

# HOUSTON OBJECTIVISM SOCIETY

Vol. 1, No. 1

January 1988

## HOUSTON OBJECTIVISTS ORGANIZE

This is the first issue of the Houston Objectivism Society (HOS) Newsletter. HOS was formed in October 1987 to promote the ideas of Ayn Rand in the Houston area. Our first meeting was held on November 20, 1987 with 35 people attending.

HOS members will receive this quarterly newsletter, and may participate in the HOS lending library. The newsletter will contain information about the status of HOS projects, notices of upcoming events, and other information of interest to Houston-area Objectivists.

HOS is not an official Objectivist organization, nor is it affiliated with the Ayn Rand Institute or any other Objectivist organization. This newsletter is not an official Objectivist publication. The sole purpose of this organization and newsletter is to facilitate the spread of Objectivist ideas and our understanding of them.

The first issue of this newsletter is being sent to many nonmembers of HOS in the hope that a description of some of our projects will entice you to join HOS. Membership is \$10 per year. A membership blank can be found on page 4. Checks should be made payable to Houston Objectivism Society, and mailed to:

Warren Ross  
1903 Ganyard  
Houston, TX 77043

## SUMMARY OF NOVEMBER 20 MEETING

Warren Ross opened the meeting with an introduction and history of Objectivist-related activities in Houston. This was followed by a videotape of Dr. Peikoff's speech "Can Capitalism Survive?" which was filmed at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania in 1986.

Warren then discussed several potential projects for HOS. Those in attendance agreed to offer a local prize in conjunction with the Ayn Rand Institute's Fountainhead essay contest. That project is discussed in detail on page 2.

## LENDING LIBRARY PROCEDURES

The contents of the lending library are enclosed. The library consists of the complete inventory of the Second Renaissance and Intellectual Activist book services. The idea for the lending library was conceived by Joe Blackburn, who donated the contents of the library to HOS.

We have been searching for a secure, permanent location for the library, but have yet to find a suitable location. Presently, the library will be open at the bi-monthly HOS meetings. Materials may be checked out at HOS meetings only, but may be returned at HOS meetings, to Warren at the address listed above, or at Dr. Peikoff's lecture series (see page 2). The lending period is two (2) months. PLEASE be responsible about returning materials on time- there is only one copy of many materials.



## FOUNTAINHEAD PROJECT

HOS will offer a \$1000 prize to the best entry from the Houston area in the national Fountainhead essay contest sponsored by the Ayn Rand Institute. We expect this Local prize to at least triple the number of entries from Houston. Last year, there were 35 entries from Houston. Students often think, and rightly so, that their chances for winning a national contest are slim. This local prize guarantees that a Houston student will win at least \$1000, providing greater incentive to enter.

Pledges in \$50 increments were solicited at the November 20 meeting. The goal is to raise \$1200 to cover the prize and expenses. Enthusiasm and support for the project was demonstrated by the fact that \$1050 has been pledged to date. This virtually assures the Fountainhead project's success.

Another \$150 is still needed to cover mailing expenses. Those wishing to pledge money to the project may write or call Warren Ross (#468-2256). If more than \$1200 is raised, HOS will offer second and third prizes as well. Deadline for pledges is January 25, so please act promptly. Those who have made pledges should send a check made out to HOS to Warren.

Once prize money is secured, a cover letter and flyer will be sent to every high school English Department head in Houston. Time is important if we are to give students enough time to read The Fountainhead and write their essay before the April 30 deadline.

The local contest will be judged by the Ayn Rand Institute; however, HOS will receive copies of Houston entries. HOS will sponsor an awards dinner, which will take place in lieu of the August meeting.

## CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Campus activities are very important to the spread of Objectivism. They heighten awareness of Objectivism and Ayn Rand's works among the general student populace, even if they are not Objectivists. Many students have heard of Ayn Rand, but do not know enough to take any initiative to learn more about her ideas. Campus sponsored lectures and discussions are a very easy way for such students to learn more. Campus activities also help spread Objectivism under the auspices of the Ayn Rand Institute. Activities of official campus clubs, e.g., Dr. Peikoff's lecture series, are priced at a discount. The cost of many events would be prohibitive to college students without such financial aid.

