

# Global Peace Services USA

*...an idea whose time has come*

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## *Greetings from John Eriksson, President, GPS USA*

*This issue of the GPS Newsletter opens with a remembrance and a celebration of the life of a GPS Founding Member, Sr. Mary Evelyn Jegen, SND (1928-2014), written lovingly by former GPS Board Member, Clara Doyle of McLean, VA. This is followed by an informative and thoughtful article by Lauren Hess, "Born-Frees Working to Transform South Africa." Lauren is a young South African woman who is committed to finding workable solutions to inequalities of all kinds, with a special focus on race relations. She is currently in her second year of study at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Philosophy and Economics. Committed to community engagement, she has worked on various social justice projects around the world, ranging from clearing alien vegetation at an eco-farm in Johannesburg to assisting at a pop-up AIDS clinic in Nairobi. Lauren has served on the Executive Committee of the United Nations Association of South Africa (Stellenbosch Chapter), is a team member on the South Africa-Washington International Program and an Allan Gray Candidate Fellow, which all facilitate her personal, academic and entrepreneurial growth.*

*An interlude follows consisting of a poignant poem, "On Receiving News of the War," written by Isaac Rosenberg, a casualty of WW I, and introduced with a biographical note by Board Member Mindy Reiser. Concluding this issue is a book review by John Eriksson of "Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality," by Danielle Allen.*

*GPS has embarked on a potentially mutually rewarding relationship with the American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE). A paper by GPS Board Member, Robert Muscat, "Peace and Conflict: Engineering Challenges and Opportunities," was discussed at an Engineering Ethics session at the June 2014 ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition in Indianapolis. John Eriksson then presented the paper, augmented by his experience in Sri Lanka, at the ASEE North Midwest Section Conference at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, October 17, 2014. GPS participation is being discussed or planned at other selected ASEE section regional conferences, as well as at the national June 2015 Annual Conference & Exposition in Seattle. The Newsletter will report more extensively on further developments.*

*We are delighted to announce the inception of "Peace Dispatch" — a monthly e-mail highlighting books, articles, films, conferences and other events with a focus on the varied dimensions of peacemaking and peacebuilding. If we have your e-mail address, you should have received our inaugural Dispatch in your Inbox. If not, please send your e-mail address to us at: [globalpeaceservicesusa@gmail.com](mailto:globalpeaceservicesusa@gmail.com). We welcome your feedback on this new initiative.*

# Mary Evelyn Jegen, SND

February 15, 1928 – July 4, 2014

*Requiescat in pace*

Mary Evelyn Jegen, SND, was teaching in the Education for Parish Service (EPS) program out of Trinity College in Washington, DC, when I first met her. She invited her class in Moral Theology to a convocation on the Trinity campus on March 27, 1999. The convocation, “Building Blocks for Peace Service,” brought together experts and interested persons to share ideas and experiences about education and training for peace service.

*“Global Peace Services-USA. . . An idea whose time has come.”*

That one-day introduction to Peace Service, as an alternative to military service and war, so excited and interested me; I quickly joined the newly incorporated organization, Global Peace Services USA (GPS-USA). After two years of planning and development, these new GPS-USA Board members (Mary Evelyn Jegen, John Eriksson, Tricia Sullivan, Mindy Reiser, and Harry Yeide) were going to offer an opportunity for education and skills-training toward the goal of a professional body of peacemakers.

*“There are times when a person has to rush off in pursuit of hopefulness.”* – Jean Giono

“Peace Power 2000: Training Peacemakers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” was held at Centro Maria in Washington DC in June, 2000. Twenty-eight participants with a wide range of backgrounds and ages came from 14 states and the District of Columbia. This pilot project with its four modules led by the hard-working Board members began the development of a sound curriculum for peace service. Sr. Mary Evelyn Jegen’s international experience in curriculum development lighted the way. Throughout the four 6 day weeks of classes, the guest speakers, the well-chosen videos, the pertinent reading and the significant field trips addressed the many forms of violence present in the world. When I revisit recollections of Peace Power 2000 today, the program still conjures up a tingling sensation within me as I remember the joy of those experiences, the shared learning, communal living and wonderful conversations during meals.

*“You cannot – simultaneously – prevent and prepare for war.”* – Albert Einstein

While serving on the GPS Board, Mary Evelyn was also an editor for the organization’s newsletter. In the organization’s March 2003 issue, her article, “*What is Peace Service?*” argued that we must provide a credible

alternative to war. War is an unnecessary evil that needs to be replaced by better ways of providing defense and security. Civil society can invent and then systematize a working alternative to war service, which we can call peace service. Mary Evelyn proposes that peace is a quality of relationships. The essential characteristics of peace service are a willingness to let go of past injuries in order to create a new and better relationship, a commitment to promote the common good, and a habit of reflection. I hear Mary Evelyn saying these words today as clearly as when they first awoke in me the vision of a nonviolent world.

