
SOAPBOX JUDGES

Anthony Di Lorenzo, Loyola University

Chicago

Ben Joravsky, *Chicago Reader* and 2014

Altgeld Award Co-Recipient

Angel Ysaguirre, Illinois Humanities Council

ENVIRONMENTAL ENCROACHMENT MARCHING BAND

Chicago performance art group Environmental Encroachment uses circus theatrics, live music, and costumes to create unique entertainment environments. Performance formats include stage shows, parades, and punk artist marching band encroachments; visit www.encroach.net.

SOCIETY OF SMALLNESS

The Society of Smallness believes that less is less and thinking small is a needed antidote in an age of supersizing and overachieving. Through playful interactions, the society invites a closer look and a shift in perspective.

ABOUT BUGHOUSE SQUARE

Bughouse Square (bughouse is slang for mental health facility), the popular name for Washington Square Park, was the city's most boisterous and radical free-speech space from the 1910s through the 1930s. Orators mounted soapboxes and spoke to responsive, vocal crowds. Bohemians, poets, atheists, and religionists of all persuasions entertained bystanders. The square's core contributors, however, came from the ranks of the Wobblies, men and women of the Industrial Workers of the World, whose radical views, wit, and humor made them champion soapboxers and perennial crowd favorites. World War II and a post-war crackdown against socialists and communists, however, led to Bughouse Square's decline, and by the mid-1960s it had all but ceased to exist. The Newberry revived the park's free-speech legacy with the Bughouse Square Debates in 1986.

ABOUT THE DILL PICKLE AWARD

The Dill (sometimes spelled Dil) Pickle Award is presented to honor the champion soapbox orator. *The Dill Pickle Club* was founded by labor activist and Bughouse soapboxer Jack Jones in 1914 to provide an indoor forum for free expression. By 1917 the Dill Pickle had located just around the corner from Bughouse Square and the Newberry, at 22 Tooker Place. Picklers attended lectures, plays, dances, concerts, and, of course, had plenty of talk. Carl Sandburg, Clarence Darrow, Maxwell Bodenheim, Lucy Parsons, Ben Hecht, Charles MacArthur, Sherwood Anderson, and Ben Reitman were just a few of the literary, political, and social luminaries who regularly attended. The club closed in 1933.

The Newberry Library thanks the **BUGHOUSE SQUARE DEBATES COMMITTEE**, who created this event: Rachel Bohlmann, Jennifer Coufal, Paul Durica, Stephanie Fong, Vince Firpo, Rachel Shrock, and Alex Teller.

HECKLING

Responding to speakers is a Bughouse Square tradition, and interaction is part of the fun. Please keep it civil and friendly.

#BUGHOUSE SQUARE

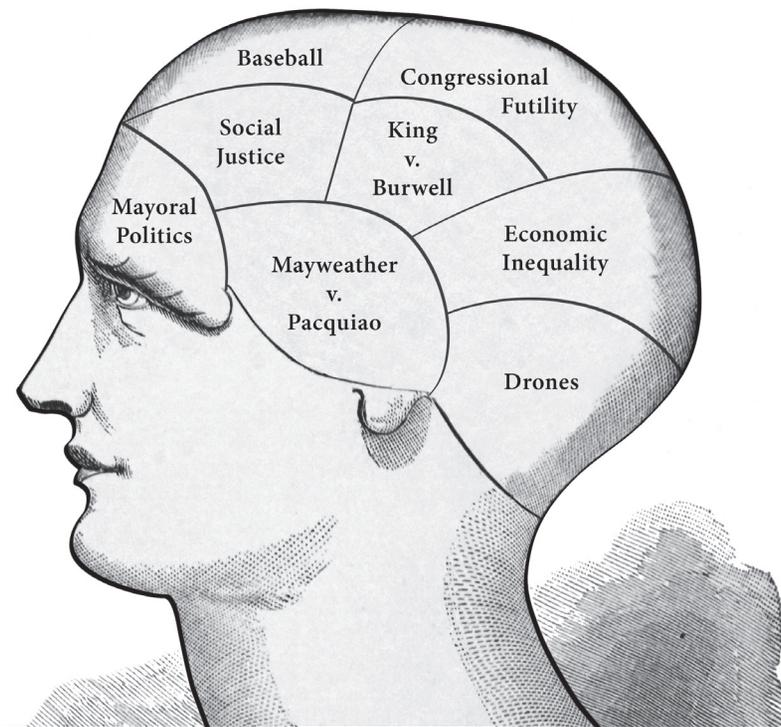
Want to supplement your heckling with some online commentary? Share your thoughts, musings, and ruminations with us on social media.

SPECIAL THANKS

The 2015 Bughouse Square Debates are supported in part by a grant from the Free for All Fund of the Chicago Community Trust.

GIVE 
CHICAGO
a Piece of Your
MIND!

BUGHOUSE
SQUARE
DEBATES



SATURDAY, July 25, noon – 4 pm
Across from the Newberry, in Washington Square Park

Rick Kogan, *Master of Ceremonies*

BUGHOUSE SQUARE DEBATES

NOON — **MUSIC** by Environmental Encroachment

1 pm — **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO BUGHOUSE SQUARE** by Rick Kogan

1:10 pm — **PRESENTATION OF THE 2015 JOHN PETER ALTGELD FREEDOM OF SPEECH AWARD**

Recipient: Wendy Kaminer. David Spadafora, President of the Newberry, will present the award.

