



# Houston Objectivism Society

Vol.7, No. 3 May 1994 Newsletter

## M & M in June

The June 11th HOS meeting will feature the audio tape of *Modernism and Madness*, Dr. Leonard Peikoff's latest speech at Ford Hall Forum. In addition, we will watch a video of Dr. Peikoff's speech *Health Care is not a Right*.

Prior to these main events, Jeri Eagan and Janet Wich will briefly address two questions carried over from an earlier meeting. In addition, members will be updated on the Physician Project.

Please join us at 6:30 pm, this Saturday, at the Phillips clubroom. The gate code is #5145.

#1793

## Personal Applications of Objectivism

At the May 14 meeting of HOS, Johnnie McCulloch hosted an examination of how individuals have used Objectivism at work, at play and with relationships.

Johnnie started by showing how some of his friendships have been affected by his fairly recent introduction to Objectivism. This generated an interesting discussion concerning the different standards of friendship depending on the level of friendship and the knowledge possessed by one's friends.

Brian Phillips contrasted views he held on three different issues prior to and after his introduction to Objectivism. Some modification occurred, but the main benefit was that his views were sharpened and provided with a non-arbitrary foundation. In addition, all three views were integrated into a non-contradictory whole.

Janet Wich showed how her knowledge of Objectivism has fundamentally affected how she teaches English literature, vividly contrasting her method and selection of material with that of another teacher.

Clark Hamilton discussed how he has reacted to recent structural and almost ideological changes at his company.

Sean Rainer passed on some astute observations about life as a student at the University of Houston, where he is currently practicing survival skills in the Humanities with the help of Ayn Rand. (Sean also announced that he and Jerry Smith are planning to re-activate an Objectivist student group on campus. We applaud their efforts.)

Pete Jamison wrapped up the session with some interesting comments on relationships.

Prior to this main section of the meeting, George Marklin addressed an earlier question, on the subject of marriage, including its moral and legal aspects. This concluded with a discussion of intrinsicist and subjectivist views of marriage.

Jim and Sandi Brents provided treats for the evening, including some very tasty brownies.

It was a pleasure to welcome more new members to HOS at this meeting: Beth Freeborn, Steve and Elizabeth Miller, Mikael Thomson and David Comeaux, a law student senior at the University of Houston.

## Pamphleteering at April Meeting

Warren Ross discussed the opportunities afforded by pamphleteering at the April meeting. In addition, HOS members prepared cover letters and pamphlets to be sent to their physicians and dentists.

Warren noted that opportunities are rare for addressing current issues in a substantive way. Newspapers are very selective in offering Op-Ed space, and letters-to-the-editor are edited for brevity and even for content. But sending pamphlets to the right individuals, accompanied by a cover letter, can be a very effective way of informing and persuading people about rational op-

tions.

Currently, Janet Wich coordinates a group of eight people who send an assortment of pamphlets out each month to various parties.

At this meeting, however, the focus was more narrow. Two computers were used to create a data base for physician names and addresses, and many attendees used a standard cover letter appropriately modified to send a pamphlet and cover letter to their physician(s).

Thanks to Richard Beals for providing food for the evening.

A new HOS member was welcomed to the Houston area. Diedrik Swager is in the United States for six months, working for Baker-Hughes. Diedrik will be returning to Delft University in Holland, where he formed an Objectivist student club.

## Physician's Project

Three hours prior to the May meeting, about twelve volunteers arrived at the Phillips clubhouse to stuff envelopes for the Physician's Project.

Utilizing 6000 mailing labels of doctors in the Houston area obtained and donated by Joe & Mollye Blackburn, Dr. Peikoff's *Health Care is not a Right* pamphlet and Warren Ross' cover letter were enclosed in pamphlet-sized envelopes for 2000 mailings. At the end of the regular meeting, only the task of applying labels was left to accomplish, and project chair Dwyane Hicks was grateful and relieved that everyone pitched in.