*“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”* – Lao-tzu

Mary Evelyn Jegen, SND, journeyed many thousands of miles in her lifetime as teacher and mentor for an entire generation of peace activists. She was an assistant professor in the History Department at the University of Dayton when she took the “single step” that changed her life. Some students had asked her help when they wanted to file for conscientious objection to military service. She took this issue to prayer and her heart was opened to a new call, a call for peace through nonviolence. “They converted me,” she said. “I remember the date and hour of my decision. I was on retreat, and I said to myself: “This is where I stand. From now on I work for peace.” And so she did work for peace for the rest of her long and productive life. The work must go on.

At the conclusion of her obituary written by her religious order, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, it says: “A woman who lived what she taught. A paraphrase of Proverbs 3:17 might summarize her life: “*Her ways were pleasant ways, and all her ways were peace.*”

To read a complete accounting of Mary Evelyn’s life and accomplishments, go to the obituary on the website of her religious order, the Sisters of Notre Dame: [www.sndohio.org/sisters-notre-dame/blog/6358](http://www.sndohio.org/sisters-notre-dame/blog/6358)

The Pax Christi USA web site also has many tributes to Mary Evelyn Jegen.

Clara M. Doyle

# Born-Frees Working to Transform South Africa

## Introduction

On the 11th of February 1990, Nelson Mandela stood on the balcony of City Hall in Cape Town, facing the masses of supporters who had gathered on the Grand Parade to welcome him as a free man after almost three decades of imprisonment. He greeted the crowds in the name of “peace, democracy and freedom for all” and urged those gathered to continue as these goals were almost in sight. Among those in the crowd stood my parents. As Mandela gave his speech to the thousands gathered on the Parade, my mother gave a marginally more private speech to my father. “I think I am ready to have children in this country now,” she said.

In June of 1994, barely two months after South Africa’s first democratic elections took place, an overly eager baby was born: me. With that, the arbitrary year of my birth and that of my country became a binding force; identifying me and those born to our newly democratic society as born-frees. The baton has now been passed on to this new generation and as we continue to deal with the remnants of our oppressive and segregated past, it is up to us to fully realise the economic and social freedoms of our fellow citizens for whom only political freedom is currently a reality.

This article aims to highlight projects with which I and other born-frees are currently involved, in an attempt to bring about social justice within contemporary South African society. The anecdotes and experiences offered within this article are just that; subjective, day-to-day experiences of those working in grassroots organizations to affect change.

## Institutional influence

As a student, my university, the University of Stellenbosch\* plays an extensive role in my life — both in and out of lecture time. My university is an historically white institution in whose hallowed halls the foundations of apartheid were laid and which catered only to elite members of the white Afrikaner community during the days of apartheid. Partially due to reality and partially due to perception, the university remains largely white as many students of colour find it difficult to envision themselves at such an institution. Although

apartheid legislation is long gone, the history and ‘feel’ of the university continues to haunt many born-frees.

This is why many community engagement projects facilitated by the university and student societies on campus address not only skills shortages through efforts such as numeracy or literacy projects, but attempt to address something even deeper: perceptions within the communities surrounding the university. The United Nations Association of South Africa Stellenbosch Chapter (UNASA-SU) plays an integral role in connecting students across race, class and gender through such projects. There are many other community engagement societies on campus such as Funda Fundisa, which offers tutoring to high school students in Kayamandi —the nearby historically disadvantaged largely Xhosa township — and Golden Key International Honour Society, which prides itself in developing its academically excellent members into impactful, active citizens through various projects, but as the largest community engagement society on campus, and the one with which I have the most experience, I will focus on the work of UNASA-SU.

UNA Chapters in South Africa are unique in that they are based at universities and are therefore predominantly student-run, with guidance from the national body. While each UNASA Chapter tries to fulfil its entire mandate to run projects which facilitate all eight UN Millennium Development Goals, many have honed their focus onto certain aspects. For example, UNASA-SU is known for its focus on community development, while UNASA-UCT (the University of Cape Town Chapter), with its recognized strength in diplomacy, regularly holds a Model United Nations and assists UNASA-SU in building its own capacity to one day soon hold its own Model United Nations.

