

# The Debs Foundation Newsletter

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



FALL, 2002

## JULIAN BOND: Human Rights Activist

This year's designate for the Eugene V. Debs award has had a long and distinguished career as activist, public servant and academician. These diverse activities can mix but rarely do. In the case of Julian Bond they have in numerous and distinctive fashion. Current commitments exhibit that diversity: Distinguished Professor in the School of Government at American University in Washington, D.C., Professor of History at the University of Virginia and, since 1998, Chairperson of the NAACP Board of Directors. Mr. Bond is one whose lectures and writing on the civil rights movement are from both personal experience and his own research. Early activism was in the field of voter rights, and his outspoken antiwar sentiments during Vietnam led the Georgia state legislature to deny him his seat in that deliberative body, action which forced Mr. Bond to seek judicial redress.

Social justice, freedom, antiwar: all very Debsian and why Bond has been selected for this year's Debs award. On this



JULIAN BOND  
*Debs Award Recipient*

occasion of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Debs Foundation we are pleased to have a person of such stature receive the award. Civil rights and personal freedom are under siege today just as they were in 1962. Sure, in many regards we have come a long way since Debs' day, but there constantly are battles which must be joined, generation by generation. We hope that you can join us October 26 in celebrating 40 great years for the Debs Foundation and in honoring the life work of a great contemporary civil rights leader.

## BANQUET OCTOBER 26<sup>th</sup>



CLAYOLA BROWN  
*Keynote Speaker*

The presentation or keynote address will be given by Clayola Brown, who is an International Vice President of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and

Textile Employees (UNITE). She additionally is an Executive Council Vice President of the AFL-CIO, CLC, Director, Department of Civil Rights of UNITE, Manager of Amalgamated Service and Allied industries Joint Board, and has other important civic and business affiliations.

Her numerous awards and honors speak of widespread recognition for her contributions to American society. These honors show special recognition from NAACP, SCLC, New York State CLUW, New York City Central Labor Council, and more than a dozen others.

Known for being an articulate and lively speaker as well as for her leadership abilities, Ms. Brown has been an highly effective spokesperson for social justice. The foundation is delighted to have her as presentation speaker at this year's award banquet.

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## September 11 and Charitable Contributions

To attribute the current decline in charitable giving to 9/11 is in some regards valid, in others a stretch. Sure, a lot of giving seems to have been re-directed to more patriotic causes, and the venerable American Red Cross has been exposed as another of the corporate scandals. On the other hand, charitable giving responds to the state of the economy, which was struggling before 9/11. To this point the Debs Foundation's income and assets have not felt the pinch, but it is too early to tell if giving to the Debs Foundation will dive. The next four months are when the bulk of annual giving is made to us (annual dues, individual contributions, dinner ticket sales, and greetings in the souvenir dinner program).

Although it probably was a long overdue decision, the timing may not have been the best when the foundation chose this year to break the "all volunteer" precedent and employ Karen Brown as Museum Director and Head Curator. Karen is fitting into the responsibilities of her new position and expanding the scope of her activities. Among other projects, she currently is involved in a project which will digitally record all photographs in our extensive collection. The project is being coordinated and assisted by the staff of Rare Books and Special Collections of Indiana State University's Cunningham Library.

There have been other special expenditures recently related to physical preservation of the Debs Home, and we had to dip some into the Endowment Fund to pay for these necessary projects.

So, we are making out financially, but our plea to you is to keep your financial support coming, Please!

### Michael Sullivan Takes Helm



Michael Sullivan

With Jack Sheinkman stepping down after fifteen years as foundation president, the incoming president is Michael Sullivan, President, Sheet Metal Workers International Association. A native Hoosier, third generation union man, longtime admirer of Eugene Debs, and year

2000 recipient of the distinguished Eugene V. Debs Award, Mike is enthusiastic about his new leadership position. His elevation to the position was confirmed at the foundation's Spring, 2002 business meeting. Although his union's headquarters are in Washington,

#### DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Fall 2002

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The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

Box 843

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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*

Woodrow Creason, *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 for is provided elsewhere in this issue.