At this point, the amount of funds available has limited us to 2000 mailings, but we hope to increase that in the future, possibly with contributions

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from the doctors themselves. Already, one physician has purchased 100 copies of the pamphlet for his waiting room. If you think this is a worthwhile project, please contribute what you can.

I would like to thank the following for their contributions: *Jeri Eagan, Richard Beals, Warren Ross, Joe & Mollye Blackburn, Sean Rainer, Jerry Smith, Ronnie Shoemaker, J.P. Miller, Caroline Yeoman, Johnnie McCulloch, Vern & Margaret Alway, Pete Jamison, Diedrik Zwager, Pravin Shah, Jim & Sandi Brens and Dale Schwartz.*

Honorable Mention: Brian Phillips is also sending the pamphlet out to a great number of small business owners.

Special Appreciation: To Jeri Eagan, for helping me to organize this project.

Special Citation: Warren Ross, who signed his name to two thousand cover letters.

## Profile: J.P. Miller



J.P. Miller lives with his wife, Mahvash <sup>Ramsay</sup> ~~Ramsey~~, and their children, Rayan and Jonna, north of Houston near the facilities of Compaq Computer Corporation, for whom he works.

*What do you do, J.P.?*

I'm an electrical engineer for Compaq Computer. I design comput-

ers, concentrating at this time on large database and network servers.

In the past five years I've been involved with the design of cache and CPU architecture, memory, subsystems, and peripherals for microcomputers. A network server and a database server are computers which hold files containing data needed by various people on a network. By means of their own computers, the users access the server computer. With a network server, the use of programs is independent and does not affect the other users. But with a database server, individual use affects the use by others. For example, the database server might be used as a ticket reservation system. Thus, as tickets are reserved, that information is stored centrally and is made available continuously to all users. The database server, therefore, needs more compute power built into it, while both kinds of servers require a great deal of disc storage capacity.

We're the market leader in these two PC-based kinds of servers.

*When did you start working for Compaq?*

In 1987. Before that I worked for Geosource designing seismic data acquisition equipment. And I started, after college, with Texas Instruments, designing microcomputer boards and peripherals for industrial applications. Before that, I worked in many jobs while attending college at Iowa State University.

*How do you like Compaq?*

Compaq is probably the greatest company I've ever seen to work for. It operates very rationally, in most regards, and it's very exciting and dynamic work. My contributions and that of my colleagues are well rewarded, and it's very satisfying work.

*It seems as if Compaq has really taken off after its recent change of leadership.*

Yes, Rod Canion, Jim Harrison and Bill Murto started the company in order to create a fun place to work, free of a large bureaucracy and free to do more entrepreneurial projects. They achieved Fortune 500 status faster than any company in history, achieved the level of \$1 billion in sales faster than anyone and introduced the 386 CPU

into the PC arena. Although IBM established the industry standard, Compaq pioneered the idea of rigidly adhering to that standard for the sake of compatibility.

Through this period, Compaq had phenomenal development and growth, but they didn't pay too much attention to costs. In addition, the market changed quickly from that of a new technology to one which was more mature and commodity oriented. In just six months, we went from our best quarter ever in profits to our first losses and layoffs, and Rod Canion wasn't able to come up with a plan to change direction as soon as the Board thought necessary. Eckhard Pfeiffer was put in charge, and, without abandoning our technological leadership, succeeded in containing costs while serving a much wider product audience and expanding our market. Most of our competitors are just starting this shift, now, so we're in a real good position.

*Where did you grow up?*

In Sigourney, Iowa, a small town with a population of two thousand. My father was a shoe repairman until I was in high school. Then he became a patrolman, finally the Chief of Police. I attended a small public school, where I was a good student but not a great one. I was bored and lazy with school studies, but I read voraciously on my own and loved science. Astronomy, radios, telephones and electricity interested me, and I built electrical devices all the time.

At one point I was flunking reading class although I was reading *Huckleberry Finn* aloud to my brothers and sisters. I didn't want to do my work. My mother got me into an advanced reading class, after which I did much better.

