

MAY DAY A TIME TO REFLECT

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to increase profits, 16 hour shifts, injuries and even deaths became commonplace in many industries.

As early as the 1860's working class people began to organize and demonstrate in support of the 8-hour work-day and safer working conditions. At its 1884 National Convention in Chicago, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (Later known as the AFL) proclaimed, "8 hours shall constitute a legal day's labor from and after May 1st, 1886. On that date more than 300,000 workers in 13,000 businesses across the country walked off their jobs in the first May Day celebration in history. In Chicago, the center of the struggle for the 8-hour day, 40,000 workers went out on strike. By May 3rd, 1886 that number had increased to over 100,000.

For months, armed Pinkerton agents and Police had harassed and beaten up locked-out steel workers as they picketed. On May 3rd, 1886 tension and rage erupted into violence at the McCormick Reaper Works in Chicago. Beatings by Police and company thugs escalated into rock throwing by strikers. The Police responded with gunfire and at least two strikers were killed, and many more wounded.

Full of rage, a Public meeting was called for the following day in the Haymarket Square to discuss the Police brutality. This meeting included families with children and the Mayor of Chicago himself. The Mayor would later testify that no suggestion of violence was ever made by the speakers at this meeting. After accusations were made by Pinkerton agents that organizers were calling for more violence, Police moved in to break up the meeting. As they began to disperse the crowd, a bomb was thrown into the Police ranks. One officer died immediately and seven more died in the following weeks. The exact number of civilians killed or wounded is unknown.

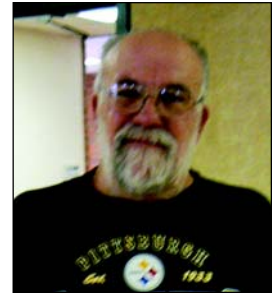
Eight organizers were arrested and convicted of murder even though only three of them were at the meeting in Haymarket Square and those three were in plain view of Police. On November 11th, 1887 four of the eight, Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel, and Adolph Fischer were hung, not for their actions, of which they were innocent, but for their political and social beliefs. Six years later the remaining organizers were pardoned by Governor Altgeld, who publicly lambasted the judge for presiding over a travesty of justice.

And so, as we look forward to the more traditional holiday at the end of May, let us take a moment on May Day, the 1st of May, to remember the martyrs of Haymarket Square and the sacrifices they made to ensure a brighter, safer future for all of us.

Submitted by Dave Allen, Building 10

DENNY MARTIN RETIRES URGES MEMBERS TO KEEP THE UNION STRONG

Since the boomers began hitting the magic age of 60 (a threshold where we can voluntarily retire), we've seen a lot of good members leave us. One of them is **Denny Martin** who retired on April 1st. Throughout his over 37 years with GE and with the union, Denny has been an active member and a staunch Local 506 supporter. He faithfully served as a steward, a sergeant at arms, a trustee and he was a founding member of the Election Committee. If he wasn't already volunteering for a project, he could always be counted on to step up when called upon.



Denny attended his last membership meeting as an active member on March 20th. There he made some sincere remarks about his years as a 506 Member and his concerns for the future. With a lot of emotion Denny said, "I've worked at GE over 37 years and paid dues to the union to secure family sustainable wages and good benefits". Denny thanked all of the past and present officers for the sacrifices they have made for the membership. Concerned about the future though, Denny cautioned members that, "To continue to advance and to continue the great tradition of this Local, you'll need to keep the Union spirit ...and lately that spirit seems to be waning".

Thanks for that observation Denny, we'll do our best to keep that spirit alive and well.

WORKER MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

Since 1989, Unions have observed Workers Memorial Day each April 28th to remember those who have died or suffered work related injuries and diseases on the job. April 28th was chosen because it is the anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. As in the past, the Erie-Crawford Central Labor Council will sponsor a memorial service in Erie City Council Chambers at 6pm this April 28th. During this short service, a bell will be rung as names are read for each Erie County worker who lost their lives in the workplace since April 28, 2007.