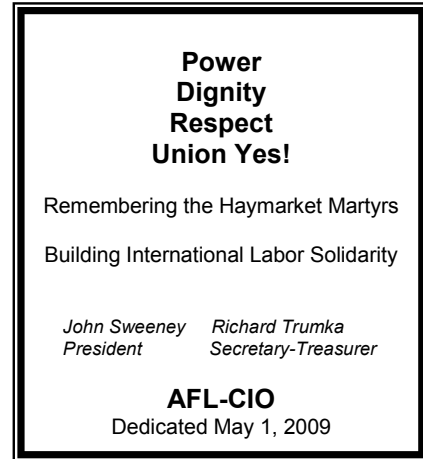


## Chicago Labor Holds May Day Rally



Ross Hyman, representing the AFL-CIO officers, delivers their message..



Text of plaque now being manufactured.

### *AFL-CIO Presents It's Plaque for Haymarket Memorial*

Chicago workers celebrated May Day with an afternoon rally in Haymarket Square by the Memorial Sculpture at Randolph and DesPlaines. The crowd cheered the presentation of a plaque from the AFL-CIO to be attached to the base of the Monument. Last year's plaque came from the Chicago Federation of Labor. Other plaques have been presented by unions in Iraq, Columbia, S.A. and UNI (Union Network International).

Ross Hyman, spokesman for the AFL-CIO, delivered a message from President John Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker. They declared: "Because we believe deeply in solidarity with workers everywhere, we're proud that the AFL-CIO now has a plaque at the place where May Day itself—the international day for workers—was born. That is happening because the Illinois Labor History Society and the Chicago Federation of Labor played a key role in the building of this monument. We will always be grateful to them for what they've done."

Continuing in the same vein, they declared: "...the best way to honor the Haymarket Martyrs is to advance the cause they fought and died for. Here and now, that means restoring the freedom of workers to organize into unions by passing the Employee Free Choice Act."

Speaking for the Chicago Federation of Labor was its Secretary-Treasurer, Jorge Rodriguez. ILHS President Larry

Spivack addressed the gathering with welcoming remarks, and Trustee James Thindwa of Jobs with Justice acted as Master of Ceremonies. The text for the plaque was turned over to Nathan Mason, Special Projects Curator for the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs.

Among those who addressed the meeting were: Tim Yeager of UAW; C. J. Hawking of ARISE; Margarita Klein, Chief of Staff, Workers United; Skippy (as he prefers to be called) of the IWW; and Armando Robles, President of UE Local 1110 which had occupied Republic Windows and Doors.

Well known folksinger Bucky Halker had the crowd singing along with him as he opened and closed the event. Worthy of note was the large number of young people, many from the IWW, who were present. The event was also attended by Mary Brogger, the sculptor of the Memorial. She expressed her pleasure at the appearance of the growing number of plaques from around the world.

### **Immigrant Rights March**

Chicago's Immigrant Rights groups, supported by Labor, again took to the streets on May Day. Assembling in Union Park at Ashland and Randolph, they marched to the Loop where they gathered at the Federal Plaza, to demand reform of immigration legislation.

## Remembering 1937 Massacre At Republic Steel



Victor Storino surrounded by the Women of Steel.  
Photo by Rod Sellers

Once again the retired steelworkers of SOAR organized the annual tribute to the ten who died and the scores of strike sympathizers who were injured by the police on Memorial Day of 1937 on Chicago's southeast side. They fell as police gassed, shot and clubbed the demonstrators who sought to support the pickets at the Republic Steel mill on Burley Avenue.

SOAR President Victor Storino chaired the event and U.S. Senator Roland Burris said a few words. ILHS Board member, Alma Washington speaking as the famed Lucy Parsons, related some of her experiences in the labor struggle from the Haymarket Tragedy of 1886 to the Memorial Day Massacre of 1937. Women of Steel followed with song and dramatic reading of Lupe Marshall's eyewitness testimony before the Congressional investigating committee chaired by Senator Robert LaFollette, Jr. of Wisconsin.

Awards were presented to representatives from the six-year-old strike at Chicago's Congress Hotel, and from the brief occupation of Republic Windows and Doors carried out by UE Local 1110. That occupation succeeded with the payment of the unpaid severance pay and the subsequent purchase of the bankrupt property by a new company which has reopened with the UE workers.

On adjournment the crowd left the hall to lay a wreath at the memorial sculpture which was dedicated last year.

