

The Debs Foundation Newsletter

PO BOX 9454 ■ TERRE HAUTE INDIANA 47808-9454



FALL 2019

Mary Kay Henry to Receive 2019 Debs Award



Mary Kay Henry will accept the 2019 Debs Award on behalf of SEIU this Sept. 28th

In 2010, **Mary Kay Henry** became the first woman to be elected the President of the Service Employees International Union. Born in the late 1950s near Detroit, Michigan, she grew up deeply influenced by her religious faith in freedom for all and surrounded by a vibrant culture of fighting for social justice based in strong unions and effective community organizing. While in college at Michigan State University, she was a volunteer lobbyist for a grassroots group. Following graduation, she joined SEIU as a researcher in 1980.

For many years she served SEIU in the state of California helping the union to pioneer the use of card check agreements, non-traditional collective bargaining agreements, comprehensive campaigns and system-wide health care organizing strategies. With her leadership as President, the two million member union has won major victories by strengthening and uniting healthcare, property services and public sector workers in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

With a clear understanding that the best defense is a strong offense, Mary Kay personally prioritized the Fight for \$15 campaign as a key component in resisting the ongoing attacks on the rights and benefits of all workers and especially those in the fast food industry. Initially targeting the McDonald's corporation,

the Fight for \$15 campaign is now a global movement of activists and organizers representing low wage workers in every economic sector in the struggle to obtain living wages and the right to form unions. The award plaque will be presented to Mary Kay by leaders of the Fight for \$15.

Her courage, determination and accomplishments are hallmarks in perpetuating the legacy of Eugene V. Debs. With imagination and creativity, Mary Kay has broken down barriers in uniting those who struggle to achieve healthcare for all, to secure the rights of immigrants and to guarantee safety and justice for communities of color and of the LGBTQ movement.



Mary Kay Henry addresses the crowd at a rally for United Healthcare Workers

The Foundation is pleased continue its tradition of highlighting those who are bold and effective in exposing and helping to correct the vast injustices heaped upon the overwhelming majority of those who live in the United States by a shrinking minority of corrupt, venal individuals. The time of reckoning draws closer every day.

Banquet Musical Performance by Magpie

Terry Leonino and **Greg Artzner** started out in Kent, Ohio, in September of 1973. They moved to Washington, D.C., the following year. After being regular stalwarts of the folk music scene there for 34 years, they moved to upstate New York where they live now.

Terry grew up listening to the music in her family, both the Ital-

ian music played by her paternal grandfather and the country and jazz sung by her mother and her aunts and cousins on her mother's side of the family. Her voice is a beautiful and impressive instrument, not only because of its natural power, but also because of her versatility. She is a gifted singer of jazz and blues, but is equally comfortable with the subtle beauty of traditional folk and contemporary songs.

Greg came up listening to folk on record and singing along all the while. The popular folk music of the revival in the 50s and 60s caught his ear and imagination. At an early age, he was hooked and took to the guitar, listening

and learning not only the music, but going back to explore its roots. More than 50 years later, Greg is an outstanding guitarist, whose finger-style approach

owes a lot to a wide range of influences and is the solid basis of Magpie's sound.

With a career that has spanned more than forty years, Magpie has traveled the globe, bringing its unique sound and breathtaking versatility to audiences everywhere. From traditional songs to vintage blues, swing and country to folk classics to contemporary and stirring original compositions, they cover a lot of musical ground. With their powerful voices and harmonies and their excellent instrumental arrangements on guitars, mandolin, harmonica, dulcimer, and concertina, their sound is much bigger than just two people. Award-winning recording artists, songwriters, musical his-



Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino are Magpie

torians, and social activists, Terry and Greg always promise a presentation that is highly entertaining as well as provocative and deeply moving.

EUGENE V. DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Fall 2019

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Box 9454
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The Debs Foundation Newsletter is published twice yearly for distribution to supporters 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 supporters, a donation form is provided elsewhere in this issue.

