Director of Social Services, Chicago Joint Board, ACWA, then from 1972 to 1976, as Executive Assistant to the General Officers and Director of Social Services, ACWA, and in numerous community service positions.

One does not earn consideration for the Eugene V. Debs Award merely for the length of the list of one's official titles. It is for the substance and thrust of her work that Joyce Miller is being honored November 12. She has been a genuinely progressive force in the trade union movement, an outspoken and effective advocate for women where they work and in their unions. One of her commitments which does not show on a list of titles has been to increase the awareness of union members of important issues and events in Central America. Also, in this election year, she has been a leader in the drive to place on the national political agenda the needs of working women as these relate to the family and to children in particular.



Joyce Miller

Gene Debs was an early advocate of woman's rights: the right to vote, and the right to join unions. The Industrial Workers of the World, which Debs helped found in 1905, repeatedly emphasized that women were in industry to stay. Male workers were urged not to fight against women in industry. Women find it necessary to work, they reasoned, so they should be organized with the men, as a legitimate part of the army of labor. That was pretty radical policy for a turn-of-the-century labor organization. As a matter of fact, it involves principles still requiring constant vigilance at the workplace and in labor organizations. Both organized labor and society in general are better today because of the work devoted to these causes by Gene Debs and such persons as Joyce Miller. We are pleased to honor her with the 1988 Debs Award, and we trust that you will join us in this celebration.

**SEE BANQUET  
DAY SCHEDULE  
PAGE FIVE**

## MEMORIAL FUND EXCEEDS \$2,000

The Marion Groce Memorial Fund drive was initiated in 1987, one year after the untimely death of the highly respected union leader who at the time of death was Director of the Midwest Region and ACTWU Vice President. He served for a number of years as a Vice President of the Debs Foundation, and was dedicated to the perpetuation of the memory of the life and principles of Debs. At the request of Marion's wife, Topsy Groce, ACTWU initiated a drive to honor Marion's life with special donations to the Foundation's Endowment Fund. The response was heartening, and contributions to this date have reached \$2,400. Individual acknowledgments and expressions of appreciation were sent, but we are pleased to be able to make this public acknowledgment. The following is the list of the organizations and individuals contributing sums ranging from \$25 to \$500.

Baltimore Regional Joint Board - ACTWU  
Bemis Company, Incorporated  
Bruce Dunton, V.P. and Director - ACTWU  
Buffalo Joint Board - ACTWU  
Central and South Jersey Board - ACTWU  
Chicago Joint Board - ACTWU  
Indiana-Kentucky Joint Board - ACTWU  
Joint Board of Shirt, Leisurewear, Robe,  
Glove and Rainwear Workers' Union  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Joint Board - ACTWU  
New England Regional Joint Board - ACTWU  
Ohio Regional Joint Board - ACTWU  
Pacific Northwest Joint Board - ACTWU  
Pennsylvania Joint Board - ACTWU  
Lawrence Schwanke, Director of Personnel &  
Industrial Relations - Bemis Company  
Southwest Regional Joint Board - ACTWU  
St. Louis Joint Board -T - ACTWU  
Twin Cities Joint Board - ACTWU  
West Carolinas Joint Board - ACTWU

## MUSICAL CHAIRS (OR STAIRS)

The musical chairs of changing curators for the Debs Home was played out once again in late August when Jeff and Lisa Witt succeeded Gena Sousa and Tracie Patterson as live-in curators/tour guides. The annual drama might appropriately be called "musical stairs," considering that the home has three floors plus basement, but that is not the point. The fact is that it takes a while to gain experience as tour guide and as custodian, curator, foundation representative, housekeeper, etc. And all sorts of phone calls come to the house, including inquiries about foundation activities, specialized knowledge, museum hours, and so on, which are O.K. except when they come early morning or late night. Easiest to handle are solicitors asking to speak to Mr. or Mrs. Debs. During a tour there can be an infinitesimal number of quires which can make a guide wish to be a walking encyclopedia of knowledge. It certainly takes a great deal of personal commitment, patience, tact and skill to do the job right.

Lisa and Jeff are new at the job but are catching on fast. Jeff has a degree in Social Work and is employed at Katheryn Hamilton in the city. Lisa is finishing her doctorate in Counseling at Indiana State University. Of course, until we can afford a full-time, paid museum director-curator, the game of musical chairs will generally be played out on an annual basis.



*Gena and Tracie  
On tour in the Dining Room.*

## DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

FALL, 1988

Published By

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation  
Box 843, Terre Haute, IN 47808

Foundation Officers

Jack Sheinkman, *President*

Noel Beasley, *Executive Vice President*

Charles King, *Secretary*

Woodrow Creason, *Treasurer*

The *Debs Foundation Newsletter* will be 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 information 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.

