

Houston Objectivism Society Newsletter

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Next HOS Meeting: Manners and Etiquette

One topic that sees increasingly alarmed media coverage today is the increasing hostility of people towards one another in our culture. We see stories in our newspapers with increasing regularity about minor altercations exploding into violent and even deadly confrontations. Ayn Rand has warned that increasing violence is a sign of a culture in rapid decline, but why is this going on now despite the large gap between the beliefs of our largely irrational intellectuals and the man on the street? Part of the answer lies in the wholesale attack over the past thirty years on the concept of etiquette, the means by which we show respect for one another as rational human beings.

Steve Miller will examine the concept of etiquette by defining the term, examining its role in a rational culture, and exploring the nature of the attacks on the concept that have successfully caused most people to regard the term as elitist, irrelevant, and even detrimental to the smooth functioning of civilization.

"The charge that etiquette is only about forks is a shorthand way of saying that etiquette is snobbishly picayune -- the hobby of otherwise useless scoundrels who, being in possession of some pointless information, set vicious traps for the fun of catching good-hearted folk who are only trying to live out their honest lives in peace. To such dastardly behavior they give the name that belongs to polite and considerate behavior. There is a vocabulary problem here all right, but Miss Manners doesn't think it is hers." -- Judith Martin in *Miss Manners Rescues Civilization*.

The meeting will be held on August 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the Clubroom of The Meridian apartment complex, 6263 Westheimer (between Hillcroft and Fountainview), across from Payless Shoes. The Clubroom is located upstairs facing Westheimer.

NOTE: Attending members are asked to contribute \$2 to help pay for the expenses of renting this clubroom. We have not been recovering rental costs, and would like to encourage those who have not been contributing to do so. Those attending are asked to bring snack items.

The Real Horatio Alger

by Warren S. Ross

"Horatio Alger hero" is a common phrase in America, referring to the person who achieves success by his own effort in the face of great obstacles. Over 100 books with such heroes were written by Horatio Alger (1834-1899), whose stories of boys overcoming poverty were widely read in the 19th century. Yet Alger's novels are virtually nowhere to be found today. Bookstores don't stock them. The Houston Public Library doesn't circulate them (though it has a collection of them in a separate building for old books of historical interest). Few if any have read them today, even among those who admire heroic literature.

Occasionally, one reads about a famous businessman who was inspired by Alger, such as the stockbroker Victor Niederhoffer, who is a fan of Horatio Alger, and who has a complete collection of Alger first editions. Benjamin Fairless of U.S. Steel and James Farley of Coca Cola are other examples.

Also occasionally, a university literature course covers Alger, treating him as a cross between ancient history and amusing turn-of-the-century nostalgia.

As our culture has moved further away from the remnants of

reason, the idea of the Alger hero is not only ignored but directly attacked, as in three recent references to courses or doctoral dissertations found at university web pages that characterize the Horatio Alger success idea as a "myth."

This state of affairs regarding Alger motivates a number of questions: What were his novels really like? What is the essence of the Horatio Alger hero as portrayed in his novels? Why were they so famous in their time? And why did they lose popularity? It might be easy to assume that the demise of Alger's popularity is solely due to the change in our culture from the individualism of the 19th century to the anti-individualism of the 20th. This, however, is only part of the reason.

A Typical Plot

We can begin to understand his ideas by relating the story of his first

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and most famous novel-- *Ragged Dick* (1867). Dick is a bootblack in turn-of-the-century New York City who is near starvation. He sleeps in the streets every night and wakes up hungry and penniless. He is an industrious shoeshiner, however, who earns just enough to eat after a couple of hours of work. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that he is an amiable fellow with a good sense of humor, but that he wastes what little money he earns on going to nighttime entertainments-- shows, gambling, etc., and in throwing parties for friends. Despite his flaws, he is portrayed as an honest boy, who would not cheat or steal from anyone-- despite given frequent opportunity to do so.

He overhears a wealthy

businessman speaking to his nephew. The nephew has just arrived in the city for a visit, but his uncle must attend to business and cannot show him the sights. Dick offers to show the boy, Frank, around. The businessman accepts the offer, despite Dick's raggedness, because he senses Dick's honesty and familiarity with New York sights. As a requirement for entrusting his nephew to Dick, however, the businessman asks that Dick clean himself up and wear a suit of Frank's, so that he'll look respectable enough to show Frank around.

