

1995 Bughouse Square Debates

Saturday, July 29, 1995
Noon to 5 p.m.



Entertainment

Noon to 2:00 p.m.

Traditional soapbox poetry read by Carlos Cortez
Folk music performed by Jim "Jimmy T" Tomasello
Poetry read by Michael Warr
Appalachian folk songs performed by Wayne Howard
Poetry read by Ed Two Rivers
And a special appearance by Studs Terkel

Soapbox Sessions

2 to 3:30 p.m.

Soapbox 1

Teenage Pregnancy

Maria Pappas

10th District Cook County Commissioner

Privacy, Privatization, Privateering

Michael Silverstein

Samuel N. Harper Professor at the University of Chicago

Topic to be determined.

Eugene Pincham

Retired Illinois Appellate Court Justice

Soapbox 2

Do We Need Prayer in Schools?

Seymour Simon

Attorney and former Justice, Illinois Supreme Court

Remembering Bughouse Square 1930-35: What lessons of the 1930 Depression are applicable to 1995?

Jack Spiegel

*Former Director of Amalgamated Clothing Union and 1930
Leader of the Unemployed*

Soapbox 3

Rescuing the American Health System from the Corporate Plague

Quentin Young

Chair, Health and Medicine Political Research Group

The U. S. Flag: Symbol or Substance?

Barbara Flynn Currie

State Representative for the 25th District

Main Debate

3:30 pm

"The Contract For or On America"

James Wall

*President of the Christian Century Foundation and
Editor of Christian Century*

vs.

Larry Horist

*President of Thomas & Joyce, Inc., and Chairman,
Foundation for Research, Education and Empowerment*



The History of Bughouse Square

by Cindy Mitchell, Mayor of Bughouse Square

Chicago's famed Bughouse Square has a history dating back to the early 1840s. In 1840, the land now occupied by Washington Square Park was the neighborhood cow pasture. Residents of the area brought their cows here early in the morning, retrieving them in the evening and taking time to chat around the communal well. In 1842, Erasmus Bushnell bought a large tract of land, including this area, for a housing development. He donated the square to the city as its second public park. The neighborhood quickly became a desirable location and the new park was surrounded by lovely mansions and row houses.

This era was shortlived, however. By 1910, the area began to attract a "bohemian element" and the mansions were soon converted to rooming houses. By 1915, the park became the premiere forum for the freedom of speech in Chicago. The famous, infamous, and fanatical came daily to the park to mount the soapboxes and try to convert whoever would listen to any of a myriad of political and philosophical theories. Emma Goldman, Ben Heineman, and Clarence Darrow were only some of the well known personages who entertained the crowd. But the favorites were often the lesser known but equally convincing silver tongued orators, such as "One Armed Charlie" who quoted the Constitution by heart, or the "Bulgarian General," the self-proclaimed world expert on Russian military strategy. Throughout the summer evenings, up till the 1950s, the great and the amateurs filled the park in celebration of the freedom of speech. Now Bughouse Square is only a memory, celebrated yearly by the Newberry Library's annual Bughouse Square Debates. The Newberry invites Chicago notables and everyone interested in today's pressing issues for spirited debate in Washington Square Park.

Our sincere thanks to the 1995 Bughouse Square Committee:

Tom Joyce, Chair

Diane Ciral

Leon Despres

Cindy Mitchell

Terry Sullivan

Lila Weinberg

The John Nuveen Company



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