## BRYANT SPANN MEMORIAL PRIZE FOR 1988

Were Gene Debs alive today one of his titles might be that of investigative reporter. His writings attacked corruption not only in politics but in the labor movement. The article which has won this year's Bryant Spann Memorial Prize is in the best tradition of investigative journalism. Veteran journalist, Jack Newfield, attacks not only corruption in local government but also the indifference of the press in his article: "Of Machines and Men: Mayor Daley is Alive and Well in New York City." The article appeared in *The Nation*, April 4, 1987. In this carefully researched article, Newfield details the varied corruptions associated with the administration of Mayor Koch, also noting in the process how much of the New York press ignored these problems for many years before the eruption of scandal in 1986.

This literary prize carries a cash award of \$700. It has been established to honor the memory of the late Bryant Spann and to help perpetuate the Debsian style of social criticism, and is funded by the Spann family. Correspondence regarding the competition should be addressed to the Bryant Spann Memorial Prize Committee, Department of History, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809.

## YOU CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE!

You probably have heard the story of the local resident trying to describe to an inquiring stranger how to find a particular location. It goes like this. "You go south two miles, hang a left and go a half mile, then right at the crossing until just before the creek, and then (pause). No, that won't get you there. What you do is after your first left you go on past the crossroad, and then (pause)." After two or three futile attempts at detailed instructions, the local exclaims: "You just can't get there from here!"

It is almost but not quite that bad now describing how to get to the Debs Home at 451 North 8th. Several street closings on the ISU campus, plus the new overpass on North 3rd Street, have altered some of the possible routes. Those coming into Terre Haute from the north will be on 3rd street. It probably would be best to take a left turn (east) at the light just before the overpass. Proceed to 8th street, which is one-way south, and this street will take you right to the house, which will be on your left, just south of the Statesman Towers complex of Indiana State University. Should you not turn left before the overpass, continue south to Ohio street, just past the courthouse. Turn left (east) on Ohio, and then left again (north) at either 7th (two-way traffic) or 9th street (one-way north). Proceed north to Sycamore street. Turn on Sycamore street, right if you are on 7th, left if you are on 9th. Our parking is in the rear of the Home, accessible both from 8th and

*(continued on page 4)*



## A Crucial Year: 1963

### J. Robert Constantine

In an earlier piece in the Debs Foundation Newsletter an effort was made to describe the launching of the Foundation in 1962 and the roles played by various people in the labor movement and on the faculty of Indiana State University and others (very important "other") in that enterprise. During the following year - 1963 - the major efforts of the Foundation's officers were directed toward paying off the cost of the house and - a much more expensive item - restoring the home which had, as noted earlier, passed through a long period of neglect, not to say downright depredation. Having survived the tender care of a college fraternity for a decade and then been carved into four or five apartments by a "developer," the house was in genuine danger of being irreparably damaged. (Much of the woodwork had been painted ghastly shades of yellow, pink, and green and the floors had been covered with non-descript tiles. The ceilings had been "dropped" about 2 feet as an economy measure).

The funds for undoing the effects of this savage treatment and for restoring the home came from a wonderful variety of large and small contributors, whose only common denominator appeared to have been their desire to perpetuate the memory of a major labor leader, Socialist presidential candidate, and social reformer. Funds for the restoration of specific rooms in the home were solicited among major unions and their response was generous and prompt. Among the earliest to respond were U.A.W. Local 662 in Anderson and Madison county (Anderson) AFL-CIO Labor Council in which groups the Foundation had early and strong friends in Gene Pitts, Bob Kinerk, and Dallas Sells. In and around New York City, Mitchell Loeb, a retired journalist and political cartoonist, raised several thousand dollars among the Workermen's Circles, the needles trades union, which made possible the restoration of Debs' study on the second floor. Region 3 of the U.A.W. (Indiana and Kentucky), led by Dallas Sells, provided funds for the completion of the dining room and The Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen (Pat Gorman's and Hilton Hanna's union) provided funds not only for the restoration of Debs' library but for much of the operating expenses of the Foundation in 1963 and thereafter. A check from the United Mine Workers, whose president, John L. Lewis, was the first recipient of the Debs Award in 1965, funded the restoration of Katherine Debs' bedroom on the second floor of the home.

#### Welcome Donations - 1963



*Local 662 U.A.W.*



*Teamsters*

Other unions were equally generous in this critical year: The Railway Labor Executives Association sent \$5,000; the Teamsters sent \$2,500; the United Steel Workers District 30 and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen each sent checks for \$1,000 and The International Ladies Garment Workers sent \$500.