Just being around Frank, and hearing Frank's many stories of famous men who were once poor but by thrift and hard work attained a fortune, Dick begins to think that he might have a possibility of another kind of life. His sense of future possibilities is enhanced by the self-respect his new garb and his unprecedented cleanliness instills in him. Dick, in his turn, protects Frank from some unscrupulous swindlers that lurk around the city streets.

After Frank's visit is over, Dick's changed attitude results in pursuit of a better job than bootblackening. He develops a habit of saving rather than squandering. He fulfills his desire to learn to read and write by studying with another boy at nights, reaching the position where he can compose a letter to his friend Frank. He also finds accommodations in an inexpensive room so that he does not have to live on the street. By months of saving and hard work, he accumulates a comfortable nest egg of \$100, a sum unheard of in his

earlier spendthrift life. At the end of the story he is still having difficulty finding another type of work, but after saving the life of a businessman's son, and after the businessman hears of his efforts to improve himself, he is offered an office job at what for him is an enormous salary of \$10 per week. This affords an unlimited potential for improving his lot in life.

Three Elements of an Alger Story

This story contains the three elements of almost every Alger story. First, there is the desperate situation of a poor boy, who by difficult effort improves himself and succeeds. This is the heroic element that most people refer to and respond to when they admire an Alger story. It relies on a view of man as having free will and a self-made soul. In particular, observe that Dick changes from someone who lives short-range to someone who thinks about the future. He is able to discipline himself to prepare for the future across time, even though his progress is incremental. Both in his acquisition of a modest sum of money and in his acquisition of knowledge, we see him act consistently to obtain a distant goal. This is why Alger is often said to promote "middle-class values." The members of the middle class improve themselves gradually, across time. They do not take enormous risks, do not seek "quick kills," but by discipline and consistent hard work they improve their situation-- financially and intellectually. Observe, however, that the virtue of consistent hard work based on conceptualizing the future in the present is generally

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applicable to all men, ones of extraordinary ability who take larger risks as well as to members of the middle class who possess more limited competence. Consider also that Dick does all this of his own conscious choice. Although he is stimulated to improve by contact with Frank, his choice is his own and he must sustain it even when Frank is not present.

The contact with Frank, however, introduces the second element of an Alger story: chance. The novel *Ragged Dick* is not plot-driven, it is not based solely on the fundamental premise or goal of the main protagonist. Rather the story is driven by a chance encounter with a wealthy businessman and his nephew, Frank (and later by a chance encounter with a wealthy businessman and his drowning son). Would Dick have achieved success without this encounter? Would he have changed? The story doesn't make it clear. It is precisely the injection of chance events in a story that blurs the author's message of self-reliant effort as the source of success.

Dick's character is a mixture of elements, some good and others not. The two aspects of character that Alger seems to think are decisive in overcoming Dick's faults are honesty and productiveness. He describes Dick at the beginning of the story as follows: "He was above doing anything mean or dishonorable. He would not steal, or cheat, or impose upon younger boys, but was frank and straight-forward, manly and self-reliant. His nature was a noble one, and had saved him from all mean faults. I hope my young

readers will like him as I do, without being blind to his faults [smoking, playing pranks, wasting his money]." Alger later refers to Dick's "energy, ambition, and natural sharpness," and both aspects of his character are dramatized throughout the book, with Dick's less responsible attributes slowly changed as the story proceeds. These two--honesty and productiveness-- are a

combination of character traits that could be used by an author with the proper approach to explain success without any chance events. Alger, however, seems unable to do it. Chance encounters of this kind appear in every novel of his I've read.

The two elements of an Alger novel discussed so far-- heroic effort and chance-- are what people refer to when they characterize an Alger novel as depicting "luck and pluck" (*Luck and Pluck* is in fact the title of one of his novels.) The third element of an Alger novel comes from the nature of the chance encounters-- they almost always consist of the beneficence of a wealthy man toward a poor boy. In *Ragged Dick* it is Frank's uncle and the father of the drowning boy. In *The Errand Boy* it is the President of a railroad. In *Struggling Upward* it is a wealthy relative. Often, the poor boy does something to deserve the gift, but Alger makes it appear that this is not always a trade but a moral duty on the part of the wealthy man. One of Frank's stories to Dick is of a wealthy British businessman who had been given his start by being adopted by a wealthy man. There was no trade involved-- it was a pure gift. And of course, both of Dick's chance encounters are of the same sort. While touring New York, Dick says to Frank: "If everybody was like you and your uncle... there would be some chance for poor people. If I was rich I'd try to help 'em along."

