TAKE IT TO THE PARK!

BUGHOUSE SQUARE DEBATES

SATURDAY, July 28, 1 pm – 4 pm
Across from the Newberry in Washington Square Park

Rick Kogan, Master of Ceremonies

THE NEWBERRY

Sponsored by the Newberry Library
BUGHOUSE SQUARE DEBATES

12:45 pm — MUSIC by the Chris Madison Quartet

1:00 pm — WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO BUGHOUSE SQUARE by Rick Hopson

1:15 pm — PRESENTATION OF THE 2012 JOHN PETER ALTGELD FREEDOM OF SPEECH AWARD to Laurie Jo Reynolds, David Spadafora, President of the Newbery Library, will present the award.

Laurie Jo Reynolds is a Chicagoan who has dedicated herself to defending the rights of prisoners, reforming the prison system, and closing the Tamms Correctional Center. She launched Tamms Year Ten, a legislative and artistic initiative, to pressure officials to end the use of long-term isolation at the supermax facility. Mr. Reynolds’ case on behalf of prisoners, and to stop prisoner abuse and torture in the state of Illinois, embodies the historic values of Bughouse Square and of Governor Altgeld.

The John Peter Altgeld Freedom of Speech Award is dedicated to the memory of the former Illinois Governor (1892-96) who pardoned the surviving Haymarket anarchists. The award is presented each year to an organization or person who has distinguished him or herself as a defender of free speech and ideas.

1:30 pm — SOAPBOX DEBATES OPENED

1:30 pm — SOAPBOX JUDGES INTRODUCED

— MUSIC by the Chris Madison Quartet
(while people move to the Soapboxes)

SOAPBOX DEBATES

Soapbox speeches run no longer than fifteen minutes, all four soapboxes run simultaneously. Speakers compete for the Dill Pickle Award for best soapbox speaker.

SOAPBOX 1

1:45 pm — David Ratowitz, Dead and Dirty: Time Reason Prostration Has Made Chicago the Most Racially Segregated and Compulsory City in America

2:00 pm — Eliza Shenkberger, as “Red Martha” Beegle, On the Madness of Capitalism

2:15 pm — Bill Berthle, Is It Acceptable to Say That Jesus Is the Only Way to Heaven?

2:30 pm — Sam Singleton, Atheist: Evolution Is An Appreciation of Appreciation

SOAPBOX 2

1:45 pm — Beth Kruger, Mobile Food in Chicago. Let Freedom Roll!

2:00 pm — Tom Feuer, Privatization Is the Symptom, Not the Cure, for What Ails America.

2:15 pm — Scott M. Pirtt at Robert Ingersoll, About the Holy Bible

2:30 pm — Ross Bruzek, Citizenship: Is a Daily Call to Arms?

SOAPBOX 3

1:45 pm — The Atheist at Large. Why Is It Important to Debate Faith?

2:00 pm — Mary Hulan FioRito, Abortion in America—Does Legal Abortion Help or Hurt Our Country?

2:15 pm — Jamie Albert, Political Toxicity in Higher Education: The Analysis and the Subversion of Democratic Values

2:30 pm — Meghan McGrath as “Yellow Kid” Welz, Doc Metzger’s Minute Cine-Al Effect

SOAPBOX 4

Open Mic
Step up—one and all!

2:40 pm — MUSIC by the Chris Madison Quartet
(on the Soapbox Debates and all people move back to the central stage)

MAIN DEBATE

2:50 pm — WHO’S TO BLAME FOR THE GREAT RECESSION, BIG GOVERNMENT OR BIG BUSINESS?

Jon Anderson, Occupy Chicago
v.
Eric Kohn, Chicago Tea Party

Questions and answers with the audience will conclude the Main Debate.

3:30 pm — SOAPBOX CHAMPION ANNOUNCED

— DILL PICKLE AWARDED

SPEAKERS

Jamie Albert is a folk singer and activist who performs about labor, poverty, and other social justice related issues. Jamie is also a “wobbly,” aka a member of the IWW.

Jon Anderson (in debate) is part of Occupy Chicago. A decorated Marine, he joined fellow veterans who relinquished their medals at the NATO summit in Chicago in May to protest the corporate policies made in Iraq and the huge amounts spent on military budgets today.

The Atheist at Large is a social atheist trying to show people that when it comes to god, there is no one thing, they are not thinking rationally. He had a bar room on a bar called “Debate Pub.”