UNASA-SU enjoys a large member-base of about 300 students and, as all other student societies, is run by an executive committee that is elected by these members on an annual basis at the Annual General Meeting. These individuals are then tasked with the successful running, organization and evaluation of the projects, assisted by project managers. These projects have been in operation for a number of years and are managed by succeeding student cohorts in order to maintain sustainable and impactful relationships with the communities within

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\* The University of Stellenbosch, whose origins date back to 1886, is a public research university located in the town of Stellenbosch, some 45 miles from Cape Town, in the heart of the South Africa’s well known wine-making region. The

university, established by the Afrikaner community, for many years had Afrikaans as its language of instruction, but increasingly uses English in lectures and examinations. Some 28,000 students attend the university, which has ten faculties.

which they operate. The projects which Stellenbosch University's UNASA currently runs are: the Reading Project, the Swimming Project, Schools and University Model United Nations (MUN) and a mentoring programme in collaboration with the university's community engagement office. The collaborative nature of these projects is reflected both in funding, which is a combination of membership fees (R100 per student per year — about US \$9.50), support from the university, and from UNASA-SU through diverse fundraising efforts it has been able to secure. The university and its surrounding communities serve as a vital support structure for the success of such efforts as our Reading Project, based in Kayamandi's community centre, and the basic swimming skills course, taught to Kayamandi children in our province's best girls' swimming school.

While fellow volunteers and I may be painting murals with children from Kayamandi or helping them with their latest English comprehension, our presence is not only focused on these activities. To me, these interactions represent endless possibilities. The possibility that one day the student population of my university may realistically represent the demographics of the country. The possibility that the children of farm workers and farm owners can study alongside one another; truly recognising one another as equals. The possibility that the idea of tertiary education (especially at my university) does not remain a far-off concept that is 'for other people.'

Bridging the psychological gap that exists within South African society is an area that often goes unnoticed in the attempt to provide more tangible forms of support. While in no way undermining the importance of level playing fields in terms of opportunity, economic and social support, in my experience, even with extensive material support, one must prepare students to deal with the subtle onslaught of institutionalized racism and classism that seeks to make them feel inferior on a daily basis — a phenomenon that is not unique to South African society. The core insight of Steve Biko's Black Consciousness movement, which believed that "the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed," remains as relevant now as it was during the repressive period of the 1980s. Without this intervention in thinking, students from marginalized backgrounds will face daily uphill battles and, at worst, are doomed to fail.

### **Mutually beneficial engagement**

While marginalized communities are often characterized as 'takers' who benefit from the 'makers' within more privileged communities, to place a community in any one of these boxes would be short-sighted. In the most constructive forms of community engagement, a

relationship is formed whereby a system of mutual benefit can exist. As the children I have worked with improve their comprehension skills and start to consider tertiary education as an attainable goal, through engaging with them I am constantly made aware of the reality of what it means to be a born-free without tangible freedoms, to be a born-free whose living conditions still bear a striking resemblance to those experienced under the apartheid regime. These often far-removed realities provide a fresh insight for university students, the overwhelming majority of whom come from extremely privileged backgrounds. As one of the Reading Project volunteers, Felix Debray, commented, "It [Kayamandi] changes the usual boundaries of the university which is relatively restricted in terms of social heterogeneity, and is not representative at all of our South African environment." Such experiences ground one in the reality of why and how social justice initiatives have the ability to play an integral role in development of our fledgling democracy.

The fact that there can be born-frees like these among us is what compels me and other volunteers to do what we can to ensure that South Africa reaches its full human potential. UNASA-SU Vice President, Chloë Kilgour, shared that she had found the experience in the organization's project work "enriching, humbling, and necessary" which "all South Africans should encounter." Through various organisations and community engagement programs, I have had the privilege of learning not only from these communities, but from my fellow volunteers such as Lorato Modongo, head of the Reading Project for 2013/2014, who remarked that, "We must not wait for the next person for development, but must take initiative and inspire others to serve their communities." As our efforts continue to follow an holistic approach (focusing on tangible skill transfers as well as empowerment) within the implementation of our community engagement projects and other social justice initiatives, I am confident that we are forging the path to an even more vibrant nation. Being surrounded by such committed, inspirational young people allows me to take comfort (as every South African should) in the fact that we are doing just fine. There are more great things to come from our nation — and soon!

Lauren Hess

# Remembering the Outbreak of the First World War

In 2014, as armed conflicts across the globe continue to flare — consuming lives, shattering communities and spewing forth toxins of hatred — we recall that 100 years ago, the world was consumed in a lethal war whose ravages helped set the stage for even greater carnage to come. The June 1914 assassination in Sarajevo of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, set in motion a deadly cascade of events which left more than 16 million soldiers and civilians dead in November 1918 at the end of what came to be called World War I or the Great War.