So the three elements of the Alger novel, as exhibited in *Ragged Dick* and his other books, are "luck," "pluck," and ... *altruism*. This is a deadly and self-

Investing: An Objective Approach

On September 6 Lyceum International will present "Investing: An Objective Approach" by Dr. Yaron Brook.

This seminar will explain how financial markets work and how they can work for you. All topics are intended to teach how you can increase your wealth over time without taking unnecessary risk. This seminar will help separate fact from fiction in the vast amounts of financial advice investors are bombarded with every day.

This seminar gives you the knowledge you need to secure your financial future.

This seminar will be held September 6 at the Hyatt Regency Houston Airport.

To register, or for more information, contact Lyceum at:

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contradictory mixture. It was discussed above how the introduction of "luck" undermines heroism. In Alger, this undermining is implicit. Alger could have left his altruism implicit if he had merely introduced the gifts of wealthy strangers as story elements, without explicit philosophizing. Even implicit altruism would have undercut the heroism: Logically, if poor boys need the help of wealthier benefactors to succeed (whether strangers or long-lost relatives), it means they are not capable on their own of succeeding. Alger, however, goes far beyond mere implication in endorsing altruism and undermining heroism. In the following exchange between Dick and Frank, Dick expresses a different attitude than one would expect to hear from the self-reliant streetwise boy he originally appears to be:

"I'd like it if some rich man would adopt me, and give me plenty to eat and drink and wear, without my havin' to look so sharp after it. Then agin' when I've seen boys with good homes, and fathers, and mothers, I've thought I'd like to have somebody to care for me."

"Dick's tone changed as he said this, from his usual levity, and there was a touch of sadness in it. Frank, blessed with a good home and indulgent parents, could not help pitying the friendless boy who had found life such up-hill work.

"Don't say you have no one to care for you, Dick," he said, lightly laying his hand on Dick's shoulder. "I will care for you."

"Will you?"

"If you will let me."

"I wish you would," said Dick,

earnestly. 'I'd like to feel that I have one friend who cares for me.' "

A more maudlin and self-pitying exchange of dialog can hardly be found in literature, let alone 19th century literature. And it comes from the mouth of the "hero" invented by the writer of books about boys who "gain success by leading exemplary lives and struggling valiantly against poverty and adversity" (*Columbia Concise Encyclopedia*). Instead of Dick's taking the responsibility for raising himself up, and viewing poverty as a condition to be born until he can do something about it, he wants to be taken care of. And instead of admiration on the part of his benefactor, the benefactor feels pity. This is the true implication and underlying philosophy of altruism-- that man is a helpless creature who needs to be taken care of and pitied rather than left alone and admired for his achievements. The introduction of altruism thus blows heroism to pieces.

Altruism... to Anti-Capitalism

Alger's altruism leads him, as one might predict, to explicit attacks on capitalism and capitalists. As identified by the biographer Gary Scharnhorst in his *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.*, such attacks permeate his books:

From *Rupert's Ambition* : "Rupert did not envy his father's old partner. 'I would rather be poor and honest,' he reflected, 'than live in a fine house, surrounded by luxury, gained by grinding the faces of the poor.' "

In *Number 91*, he criticizes the idea of rebates. He personally crusaded against the railroad

rebates of the late 1870's.

Alger railed against stock speculation, specifically mentioning or alluding to Jay Gould as evil in *Store Boy* and in *Luke Walton*.

In *Paul the Peddler* and *Luke Walton* he endorsed the "dog-eat-dog" attack on capitalism, saying there were too many competitors in the market and that this dropped prices too much, i.e. capitalism was subject to what moderns call "market failure."

In many books he stated the Marxist critique that capitalism only pays subsistence wages, and that the laborer is worth more, and if he isn't paid more he is being exploited.

He endorsed unionization in *Ben the Luggage Boy* and in *Slow and Sure*.

In *Luke Walton* he endorsed usury laws.

In *Tom Tracy* he criticized the profit motive.

Little wonder that with some selectivity, both in which novels were published and even in which chapters from those novels were included in later editions, Alger was enthusiastically promoted by the Progressives. Writers of the political left, like Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, and Upton Sinclair, all claim to have been influenced by reading Alger. Alger himself admired Teddy Roosevelt, though he died before Roosevelt became president and famous as a "trustbuster."