*Any more interests?*

At one point, an English teacher got me involved in plays, after which I became involved in drama and other organizations. I got a ham radio operator's license during this period and I worked part-time as a gardener and caretaker, saving up \$2,000 by the time I entered college. By that time, I had decided to become an electrical engineer.

My parents couldn't help me with paying for college. As a result of that, and getting married along the way, it took me 11 years to get my degree. I worked at a variety of jobs during this time, oscillating back and forth between working and attending school. One of those jobs involved working at a radio station as the engineer. It's the only job I was ever fired from.

*For what?*

I didn't show up for work because I had been arrested for protesting the draft in front of a draft office. I was there with my first wife because of my partially invalid views about the draft: Because of religion, I was inclined towards pacifism, although not completely. The rest was my feeling that people ought to be left alone to do what they wanted to do.

*Were you very religious in high school?*

Yes, I was devoutly Catholic, but I remember being torn between two aspects: On one hand, I was absolutely bored with the whole thing; but on the other hand, I was terrified that I was a sinner and that someone would find out that I was a sinner.

I thought it was extremely important to be good, and I had learned that Catholicism was the standard of good. But most important to me was that people *think* I was good, too. That was probably the worst mistake of it all.

*When did all this change?*

During my first three years of college. I was extremely devout during the first year, but during the second year, I realized that I was gaining nothing from this but self-torture, and I started pulling away from it. From there I was involved in some radical activities against the draft, although I never embraced the mindless drug culture of the time, and I was disturbed by the widespread belief in socialism. I thought socialism violated rights and was evil.

*How did you discover Ayn Rand?*

My first wife had majored in English and was told by a friend at one point about a wonderful novel in which the heroine was raped—and liked it. My wife read *The Fountainhead*, liked it and we started having conversations about it, although I hadn't read it.

While she continued reading other books by Ayn Rand, we argued a lot about the ideas because they seemed to contradict everything I had accepted as a youth, particularly the altruistic aspects.

Finally, I asked her to recommend to me the book by Rand which most accurately and succinctly represented Rand's views. She recommended *The Virtue of Selfishness*, and I read it with the intention of methodically proving Ayn Rand to be wrong. But point by point, I found Rand to be proving me wrong, and I knew it. Within a year I had read all her books. Intellectually I considered myself almost a full-fledged Objectivist, then, although it has taken years for my emotional responses to catch up, particularly with regard to religious issues. It's been very gradual. *You've told me, before, about introducing Objectivism to people at work. Has that been very successful?*

What I've mainly been able to do in that area is to raise the level of discussions to a principled or even philosophical level with many people at work. It used to be that they just made the usual cynical jokes or criticisms of current issues, usually political. But I've changed that with a number of people by bringing up the principles to which these issues refer. In addition, I've introduced a few to *Atlas Shrugged*. *You said that The Virtue of Selfishness proved you wrong. But, during that first year, what was it that appealed to you about Ayn Rand?*

The intellectual approach—it was reason that appealed to me. Prior to Ayn Rand, every approach that I had seen in regard to fundamentals, i.e., belief structures, had been an irrational approach. For once, it was a rational approach; it was something my mind could deal with, something I knew how to deal with, and I had never been offered that satisfaction before. I knew that my mind was a powerful tool in science and engineering, but I had felt anything but confident in dealing with concepts concerned with what I should be, or do or with what constituted good and evil.

These things were always divorced from the mind, before. Fields that I

had tried to embrace—philosophy, religion, art—they had rejected the mind, and Ayn Rand showed me that my mind *was* a valid tool for dealing with those areas, too.

I remember the particularly vicious mind/body attitudes entertained by people in art at college. Other students in literature classes, which I took, thought it contemptible that an engineering major should be involved in art, and my fellow engineering students thought that I was bizarre to be interested in literature. I remember trying to actually formulate the idea that both science and art were creative processes. But I would have conversations where people said, "No, you're using your mind, it can't be creative. Creation is letting things go, accepting your emotions, whatever falls out."