D.C., the Sullivans still maintain their residence in Indianapolis. The other executive officers—Beasley, Creason, King—look forward enthusiastically to working with Michael Sullivan on the executive team. He has demonstrated excellent leadership qualities in his work with organized labor, and his standing in his union and in the circles of organized labor will equip him to carry on in the tradition of past foundation presidents Gorman, Findley and Sheinkman.

### Jack, We Hate To See You Go!

You have been a great President. You deserve the rest, having remained active in a number of union affairs and as President of the Debs Foundation well beyond the age when most people have become late sleepers, but you will be missed. Jack Sheinkman became President of the foundation in 1987. He has hardly missed an annual award banquet since, and few business meetings.



Jack Sheinkman

Jack's standing in the ranks of organized labor, especially among progressives, has helped to strengthen the support of organized labor for this foundation which honors one of the great pioneers of the labor movement. His wisdom and knowledge was helpful. His energy and fiery rhetoric were inspiring and contagious, and he was willing to become involved in all the foundation's activities.

Jack's resignation became effective with the Spring business meeting in May. We wish him well as he enters into full (or at least fuller) retirement.

## Looking Back, Looking Forward

The Spring issue of this newsletter dealt with the founding of the Eugene V. Debs Foundation and its first 40 years: key players and major accomplishments. It is an enormous and hopeless task to attempt to cover all that is of major importance. There is the danger that key persons and events will be overlooked. Take for instance the new slate shingle roof, installed at the cost of \$25,000, for preservation and keyed to the 100th anniversary of the Home's construction in 1990. The justification for doing all this history is to give recognition where it is due and to inspire others to continue the good work. We try to record the past, but look also to the future, which begins with the present.

It would be impossible to over emphasize the importance of the contributions of those charter members, but the accomplishments of the past 40 years have been the fruits also of a host of additional actors who have come on stage, done their act, and many have then moved on. However, while on stage they all helped make the foundation's success story what it is.

What can be said which does justice to the contribution of such persons as John Laska. John painted the third floor murals which have made the tour of the Debs Home more vivid and meaningful than would otherwise be the case. John also designed both award plaques for the foundation's major awards: The Eugene V. Debs Award, and the Theodore Debs Distinguished Service Award.

The list goes on. There is Ed Spann, whose family for over a decade supported the annual competition for the Bryant Spann Memorial Prize in Literature. Pete and Kathleen Culver for most of these 40 years have been cheerleaders to organized labor for the foundation, and Bob Clouse has done the same at Indiana State University. Oscar Edelman made major donations which

assisted with home renovations, finishing the basement for living quarters for curators, and adding to the endowment fund. Until his death, Tilford Dudley was an indispensable spokesman for the foundation to organized labor, and a host of Indiana AFL-CIO State leaders have lent valuable support. For more than a decade, Dennis Chessier has been our liaison with the UAW, statewide and with Local 662. Dennis never misses a business meeting, and always makes constructive input. The list of ISU faculty who have assisted in various ways include Chris Perry (deceased), Paul Burkett, Gary Daily, Richard Schneirov, and a number of departmental secretaries have given willing assistance with message relays, proofing, etc. And mention must be made of the three men who have lent the prestige of their names and their leadership skills to serve as foundation presidents (Gorman, Findley, Sheinkman). As the foundation moves beyond year 40, it is encouraging to have a new generation labor leader, Michael Sullivan, take over as foundation president. Two of the executive officers are, putting it mildly, not as young and spry as they once were. The creation of a paid position for a Museum Director was seen as a way to ensure some stability and continuity as officers Creason and King become "late sleepers," still eager and willing to do their parts, but feeling the tug also of other desires (travel, family, and just taking it easy a bit).

We whose main contributions have been to the first 40 years of the foundation's life, feel that if we have done our parts well, the next years will be equally fruitful. The persistence of the causes for which Debs struggled—industrial unionism, social justice, and world peace—determine us that it be so.

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**Recycle your  
Newsletter by  
sharing it  
with a friend.**

### NOTE:

The form at right is for 2002 dues or for new members. Year 2003 dues statements will be mailed later in the fall.

### 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

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 officers.



# The Great Cheese Roll (Race)

## *Or, Politics as Usual*

I caught an entertaining segment of "News" on television awhile back. It covered a "competition" (spectacle) held each summer somewhere in England or Scotland. The idea is to chase a ten pound cheese ball down a steep grassy hill, and the person who manages the best time on the hill wins the cheese. It was hilarious. Those grown men ran and, predictably, fell and rolled a lot, limbs flying, but most of them managed to pop up and continue running.