The Origin of Alger's Ideas

Alger's philosophical ideas are not original with him. He merely adopted the philosophical package-deal that

was prevalent in American culture toward the latter half of the 19th century. This package-deal combined the pro-reason ideas of the American Founders, mixed in their altruism, then supercharged the bad aspects of their ideas with the increasingly anti-reason views being imported from Europe. Such anti-reason views first appeared in America in the universities and religious seminaries, and that is where Alger absorbed them. Alger graduated from Harvard in 1852. He taught school for a short while, then trained as a minister. He practiced ministry for some years, interspersing a roving ministry with long trips to Europe in which he would be paid by magazines to write his impressions. He wrote poetry and stories for boys during this time. In 1865, he left the ministry and began to write full time. *Ragged Dick* was published in 1867, which began the period of Alger's fame.

In one poem (see box on next page), written in 1857, Alger expresses both his emphasis on productive work and his religious framework. The poem is called "Nothing to Do: A Tilt at Our Best Society." In it, he lampoons the idle rich who don't do anything but haughtily look down on others.

The poem is essentially based on the premise that we have been sent here to accomplish something by God.

That this poem is representative of Alger's deepest philosophy is

Nothing to Do: A Tilt at Our Best Society

O, ye who in life are content to be drones,
 And stand idly by while your fellows bear stones
 To rear the great temple which Adam began,
 Whereof the All-Father has given each man
 A part in the building--pray look the world through,
 And say, if you can, you have nothing to do!
 Were man sent here solely to eat, drink and sleep,
 And sow only that which himself hoped to reap,
 If, provided his toil served to gain his subsistence,
 He had answered in the full the whole end of existence.
 Where then would be poets, philanthropists, sages,
 Who have written their names high on History's pages?
 They stood not aloof from the battle of Life,
 But, placing themselves in the van of the strife,
 Marching manfully forward with banner unfurled,
 Left their deeds and their names a bequest to the world.
 Have you ever (forgive me the bold impropriety)
 Reckoned up your outstanding debt with society,
 Or considered how far, should your life close tomorrow,
 You would merit her real and genuine sorrow?
 If, in dying, the world be no wiser or better
 For your having lived there, then you are her debtor;
 And if, as Faith, Reason and Scripture, all show,
 God rewards us in heaven for the good done below,
 I pray you take heed, idle worldling, lest you
 With that better world should have nothing to do!

indicated by the fact that he gave it to a number of libraries, resubmitted it to other literary journals (e.g. a Christian paper) after its first publication and referred to it favorably in letters nearly 40 years later.

Given the contradictory mix of elements, why were Alger's books popular? The most plausible

explanation is that there is an enormous need for the heroic in literature, and, despite the contradictory elements, most of his stories have an aspect of heroism. Further, as indicated above, people simply read him selectively. It was

not just the anti-capitalists but also the defenders of individualism and laissez-faire who seem to have read him selectively, ignoring the altruist and anti-capitalist message. Beyond all this, there is a need in our language for a *concept* that denotes the man who succeeds through his own effort. The "Horatio-Alger hero" is just such a concept, and it is not surprising that it has survived long after Alger's novels stopped being read widely. Despite the fact that the concept denotes a character badly undercut in its actual implementation in Alger's novels, the concept itself is valid and desperately needs the stature given to it

by an explicit phrase.

Why did Alger's novels fall out of favor? Because of the contradictory elements. He did not fundamentally challenge the irrationalist philosophy at odds with the heroic element. In fact two thirds of every one of his books contained the anti-heroic poison that undermined the remaining

one-third. His books were therefore unconvincing and could not inspire without enormous compartmentalization on the part of the reader. Even if Alger had not explicitly sanctioned the irrational philosophy, a novel by itself, especially a nonphilosophical novel of the lighter sort, could never stop a culture from accepting the wrong ideas. This is one reason why Ayn Rand's one-two punch of heroic novels and explicit philosophical writing has a far better chance of changing our culture than her novels by themselves, wonderful and philosophically potent though they are.

To recapitulate, Alger's ideas reflected the contradictory aspects of American culture at the time. He was a cultural barometer. While the country was booming as a consequence of the pro-reason influence, it was also moving toward greater government regulation as a consequence of the anti-reason influence. It appears that, read selectively, Alger offered something to everyone. His altruism undermined his heroism, but his heroism also diluted his altruism. He was replaced by more consistent altruists.

Alger Re-written

Despite these serious flaws, there is positive potential in some of Alger's story lines--potential to motivate excellence, productive effort and self-reliance. To grasp that potential, one must identify the heroic element and separate it from the antithetical elements. In some of Alger's stories (e.g. *Paul Prescott's Charge*), I think it is virtually

impossible to make this separation. But in others, the separation is possible. As an exercise in making this separation, and in removing altruism and luck from a story, I recently re-wrote Alger's story *Struggling Upward*, attempting to write it (as best as I am able) from a consistent, rational philosophical perspective. The result cannot be presented here, but my own notes written as assignments to myself in the process of rewriting may be instructive in regard to the nature and difficulty of this process.