I knew that was wrong, particularly when you can see how a good poem is carefully constructed in accordance with meter, rhyme, the sounds of words, etc....with how the form of a poem contributes to its content.

All this really came home to me in reading *The Romantic Manifesto*, in which someone affirmed for me an integrated view and gave me courage to fight for it. No longer would I allow people to denigrate the process of engineering *or* that of art. It was wonderful to get that sanction about something I knew.

So all these things about which I was uncertain or had conflicting elements, such as art or religion, where I had this feeling that I ought to be a good person but wasn't—all of a sudden, I could use a part of myself, my mind, which worked wonderfully in regard to technology and in which I had great confidence. I saw that it was just as valid in these other areas, and that was a great relief.

*Tell me about your involvement with Libertarianism.*

Back in the 1970's, I was involved with people in the North studying Ayn Rand, having some study groups and holding some local conferences. Back then, there was some coffee table conversations about whether this new thing called Libertarianism was a good thing or not. I didn't understand the argu-

ments because I had little knowledge of the Party or its ideas. But in the late 70's, I met some people who were petitioning to get the Party on the ballot in Iowa. They articulated some positions which appealed to me: support of capitalism and individual freedom and opposition to government intervention in education and other important areas of our lives. In comparison with the other political parties, this seemed very attractive. So I helped to circulate petitions. The effort was successful, although I noticed that the activity fizzled out after the election.

I finished college in 1978 and came to Houston for a job with Texas Instruments. At that time, I encountered the Libertarians in Houston, who had a vigorous organization. I joined in and even headed up some activities. One such activity was opposing the re-instatement of registration for the draft. Part of that activity involved a protest rally in Hermann Park. When I found out that the American Communist Party and some socialist Worker's Party were going to be involved, I asked why? The answer given was that they were needed to form political alliances with whomever would support us with particular issues. I found out just how bad this could be at the rally: About ninety percent of the microphone time was taken up by socialists' denouncing "capitalist pigs" and with expressing other rhetoric typical of socialists, sometimes literally screaming into the microphones.

In the newspaper accounts of the event, the Libertarian Party was listed prominently as a sponsor, but the quotes consisted entirely of the socialist rhetoric, even though some of the speeches had come from Libertarians espousing fairly Objectivist, pro-rights positions.

I was very disgusted with the whole thing, but when I discussed my concerns with others, I found that they had very pragmatic attitudes about these alliances. I felt very uncomfortable, but I thought that this attitude was an anomaly. I also entertained the hope of changing minds about the issue, hoping to get them back on the right track.

I worked very hard, even becoming chairman of the Harris County Libertarian Party in 1979 and 1980. We got the Party on the ballot during this period.

I thought that I might extend my influence and became a member of the board at the state level. But once there, I kept hearing the idea that Ayn Rand had some good ideas, *but...*there was always all kinds of buts. Implicitly, there was this attitude that they had to prove, when agreeing with Ayn Rand, that any such agreement was not evidence for their being abject unthinking followers of Ayn Rand.

In addition, the higher up the people I met, the more I encountered outright contempt of Ayn Rand. It was said that she was an evil, vicious, manipulative, controlling, psychologically domineering monster, who victimized anyone who came into her sway. More and more, I heard those kind of attacks, and I realized that something was very wrong here; that something was really out of whack.

At the same time, my engineering duties and an entrepreneurial venture were taking up more of my time. For both reasons, I resigned my leadership positions in 1981. I attended some meetings for a couple of more years, becoming more and more uncomfortable with the people involved, who displayed a viciousness and nastiness about the world. Their complaints seemed to be directed not at bad policies, as such, but at the Constitution and our government, at government itself. Anyone could do anything, anything is legitimate, as long as government isn't involved. I stopped being involved.

