

The Houston Objectivism Society Newsletter

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RIDPATH TO LECTURE AT UH

On Sunday, October 29, Dr. John Ridpath will speak at the University of Houston. The lecture will start at 4:00 pm in the Dallas Room on the second floor of the University Center. UH students will be admitted free, others will be charged \$5.

Dr. Ridpath will present a lecture titled "Ayn Rand and the History of Individual Rights". He argues that the fundamental determinant of any society is its dominant philosophical ideas, and that the crucial philosophic base of a free society is the concept of individual rights. Dr. Ridpath then traces the concept from the ancient Greeks through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment to its decline in the 19th and 20th centuries (as manifest in the rise of statism throughout the world). The lecture concludes with a brief discussion Objectivism, the philosophy of Ayn Rand. Dr. Ridpath explains why Objectivism is the philosophy which can reverse the decline of individual rights in our time.

Dr. Ridpath is an Associate Professor of Economics and Intellectual History at York University in Toronto. He has published articles in professional economics journals as well as in *THE OBJECTIVIST FORUM* and *THE INTELLECTUAL ACTIVIST*. His scholarly interests include the evolution and significance of man's natural rights and major philosophical ideas influencing Western history. Dr. Ridpath has been honored by York University and the Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations for his outstanding contributions to university teaching.

TOS CONFERENCE

At the Texas Objectivist Societies Conference in Austin, several papers and workshops will be presented. The papers to be delivered include: "How Johnny Can Add" by Warren Ross, "Moral and Military Aspects of Trade With the USSR" by James Konzak; Naturalism vs. Romanticism as Expressed in the Works of Millet and Breton" by Tal Brooks; and Gary Piquet will give a paper on classical economics. A one hour question and answer period will be held each day after lunch.

The workshops will include: "A Century of Modern Art" by Pete Jamison, "Intellectual Activism and the Media" by Athena Productions, a play reading of "Madame X" by Ann Ciccobella, "Translations of French Articles on Free Banking" by Paul Blair, "The United Way Intrusion" by Anna Franco, and "Applications of Ethics" by David Haddad.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Phillips' Fun Night

Beginning in November, Phillips' Fun Nights will be held at Dawn and Brian's new apartment at the Atrium Regency Condominiums in beautiful southwest Houston. The address is 5655 Glenmont, Apt. #210, and the new phone number is 668-0453. The following are the scheduled events and dates:

Saturday, November 4, 7:00 pm:

Movie: The Naked Jungle starring Charlton Heston as an industrialist working to save his plantation in the South American jungle from impending disaster.

Saturday, December 9, 7:00 pm:

Game Night: Pictionary, Scrabble, Anagrams, and Chess will be available. Bring your favorite game and/or partner.

New Year's Eve Party

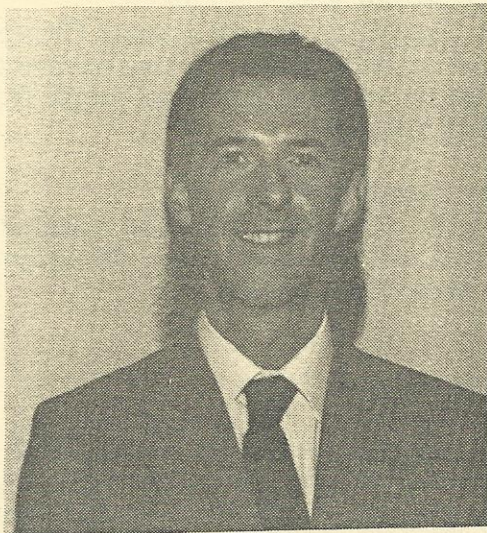
On the evening of Dec 31, HOS will throw a New Year's Eve party. It will be held at the club house of Wallingford Apartments, Dwyane Hicks', new residence. More details and a map will be provided in the next newsletter. For more information, call Dwyane Hicks at 781-3609.

