



ILLINOIS LABOR HISTORY SOCIETY

# REPORTER

2016-Issue 2

May Day 2016 got off to a cold and wet start, but soon the crowd grew. We welcomed members of the World Federation of Trade Unions, who dedicated a plaque to the monument, and heard from Chicago labor leaders. The crowd got into their groove to the music of Yoko and the Oh Nos and T-Mac and the Organic Sweet. Then the crowd got an extra boost when trade women from across the country, in town for the Women Build Nations Conference, marched into Haymarket Square, waving holding their banners proud (*photo below*). Mark Dvorak, Ben Powel and Larry and Sarah Feldman ended the rally, leading the crowd in Solidarity Forever.



*photo by Mike Matejka*

After the rally, ILHS members went across the street to the Chicago Federation of Musicians Hall, where we held our annual membership meeting. We heard a video-recorded greeting from the World Federation of Trade Unions, as well as had a chance to talk more with our special guests from the WFTU. We also welcomed our newest board member, Sarah Joy Liles, who joins ILHS representing Pipe Fitters Local 597.

A big thank you to the Chicago Federation of Labor for all of their hard work and lead sponsorship of the annual May Day celebration, which allows us to remember our city's historic labor past, and pledge our solidarity to continue the fight today.

*more photos inside* →

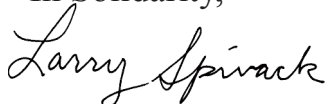
## Dear ILHS Members,

It seemed we had at least one event every week this spring at ILHS. We went on the road to Wisconsin, Iowa and Missouri, building relationships with others in the Midwest who want to tell the workers' stories. We came together to celebrate the life of our co-founder Les Orear and joined with the Chicago Federation of Labor to honor the spirit of May Day. So many of you joined us at these and other events.

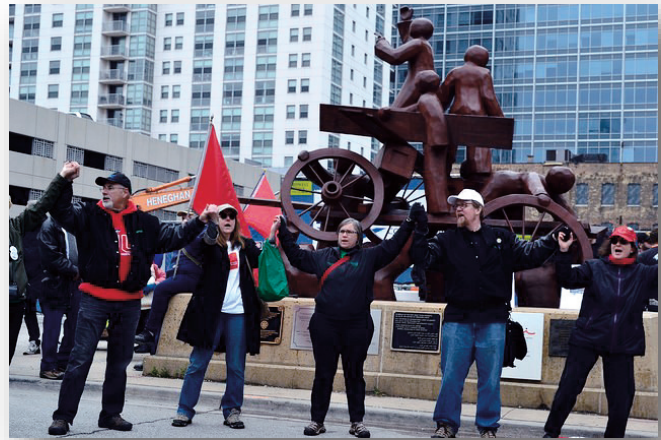
As I look ahead it does not seem like the ILHS will be slowing down any time soon. In late July we will host the Midwest School for Women Workers, alongside the University of Illinois' Labor Education Program. Women's labor education programs have a rich tradition and history in our labor movement, and ILHS is proud to have the opportunity to join this legacy by hosting this intensive week-long school at Roosevelt University.

We are also looking forward to the annual Labor Day celebration, so be sure to circle September 5 on your calendars--we will be sending out more information soon.

In Solidarity,



Larry Spivack



## 2016 Board Members

### Executive Committee

Larry Spivack, President  
Mike Matejka, Vice President  
Tom Suhrbur, Vice President  
Debby Pope, Secretary  
Nick Christen, Treasurer  
Bucky Halker  
Lisa Oppenheim  
Bill Pelz  
Alma Washington

### Board

Julia Berkowitz  
Caleen Carter-Patton  
Tim Drea  
Mike Elliot  
Sarah Joy Liles  
Peter Fosco  
Erik Gellman  
Angela Harkless  
Katie Jordan  
Ken Munz  
Liesl Orenic  
Robert Reiter  
Keith Richardson  
Judy Simpson



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[Illinoislaborhistory.org](http://Illinoislaborhistory.org)

# History Fair Awards

Congratulations to the 2016 Illinois History Fair, Best Labor History Award Winners! The next generation of labor historians looks strong in Illinois. *(pictured below with ILHS Director Stephanie Fortado)*