Illinois Labor History Society  
28 E. Jackson, Rm. 1012, Chicago, IL 60604-2211  
Telephone: 312-663-4107  
Fax: 312-663-0404  
Web: [www.illinoislaborhistory.org](http://www.illinoislaborhistory.org)  
E-mail: [ilhs@prodigy.net](mailto:ilhs@prodigy.net)

Larry Spivack, President  
William J. Adelman, Vice-President  
Michael Matejka, Vice-President  
Debby Pope, Secretary  
Robert Bionaz, Treasurer

## Cherry Mine Disaster Centennial

November 14 and 15 will be the centennial of the Cherry Mine disaster, an underground coal mine fire that claimed 259 lives in the Bureau County community. The mine deaths led Illinois to pay more serious attention to mine safety and to adopt workers' compensation legislation.

The Illinois Labor History Society is working with the Illinois Valley Federation of Labor and the Illinois Valley Building & Construction Trades Council to support the town of Cherry in its centennial commemoration program for November 14-15. The community is selling personalized paving stones to help fund the cost of a new monument to be installed next to the town library.

Festivities are still in planning stages. Speakers are being invited from the union and political communities. Representatives from the Italian community from which about one-third of the miners emigrated have expressed interest in attending.

Other activities are being planned such as a trolley that will take visitors to the mine. On Sunday there will be a ceremony at the memorial monument in the Cherry cemetery erected in 1911 by the United Mine Workers.

Local union members from Cement Finishers Local 11, Laborers Local 393, and Operating Engineers Local 150 are working to prepare the new site. Supplies have been donated by local businesses.

Cherry hopes to attract visitors from throughout the state.

Memorial pavers cost \$150 and can carry an inscription up to three lines, 20 characters each. Send checks and text to the Cherry Booster Club, c/o Dan Carrico, Bank of Cherry, PO Box 291, Cherry, IL 61317.

## Forum Held on African Americans in Labor Organizing

This year's Black History Month activities included a forum on the history of labor union organization and struggle involving African American workers. Appropriately, the event took place at the Charles Hayes Center in Chicago. That building, named for the former area director of the United Packinghouse Workers, was always available to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during his visits to Chicago.

ILHS was among the cosponsors of the event, which included the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Chicago Jobs With Justice, and the Coalition of Labor Union Women. ILHS trustee James Thindwa was the moving spirit behind the event and trustee Bill Pelz led the wrap-up session. President Spivack was one of the main speakers.

## Letter Carriers Cheer Address by Spivack

The state convention of the National Association of Letter Carriers took place on June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in Springfield. The 700 delegates gave an enthusiastic response to an address by president Larry Spivack. NALC state president Ken Christy later described Spivack's remarks as no less than spectacular.

\*\*\*

## Plan to Be in Pullman on Labor Day 2009

Gather for music, food, and speakers in front of the Florence Hotel in Pullman from 12-4 pm on Labor Day. Contact ILHS for more details about the event.



**Bucky Halker does a singing lecture at Illinois Wesleyan.**

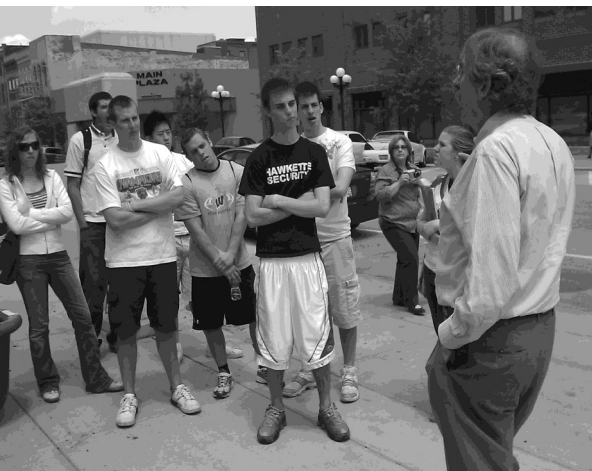
## Historic Labor Music and Stories Resound in Bloomington

Central Illinois has echoed with labor music and history, thanks to two recent community and university-based programs. In April, the public libraries in Bloomington and Normal chose a book about two women in eastern Kentucky mining country, *The Coal Tattoo*, as its community read.

Funding from the Bloomington and Normal Trades and Labor Assembly (AFL-CIO) made possible a visit by the author; a coal mining music concert by Chicago musician Bucky Halker; a film about Mother Jones by ILHS trustee Rose Feurer of Northern Illinois University; a Cherry mine disaster presentation by Steve Stott and a showing of the film *Matewan*.