During my teen-age years, I listened to a lot of rock music, searching for answers to the issues which confront us all. One of my favorite rock bands was a Canadian group called RUSH, who dedicated an album to "the genius of Ayn Rand".

Several years later, I stumbled upon Anthem and The Fountainhead in a bookstore. I read and enjoyed both books, but wasn't motivated to read any of Ayn Rand's works.

The catalyst for studying Objectivism came when I served on a jury for an attempted murder case. The issue of sentencing a man to prison made me think about many things - specifically, the issue of moral standards - and I began searching for answers to these questions. My search began in the religion section of a bookstore (where else does one find moral guidance?). Fortunately, the religion section was next to the philosophy section, and I saw Ayn Rand's non-fiction works. I bought all of them, and my life hasn't been the same since.

I was immediately captivated by Ayn Rand's ideas. At the time I was working as an electronics technician, and I had considerable exposure to logic - digital electronics are often called logic. This gave me a very practical demonstration of the power of logical thinking. It didn't take much of an argument on Miss Rand's part to convince me that logic shouldn't be limited to one's professional life.



J. Brian Phillips

Without Ayn Rand's influence, I probably would have never pursued the one career I really wanted - writing. Since I was 16 I wanted to be a writer, but I was never sure what to write about. Comedy and sports - two of my favorite subjects - always seemed to be more appropriate as hobbies than something to devote a career to. It was Ayn Rand - and For the New Intellectual in particular - which convinced me that I should pursue my dream. And, while my successes as a writer have been modest, I am far happier in this struggle than I have been in previous victories.

When I first read Ayn Rand's non-fiction, I was amazed at her ability to express feelings I had experienced for many years. I later learned that her philosophy was essentially the conscious expression of my sense-of-life. As I studied Objectivism further, I found that my understanding of myself greatly increased.

I also appreciated Miss Rand's vision of man as an heroic being, and her insistence that America's Founding Fathers gave us history's closest approximation of laissez-faire capitalism. I had long regarded the Founding Fathers as heroes, and thought that the Revolutionary Era must have been the most exciting time in history. While I still regard the Founders as heroes, I think that we live in much more exciting times. Our generation has a very real chance to see the establishment of a free - i.e., Objectivist - society.

I find many Objectivists are pessimistic about the future, and this greatly concerns me. The only philosophy which can or will save the world is Objectivism. But if those who advocate Objectivism accept defeat without a battle, then the cause of freedom and reason is doomed. Personally, I think the world should not be abandoned so easily.

Request for Profiles

Anyone interested in having his profile printed in the HOS newsletter can send his profile to Anna Franco, 2751 Wallingford Dr. #2212, Houston, TX 77042.

THE REAL CHILD CARE CRISIS

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advocates seek to avoid is not parenthood, but the responsibilities that follow. Many people give more thought to the financial ramifications of a home or car purchase than to those involved in raising a child. Yet, the lifetime costs of raising a child can easily approach those of buying a house.

Some argue that children are innocent victims of their parents' irresponsibility or misfortune. While this may be true, the childless neighbor, whose tax dollars would pay for government child care programs, is no less innocent. Subsidized child care, in fact, is an undeserved reward. Like all undeserved rewards, it provides an incentive for irresponsible people to continue their irresponsible ways.

Of course, unforeseen events sometimes change an individual's or family's situation. But bad luck is no justification for a coercive redistribution of wealth. Such people must rely on the voluntary charity of others. One person's need is not a claim on the property of others.

The free market can operate effectively only when people are responsible for their actions. When the market provides consumers with a choice of goods and services, the consumers must decide which suits his wants, desires, and values.

The market provides many child care options. Cost and quality vary widely, and parents are free to choose which best suits their budget and requirements. When consumers refuse to accept a substandard product, the market responds accordingly. This is as true of child care as any other product or service.