When I attended the first meeting of HOS, I felt a sense of relief that so many people showed up—that they were people who respected the ideas of a woman who had made such a difference in my life. Finally, Peter Schwartz's article on Libertarianism in *The Intellectual Activist* really clarified the issue for me. By the end of my involvement with Libertarians, I really had a bitter, galling taste in my mouth about the whole thing. Not surprisingly,

I never met anyone in that organization with whom I could have become friends. That's not the case with people I've met in HOS.

*Thank you, J.P.*

## Abortion: Rights Applied

by

*Dwyane Hicks*

Ayn Rand addressed the issue of abortion in a number of essays, but I believe her major achievement in this regard was in identifying the nature of individual rights, by clarifying their context, which depended on her identification of man's nature. Given that the concept of individual rights has been obfuscated, inverted and nearly destroyed over the last fifty years, it is not surprising that the issue of abortion, an intimate application of rights, is so controversial and seemingly unresolvable in the culture of today.

The following views are my understanding of the issue and cannot presume to represent those of Ayn Rand. Her views on the subject are found in the following:

"Of Living Death," *The Objectivist*, Oct. 1968, 6.

"A Last Survey," *The Ayn Rand Letter*, IV, 2,3.

"The Age of Mediocrity," *The Objectivist Forum*, June 1981, 3.

In addition, Dr. Andrew Bernstein has addressed this issue extensively and philosophically in his speech, "The Right to Abortion," the audio tape of which is available from Second Renaissance Books.

The long-standing confusion in this country over the issue of abortion derives from the decades-long destruction of the concept of rights.

The onslaught against individual rights in this century has come from the collectivist Left, with conservatives contributing to, and even hastening, the loss of rights by failing to provide any philosophical defense. Failing especially to challenge the morality of altruism, conservatives have allowed the Left to pose as champions of morality, with conservatives quibbling over means, practicality and present resources. Thus, however personally corrupt such personages as President Clinton or Senator Kennedy may appear to be, the moral authority of their policies has not suffered major defeats.

With abortion, however, this political position of Left and Right has been

reversed. Anti-abortionists have self-righteously committed murder and arson and have several sympathizers on the Supreme Court. The Left, in response, has been hesitant and timid. Newscasters introducing the topic invariably begin their presentations with the statement: "Abortion is an emotional issue," stated with an emphasis which belies the fact that they are uttering the obvious. The implicit context of such a statement is that all values are subjective; therefore, any strongly held values are impervious to reason. This implies that one's claim to one's body is no more valid than anyone else's claim. Other liberals sometimes offer unconvincing arguments based on altruism: Focussing not on the woman but on the "child", they have argued that it is better off (dead) than being raised by an unfit mother.

Abortion can only be defended on the basis of individual rights—rights that have been attacked by the Left for almost a century for the sake of "the public good", "economic rights" and "equality." The Left's position of sacrificing individual rights for the sake of establishing and continuing a welfare state cannot be maintained while simultaneously arguing that women have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, concepts obviously appropriate to the issue of abortion. Having destroyed these rights for the so-called material realm, i.e., pertaining to business activity, it is hard for liberals to resurrect them in regard to sexual matters, a realm which liberals predominantly regard also as materialistic. ("If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with.")

One legal result of the destruction of individual rights was the tacit restriction of Constitutional rights to those enumerated in the Constitution, ignoring the Ninth and Tenth Amendments and inverting the political relationship between government and governed. Thus, the need to construct the "right to privacy" and the "right to choice." (Conservatives, ever ready to stupidly concede more fundamental liberal premises, point out that they can't find the right to abortion in the Constitution—thus confirming the false idea

that rights unenumerated do not exist.)

Because liberals attempted to defend abortion without reference to the right to life, conservatives were allowed to steal it, and liberal arguments were left without foundation and therefore untenable: The "right to privacy" cannot include a "victim," and one cannot be allowed "to choose" "murder."

As a result of these aspects in regard to abortion, conservatives are the moral crusaders while liberals are the evaders, leaving our rights vulnerable. For abortion is a crucial issue to us all. If the state can ordain the continuance of a pregnancy, i.e., govern the status of cells internal to the human body, what rights are left?