Rev. Dr. William Berthle has been an artist and poet since the 1950s with a degree in art and currently works with some 40 minority partners of the church all over the world.

Ross Bruzek is a Chicago native, an actor, and a writer.

Mary Hulan FioRito is the Executive Assistant to the Archbishop in the Archdiocese of Chicago. A graduate of Loyola University School of Law, she has spent more than 20 years working in the pro-life movement.

Eric Kohn (movements) is a Chicago author and a poet who has been listening to politics professionally since 2000. He is active with the Chicago Tea Party and programs director for America’s Future Foundation — Chicago, an all-volunteer organization developing the next generation of liberty leaders in Chicago.

Beth Kruger is the Director of the Institute for Justice Clinic on Entrepreneurship at the University of Chicago Law School.

Meghan McGrath, formerly of COTU-COSME, is a Senior Poetry Editor at Sunstone Magazine. She will speak as Joseph “Yellow Kid” Welz, who got his start peddling nuclei for Doc Metzger (in chief Ingersoll’s mansion).

Scott M. Pirtt is a performer and historical re-enactor in Chicago. He is acting as Robert Ingersoll, the Great Agnostic, who, in the late nineteenth century, toured the country on the topic of free thinking.

Eliza Shenkberger as “Red Martha” Beegle, On the Madness of Capitalism: This is a soapbox speech by Eliza Shenkberger at the 2012 John Peter Altgeld Freedom of Speech Award at Bughouse Square in Chicago. Shenkberger is a Chicago native who has dedicated herself to defending the rights of prisoners, reforming the prison system, and closing the Tamms Correctional Center. She launched Tamms Year Ten, a legislative and artistic initiative, to pressure officials to end the use of long-term isolation at the supermax facility. Shenkberger’s case on behalf of prisoners, and to stop prisoner abuse and torture in the state of Illinois, embodies the historic values of Bughouse Square and of Governor Altgeld.

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SPEAKERS (CONT.)

David Rutowski campaigned for US Congress from Illinois' 4th District in 1990. He is the Republican Congressman for the 4th Ward in East Lansing.

Elsa Sheenberger is a member of the Century Club. She works in the non-profit world by day, is an MBA student by night, and is an historical re-enactor in all the time in between. Today she is the Martin's feminist "Red Martha" Bridger.

Sam Singleton, Artist, Radio Host, is the fictional character created and played by Roger Scott Jackson. His other work as "radio" is in radio, television, and theater. He's the hook.

Tom Tresser has been an educator, artist, and champion of democracy for over 20 years. His latest non-profit enterprise in civic engagement is Civic Lab (http://www.civiclab.us/).

SOAPBOX JUDGES

Ted Cox, Chicago Reader
Robert R. Elder, journalist and Managing Editor of USA Today Chicago
D. L. Hopkins, Time Out Chicago

MUSICIANS

The Glitter Modieu Quartet is one of Chicago's most in-demand jazz groups. The ensemble has performed at many venues in Chicago as well as New York City, including Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, Andy's Jazz Club, and the Jazz Showcase. Today the group features Dana Elkind on trumpet, Joe Pacheco on banjo, and Mike Avery on drums.

ABOUT BUSHHOUSE SQUARE

Bughouse Square ("Bughouse" is slang for a mental health facility), the popular name for Washington Square Park, was the city's most popular, historic, and radical free-speech space from the 1930s through the 1950s. Cleaver manned a computer and spoke to passersby, sold newspapers, and wrote on an easel for all passersby to see. The Squares was a cultural center, where music, art, and politics were discussed. The Squares was a center for many political and social movements.

ABOUT THE DILL PICKLE AWARD

The Dill Pickle Award is presented to honor the festival that has created the best soapbox speech. The Dill Pickle Club was founded by labor activist and Bughouse square organizer Jack Finley in 1940 to provide an annual forum for first-time speakers. By 1945, the Dill Pickle Club had met in several locations around the city, from Bughouse Square to the Newberry Library at 220 South Dearborne Street. Pickle Club speakers included performers, poets, and activists, and the business was of a few of the literary, political, and social leaders of the time. By 1946, the club had disbanded and the Newberry Library took over.

The Newberry Library thanks THE BUSHHOUSE SQUARE DEBATES COMMITTEE for creating this event: Rachel Behmane, Paul Dence, Vance Fyfe, Molly Fitcher, Shawn Healy, Kelly McGrath, and Gary Byerly.