But a growing number of parents refuse to accept the responsibility of choosing. They want the government to mandate standards, to provide licensing, and to pay for child care. They want the government to assume their responsibilities as parents. Sadly, this is the real crisis in child care.

This article originally appeared in the October 1989 issue of THE FREEMAN. It has subsequently been published on the Op/Ed pages of several newspapers, including the Pittsburg Post-Gazette.

September HOS Meeting

HOS members Jeff Crow, Anna Franco, Dawn Phillips and Brian Phillips premiered their video "Montessori: An Educational Renaissance" at the September 22 HOS meeting. Twenty-seven HOS members and guests attended the meeting.

The video, which examines the philosophy underlying the Montessori Method of Education, featured on-camera interviews with HOS President Warren Ross, Directress Traci McMinn of the Village Montessori School, and President Laura Murray of the Post Oak School. After the video was viewed, Traci and several other teachers from the Village Montessori School answered questions from HOS members.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October	November	December	January
29 - Ridpath	4 - Movie Night 10-12 - TOS Conference in Austin	9 - Game Night 31 - New Year's Party	6 - Movie Night ? - HOS Meeting

THE REAL CHILD CARE CRISIS

by J. Brian Phillips

The statistics are familiar. More than half of all women with children under the age of six have jobs outside the home; almost 40 percent of all working mothers are single, widowed, divorced or married to men who make less than \$15,000 a year, and the average cost of day care is \$3000 per child. The conclusion is also familiar: the government must do something.

But the private sector already is providing a wide range of child care services. National child care chains, such as La Petite, Kinder-Care Learning Centers, and Children's World Learning Centers, aim primarily at middle-income families. Lepercq de Neuflyze, a New York investment bank, recently put \$3 million into 14 preschools targeted at the upper-income market. And, across the nation, thousands of people operate for-profit child care facilities. Of course, not every parent can afford such services. But the private sector has generated a number of options. For example, many employers, becoming increasingly aware of the problems their employees face in finding child care, are offering a variety of programs. Some companies, such as Merck, Campbell soup, and Apple Computer, operate on-site child care facilities for employees' children. Others, like IBM and BankAmerica, subsidize community centers. In all, the Conference Board estimates that 150 businesses and 600 hospitals have established on-site or near-site child care operations.

A growing number of firms such as IBM, Merck, Hewlett-Packard, SmithKline Beckman, and Transamerica offer alternative work schedules to give parents more time to care for their children. Control Data, Pacific Bell, The Travelers Companies, J.C. Penney, New York Life, and many smaller companies allow some employees to work at home via computer terminals. Rolscreen, an Iowa manufacturer, has used job sharing to overcome a labor shortage caused by a lack of child care options.

Real estate developers also recognize the growing importance of child care. "Developers are using day care as an amenity the way they used to use shrubbery and health clubs," real estate magnate Leonard N. Stern told *Fortune* magazine (November 21, 1988). Office buildings, apartment complexes, residential subdivisions, and business parks increasingly are offering on-site child care for tenants. Perhaps the most ignored child care option is the most widely used: home-based care by a relative or hired sitter. Nearly 70 percent of all child care is provided in this manner. Similarly, some parents form co-ops - resources are pooled and parents watch their children on alternate days.

Without a doubt, there is a tremendous need for child care services. Most of this need, however, is being met by the private sector - entrepreneurs, employers, developers, relatives, friends, neighbors, and church groups. But for a small, vocal minority, these alternatives are insufficient. They believe that child care, like education, is a right. And like education, they believe others should pay for it.

The public school system, few would disagree, is in terrible shape - violence, drugs, crumbling buildings, falling test scores, uninterested teachers, and rebellious students. Increased government controls haven't improved the educational system; in fact, the opposite is true. Yet, in the name of improved quality and affordability, many people want to subject the child care industry to similar controls.

This brings us to the real essence of the child care debate. Contrary to popular belief, parenthood is not only a right, but also a responsibility. And, with few exceptions, parenthood is avoidable. What child care

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