At Illinois Wesleyan University in May, Dr. William Campbell offered an intensive four-week class "Labor Music and Labor History." Bucky Halker returned to do a free public concert of labor music at the University's library. A social and labor history walking tour of downtown Bloomington and older neighborhoods was led by McLean County Museum of History director Greg Koos and ILHS downstate Vice-President Mike Matejka. ILHS President Larry Spivack and trustee Joe Bella did a musical/narrative program wrapped around legendary IWW musician Joe Hill. The students did a field trip to the Union Miners' Cemetery in Mt. Olive and to Virden.

As a final project, the students researched and wrote a paper about a working class ancestor. As the students probed their own family past, amazing and eye-opening stories appeared, giving a direct link to the labor history the students had studied.



**Greg Koos leads tour of Bloomington.**

## Student Labor History Projects Earn Kudos from ILHS

A labor history project by an Illinois student has made it to the national History Day competition in Washington D.C. this year. This one even placed fourth in the nation in the Documentary category. Sarah Seibert, a middle school student at the Science and Arts Academy in Des Plaines, created her winning video project on the subject "Florence Kelley and Her Fight for Children's Rights". Florence Kelley of Chicago's Hull House was the state's first factory inspector, appointed by Governor Altgeld, and led the early battles against child labor in Illinois factories. Sarah has been kind enough to present ILHS with a copy of the project, which will be available in our archive.

This year's labor history projects presented at the Illinois History Expo in Springfield were judged by ILHS trustee Amy Girardi and awarded prizes. The Junior prize went to Natalie Sheehan of St. Mary School in DeKalb. Her project was a powerpoint entitled "A Revealing Inside Look at the Chicago Union Stock Yards". The Senior prize went to Nicole Jaconetty of Regina Dominican High School in Chicago for a performance entitled "Florence Scala and the Spirit of Community Organizing".

At the Chicago Metro History Fair, one of our prizes went to Jane Huang of Payton College Prep High School for her paper entitled "Teaching a Way to Lead: Margaret Haley and the Chicago Teachers Union". Another award went to a group from Lincoln Park High School for their project "Robert M. La Follette: Father of the Labor Unions". The student group was composed of Stacey Gonzalez, Hye Kim, Sophia Mao, and Melissa Martinez.



**Trustee Amy Girardi awards certificate to Natalie Sheehan at the History Expo in Springfield.**

## A Goodbye and Welcome Aboard to ILHS Office

As we go to press, we must say farewell to Josh Noehrenberg, our part-time employee since last September. He was a student at Roosevelt University. He is leaving for a leadership position as a political activist.

His place will be taken by Emily Pope-Obeda who returns to us after graduating from Brandeis University. In the fall, she will be moving on to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as a graduate student in history.

Welcome also to John Cheeseman, a retired member of IBEW Local 21 who now volunteers weekly with ILHS.

## 2009 Annual Meeting

Impressive gains in organizational memberships were scored in fiscal 2008, President Spivack reported to the Annual Meeting, thanks to strong support from the Illinois AFL-CIO and the Chicago Federation of Labor. Nevertheless, the times are hard, and like other non profit organizations we are feeling downward pressures on our revenue flows.

Spivack also reviewed highlights of our program activity throughout the year. They ranged from numerous tour parties, to presentations at union conventions, climaxing with the Union Hall of Honor program on FDR and the New Deal.

All the Officers were reelected without opposition, as were those Trustees whose terms were expiring. President, Larry Spivack; Vice President, William Adelman; Vice President Mike Matejka; Secretary, Debby Pope; Treasurer, Bob Bionaz; Trustees for 3 year terms ending 2012, Katie Jordan, Ken Munz, Lisa Oppenheim, and Tom Suhrbur.

The scheduled speaker, Kim Bobo author of *Wage Theft in America*, was obliged to cancel due to a family emergency, but we were happy to hear, instead, from C.J. Hawking and Steve Ashby, authors of the recently published book *Staley: The Fight for a New American Labor Movement*.

Both books are now available at our web site Bookstore and well worth adding to your collection. The same can be said for Peter Pero's book, *Chicago Italians at Work*.

Once again, we are grateful to Spencer Alioso, Business Manager of the Chicago Federation of Musicians for making their convenient hall, located in Haymarket Square, available for the meeting.

