

## JANUARY MEETING TO FOCUS ON ESSENTIALS

In an effort to practice thinking in essentials, the January HOS meeting will be an application of the principles Linda Reardan presented at the Texas Objectivist Societies Conference in November. For a summary of Linda's workshop at TOSC see the article on page 2.

Warren Ross will lead the discussion, beginning with a brief summary of the ideas Linda presented. *Attendance at TOSC is not necessary to benefit from this meeting.*

Warren's presentation will focus on an OpEd article from *The Wall Street Journal* and the short story, "The Last Leaf", by O. Henry. A copy of the OpEd article is enclosed. Please read the article and the short story prior to the meeting.

While reading the article, try to decide which of the six reasons given (if any) for Margaret Thatcher's demise is most fundamental, i.e., is in fact the actual cause. While reading the short story, try to identify the essential plot line and the essential theme.

By identifying the essence of the story and the article, we practice thinking in essentials, an invaluable tool in dissecting and understanding complex situations.

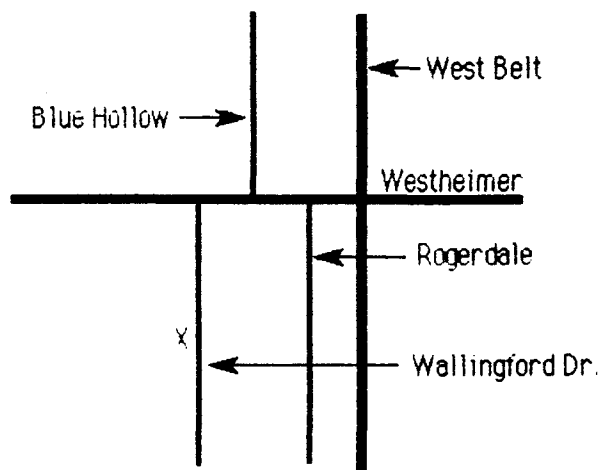
The meeting will be held on January 25, 1991 at 7:30 p.m. in the Spindletop Room in the Student Center on the University of Houston Campus.

## ANNUAL HOS NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

The annual HOS New Year's Eve Party will be held at the apartment of Dwyane Hicks and Anna Franco. The address is

A map to their apartment is below. The party will start at 8 p.m. on December 31.

Dwyane and Anna ask that anyone planning to attend call them ( ) to coordinate what snacks and beverages to bring.



## NEW OBJECTIVIST NEWSLETTER

The *Cantique Connection* is a new newsletter for people who like to whistle while they work. Editor Anne Moroney lists three goals for her newsletter: 1. To publish news and announcements of activities of interest to Objectivists; 2. To show how people are using Objectivism in everyday situations to make themselves happier and more productive; and 3. To provide a means for Objectivists to reach other Objectivists for activism, pleasure, or business.

Because this newsletter may be of value to some HOS members, a copy of the first issue of *Cantique Connection* is enclosed with this newsletter. We hope you enjoy it.

## HICKS BECOMES NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Beginning with the next issue of the HOS Newsletter, Dwyane Hicks will assume the role of Editor. All materials related to the Newsletter should be mailed to Dwyane at

Dwyane's phone number is

## SUMMARY OF TOSC II

Sixty-five people attended the Second Annual Texas Objectivist Societies Conference in Houston during the weekend of November 2-4. Attendees came from as far away as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Minnesota and California.

The conference opened with registration and a reception on Friday night. After opening remarks by conference Chairman Dwyane Hicks, Bob Gifford presented the conference's first paper, "Selfishness and the Spread of Objectivism".

In his paper, Bob explained why activism is important to the spread of Objectivism and why it is not a sacrificial activity. He summarized the activities of numerous Objectivist groups, including the Ayn Rand Institute and HOS and encouraged the audience to become more involved in actively promoting Objectivism.

Bob's paper was immediately followed by a panel discussion on intellectual activism. Moderated by Dan Fordyce, the panel included Yaron Brook, Warren Ross, John Beason and Bob Gifford. The panel members discussed their own experiences with activism.

Brian Phillips presented the second paper of the day, titled "The Philosophies of Environmentalism". In his paper, Brian examined the two dominant ideological trends in environmentalism-- "social ecology" and "deep ecology".

Social ecology holds that environmental problems are caused by social injustices, and the solution to these problems must come through new social relationships, i.e., a socialized economy. Deep ecology attacks industrialization itself as the source of environmental problems, and calls for a return to the life of hunter-gatherers. Both of these ideologies advocate a collectivism which includes everything in the environment.

Brian then presented the political implementation of these ideas. Social ecology finds its most consistent implementation in the Greens movement, an openly leftist coalition of environmentalists, feminists and peace activists. Deep ecology is most consistently practiced by a group called Earth First! which uses sabotage and

other forms of violence to impede industry and development.

Philosopher Linda Reardan began Saturday afternoon with a workshop titled "Thinking in Essentials". Linda explained that, when dealing with complex situations or concepts, it is necessary to identify essentials-- i.e., those characteristics which explain the most of the others.

Constructing definitions follows the principles of thinking in essentials. Linda listed four steps in this process: 1) List a few referents of the concept (X) and some of their characteristics; 2) Find the genus by identifying what X and the other referents have in common; 3) Find the differentia by identifying the characteristics which distinguish X from other species. Then determine which of these characteristics is fundamental; 4) Double check the definition according to the rules of definition. A handout at the conference listed 6 rules for forming definitions.

To illustrate these steps, Linda led the audience through the formation of definitions for two concepts: "civilization" and "jealousy".