Wendy Kaminer is a lawyer, social critic, and long-time defender of free speech and civil liberties. We wish to recognize in particular her efforts against censorship on college campuses, including her involvement with FIRE: Foundation for Individual Rights in Education and her response to criticism she faced after participating in a Smith College alumnae panel discussion on free speech, civil discourse, and the liberal arts last fall. Following accusations of racial violence brought against her by members of the Smith community and the editorial decision of the college's student newspaper to label some of her words as "slurs" in a transcript of the event, Kaminer reaffirmed the importance of freely discussing potentially offensive and disturbing language. In an op-ed in *The Washington Post*, she noted that the "reliance on subjectivity, in the interest of equality, is a recipe for arbitrary, discriminatory enforcement practices, with far-reaching effects on individual liberty."

The Altgeld Freedom of Speech Award is dedicated to the memory of the former Illinois governor (1892-96) who pardoned the surviving anarchists wrongfully convicted of the Haymarket bombing of 1886. 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.

1:25 pm — **MAIN DEBATE** on the Main Stage
Public or Private? What Should Be the Future of Public Education in Chicago?

Troy LaRaviere, Principal of Blaine Elementary School, Chicago Public Schools
and

Bruno Behrend, Senior Fellow for Education Policy, the Heartland Institute

A Q&A with the audience will conclude the main debate.

2:15 pm — **SOAPBOX JUDGES INTRODUCED**
— **SOAPBOX SPEAKERS INTRODUCED**
— **MUSIC** by Environmental Encroachment

SOAPBOX DEBATES

Soapbox speeches run no longer than 15 minutes; all four soapboxes run simultaneously. Speakers on boxes 1–3 compete for the Dill Pickle Award for best soapbox speaker. Speakers may change without notice, and times are approximate.

SOAPBOX 1

2:25 pm — A.J. Segneri, *"A Democratic Revolution from Below"*

2:40 pm — Gail Schechter, *"The Chicago Region as The Picture of Dorian Gray; or, The Co-Dependency of Winnetka and Englewood and Why We Should Care"*

2:55 pm — Malik January, *"The Prioritization and Faults of Security"*

3:10 pm — Jerry Field, *"The Care and Treatment of Veterans for Education and Employment"*

SOAPBOX 2

2:25 pm — Michael Brennan, *"The Best Health Care Plan for America"*

2:40 pm — Tom O'Donnell, *"The Root Causes and Solutions to World Problems"*

2:55 pm — Rachel Goodstein, *"Tough Talk for Tough Times in the Toddling Town: Serious Solutions for the Second City's Crises"*

3:10 pm — Jamie Albert, *"A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall: The Blame Pattern"*

SOAPBOX 3

2:25 pm — Erwin Lutzer, *"Jesus and a Skeptic: Why All Rational People Should Believe in Jesus"*

2:40 pm — Bill Geraci, *"Problems in Translation; or, Jesus' Virgin Birth?"*

2:55 pm — Natia Weathers, *"The Irrelevance of Coincidence and Hard Work"*

3:10 pm — Howard Cort, *"Emerging Alternatives for Israeli-Palestinian Coexistence"*

SOAPBOX 4

OPEN MIC — moderated by the Society of Smallness
Step up, one and all!

AFTER THE SOAPBOX DEBATES

ENTERTAINMENT ON THE MAIN STAGE

A reading of August Schiermeyer's poem "Bug-House Square" (ca. 1919) by Darrell Blobaum. Blobaum is the great-nephew of Schiermeyer and a hobo/labor history enthusiast.

3:35 pm — **SOAPBOX CHAMPION ANNOUNCED**
— **DILL PICKLE AWARDED**

SOAPBOX SPEAKERS

As a folk singer and union and protest song revivalist, **Jamie Albert** performs about labor, poverty, and other social justice issues. He is a member of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Michael Brennan, with the Illinois Single Payer Coalition, is a retired court researcher, teacher, and debate coach. He advocates guaranteeing health care as a human right.

Howard Cort received an MA in political science from SUNY Albany in 1965 and wrote approachestocoexistence.com in 2008.

Jerry Field is an Army veteran, serves on a half-dozen veterans committees, and has advocated for veterans for three decades. He teaches at the college level and is currently on a STEM grant.

Bill Geraci started young and got older, hopefully correctly figuring some things out along the way. As for work, he's a staff computer guy for the University of Chicago.

Fourth-time soapboxer **Rachel Goodstein** has lived in Chicago for over 30 years and has been involved in good government causes and general do-gooding.

Malik January attends Urban Prep Academies for Young Men and has an enigmatic passion for computers.

Senior pastor at Moody Church since 1980, **Erwin W. Lutzer** is an award-winning author, an international conference speaker, and the featured guest on three radio programs.

Tom O'Donnell is a 19-year-old independent researcher developing solutions to world problems so everyone can have great living conditions.

Gail Schechter is the Executive Director of Open Communities, a housing, economic, and social justice advocacy organization covering north suburban Chicago.

A.J. Segneri, Lead Organizer for the Foundation for a United Front, is an Evanston-based activist who has served on political campaigns and has founded socially and economically conscious organizations.

Natia Weathers is a rising freshman at Wheaton College interested in studying psychology and sociology with the goal of becoming an Army psychologist.