Certainly not the right of property, if the government owns bodies. Property, the right of use and disposal, is the servant to one's life, and is otherwise irrelevant. The conservative who campaigns for property rights but is against the right to abortion is like a 19th century abolitionist who is indifferent to the rape of a slave by a plantation owner, but is outraged that her dress was torn or that the master filched some of her garden carrots.

The right to liberty and the right to the pursuit of happiness are similarly abrogated. If someone can be enslaved for "just a few months", it remains that someone can be enslaved. It is as gross a contradiction to outlaw abortion "for life" as it was to draft men to fight for liberty.

Further, the birth of a child is just the beginning of a life-long responsibility. As Ayn Rand says in "The Age of Mediocrity", "parenthood is an enormous responsibility; it is an *impossible* responsibility for young people who are ambitious and struggling, but poor; particularly if they are intelligent and conscientious enough not to abandon their child on a doorstep nor to surrender it to adoption. For such young people, pregnancy is a death sentence: parenthood would force them to give up their future, and condemn them to a life of hopeless drudgery, of slavery to a child's physical and financial needs. The situation of an unwed mother, abandoned by her lover, is even worse."

The right to abortion is an applica-

tion of individual rights, a realm which Ayn Rand inductively showed to be within morality, applying her innovative work in concept formation.

That which is moral pertains only to living organisms with a volitional capacity. While plants and animals both possess regulatory mechanisms which result in their survival, man's rational faculty is the only mechanism which has the capacity of choice and therefore the need for a code of values. In a solitary context, such as a desert island, man's need of morality, i.e., principles to guide one's behavior, is crucial, but the issue of rights does not yet apply. Introduced into a social context, man's need of morality remains, but the possibility exists of other men thwarting his need to act morally. The concept of individual rights arises not as a gift from God nor as an arbitrary license from society, but by the need to leave man's moral nature unshackled and functioning so as to maintain and further his life.

Thus, Ayn Rand's definition: "A 'right' is a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man's freedom of action in a social context."

Since contemporary society, influenced by Marxism, constantly uses the term "rights" to mean claims on the products produced by others (thus contradictorily implying a "right" to enslave), justified by the claimant's needs, it is important to contrast Rand's concept of rights with the contemporary, destructive usage. From "Man's Rights" in *The Virtue of Selfishness*: "Bear in mind that the right to property is a right to action, like all the others: it is not the right to an object, but to the action and the consequences of producing or earning that object. It is not a guarantee that a man will earn any property, but only a guarantee that he will own it if he earns it. It is the right to gain, to keep, to use and to dispose of material values."

Applying this knowledge to the issue of abortion, it is clear that rights cannot apply to that which is not yet born. The fetus cannot yet have a fully functioning perceptual awareness, much less a conceptual faculty, the faculty which is man's volitional one. (In regard to studies which "prove" the exist-

tence of perceptions of a fetus, Jeri Eagan points out in "Rights in the Parent/Child Relationship": "Percepts are automatic integrations of sensory data into entities based on their characteristics, a process which requires clarity and contrast. Even if one assumes the fetus has the physiological maturity necessary to engage in such a process, its environment is diffuse and lacking in contrast with regard to its sensory data. Therefore, even the automatic process of percept formation is doubtful for even a mature fetus. An implication of the primacy of existence is that awareness cannot exceed that of which one is aware. The severe limitations on sensory data in the uterus pose severe limitations on any sensory process. A fetus is not capable of perception, as we know it, much less thought.") And while the termination of a pregnancy during viability may be a weighty moral decision on the part of adults, depending on the circumstances, such a decision concerns only the rights of moral entities, namely the potential mother. (The circumstances for such a decision may range from that of a flippant termination of a healthy fetus at a late stage by an able and wealthy, but irresponsible, woman to the continuance of a pregnancy after becoming aware of some monstrous deformity, such as the existence of Siamese twins, a circumstance which would result in a condition of metaphysical slavery.)