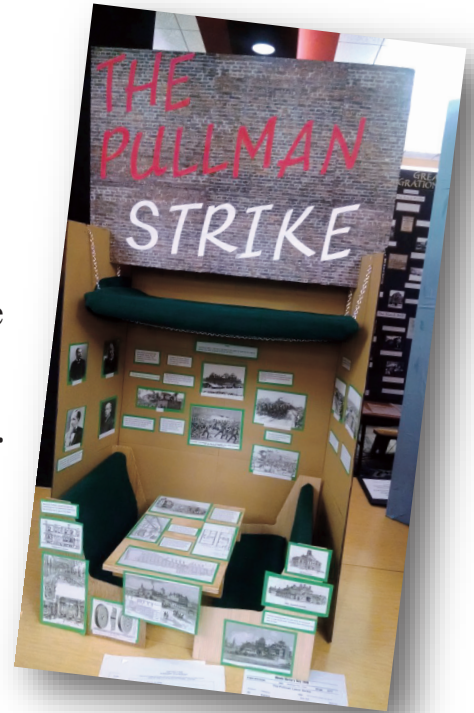
## Documentary

Rosemary Mascarenhas and Parita Shah, Mead Jr. High School  
“The Memorial Day Massacre: An exploration, encounter, and exchange”

## Exhibits

Nafisa Ismail and Maddie Clark, Solomon School,  
“Florence Kelley: Putting Women and Children First in Social Reform”

Annie Jo Wills, Marian Central Catholic High School “The Pullman Strike” *(pictured right)*



**Also congratulations to the Chicago Metro History Fair Award Winners:**

## Les Orear Labor History Award

*Sponsored by the Illinois Labor History Society*

MarcAnthony Huang, Payton College Prep High School,  
“Everything But the Squeal: Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*”

## Mollie Lieber West Memorial Women’s Activist History Award

*Sponsored by ILHS Board Member, Lisa Oppenheim*

Caitlin Kromidas and Katherine Skiba, Payton College Prep High School, “Second Wave Feminism and the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union”





# ILHS Takes its Show on the Road

The Illinois Labor History Society recognizes that it is important to build the solidarity of the labor movement throughout the Midwest region and to collaborate with groups in the surrounding states to support labor history programs. This Spring ILHS had the chance to take its show on the road, visiting Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin. We met with others who care deeply about telling the workers stories and together renewing our commitment that the Midwest is Labor country!

## May: Quad Cities, Iowa

ILHS President, Larry Spivack (pictured below) joined the Quad City Federation of Labor, the Iowa AFL-CIO and the University of Iowa Labor Center at USW Local 105 to provide a free labor education course to 35 union members, faith leaders, and community activists.



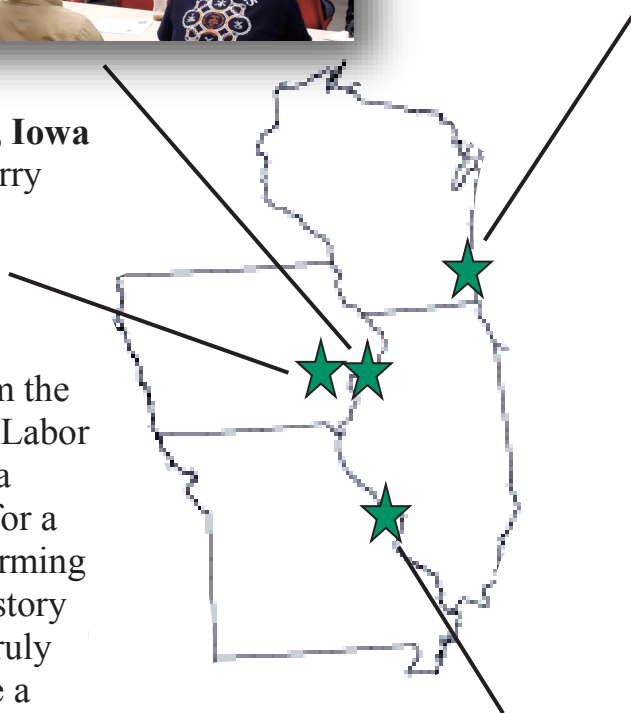
## May: Kenosha, Wisconsin

The ILHS, along with the Wisconsin Labor History Society, co-hosted a showing of the documentary “Brothers on the Line,” at the Hall of UAW 72. Film Director, Sasha Reuther (pictured below with ILHS Secretary Debby Pope ) grandson of UAW leader Victor Ruether, spoke after the film. Four members of the Northeastern Federation of Labor made the trip north to join more than 60 or our brothers and sisters in Wisconsin for the showing.



## March: Iowa City, Iowa

ILHS President, Larry Spivack, Secretary Debby Pope, and Director Stephanie Fortado met with representatives from the University of Iowa Labor Center and the Iowa Labor Movement, for a discussion about forming and Iowa Labor History Society. It would truly be inspiring to have a new labor history society in nearby Iowa, and we look forward to the chance to work together more in the future!