\* \* \* \*

### ILHS Officers

President	<b>Larry Spivack</b> - AFSCME Council 31
Vice President	<b>William Adelman</b> - Retired, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Illinois at Chicago
Vice President	<b>Mike Matejka</b> - Great Plains Laborers District
Secretary	<b>Debby Pope</b> - Chicago Public Schools
Treasurer	<b>Bob Bionaz</b> - Chicago State University

### ILHS Trustees

<b>Joe Bella</b> - AFSCME Council 31
<b>Joe Berry</b> -University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Labor Education Program
<b>James Conness</b> - IBEW Local 176
<b>Rosemary Feurer</b> - Northern Illinois University
<b>Amy Girardi</b> - Illinois AFL-CIO
<b>Katie Jordan</b> - CLUW
<b>Ken Munz</b> - SEIU Local 1
<b>Lisa Oppenheim</b> - Chicago Metro History Education Center
<b>Liesl Orenic</b> - Dominican University
<b>William Pelz</b> - Elgin Community College
<b>Terry Reed</b> - IFT, Springfield
<b>Richard Rowe</b> - Architectural Iron Workers, Local 63
<b>Thomas Suhrbur</b> - Illinois Education Association
<b>James Thindwa</b> - AFT
<b>Sherrie Voyle</b> - Jacobs, Burns, Orlove, Stanton, & Hernandez
<b>Alma Washington</b> - AFTRA-SAG
<b>Eileen Willenborg</b> - AFTRA-SAG



## Let Me Tell You Something

By Les Orear, ILHS President Emeritus

*A principle reason behind the study of History is so that we may find some guidance in our attempts to deal with current issues. In the April 2009 issue of the Progressive Magazine, founded 100 years ago by Republican Senator Robert LaFollette of Wisconsin, there are selections from articles which it published over the last century.*

*Senator LaFollette was a member of President Theodore Roosevelt's "Bull Moose" wing of the Republican Party, the party of Abraham Lincoln. "Progressive Republicans" you say in disbelief. Yes. In those days the Democrats presented the voice of Conservatism. How the labels change! Unfortunately, a lot of the issues remain. Consider this excerpt from the January 1917 edition.*

*The Need for Health Insurance by Irving Fisher:*

*"At present the United States has the unenviable distinction of being the only great industrial nation without universal health insurance. Health insurance is like elementary education. To function properly, it must be universal and to be universal, it must be obligatory."*

*Ninety-two years later, America has still not caught up with the rest of the world! Must we once again allow ourselves to be befuddled by the speeches and assertions of conservative politicians and other corporate spokesmen who warn us against needed policies on the grounds that publicly funded health care is somehow "un-American." Yet a recent survey commissioned by the New York Times reports that some 70% of Americans, both Republicans and Democrats, support a public health insurance program.*

*How many Canadians or British or French voters are demanding abolition of their public health programs? The answer is "none!" They don't want any part of our chaotic system.*

*Fellow citizens, will we allow ourselves to be hood-winked by corporate interests for another ninety years, or will we learn at last from our own history?*

(Les Orear is a 98 year old veteran unionist and labor communicator.)

## Teachers and Students Tour Chicago's Labor History Sites

The first half of the year has brought an unprecedented flow of labor history tour parties, mostly school related, President Larry Spivack reports. He and Vice President Bill Adelman were the principle tour guides.

President Spivack led a tour from the Chicago Metro History Education Center, made up of 40 middle and high school teachers from Maine, Leyden and Ridgewood school districts. The group was organized by ILHS Trustee Lisa Oppenheim under a U.S. Department of Labor, *Teaching American History* grant. They visited the Old Stone Gate and the Fire Fighter's Memorial, both in the former Chicago Stock Yards area; as well as the Haymarket Memorial and the Haymarket Martyr's Monument.

A tour led by Vice-President Bill Adelman of 28 middle school teachers from Syracuse, N.Y. went to Haymarket sites, the Stockyards, and Pullman. Another Adelman trip involved a busload of teachers from Pueblo, Colorado.

From Colorado Springs came a party of seventeen students and teachers on a Jazz and Civil Rights tour who visited the ILHS office for a discussion with Dr. Timuel Black about the Great Migration to Chicago and the Civil Rights movement in Chicago. Les Orear followed with a talk about the meat packing industry as an important employment opportunity for African American migrants from the 1920s through the 1950s. The United Packing House Workers, (UPWA-CIO), which represented the industry, welcomed the new workers to union membership. The union was an active participant in the Civil Rights movement, led by Dr. King.

## ILHS Hoists It's Flag at Labor Historians' Conference

Roosevelt University was the scene as LAWCHA (the Labor and Working Class History Association) held its 2009 Conference. Over three hundred sixty people from all over the country attended the four-day conference on Race, Labor and the City. Larry Spivack gave welcoming remarks at a workshop entitled "Gilded Age Chicago Revisited". Les Orear joined discussions at workshops he attended on Labor Music and on the Great Steel Strike of 1919. Jim Green, former president of LAWCHA, introduced Les to the crowd at a luncheon in honor of Orear's former colleague Addie Wyatt. Wyatt was Program Director of UPWA District 1 and later International President, Amalgamated Meatcutters. She retired as International Vice-President of UFCW.