But the real issue of abortion is relevant not to the last trimester but to the first, contrary to the manner in which anti-abortionists depict it. For the first trimester affords plenty of time to a woman to make a decision, and it is this period with which anti-abortionists take issue, given their claim that human life begins at conception.

As stated earlier, rights apply only to a moral entity. During this period, living tissue exists but clearly not an individuated entity, i.e., a human being. Even to the extent that potential organs are formed, they are not functioning organs, but are tissues in the process of developing. Thus, these tissues have, at this time, a purely parasitical relationship to the woman's body. The develop-

ing organs are not functioning independently during this time, much less the entity as a whole. What view of human life would ascribe human life to this period, including the time after conception when only cells exist?

In "The Right to Abortion", Dr. Andrew Bernstein explains:

*The modern anti-abortionists' view of human nature comes directly out of religious faith. The father of this view is Plato. In his dialogue, "The Phaedo", Plato defines a human being as a soul imprisoned within a body and argues that the true philosopher yearns for death.*

*It is a theory that emphasize a spiritual, supernatural component to human nature. A human being is essentially an immortal soul temporarily enjoined with the flesh, yearning for death so that he can attain salvation in a higher spiritual world.*

*St. Augustine, the first great philosopher of the Catholic church and, philosophically, a neo-Platonist, stresses this view further; he defines man as soul using a body. In the religious tradition, a human being is a temporary mixture of body and soul.*

*Given this religious approach, when is the immortal soul combined with the flesh? The anti-abortionist's answer is: at the moment of conception. The religionist holds that God delivers the immortal soul into its tiny embryonic body at the instant that conception occurs. Therefore, since the fetus possesses the defining characteristics of being a man from its first moment, it must be considered a human being throughout the pregnancy and, consequently, in full possession of all legal rights. Therefore, the deliberate termination of its life is an act of murder and must be prohibited by the state.*

Note that this arbitrary view of man's nature, based on faith, allows the projection of a higher value than man himself. The indifference with which anti-abortionists view the lives of actual women is generated by the same view of man which sanctioned burning men at the stake for their own good.

With this context in mind, one can appreciate more fully Ayn Rand's contrasting description of man in *Atlas Shrugged*: "Man is an indivisible entity,

an integrated unit of two attributes: of matter and consciousness, and...he may permit no breach between body and mind, between action and thought, between his life and his convictions."

Given the premise that the fetus does not possess rights, there are those who suppose that the newborn has no rights for the same reasons. But this is a non sequitur. Although the actual birth can occur within an arbitrary range of time, within limits, the occurrence of birth is nevertheless not seamless. In *The Intellectual Activist* of August, 1980, James G. Lennox notes: "First the infant is a separate individual, not an integral part of the organ of another person. It requires independent action to acquire its air and food, and to develop a separate, focused, perceptual awareness of its environment. It exists independently in a social context—other individuals can interact with it, and do it harm independently of interacting with its mother. Finally at birth it begins an active, cognitive acquisition of a functioning conceptual faculty."

From this point on, the infant possesses rights, although not of a nature pertaining to that of an adult. Briefly, rights are absolute but contextual, and the nature of those rights progresses with age in accordance with the capacity of the youth—from infancy to the late teens.

This subject, children's rights, and the related issue of parents' rights and obligations, are examined extensively in Jeri Eagan's "Rights in the Parent/Child Relationship", a paper presented at the 1993 Texas Objectivist Societies Conference.

It is worth noting that with the issue of abortion, both liberals and conservatives espouse the view of rights as claims on the able on behalf of the needy. In this view, rights represent an obligation and sacrifice rather than a sanction to action. Liberals, particularly feminists, view abortion as a welfare service, akin to food stamps, which must be paid for even by those who condemn it. Anti-abortionists are thereby deprived of their liberty, being coerced into supporting that which con-

tradicts their convictions, even if the basis of that conviction is faith.