**June: St. Louis, Missouri** ILHS Director Stephanie Fortado gave a labor history presentation to St. Louis labor leaders at a luncheon hosted by Amalgamated Bank, a bank for the labor movement.



# A Busy Spring with ILHS



In April the ILHS provided a history tour for more than 150 women in the trades from around the country as part of the Women Build Nations conference. Several ILHS Board members played important roles in the tour, including Julia Berkowitz who led one of the buses and conducted research in developing the tour, Katie Jordan, who gave a talk about her experiences with the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and also Alma Washington, who portrayed historic labor icon, Lucy Parsons. Extra thanks to Chicago Women in trades for their support of the Tour.

Other springtime activities included:

- A talk at Bloomingdale Library on the Haymarket Tragedy
- A book table for the Labor Notes Conference in Chicago, supported by ILHS volunteer Margaret Fulkerson and two tours for international guests for the Labor Notes conference in Chicago, led by ILHS Vice President Tom Suhrbur and Director Stephanie Fortado
- A book table at the annual Illinois Education Association Representative Assembly
- A book table at the Regina V. Polk Women's Labor Conference at Pere Marquette State Park in Grafton Illinois
- A Chicago labor tour for the Midwest Sociological Society, led by ILHS Board Member Erik Gellman
- A one-hour Illinois women's labor history presentation for the Women in Leadership program in Springfield, by ILHS Vice President Mike Matejka and Director Stephanie Fortado
- A tour of the factory and historic town of Pullman for the AFL-CIO Lawyers Coordinating Committee
- A guided field trip of the Haymarket Square led by ILHS volunteer Peter Pero, and Director Stephanie Fortado
- Labor History courses for the Chicago Roofers Joint Apprentices Program, led by ILHS vice President Tom Suhrbur, volunteer Dave Rathke, and Director Stephanie Fortado



## Volunteer Spotlight

**Peter N. Pero** has been a part of ILHS since 1980 when he wrote a master's thesis on the Italian Clothing Workers Union in Chicago. At that time he started interviewing active ILHS members like Les Orear, Stan Rosen and Bill Adelman; they were always available to talk and inspire students. By the 1990's Peter became a college instructor in Milwaukee and even taught in Tokyo for several years. "I was sort of a 'migrant worker' in many fields of education" Pete said. "Sometimes you have to travel where the jobs are and this is still a problem at many campuses in America today." Pete's prospects are better now as a member of the Chicago Teachers Union.



*Peter Pero at the Commemoration of the Les Orear Bench*

When not volunteering at the ILHS office, Peter is a member of the Maxwell Street History Foundation. The club has been preserving fragments of this old Chicago street market since 1996. "Some of us still sit at the New Maxwell Market on Roosevelt Rd. and Desplaines Street selling books, T-shirts, and historic posters," Pete says. "Give us a call at (312) 243-0394 and become a street marketeer like the old time vendors were more than 100 years ago on Maxwell Street."

Peter is serving as an assistant to Stephanie Fortado at the ILHS office this year. His summer project is to re-format the old history slide shows that Bill Adelman, a former ILHS Vice President, wrote and assembled more than 40 years ago. Some of the shows need scripting, photo identification and all these fragile kodachrome slides need transfer to CD disks for historic preservation.

For ILHS members who have information on the old Adelman photos, contact Peter Pero at [HistoryStreetGuy@gmail.com](mailto:HistoryStreetGuy@gmail.com) and get involved.



Yes, that is the Haymarket Memorial under all that plastic! The Memorial is being temporarily moved due to a construction project at Haymarket Square. You can still visit the memorial at Union Park (1501 W. Randolph Street, Chicago), while the project is ongoing. In about eighteen months the statue will be returned to its original location at Haymarket Square, with a new and improved base.



# Scenes from May Day 2016



*Photos Clockwise: Actors from the play Bloody Haymarket make a visit to Haymarket Square; Stop the War on Workers; AFSCME represents at May Day; Women from the Building Trades; Chicago Federation of Labor Secretary-Treasurer and ILHS Board Member Bob Reiter rallies the crowd; the Chicago Federation of Labor at May Day, Photos courtesy of ILHS Vice President Mike Matejka*



## Les Orear Bench and Plaque at the Stockyard Gate

On May 14, the Illinois Labor History Society commemorated a bench and plaque at the historic Union Stockyard Gate in honor of the memory of ILHS co-founder and long-time President Les Orear. Although it was a cold, blustery day, more than forty gathered to remember Les and celebrate his life. The ILHS thanks Kathy Steichen, and the Uri-Eichen Gallery, which hosted a reception after the dedication. Also, thank you to Jerry Kalwasinski, from the Chicago Department of Transportation who assisted with the project. And an extra big thank you to Peter Fosco, ILHS Board Member and the members of LiUNA, who are donating their labor to install the bench and plaque.