### Rice University

Four Rice students have agreed to form a campus Objectivism club. They are currently looking for a faculty advisor. Anyone interested in joining the club should contact club President Michael Myers at 630-8663.

### University of Houston

There is currently no formal activity on the UH campus, although one HOS member is a graduate student there. An ad in the Daily Cougar for the upcoming "Philosophy of Objectivism" course has generated a few responses. If any among them are interested in forming a campus club, we will report that in future newsletters.



## LETTER WRITING PROJECT

Letters to the Editor are one of the most widely read sections of a newspaper. Both major Houston papers have a daily readership of about one million people, which translates to a huge potential audience for Objectivist ideas. Letters to the Editor can also influence the editorial policies of the paper.

HOS members are encouraged to participate in this project. The goal is for each participant to write at least two letters per week. Obviously, the greater the number of letters written, the greater the chances of success. To date, HOS members have had eight letters printed since the project's inception.

When writing letters to the Editor, there are several points to remember:

1. Keep it short. Long letters are either heavily edited, or not printed at all.
2. Stick to one point. Pursuing side issues can be confusing and detract from the main issue.
3. Persevere. The local papers print about 20% of the letters they receive.

In addition to writing letters, this project will also monitor the Editorial sections and contact anyone expressing ideas similar to Objectivism. Anyone interested in participating in this project should contact J. Brian Phillips at 896-9707.

## BITS AND PIECES

The purpose of the Executive Committee is to provide organization and co-ordination of the various projects undertaken by HOS. The committee itself will not determine which projects are pursued. HOS members will make this determination through their support and participation.

Because the newsletter is quarterly and HOS meetings bi-monthly, some issues of the newsletter will announce two HOS meetings. For example, the April issue (to be mailed in late March) will announce the April and June meetings.

Current plans are to offer Dr. Peikoff's lecture series on a continuous basis. Anyone interested in attending a course other than "Philosophy of Objectivism" (which starts on January 10) should contact Anna Franco at 630-9229 (evenings and weekends). The courses available are:

- "The Philosophy of Objectivism"
- "Understanding Objectivism"
- "Objective Communication"
- "Introduction to Logic"
- "Ancient Philosophy"
- "Modern Philosophy"
- "Lectures on Fiction Writing" by Ayn Rand

The bi-monthly HOS meetings will be held in even numbered months: February, April, June, August, October, and December.



UPCOMING EVENTS

1. The Philosophy of Objectivism- Twelve taped lectures by Dr. Leonard Peikoff. The lectures begin on January 10, 1988 (Sunday) at 10 a.m., and run consecutive Sundays through the end of March. Ayn Rand participates in the recorded question-and-answer periods in lectures 5 through 12.

Location: Holiday Inn West  
3131 West Loop South (between Richmond and Westheimer  
on the West Loop feeder road inside the Loop)  
Room: The Learning Center

Cost: full 12 lectures \$85  
visitor (single lecture) \$9

Reduced rates of \$50 and \$5 for the respective categories  
are available for:

1. full-time students
2. repeat students (this lecture series)
3. Multiple members of the same family

2. Next HOS meeting- Friday, February 26, 8 p.m. at the Rice Graduate House. The address is 6500 South Main, at the corner of South Main and University Blvd. Take an immediate left inside the Graduate House and go up to the 2nd floor.

President

Warren S. Ross

Executive Committee

C.J. Blackburn  
Anna Franco  
J. Brian Phillips  
Warren S. Ross

Editor

J. Brian Phillips

Asst. Editor

Anna Franco

Editorial Address

J. Brian Phillips  
Box 53791  
Houston, TX 77052

Membership form

Please accept my membership dues (\$10 for one year) for the Houston Objectivism Society.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Warren Ross  
1903 Ganyard  
Houston, TX 77043

(Checks only. No cash please.)