Museum Director's Report

Allison Duerk

"Solidarity is Victory." "Injustice — great or small — must be challenged." "Speak out or accept your fate." "Workers' rights are human rights." These are just a few of the dozens of notes left on the idea board in the foyer of the Debs Museum. Over the last year, museum visitors moved by Debs' ideas have left short notes to answer the question "How do Debs' words speak to you today?" Be sure to leave your own note during your next museum visit. As we build new programs to keep the Debs legacy alive, these notes signal that his spirit of solidarity continues to inspire a new generation of organizers and change-makers.

While history students at Indiana State University often tour the museum, faculty from programs varying from English to Communications to Elementary Education included class tours in their spring semester courses. Thanks in part to these growing audiences, visitor attendance continues to reach new heights. The Unity Study

(continued on next page)

Museum Director's Report

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Circle also continues to meet in the museum library to explore Debs' numerous writings and speeches. Our July meeting connects Debs to another Hoosier, Kurt Vonnegut, in preparation for a guest lecture by **Chris Lafave**, curator at the Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library in Indianapolis. This lecture on July 24th will focus on Vonnegut's novel *Jailbird*; find details at debsfoundation.org.



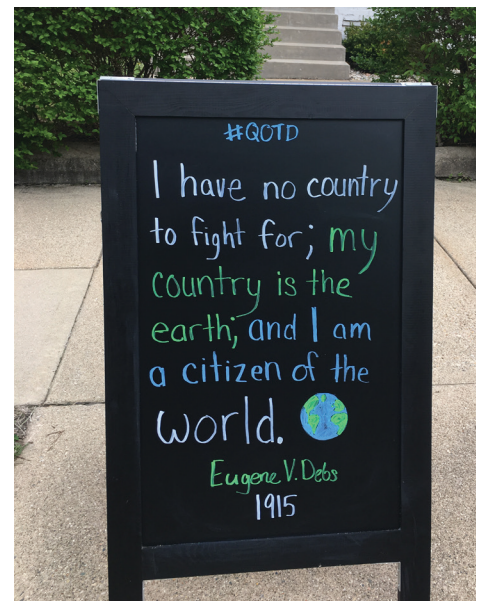
Author Jack Kelly describes the power of solidarity during this year's Debs Day celebration

Stormy weather couldn't prevent us from enjoying another successful Debs Day on June 15th. Long-time supporter **John S. Morahn** commenced a full day of programming with a presentation of new research on the neighbors who once surrounded 451 North 8th. Visiting author **Jack Kelly** discussed and signed copies of his compelling new book *The Edge of Anarchy: The Railroad Barons, the Gilded Age, and the Greatest Labor Uprising in America* (see **Noel Beasley's** review in the Spring 2019 newsletter). Copies of *The Edge of Anarchy* are now available in the museum's gift shop. Debs Day concluded with

a participatory reading of *Liberty*, the speech that Debs delivered to some 100,000 union supporters following his release from Woodstock Jail. Debs had just completed a six-month jail sentence for leading the Pullman Strike 125 years ago this summer.

Other recent events included a well-attended book signing with historian **Paul Buhle**. His latest work, *Eugene V. Debs: A Graphic Biography* is also available in the gift shop. Visiting Croatian scholar **Ivica Šute** presented a guest lecture on Southeastern European peasant culture in April. Students and community members also attended a series of women's history themed tours of the museum for International Women's Day and the Women's History Month Colloquium at Indiana State University.

Remember to keep up with day-to-day museum activities on Facebook (@EugeneVDebsFoundation) along with Instagram and Twitter (@DebsMuseum). Many thanks to our committed team of volunteer docents who help ensure uninterrupted daily operations at the museum. The volunteer docent team is always growing — community mem-



Debs quotes are hitting the pavement — and the internet.

More than 600 Facebook users shared this one from our page, @EugeneVDebsFoundation.

bers interested in joining should contact me at allison.duerk@debsfoundation.org. Finally, my heartfelt appreciation goes to **Jack Hayth**, our summer intern from Ball State University. Jack has been an asset to the Debs Museum and will be missed when their internship concludes in August.