Ann Ciccolella presented a staged reading of her play *Madame X* on Saturday afternoon. The play examines artistic integrity, as dramatized by the work of John Singer Sargent. Entertainment Night included an art slide and music presentation by Yaron and Revital Brook, a piano recital by Dr. Dean Shank, a reading of "Kira's Viking" by Chris Land, and a poetry reading by Michael Clover.

On Sunday morning Steve Rogers presented a paper titled "An Historical Introduction to Free Will". Steve examined numerous variations of determinism, e.g., social, racial, and supernatural and how these ideas have affected various cultures, including contemporary political policies, such as the "war on drugs" and the "war on pornography".

Yaron Brook presented a paper written by Ohad Kamin titled "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly". This paper examined the demise of western movies and the values underlying the

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January

17- Ben Franklin born (1707)  
25- HOS meeting

### February

2- Ayn Rand born (1905)  
20- Glenn orbits Earth (1962)

### March

?- HOS meeting

### April

13- Jefferson born (1743)

## TOSC CONFERENCE SUMMARY

(continued from page 2)

against evil. Actors such as John Wayne won acclaim playing such figures, even when they lacked overwhelming talents. While westerns dominated cinema in the 1950's, they were soon undercut by Naturalism. "Spaghetti westerns" played a significant role in this demise.

On Sunday afternoon, Michael Mazzone examined the formulation of law in "Comparing the Sources of Law: A Case Study." In the workshop, he examined and explained the role of the Constitution, case law, statutory law, and other sources (such as treaties, rules and administrative decrees), in deciding one particular case.

J. Brian Phillips presented a workshop titled "How to Objectively Evaluate the News." This workshop examined the media's presentation of the investigation into the explosion on the U.S.S. Iowa in 1989. Network news broadcasts and several magazine articles were examined and discussed. (This workshop was based on the January 1990 HOS meeting.)

Anna Franco's workshop titled "Objective Observations in Music" presented the aesthetic ideas and musical observations of musicologist Deryck Cooke. In his book *The Language of Music* (1959) Cooke gives numerous examples of melodic phrases which, though they come from different pieces and differ in many elements, have the same essential internal structure and

also express similar emotions.

According to Cooke, this suggests a relationship between certain types of phrases and certain classes of emotions. Musical examples were played to demonstrate this idea. The audience participated by volunteering their reactions to the music.

Conference chairman Dwyane Hicks concluded the weekend's events with a rousing rendition of "Happy Trails". The conference was emotionally and intellectually stimulating. Next year's conference will be held in Austin, and chaired by Yaron Brook.

Proceedings of the conference will be available in the near future. For information, contact Dwyane Hicks.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

HOS membership dues for 1991 are now due. Members receive the HOS Newsletter and are permitted free use of the HOS library. Below is a membership application. On the application is space to pledge donations to the 1991 *The Fountainhead* Essay Contest. Current members will also find a stamped, addressed envelope enclosed.

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### Membership Application for the Houston Objectivism Society

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the 1991 *The Fountainhead* Essay Contest. (Minimum pledge is \$50)

Mail application and membership dues of \$10 to: Warren Ross

## ZONING BATTLE CONTINUES

Councilman Jim Greenwood currently has a proposal before City Council to rename the Planning Commission the Planning and Zoning Commission. The new commission would also be directed to develop a zoning plan for Houston within 18 months. At least six Councilmembers have expressed support for Greenwood's plan.

## THE JEFFERSON SCHOOL

The Jefferson School of Philosophy, Economics and Psychology has announced a conference for August 4-18, 1991 on the campus of the University of California, San Diego.

A highlight of the conference will be six lectures by Dr. Leonard Peikoff based on Chapters 6-11 of his forthcoming book, *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand*. Other instructors, and their topics, scheduled for the conference include Dr. Harry Binswanger the political philosophy of John Locke; Dr. John Ridpath on the political philosophy of Immanuel Kant; Dr. George Reisman on environmentalism, the theory of monopoly and wealth and its role in human life; Dr. Walter Williams on government intervention and individual freedom and South Africa's war on capitalism; and Dr. Edith Packer on "happiness skills".

For more information regarding the conference, write to:

The Jefferson School  
P.O. Box 2934  
Laguna Hills, CA 92654

In a related note, recordings of Dr. Peikoff's lectures at the Conceptual Conference based on Chapters 1-5 of his book are now available from Second Renaissance books.

A vote on the proposal was scheduled for December 11, but was delayed for 30 days. The proposal will be back on the Council's agenda in early January.

The Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Property Rights has been one of the most outspoken opponents of zoning. On December 10, committee Chairman Brian Phillips addressed city Council, citing moral objections to zoning. His comments were summarized in *The Houston Post* the following day. That same day, many HOS members called Councilmembers to voice opposition to zoning. In early December, Warren Ross, Jeff Crow and Brian Phillips had letters published in the *Houston Chronicle*.

These efforts are having an impact on the debate. All HOS members are encouraged to write and/or call Councilmembers and the Mayor to voice their opposition to zoning. In addition, those so inclined may wish to address City Council on the issue.

## STUDY GROUP AND LECTURE SERIES

Anyone interested in attending the "Ancient Philosophy" lecture series by Leonard Peikoff should contact Brian Phillips ( ). If there is sufficient interest, the series will begin in late January or early February.

Anna Franco is trying to begin a group to study *The Romantic Manifesto*. Ayn Rand's other non-fiction works would also be considered for a study group if interest dictates. Contact Anna ( ) for details, or to express interest.

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HOS Executive Committee:  
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Warren S. Ross

The Houston Objectivism Society Newsletter is published bimonthly for members of the Houston Objectivism Society. Membership dues are \$10 per year. Unsolicited manuscripts on issues of interest to Objectivists are welcome.