Governments and non-governmental organizations throughout the world have been reflecting on this fateful centennial through diverse events and activities. Bobbie Stewart, a lifelong activist for peace and social justice and member of Global Peace Services, participated in such a commemoration held at the Goethe Institut in Washington, DC in September. Bobbie shared with us the poem she read at this gathering. The work, *On Receiving News of the War*, was written in Cape Town, South Africa in 1914 by Isaac Rosenberg, who was then

23 years old. Rosenberg, born in Bristol, England to Lithuanian Jewish parents who had emigrated to the United Kingdom a few years earlier, was in South Africa to recover his health. The young man, gifted in both painting and poetry, composed the poem on learning of the onset of the war while living in the midst of the South African winter season — summer, then, in Europe when the war was officially declared.

Isaac Rosenberg returned to England in 1915 and concerned about financial support for his mother, enlisted in the military. Sent to France, he served 21 months in deadly trench warfare, and while at the front, composed what came to be known as his trench poems — written on what scraps of paper he could find. Acknowledged as one of England's finest young war poets, Isaac Rosenberg was killed in battle in Somme, France on April 1, 1918 during the German spring offensive.

Mindy Reiser

## On Receiving News of the War Isaac Rosenberg

**Snow is a strange white word.  
No ice or frost  
Has asked of bud or bird  
For Winter's cost.**

**Yet ice and frost and snow  
From earth to sky  
This Summer land doth know.  
No man knows why.**

**In all men's hearts it is.  
Some spirit old  
Hath turned with malign kiss  
Our lives to mould.  
Red fangs have torn His face.  
God's blood is shed.  
He mourns from His lone place  
His children dead.**

**O! ancient crimson curse!  
Corrode, consume.  
Give back this universe  
Its pristine bloom.**

# *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality*

by Danielle Allen

A Book Review

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator by certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, — That to secure these, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, . . .

(from the Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America, July 4, 1776)

The Declaration of Independence has been called “America’s cardinal text” (David M. Kennedy, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian). This book explains why. What particularly attracted me was its title. I hoped it might help illuminate the current debate about growing economic inequality and its implications for our social fabric and the peaceful resolution of conflict within our borders. The fact that the book was written by an African American woman who holds a chair at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University added to my interest, but was not my initial or prime motivation.

I was also intrigued by the book’s title because, as the author, Danielle Allen, observes at several junctures, Americans tend to view freedom and equality as opposing concepts. Moreover, Allen views media and other forms of social and political discourse as having focused on freedom at the expense of equality in recent years. Given my interest in the economic dimension of equality and inequality, I felt somewhat let down when the author explicitly did not deal with economic equality. But I was not disappointed. Allen examines what she terms “political equality” in great depth and comes to what was for me the rather astounding conclusion that not only did the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 stress political equality, but that the liberty and freedom that many have seen as the *core* of the Declaration, is not possible without political equality and vice-versa. In other words, freedom is not possible without political equality and political equality is not possible without freedom.

The book is extremely carefully researched and referenced. The author parses and analyzes every line, and at times, every word, of the 1,337 word Declaration. She also explores some of the key contextual elements, including the work of the so-called “Committee of Five” whose members were John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, Robert Livingston of New York, and Roger Sherman of Connecticut. Allen pays special attention to Adams and Jefferson who were charged by the Continental Congress with producing a first draft of the Declaration, as well as undertaking a fascinating

exploration of the independent imprint of some of the inscribers and printers of the Declaration.

Allen finds that by adding or deleting punctuation marks, emphases and capitalizations, the meanings and emphases of the Declaration were altered in subtle ways. She introduces the reader to Timothy Matlack of Philadelphia, a clerk to the Continental Congress who was given the task of inscribing the Declaration on parchment, and tells of two other printers who liberally used capitalization of entire words and other punctuation in printing the Declaration. Allen finds the most significant impact of these quasi-interpreters to be Matlock’s capitalization of “We” in the middle of the ninth sentence of the Declaration: “*in every stage of these Oppressions We have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms.*” She sees the seed of collective democratic views and actions in this “We,” as in “We the people” and also views this and other instances as evidence that the Declaration is a people’s document that has its origins beyond the Continental Congress.

In order to appreciate the author’s argument, it is helpful to cite a passage that delineates five facets of equality that Allen finds supported in the Declaration. The passage provides some insight into how the author defines political equality and how she discerns the role that it plays in the Declaration of Independence.

