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 short-lived, however. By 1910, the area began to attract a "bohemian element" and the mansions were soon converted to rooming houses. By 1913, 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 Heine, 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

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