In addition to removing explicitly bad philosophy from the novel, the principles I used in making the following modifications are:

1) to make the characters consistent representatives of their philosophies, i.e. eliminating undermining "softening" touches. One example of this type of undermining is the self-deprecating remarks the hero, Luke, makes.

2) to dramatize as much as possible and eliminate verbal generalizing not tied to definite concretes in the story.

The basic story line is that Luke, a productive and honest boy, is given a tin box for safekeeping by a mysterious stranger. Luke is then accused of bank theft by the town banker Squire Duncan, who uses Luke's possession of the tin box as evidence (Duncan himself is the actual thief). In the effort to clear his name, Luke is opposed by Duncan and his son, Randolph, a worthless boy who gambles and spends his father's money, and who bullies every poor boy in town. Here is a slightly edited version of my notes to myself about changes to make to the story:

1. Remove incidental references to God (godless), Heaven, Providence (including modifying a minister's comments that his sermons convert "godless" men).

2. Modify all passages that have bad philosophy re: the words "selfish", "proud" (e.g. modify "selfish" to "nasty" and "proud" to "conceited").

3. Increase as much as possible the emphasis on Luke's effort and intelligence, and eliminate any element of blind luck. E.g., emphasize *early* that he studies hard, figures out better ways to clean the school (in his job as janitor). He is more than just a "good" boy in the religious sense (i.e. honest and innocent). He is positively good in his ability to think and in the effort he puts out. Dramatize this, don't just say it (i.e. show that as a bookkeeper he discovers some errors and saves his employer money). Also, reduce the reliance on luck in the chapter ("Nighttime Adventure") on his meeting the stranger Roland Reed. Create an incident that gives a plausible *reason* for Reed to trust Luke with the box (i.e. rewrite that section to make it so the stranger is injured and is helped by Luke's ingenuity, and gives him the tin box because he can't carry it as well as use a walking stick.) Eliminate in the last chapter the idea of munificence of a long-lost cousin. Get *blood* and *altruism* out of it! Make Reed's motivation gratitude for something Luke does for him, as well as recognition of Luke's character and ability.

4. Modify all references to "popularity" as a virtue, in Luke's and his friend Linton's characters.

(Take out description of Luke as "warm-hearted" and "popular" in early paragraph characterizing him.)

5. Remove self-deprecating remarks on Luke's part, especially his bewildered remarks acknowledging he can't figure out why Mr. Reed trusted him.

6. Eliminate all charitable remarks to Randolph, i.e. have Luke be civil to Randolph but not so ingratiating that he undercuts his moral superiority. In particular, get rid of his conversation with Randolph in the second to last chapter in which he seems overly concerned with being polite.

7. Modify all dialog that implies determinism or makes political concessions to the Left. For example, in Luke's first conversation with Mr. Armstrong, modify Armstrong's view that poverty causes one to be virtuous (This is a typical conservative view, even today, and it is really just the flip side of the Left's determinist view that poverty drives one to crime). Make it an issue of choice. Also, modify Armstrong's attack on Wall Street speculation to make it an issue of doing it thoughtlessly and without ample funds, rather than a blanket attack on speculation and Wall Street.

8. Add something about the love interest. Make it clear that Florence Grant really likes Luke and wishes he were back when he is away. She can make a statement regarding her admiration for his character when he is accused of robbery. At the end, she can be waiting for him in Groveton. Eliminate entirely the nonsense about how his mother is his best

friend and put Florence in her place.

9. Eliminate irrelevancies. Tighten the writing. There is absolutely no reason for a sentence like "Of the journey on the train there is no reason to speak." If this is true, then don't.

10. Eliminate cliché'd phrases. In particular, get rid of the repeated use of the word "pleasant," which seems to be Alger's prime virtue from the number of times he uses it. It's a filler word that's only used for lack of something better.

11. Eliminate interjections of Alger himself into the narrative.

12. Add *justice* to the story. There is no reason for the Squire Duncan to get off without prison for robbing the bank.

13. Remove explicit moralizing from the narrative. The story itself should demonstrate the theme, and not require any but the briefest statements of subthemes.