I was reminded of an experience from my somewhat geographically deprived childhood on the South Plains of West Texas. The land is flat, flat, flat. Hardly a break in the monotony, mile after mile. And we country folks had no grassy lawns. We couldn't water it from our windmills, besides, the blowing sand would bury it. Along about the fourth grade our school arranged an educational experience for us to go to Lubbock, and do such things as to visit a small candy factory, and have a picnic in McKinsey State Park. In that park I saw big trees, and the most beautiful steep, grassy hill. I was the undisputed fastest runner in my grade, and I perceived the opportunity to exhibit my running skills on that downhill drag. I slipped off from the group, climbed to the top, took a deep breath, and lit out down that hill. The first four or five steps were fabulous. Whee! I'm flying! But reality set in the next few steps. Oh God! I'm out of control. I can't keep my feet under me and I can't slow down. I can assure you that since that day I have a healthy respect for the dangers in running downhill.

In viewing this spectacle of men running after a cheese ball, and thinking of my own childhood experience with a steep hill, I realized the amount of skill, acquired through extensive practice, displayed by those downhill runners. They made time even on the falls and rolls, and popped up and ran again, most body parts apparently still intact. Those guys were real pros. But then, in an inspired moment, I saw that cheese race as a parody of American political life. Too many Washington politicians never stop running the great cheese race. They soar at times, they stumble and fall at times, but most of them are skillful enough to not drop much behind on the falls and rolls, and they pop up with such skill that, with the help of their spin doctors, the falls appear a planned strategy.

President Bush is a superb cheese racer. So was Bill Clinton, but not Al Gore. Bush can even win a race which he didn't. And his bounce-back skills when he flounders and falls are amazing. Like with the slippery slope of global warming. Bush based his recommendations on the contention that we need "scientific," not biased, studies before we can say there is global warming. For him, all

research so far has been "political." Within months, and the polls showing increased public awareness of the threat of global warming, Bush pops up admitting that the evidence of global warming is conclusive (amazing how quickly his scientists completed their studies). Of course, he hasn't proposed any action (might not be good for the economy), but his words have put him back in the cheese race on this issue. Bush has had his problems on the slippery slope of corporate scandals: cooked books which present loss as profit, and presented millions in bonuses to CEOs. Bush-Cheney really took a bad fall on this one, but Bush didn't stay down. He took a skillful roll with his trip to Wall Street where, all frowns and sternness, he scolded the bad guys. Then he was really up and sprinting, all smiles, with the signing of the Corporate Responsibility Act. Bush may have caught one foot in a prairie dog hole with his decision to suspend payments to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. Although two carefully done independent studies had concluded that no UN family

planning funds were going to China for abortions, the Bush team had its own preconceived ideas, which were shaped by the Religious Right. That decision will haunt him, alienating a majority of American women.

The Democrats also have skillful cheese racers. Dashle and Gephart are among the best. They can virtually take wing when they push for a prescription drug plan not privately managed, aid for American workers displaced by NAFTA, an environmentally sound energy policy, and oppose privatization of social security. Then they stumble on those slippery slopes of the "centrist"

positions which supposedly win elections. They avoid positions which appear "Liberal," and are ready to compromise and thus avoid being labeled obstructionist by team Bush and the so-called liberal press. As of this writing it remains unclear what compromises the cheese runners will make on the homeland security bill. Will all those federal workers be unionized? How much homeland security will Bush be able to privatize?

Maybe it won't make you a more informed voter to think of politics as a cheese roll, but a sense of humor never hurts, especially when you have to fight the urge to not bother to vote, given the choices. But you also can examine how they take the steep slopes. Do they fall and roll in ways which suggest that the big cheese has been so divided up in ever smaller pieces during the falls and rolls that the whole cheese has been given away? Don't vote for that kind. I say, on to the world-class cheese roll this November.