Thanks to all volunteers who helped beautify the museum grounds at our spring work day.

Secretary's Report

Michelle K. Morahn

With so many events in the first half of 2019, we can't wait to see where we go from here! As Allison mentioned in her article, the Foundation continues to expand our outreach and create new collaborations. Looking ahead to 2020, we are partnering with ISU to secure an Indiana Humanities Grant for upcoming programs. Also, thanks to Board members **Wes Bishop**, **Lisa Phillips** and **Nancy Gabin**, plans are in the works for an academic conference in November 2020 to honor the 100th anniversary of Debs' historic 5th run for the presidency. All these events will be free and open to the public. We invite you to watch the website for details.

This fall's banquet will feature a full weekend of activities, beginning on Friday evening, September 27. At 7pm will be the premiere screening of the WFYI documentary, *"The Revolutionist: Eugene V. Debs"* which will then be available to PBS stations across the nation. The film will be shown in ISU's University Hall Theatre (the former Lab School for you old-timers). A reception and social hour will follow. Details will be posted on the website. For those of you on Twitter, WFYI had begun promotion of the documentary using the hashtag **#DoYouKnowDebs**. Or visit their website <https://twitter.com/wfyi/status/1143550417642504192/photo/1>.

On Saturday, September 28th, events begin at 10 am with our annual graveside memorial service at Gene and Kate's grave in Highland Lawn cemetery on the East side of Terre Haute. At noon we will mark the 40th anniversary of the Laska Murals in the Museum. Our intern, **Jack Hayth**, is collecting oral history stories, so please contact us if you have any memories of the artist or his work on the murals. We'd love to have your input.

Our Debs award recipient Mary Kay Henry will meet the public to discuss a short film about the Fight for \$15, followed by a question and answer session at the ISU Library Events Area from 2-4pm. This is free and open to the public, so invite your friends and comrades to see why the Fight for \$15 is so important.

The day will conclude with our annual banquet and award presentation. Details are found in the newsletter. The board meeting will be on Sunday morning after the banquet.

At the Spring Board of Directors meeting, it was agreed to allow the officers to pursue restoration of the house. We are pleased to announce we have updated the security system, which was a top priority. We will continue to update members on our progress on the house.

Thanks to all who have supported us with their time, talent or treasure. Everyone working together for the betterment of all was Debs' message and we continue to strive to keep this message alive.

Meet Our 2019 Summer Intern

Jack Hayth

As a public history major, I needed the opportunity to learn the real world skills necessary to be able to bring history, so long in the hands of the few, to the masses of the public. I was thrilled when I met Allison and managed to receive an internship here at the Debs House.

I am a Hoosier born, raised, and educated in Muncie, Indiana, a town much like Terre Haute, and have had a long interest in working class and political history, stemming from my own time organizing my community along radical lines. While here at the museum I am conducting two projects, the first of which is an oral history interview with Loren Laska, the son of John Laska, in an attempt to preserve the human element of the fabulous murals in the attic of the house. Secondly, I am planning and building an exhibit in an unused space in the house to outline the Debs ideal of prison abolition and how it continues to relate and resonate today just as strongly — if not stronger — today.

I am eternally thankful for the opportunity to intern here and feel the solidarity that resonates through the space itself and through my work hopefully a lasting impression will be made of that solidarity.

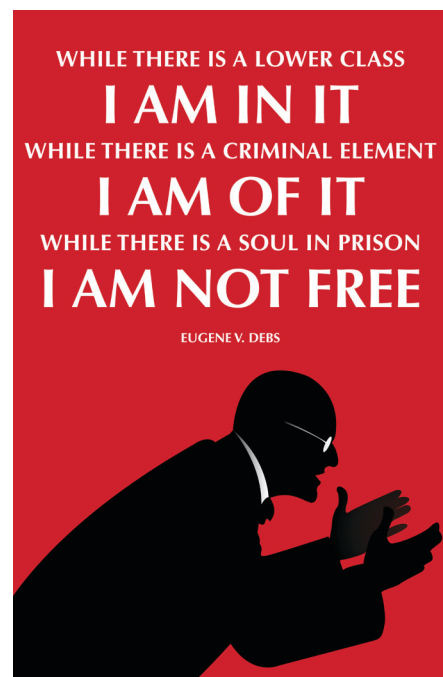


Jack Hayth will finish their Summer internship in August.