At the same time hundreds of individuals sent donations ranging from \$1.00 (one of these from Eugene V. Debs Rottluff in Canada) to several hundred dollars. Carpeting for the downstairs of the home was paid for (\$38,431) in October, 1963,

by Mary Donovan Hapgood, the widow of Powers Hapgood and one-time leader of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense League. In addition to her countless other memorabilia contributions to the Debs home, Marguerite Debs Cooper agreed to finance the purchase of drapes for the home. Donations from others purchased aluminum storm windows to replace the badly rotted wooden frames of the house and paid for a variety of other necessary improvements.

During the course of the year the Foundation's officers took the first steps toward securing exemption from eminent domain (the Debs home was on the periphery of the rapidly expanding I.S.U. campus) by state legislative action and recognition of the Debs home as a National Historical Landmark. Both goals were achieved within a few years.

As it became clear that funds would be available for the completion of the physical restoration of the Debs home, the officers and directors at their May, 1963 semi-annual meeting agreed to the creation of the Eugene V. Debs Endowment Fund and a goal of raising \$250,000 for the Fund was set. After 25 years that goal has not been reached and it remains as a challenge to all of us, but, in the meantime, the Fund has been of great value in supporting the Foundation's various research and educational efforts and, it must be added, in helping the Foundation through some extraordinary financial crises.

1963 was, then, a decisive year in the work of the Deb Foundation, both in its efforts to restore the Debs home and in its decision to secure the home's permanent location and to broaden its interests in the areas of education and research. Much remained (and remains) to be done, but the test of survival had been passed.

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### WHY NO RESERVED TABLES?

"How much to reserve a table (or two)?" A common question when banquet tickets are sold. Then, sometimes, on the night of the dinner, the room is dotted with tables marked "reserved" but conspicuously empty, often in choice locations, center front. At the Debs Award Banquets we have operated in recent years on a first come, first serve basis as regards seating, considering it more fair to everyone. It not only is fair, there is another reason. A Debs Foundation banquet ought to be the occasion for mixing and for meeting new as well as old friends. It ought to be an occasion where an auto worker and a coalminer sit at the same table, a plumber and a clerical worker, a Socialist, Democrat, Republican and an Independent. There are individuals under all these labels who are progressives, and a Debs Award Banquet offers the opportunity for persons from diverse backgrounds to share together the spirit of the occasion and in the process to gain a greater awareness of our common destiny and similar aspirations. Sure, you like to have a friend or two seated near you, but you will be rewarded if you try also to meet and mix with new people at our banquet.

from Sycamore streets.  
Those entering Terre Haute from the south, including these traveling I-70, will take Highway 41 which is also South 3rd Street, heading north. They will want to turn right on Ohio - - just before the courthouse - - and continue as described above. The Debs Home is an island of tranquility in the turbulent sea of automobiles in the university parking lot which surrounds it on three sides.  
You still can get there from here, it just requires a more careful attention to directions. Museum hours are 1:00 - 4:30, Wed. thru Sun.

NOT JUST PENNIES

Do you know what it can cost for us to obtain your change of address? When you move and do not notify us, it cost us 25 cents to receive the returned letter, and then another 25 cents to send the item on to its new address. Bulk mail costs us approximately 8 cents a piece, but the address corrections service costs at the First Class rate. It really adds up when we receive ten to twenty address changes or nondeliverables from each membership mailing. So when you move, please put us on the list of address changes. You not only will save us 50 cents, you will be assured of remaining on our mailing list.

Don't Pitch  
your newsletter.  
Pass it on!

DEBS SAID

I'd rather vote for something I want and not get it, than to vote for something I don't want and get it.