As can be seen from these notes, there are serious problems with the writing and the philosophy of this story. The story contains all the bad elements discussed above-- chance, altruism, religion-- plus others equally bad: determinism, lack of justice, and emphasis on commonplace values such as "pleasantness." Further, the writing is extremely amateurish, which by itself would have relegated Alger's stories to young boys only, except that there was better writing available even to that relatively indiscriminating audience. Nonetheless, having rewritten the story to excise as much as possible the irrational elements, replacing them as much as possible with a philosophy that embodies free will, egoism, justice, and

rationality, I think the story-- though still quite didactic and written at the level of the teenage reader-- is a far better representation of what people think a Horatio Alger hero is than his heroes actually were.

If our culture undergoes a philosophical renaissance, stories of productive efforts and the rational pursuit of values will abound. The quality of the writing and the value-orientation of the stories will vary, but there will be so much available that those in search of values in literature will be able to choose the best. Such a renaissance would bring Ayn Rand's writings to the forefront of literature, and together with the other great romantic writers, she would be permitted to teach the world what great writing and great literature are. That, as we know, is a long-term eventuality. Until the time of a second renaissance, lesser stories must serve to give some small measure of inspiration to those seeking values in literature, and some small measure of concretization to a rational metaphysics. For that reason, I recommend reading Alger's stories for what minor virtue is depicted in them. If nothing else, they provide a glimpse into life in the 19th century. Stories containing even an undercut heroism represent far more value than is available in most literature today, and if one can imagine what an Ayn Rand would have done with such stories (or the kind she would invent in their place) there can be great pleasure in reading them. They and other such stories can help to sustain us (if only partially and inconsistently) until we make the next renaissance a reality.

HOS Meeting Summaries

Chewing the Virtue of Honesty June 1997

The June HOS meeting featured a presentation by Brian Phillips titled "Chewing the Virtue of Honesty."

Brian began with a review of the process of "chewing", i.e., the proper methodology for developing the proper understanding of an idea. "Chewing", which was discussed by Dr. Leonard Peikoff in his lecture series "Understanding Objectivism" (UO), helps one tie one's ideas to reality. (Members who had attended Dr. Peikoff's recent lecture series "Objectivism Through Induction" noted that some of the material in UO is now obsolete.)

Because ideas are abstractions, and reality consists of concretes, a method is needed to connect ideas to those concretes. "Chewing" helps avoid floating abstractions, i.e., ideas which are not tied to the concretes from which they arise.

As identified by Dr. Peikoff, the eight steps in the process of chewing are:

1. State the context in an economical form. Remind yourself of what you are assuming.

2. Identify the full meaning of the idea you are "chewing". Be

clear about what you are trying to understand. For example, believing that "selfishness" means "do what you want" will ultimately lead to confusion.

3. Define a few key terms and connect them. The purpose is to clarify the key underlying ideas.

4. Concretize key concepts. Give examples and tie those ideas to reality.

5. Develop an inductive validation of the idea. The proof must come from perceivable reality.

6. Break complex ideas into stages. Remember the "crow" and limit your focus-- don't try to understand everything at once.

7. Play "Devil's Advocate". Raise common objections and try to answer them.

8. Integrate the idea with your other knowledge.

Following the review of the methodology, members then "chewed" the virtue of honesty as an exercise.

During the exercise it was noted that many of the steps occur simultaneously and/or interchangeably. For example, while establishing one's context, one may also identify, define, and concretize the key concepts underlying the idea being

"chewed".

Successful "chewing" requires that one oscillate between abstractions and concrete reality. First, one breaks down an idea by moving down the philosophical hierarchy. Then, one must unite the concretes (or less abstract ideas) into a concept or principle.

By uniting consciousness and reality, "chewing" helps avoid the floating abstractions of Rationalism and the concrete-bound mentality of Empiricism.

Ayn Rand and other Objectivist intellectuals have provided us with a philosophical map. They have identified many truths, as well as the concretes in reality which give rise to those abstract ideas. But this map can only serve as a guide-- the journey is one we must each make individually.

July 4th Party

The 1st Annual HOS July 4th party was held at the home of John and Karen Ford in Cypress.

Members enthusiastically competed in volleyball, horseshoes, and board games. The hungry competitors enjoyed a pot luck dinner and cook out.

HOS would like to thank John and Karen for their hospitality.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

\$ Winners of the *Anthem* and *The Fountainhead* essay contests will be announced shortly. The time and location of the awards ceremony will be announced at the same time.

\$ Two individuals are now responsible for the HOS library. Contact Janet Wich for books and periodicals; contact Clark Hamilton for audio and video tapes.