Banquet Schedule of Events

September 27-28, 2019

- 7 pm** | **WFYI Documentary Premiere.** Join us at ISU's University Hall Theatre for a screening of the new WFYI documentary *"The Revolutionist: Eugene V. Debs"*. A reception and social hour will follow.
- 10 am** | **Graveside ceremony at Highland Lawn Cemetery,** East Wabash Ave in Terre Haute, to honor Eugene and Kate Debs.
- 12 noon** | **40th Anniversary of Laska Murals.** Join us in celebrating the anniversary of the beautiful and moving murals by John Laska that grace the walls and ceilings of the museum's 3rd floor at 451 N 8th Street.
- 2 pm** | **Fight for \$15 Film Screening.** This year's award recipient, Mary Kay Henry, will discuss a short film about the Fight for \$15 minimum wage campaign at the ISU Library Events Area.
- 6 pm** | **Social hour preceding the annual banquet.** Sycamore Banquet Center, 218 N. 6th Street, Terre Haute. Banquet tickets and an area map are available at our website.
- 7 pm** | **Banquet featuring 2019 Debs award recipient Mary Kay Henry.** The award will be presented by workplace leaders of the Fight for \$15 campaign. Banquet tickets required.



New poster available from the museum gift shop!



Debs Foundation Event Planned for Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library Banned Books Week

Mark Haworth

Every year in September, the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library commemorates Banned Books Week, an annual event celebrating the freedom to read and spotlighting current and historical attempts to censor books in libraries and schools. This year, on Wednesday September 25th, The Debs Foundation will be hosting an evening program during this event.

Museum Director **Allison Duerk** will present an overview of the Debs Museum and Foundation; Secretary **Micki Morahn** will provide a biographical sketch of Eugene Debs; Board Member and former Debs Fellow **Wes Bishop** will provide historical context and discuss the struggle for free speech around W.W.I. with a concentration on the Canton, OH, speech along with its aftermath; and Board Member, Mark Haworth, will discuss Eugene Debs in the writings of Kurt Vonnegut and present Vonnegut's acceptance speech for the 1981 Eugene V. Debs Award. Following these presentations will be a panel discussion and audience Q&A.

The event will be held at 6:00 PM ET in the new KVML facility located at 543 Indiana Ave, Indianapolis, IN, 46202 near the Madame Walker Theater. Check our website at debsfoundation.org for updates as plans are finalized and if you are in the area, please try and attend what promises to be an informative and exciting evening at the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library.

Eugene V. Debs Award Banquet Ticket Order Form

\$43 per ticket, Table of 8 is \$280 ■ Students K-College ½ Price

Purchase Tickets Online at: www.debsfoundation.org

Name _____

Total Amount Enclosed _____

Please indicate your meal preference: {
Chicken _____
Vegetarian _____
Number Number

Tickets must be paid in advance, checks payable to:
Eugene V. Debs Foundation ■ PO Box 9454 ■ Terre Haute, IN ■ 47808

Your reservation will be recorded and honored at the door.

Inquiries may be directed to Benjamin Kite at 202-538-2845, or
by email: banquet-information@debsfoundation.org



PO Box 9454
Terre Haute, IN 47808-9454

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Personal Program Greeting

Name Only \$20.00 _____

Name and Greeting \$30.00 _____

Name(s) and Greeting:

Greetings will appear in the banquet program book, either including your name only or your name and a brief greeting (20 words max). Copies of the program book will be furnished upon request.

Greetings must be received by September 10th.

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The Eugene V. Debs Foundation is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit educational organization. Your contributions are tax-deductible. The Foundation owns and maintains the Eugene V. Debs Home and Museum and offers educational and cultural programs.

Your Continued Support Makes It Possible!