Illinois' premier scholar of labor music, Bucky Halker, headlined a tribute concert in honor of the late Archie Green and Franklin Rosemont, co-authors of the *Big Red Songbook*.

At the conclusion of the meetings, ILHS and LAWCHA member Jeff Helgerson, led a tour party of 35 to Haymarket Square and on to the Old Stone Gate in the former Union Stockyards where they were met by Les Orear for a history lesson from his experience in the United Packinghouse Workers of America. The group continued on to the Charles Hayes Community Center to view the William Walker mural "The Worker", which was sponsored by the ILHS as part of the American Bi-centennial Celebration in 1976. The tour concluded with visits to historic sites in Bronzeville.



AFSCME Council 31 staff members play labor figures at the NEXT Wave Conference.

## AFSCME Next Wave Hits Chicago

Young AFSCME members and activists from all over the country gathered in Chicago for a three-day leadership conference June 19-21. More than 500 attended an intensive program of electronic town meetings, meaty workshops, and inspirational talks by AFSCME President Gerald McEntee and Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy.

Labor history played a major role in the program. AFSCME 31 Regional Director and ILHS President Larry Spivack presented a one-hour program "Labor History for Labor Activists" to the entire conference. His illustrated talk used historic photographs and was accompanied by appearances of famous personalities from labor: Mother Jones, Rosie the Riveter, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Sam Gompers, Eugene Debs, John L. Lewis played by AFSCME staff members Karmen Ortloff, Flo Estes, and Matthew LaPierre. Lucy Parsons, played by Alma Washington, told the dramatic story of Haymarket.

Flo Estes, as Rosie the Riveter, brought her guitar and sang old labor songs such as "Bread and Roses" and "Union Maid". Alma Washington brought her professional expertise as coach to all the performers.

Spivack also led two busload tours to Haymarket, the Old Stone Gate and Fire Fighters' Memorial, the Walker mural "The Worker", and the Alewitz mural in Teamster City.



Josh Noehrenberg, managers of ILHS tables for labor events, sells *Troublemakers's Handbook* to Beth Cooper, 2nd generation AFSCME member from Pennsylvania, Council 13.

# Franklin Rosemont Remembered

Sadly, the Illinois Labor History Society reports the death of Franklin Rosemont, managing editor of the Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co., arguably this country's most important publisher of labor, radical and what might be called "alternative" books.

Franklin was an author, his most recent book being *Joe Hill: The IWW & the Making of a Revolutionary Working-class Counterculture*. Profuse with IWW illustrations, it should be in every labor historian's collection. Another of his major contributions is the *Haymarket Scrapbook*, written with David Roediger in 1986 to mark the centennial of the Haymarket Tragedy. *The Big Red Song Book* was his most recent collaboration with David Roediger, Salvatore Salerno and the late great folklorist Archie Green.

A member of the IWW since his childhood, Franklin was the son of Henry Rosemont, a prominent figure in the Chicago Typographical Union, and of Sally Rosemont, a jazz musician and union member. He was elected to the Board of Trustees of the ILHS in 1981, where he served until his untimely death at age 65 on April 12, 2009. He and his wife Penelope, Secretary-Treasurer of the Kerr Company, were inducted into the Union Hall of Honor of the Illinois Labor



**Penny and Franklin Rosemont are inducted to the Union Hall of Honor in 2005**

History Society in 2005. The citation describes them as "faithful stewards of the Charles H. Kerr Company, publishers of labor and radical classics since 1886."

Organized in 1886, the Kerr Company introduced Marx to the American political discussion through publication of the Communist Manifesto. Kerr also published the *International Socialist Review*. During the great Pullman Strike of 1894, Kerr brought out *The Pullman Strike* by Rev. William Cardwaine, Methodist minister at Pullman, which provided a full account of the workers' grievances against the Company. When Mother Jones wrote her Autobiography, it was at the behest of Kerr who published this classic in 1925 with an introduction by Clarence Darrow. The Autobiography and *The Pullman Strike* were reprinted under the sponsorship of the Illinois Labor History Society in 1971-72, shortly after the founding of the Society in 1969.

**July 11, 2009**

12 noon—3pm

*A Memorial will be held for*

**Franklin Rosemont**

**1943-2009**

at the Newberry Library  
60 West Walton, Chicago, Illinois