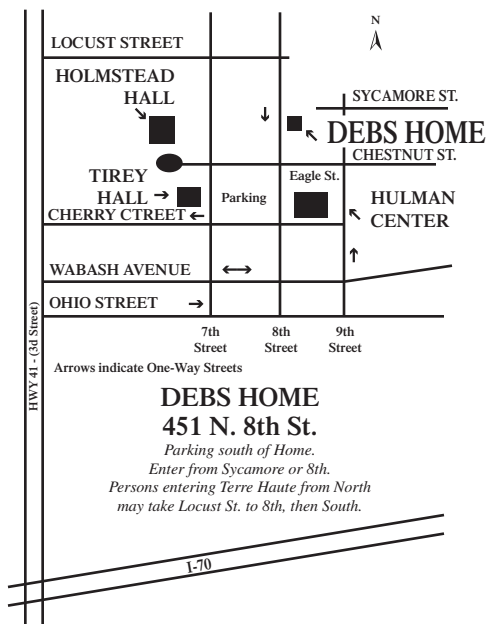
## 2002

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Afternoon

## Evening

The fall business meeting will be Sunday, October 27  
at 9:0 a.m. at the Debs Home



*Parking is free in lot shared by Hulman Center and Tirey Hall.*

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 of this page to provide name, \$20 or \$30 listing (include message) and if attending the banquet. You have double the reasons to send greetings this year: (1) to honor Julian Bond, and (2) to recognize the foundation's 40th anniversary.

## NOTE

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

Chicken Dijonnaise Number

Baked Trout	Number
-------------	--------

Name \_\_\_\_\_

$$\frac{\text{number of tickets}}{\text{X}} \times \$25 = \$ \frac{\text{amount enclosed}}{\text{ }}$$

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, 821-237-3443

## In Praise of Firemen

It is highly appropriate that any reflections on the events of 9/11 should include tribute to the NYFD members for the high price paid in the course of doing what they are trained to do. They did it in heroic fashion, many paying with their lives, other suffered perhaps permanent damage to their respiratory systems from the inhalation of noxious fumes. Firefighting has always been dangerous work, in city or in forest, and no less so in Debs time. Debs' familiarity with the dangers in railroad work would have inclined him to be concerned for the dangers inherent in many kinds of work, including fire fighting.

Eugene Debs wrote an interesting letter in 1890 which shows his humane concern for the families of firemen. Debs letter, dated April 1, 1890, is to his close friend, James Whitcomb Riley, inviting Riley to participate in a fundraiser to benefit the families of Indianapolis firemen who recently had perished in the line of duty. The letter shows not only Debs genuine concern for workers and their families; it also dates for us when the Debs Home was built. The letter to the famous Hoosier poet follows:

*My Dear Riley:*

*I write to ask if it will be agreeable for you to be here Tuesday evening the 8th to participate in an entertainment to be given **for the benefit of the families of the Indianapolis firemen who recently perished at their post.** (emphasis added) The undertaking is a most laudable one and **all Terre Haute** (emphasis his) wants to see you.*

*Besides, I want you as my guest for a day or two or as much longer as you can stay-- We have **lately moved into our new home** (emphasis added) and nothing would afford us more pleasure than to have you visit us-- Mrs. Debs joins me cordially in extending this invitation. The visit will do you good and we will enjoy ourselves together-- Please answer soon as I leave on Thursday night for the East, returning on Tuesday.*

*Yours Always,  
E.V. Debs (signed)*

## Citings

### White House Global Warming Plan

Simply put, an effective global warming policy should aim at cutting global warming pollution. But the Bush plan substitutes a different goal altogether: reducing "emissions intensity" — the amount of carbon dioxide pollution relative to economic growth. This so-called indicator is not only irrelevant, it is intentionally misleading. As long as economic growth is outpacing carbon dioxide increases, then emissions intensity will be falling — giving the reassuring but false appearance of pollution improvement. The last decade is a perfect example. From 1990 to 2000, robust economic growth caused emissions intensity to fall—even though carbon dioxide emissions were rapidly rising.

The White House plan promises more of the same. While the rest of the industrialized world has committed to reducing actual/ emissions to near 1990 levels, the Bush approach will allow Americans to pump so much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere we will exceed our 1990 levels by 30 percent in the year 2012. But thanks to the miracle of accounting, we'll be able to point with pride to a decrease in emissions intensity.

Source: David Hawkins, in *Nature's Voice*,  
May/June 2002