Photos:

*Opposite Clockwise* Les's son, Les Jr. and daughter Radha Jill Covey sprinkle flower petals over the new bench; Bud March sings a song he wrote in honor of the stockyard workers; (from left) ILHS Board member Julia Bekrowitz, ILHS Secretary Debby Pope, Emily Pope-Obeda, family member Riva Covey, and ILHS Vice President Tom Suhrbur at the memorial; ILHS Board Member Lisa Openheim recalls Les Orear's Commitment to History Fair

*Above, Clockwise:* ILHS Board Members and members of LiUNA in front of the Les Orear bench; Les's daughter Linn holds the microphone for ILHS Board Member Alma Washington as she reads from a passage of Upton Sinclair's the Jungle; ILHS Board Member Erik Gellman recounts some of the history of Les's life; ILHS Board President, Larry Spivack addresses friends of Les gathered at the Uri-Eichen Gallery reception.

# *In Memoriam*



## **Lou Pardo**

The Illinois Labor movement said goodbye to Lou Pardo, who passed away on December 6, 2015 at the age of 96. In 1995, Lou was inducted into the ILHS Union Hall of Honor. On June 4, a memorial was held to remember the contributions of this true labor leader. Katie Jordan, President, Chicago Coalition of Labor Union Women and Illinois Labor History Society Board Member wrote these words of remembrance for the occasion.

### REMEMBERING A LEGEND

As we celebrate the life of Lou Pardo today, a dear friend, we consider it a privilege to remind all of us how important the work our brother Lou did contributing to the success of the labor movement in bringing about the assurance of fair play for workers everywhere. Labor is alive today and continues to grow in no small part because of the work he began many years ago.

We will always remember Lou for touching so many lives through his activism as he worked tirelessly to achieve social justice through his hard work on voter registration and getting out the vote. In that endeavor he was second to none. Lou knew it was key to building a better world that would make a difference in the lives of working people. He had a desire to educate families everywhere on the importance of their vote.

Those who knew Lou are witnesses of his genuine love and concern for people around the globe. He supported every cause. If it was for justice, Lou was there.

We will continue his legacy of a lifetime of dedication, his vision, and his ideals. Lou, your name is added to the list of labors greatest.

*- Katie Jordan*

## **Ken Christy**

In March, the Illinois Labor Movement lost Ken Christy. As President of the Illinois State Association of Letter Carriers, Ken was a staunch supporter of the ILHS. In fact, we received the Letter Carriers' annual membership renewal on the very day we learned of his passing. ILHS will always remember Ken for his generous spirit and big smile. He will be missed.







# Illinois Labor History Society

## Membership Form

Renew your membership in the Illinois Labor History Society. Membership dues are \$30 per year for individuals and \$200 for unions (\$100 for those with less than 200 members). To join as an individual or to affiliate your local union, complete this form and send it with a check to our office, or renew online at [www.illinoislaborhistory.org](http://www.illinoislaborhistory.org).

**You can also become a recurring member. To become a recurring member you MUST sign and return this form.** Once you become a recurring member, we will automatically renew your membership each year. by charging the credit card provided. This means we will not have to ask you to update your membership.

To support ILHS, I want to:

\_\_\_\_\_ Become a member (\$30 annually)

\_\_\_\_\_ Affiliate my union (\$200 annually, or \$100 for locals under 200 members)

\_\_\_\_\_ Become a recurring member. (\$30, billed annually. Cancel any time )

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Union Local \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Payment (please check one):

Check is enclosed

Credit Card (we will call you for credit card information)

Yes! I want to become a recurring member of ILHS

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me with more information about

Scheduling a Labor History program for my union/organization

Scheduling a Labor History Tour

Volunteering with ILHS

**Return this Form To:**  
**430 South Michigan Ave. Room AUD 1851, Chicago, IL 60605**

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**430 South Michigan Ave.**  
**Room AUD 1851**  
**Chicago, IL 60605**

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# ILLINOIS LABOR HISTORY SOCIETY SPRING 2016



# MAY DAY (& MORE) INSIDE