But anti-abortionists are worse. they also regard rights as a matter of sacrifice, but of the living to the non-existent. This is altruism, i.e., destruction, reaching forward like a black hand from the Middle Ages, without even the pretense of benevolence.

*Post script:* Since rights are principles, these false views of rights will also have an effect at the end of life as well as the beginning. If liberals succeed in legislating universal health care, i.e., in making health care a "right", the limited resources of the slaves, doctors and taxpayers, will force them to ration health care. If liberals have their way, expensive life-advancing technology will be proscribed past a certain age, despite one's wealth, in order not to waste "our" resources and bust Clinton's budget. (Of course, a criterion other than age might be employed, depending on the current "politically correct" trend.) If conservatives have their way, life-advancing technology will be prescribed, despite one's wishes, in order that end-of-life agony be continued until God allows one's body to give out and we have His permission to go to heaven.

**CALENDAR of HOS Events  
for 1994**


Nearly every Sunday:  
*Understanding Objectivism*  
Call Brian Phillips at

July 9: Mock trial—  
Matthew Gerber.

August 13: Arguing ideas—Clark  
Hamilton.

September 10: Guest speaker.

**Values**  
*Mind Products*  
**Offers**



**DESNUDO by Capuletti**

This painting hung in Ayn Rand's living room and is reproduced exclusively by *Values* with the permission of Dr. Leonard Peikoff.

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*Values* is an organization devoted to the promotion of good art and the Objectivist philosophy.

## Announcements

\$ Pamela Benson, of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Objectivist Conferences, recently spent a weekend in Houston scouting out hotels. We enjoyed seeing her, and brochures for the upcoming conference are enclosed.

\$ Dr. Jerry Kirkpatrick, a Professor of Marketing at California State Polytechnic University has announced the publication of his book, *In Defense of Advertising: Arguments from Reason, Ethical Egoism, and Laissez-Faire Capitalism*. "This book is a theoretical defense of advertising, based on the philosophy of Ayn Rand and the economics of Ludwig von Mises." To order, send check or money order for \$45.00 to The Jefferson School, P.O. Box 2934, Dept K, Laguna Hills, CA 92654.

Also now available from The Jefferson School is Dr. George Reisman's new extensive pamphlet, "The Real Right to Medical Care Versus Socialized Medicine." Single copy price: \$5.95.

\$ "Ayn Rand Was Right" bumperstickers are available for \$3.00 from Dwyane Hicks at the address shown below.

\$ "Health Care is not a Right", by Dr. Peikoff, is available as a computer file if you would like to send it to someone. It can be obtained by calling my computer at 879-0444,,,22,22,22; provided that procedures posted with the article are followed.

\$ The Austin Objectivist Society has sent approximately one thousand mailings to physicians in Austin. Congratulations to chairman Paul Blair and his volunteers.

\$ Even if you're not a businessman but enjoy a good newsletter, try AOB News, the newsletter for the Association of Objectivist Businessmen: P.O.Box 370, Beverly, Massachusetts 01915-0007. (508)922-4381.

\$ The Objectivist Health Care Professionals Network (OHCPN) is an organization dedicated to the restoration and preservation of freedom in health care through the spread of the philosophy of reason. Their "Self-Defense Kit" is available from OHCPN, 500 Metropolitan Ave., Suite 453, Brooklyn, NY 11211. The price is \$7, payable to Salvatore J. Durante. OHCPN publishes *The Forum*, available for \$15, payable to Pamela L. Benson, at *The Forum*, P.O. Box 4315, South Colby, WA 98384-0315.

From the "She Told You So..." file: According to a radio report—When the mayors of San Diego and Tijuana wanted to clean up the river flowing with raw sewage between them, the plan was nixed by the EPA. The plan would endanger life forms now indigenous to the river.



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*The Houston Objectivism Society Newsletter supports Objectivism and the Ayn Rand Institute; however, we do not purport to represent or speak for the same. The Newsletter is published bimonthly for members/subscribers for a fee of \$15 per year.*