“There are five facets of the ideal equality for which the Declaration argues. The first facet, as we are about to see, describes the kind of equality that exists when neither of two parties can dominate the other. The second concerns the importance to human kind of having equal access to the tool of government, the most important instrument each of us has for securing the future. Something has gone wrong when, as scholars have recently shown, policy outcomes routinely track the stated preferences of the affluent but not those of the middle class or the poor. The third facet concerns the value of egalitarian approaches to the development of collective intelligence. Experts are most valuable when they work hand in hand with a well-educated general population capable of supplying useful social knowledge to deliberations.

The fourth facet concerns egalitarian practices of reciprocity. How well do citizens do at thinking of themselves as receiving benefactions from their fellow citizens and owing them benefits in return? And the fifth facet has to do with the equality entailed in sharing ownership of public life and in co-creating our common world. When we worry, for instance, that young people don't vote or are apathetic, we recognize that we've failed to cultivate in them a sense of having an equal ownership stake in what we make together. "

To do justice to the author's conclusions regarding the support that she finds for her argument in the Declaration would require virtually reproducing the book here.

Suffice it to say that Allen analyzes in great depth how the Declaration treats each of the facets of equality and argues that each is needed to make for a polity characterized by freedom and equality. (The easiest of the five facets to grasp is the first: when neither of two parties can dominate the other. The Declaration authors argued that with American independence, an equal political relationship would exist between the former Colonies and other States, in particular, Great Britain.)

The most difficult passages — intellectually and emotionally relate to what the author terms the "shadow of tragedy" that trails the Declaration. This refers to the Caucasian, land-owning male bias of the document and the context that surrounded its creation. The author struggles with language regarding slaves and "savages," pointing out that while the Declaration condemns the slave trade engaged in by Britain and other European countries, it does not touch on slave ownership by some framers of the Declaration (the most notorious being Thomas Jefferson). Regarding Native Americans ("savages" is the term used in the Declaration), she unstintingly observes "...new ideas about human equality did not gain traction before a genocide had been completed." Allen touches on the role of women, emphasizing their role in the background, most prominently, Abigail Adams, and notes even more sparingly the male bias in the language of the Declaration, referring to the power of culture and "habit" in impeding change (as over nearly two and a half centuries subsequent to the Declaration have demonstrated).

I initially indicated that a possible link between the Declaration and economic equality attracted me to this book. While the author eschewed grappling directly with this question, it creeps into her analysis, as when, in her description (above) of the "second facet" of political equality—equal access to the tool of government—she opines, "something has gone wrong when, as scholars have recently shown, policy outcomes routinely track the stated preferences of the affluent but not those of the middle class or the poor." It is also worth noting the

author's observation that in political discourse, liberty seems in recent years to have been in the ascendancy over political equality. The Declaration contains one reference to peace. In the last line of the penultimate paragraph, the British are held "...as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends." Based on her analysis of the entire text and the various edits of the Declaration, Allen interprets this passage as follows: "When you act in a warlike way, we'll count you as an enemy, and when you act in a peacelike way, we'll count you as a friend." In other words, the actions — warlike or peacelike — are what count. In a subsequent passage, Allen argues:

Their [the Declaration signers] commitments to equality and peace are deeply linked to one another. They can be committed to peace because they are committed to equality, which sustains peaceable modes of conflict resolution, peaceable modes for restoring equal spheres of agency. By refusing to engage in this process of recalibration, King George has shown himself to be unreasonable.

While this posited linkage between equality and peace sounds plausible, this is one issue that could have been explored further for this reviewer.

In sum, I found *Our Declaration* worthwhile reading. It reveals what a remarkable document the Declaration of Independence is. The book also reveals the remarkable insights that can be generated by an expert scholar in a 300+ page volume from a document of 1,337 words. *Our Declaration* is for the most part quite readable although words are sometimes used in special ways and careful reading of the context is required (as in the passages cited above). The style is at times pedantic — but it may be useful in this connection to recall that this book was inspired by the author's teaching the Declaration to night-school adults in Chicago.

*Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* by Danielle Allen (New York and London: Liveright, 2014, 315 pp.)

#### Other Reviews of *Our Declaration*

"Book review: 'Our Declaration,'" Thane Rosenbaum, *Washington Post*, June 26, 2014

"Empowering Words," Steven B. Smith, *New York Times*, July 2, 2014

"A Different Idea of Our Declaration," Gordon S. Wood, *New York Review of Books*, August 14, 2014

John Eriksson

## **Global Peace Services USA**

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