Last year Debs was mentioned in news articles a number of times, partly because it was the 200th Anniversary of the U.S. Constitution. Debs' prison sentence for speaking out against American involvement in World War I is a classic case of how the Constitution's free speech provisions have on some occasions not been fully upheld. This year the Debs legacy has been given some publicity for reasons connected to the same incident, for it was 70 years ago, on June 16, 1918, that Debs made the stirring anti-war speech which led ultimately to a ten year prison sentence. The occasion then was the state convention of the Socialist Party of Ohio; the place was Nimisilla Park, Canton, Ohio.  
Seventy years later, on June 19, a group of Ohio "Debsians" conducted a commemorative program in Nimisilla Park, including a reading of excerpts of Debs' Canton speech. Debs called it a war of American and British capitalists against German capitalists - a war for profit. He saw no reason why workers should be fighting one another, and said the war would end when soldiers on both sides, drawn from the world's working class, withdrew from the conflict. Organizers and participants in this year's event included Alan Curry, Ed Mann, John Russo, Merlin Luce and others. The program received good local press coverage and appears to have been a fitting commemoration of this significant event in American history. Our thanks to Merlin Luce of Youngstown for providing information on the event.  
Another event which is becoming a tradition is the Eugene V. Debs Memorial Kazoo Night, when in Detroit a group of fans, including UAW members, pay tribute to Debs once a year from the Tiger Stadium bleachers. This August 4 was the seventh annual event, when the faithful came decked out in baseball caps and tee-shirts made especially for the occasion.  
It wasn't in baseball that Debs was famous for the ability to send one into deep left field, but as was observed in a write-up on this year's Tiger Stadium event, this was probably the only baseball park where "Solidarity Forever" was heard once this summer.  
The Debs Home received a three minute slot on the Labor Day evening news coverage of TV Channel 6, Indianapolis. Reid Duffy took viewers on a fast-paced tour of the home and interviewed foundation representative Charles King.  
Debs also got exposure in Terre Haute due to the impersonation of him on the program of the county historical society's gala annual fundraiser. The theme of the event was a re-enactment of the presidential campaign of 1904, when Terre Haute native Gene Debs was one of the candidates. The foundation provided items for a display table which was "manned" by curators Gena and Tracie. They reported a lot of interest in our display of campaign memorabilia. Different versions of this impersonation were recited and well received at the Labor Day Dinner of the WVCLC and in the Brown-bag Series of Vigo County Public Library. Thanks to Carolyn Toops for helping with these programs.

Membership Dues: The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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

Enclose remittance. Make checks payable to the Debs Foundation.  
The Debs Foundation  
P.O. Box 843  
Terre Haute, IN 47808  
Your dues and contributions are tax deductible. The Foundation owns and maintains the Debs Home and offers several educational and cultural programs. We are a voluntary organization with no paid staff.

November  
12

**EUGENE V. DEBS FOUNDATION  
ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET**

**1988**

**HONORING JOYCE MILLER**

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

2:00 to 3:45 Roundtable: Pink Collar Blues - Working Women and Their Unions. Led by  
Joyce Miller, Mary Humble and others.  
In Room B1, School of Education (across from Debs Home)

Banquet in Hulman Center (enter west doors)

6:00 Social Hour and Reception (cash bar open)

7:00 Award Banquet honoring **Joyce Miller**.

Presentation speaker is To Be Announced.  
Special Feature: Echoes of campaigns past, not heard in the 1988 elections.  
(a dramatic presentation).

On Saturday the Debs Home will be open from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

The fall business meeting will be Sunday, November 13, at 9:00 a.m., at the Debs Home.

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**Dinner Ticket Order**  
(\$20 per ticket)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ X \$20 - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

number of  
tickets

amount  
enclosed

Tickets must be paid in advance.  
Please check one of the following options.

☐ Mail my tickets to the following address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Hold my tickets at the door, in the name of \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Debs Foundation. Mail to the Debs Foundation, Box 843, Terre Haute, IN 47808.  
Inquiries may be directed to Charles King, 812-237-3443.

## WHAT WOULD DEBS HAVE SAID TO THIS?

The following is excerpted from the St. Louis Post Dispatch Magazine, July 17, 1988, credited to John M. McGuire. It is presented to our readers with just one comment: What would Gene Debs have said about this situation?

### IS YOUR RESUME UP-TO-DATE?

Planned or not, job changes can come abruptly. Barry Schapiro, an outplacement consultant with Swartout Associates in the West Port area, deals with people who have lost their jobs either through corporate upheaval or an outright sacking. It is getting rough out there, Schapiro says.

The days of the gold retirement watch are over, he added, referring to how some American workers are jumping from job to job because of the new realities of the nation's business life.

"Companies these days are simply dealing with finances, and consequently they're treating employees as units of labor. Companies are looking only at the next quarter and the easiest thing to do is to cut staff."

Schapiro suggests that everyone keep a careful record of their on-the-job accomplishments. And every six months, they should rewrite their resumes to include those achievements.

Judy Dubin, president and founder of Career Dimensions in Clayton, believes people are living in a new, depersonalized age, where companies are operating on "leveraged capital" with everything strictly bottomline. "The old ethic is gone, and I think this country is living with very distorted values."

"We are living in an age with companies gobbling up companies, jobs being eliminated for complex financial reasons that no one understands...conditions not present 15 years ago."

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### BACK ISSUES BONUS TO NEW MEMBERS

An incentive to new members joining prior to January 31, 1989 is a free set of all back issues of the *Debs Foundation Newsletter*. The newsletter has been published twice annually for three years, and copies will be sent to new members as supplies last. This is an excellent way to introduce new members to foundation activities, and is an incentive you can use to help us enlarge our membership base. Please pass the word!

**REMINDER: Are Your  
1988 Dues Paid?**

**WE NEED  
YOUR FINANCIAL  
SUPPORT**

### EUGENE V. DEBS FOUNDATION

P.O. BOX 843

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47808

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