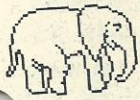


Houston Objectivism Society



Vol. 7, No. 6 November 1994 Newsletter

HOS Christmas Party

The annual HOS Christmas party will be held on December 10 at 6:30 in the clubroom of the Telegraph Hill Apartments. The address is 6500 Dunlap, #114. The gate code is #1793.

The party will begin with a pot luck dinner. Those planning to attend should contact Janet Wich at 879-4615 to coordinate dishes.

The feature of the evening will be a progressive gift exchange, which has proven to be a popular event in past years. Those wishing to participate in the gift exchange are asked to bring a wrapped gift costing less than \$10. After numbers are drawn by lottery, the person with the lowest number selects a gift and unwraps it. The person with the second lowest number can then select a known gift, or select a wrapped one. This continues until everyone has a gift.

Please join us for an evening of food, fun, and friendly vindictiveness.

Judge Addresses HOS

by Sean M. Rainer

Judge Pat Lykos, 180th district, gave her talk "Crime and Punishment in Texas, A Con's Game?" at the September HOS meeting. The meeting was held in the law offices of Dow, Cogburn and Friedman in the Coastal Tower courtesy of Michael Mazzone. Attending an HOS meeting for the first time were Michael Figart and Tammy Long.

Judge Lykos chronicled some of the events that led to the present debacle in the Texas prison

system, including several personal narratives from her courtroom. She began by saying that the primary role of government is to protect its citizens from criminals. Is our government fulfilling this responsibility, she asked.

The judge noted three lawsuits which she considers influential. These lawsuits severely limited the number of beds in prisons and the number of prisons that could be built. Moreover, the lawsuits gave sweeping powers to Austin bureaucrats, turning parole boards into tools for population control rather than rehabilitation.

Judge Lykos recalled a young man that came before her who had become a habitual criminal within the span of a year. The man had been convicted of three felonies but had not spent a single day in a state prison. Why? Because he was awarded time off of his sentence for "good behavior" and paroled.

But these changes did not occur in a vacuum. They are, in fact, the result not the cause. "The power that determines the establishment, the changes, the evolution and the destruction of social systems is philosophy" ("What is Capitalism?" *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, p19). A philosophy that denies free will and embraces moral subjectivism and relativism has led to the present state.

Modern liberals, apologizing to the thugs for moral judgment they were forced to pronounce, go out of their way to make prison life as comfortable as possible. According to Lykos, prisoners are guaranteed 34 hours of recreation time per week while the average working person has only 19 hours of discretionary time per week.

The result is an inversion of justice, in which the guilty are rewarded for their transgressions, and the innocent are forced to pay.

Judge Lykos' talk was a chilling reminder of the power of ideas.

Hamilton Argues for Principled Arguing

by Sean M. Rainer

Clark Hamilton hosted the October HOS meeting and made a presentation on the principles of informal debates. Refreshments were provided by Chuck Earls. First time attendee Sharon Savage, a law student at the University of Houston, was a guest of David Comeaux.

Clark based a large portion of his presentation on "Objective Communication" by Leonard Peikoff. He suggested this lecture course to anyone looking to develop prowess in this or other areas of communication.

An informal argument, Clark said, is not a presentation but an advertisement or a "plug" for Objectivist ideas. One cannot expect to resolve an issue in these discussions because they are usually too brief. But sometimes it is necessary to speak up, if only to avoid sanctioning the irrational.

The first question to ask is "When do I argue?" Clark said

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that it is paramount to assess one's opponent's intellectual honesty. Does he regard facts as irrelevant and ideas as unimportant? If so, it is not only a waste of time, but it is immoral to argue with such a person because in doing so, one actually conceding that ideas do not matter. In such a situation, a simple "I disagree" or "I reject that" will suffice.

If you do judge your opponent to be honest and open to reason, then an impromptu debate can be an excellent means of improving one's own understanding.

A debate, even if it is a losing effort, can serve as a litmus test in determining your own knowledge and comprehension. If you have validated an idea and done some "chewing" on it, a clear explanation of it should be forthcoming. However, if you find yourself stumbling on an idea it indicates that more study is required.

Even a perfect understanding of the concepts involved is not enough. One must also have a fundamental knowledge of the proper arguing techniques. Arguing is a skill. To improve, one must practice and know the fundamentals.

Clark presented three principles of method that one must keep in mind in order to argue effectively. Knowing these principles, he said, gives Objectivists the upper hand.

1. Find Opponent's Premise (Philosophical detection)

"A philosophical detective must remember that all human knowledge has a hierarchical structure; he must learn to distinguish the *fundamental* from the derivative..." (Ayn Rand, "Philosophical Detection" *Philosophy: Who Needs It*, p14). This is not always an easy task. Most people either do not know or will not tell you their premise-- it is up to you to bring it out. Often, people will support an idea but explicitly reject its premise. If you can show them

the clear connection between the two, their argument will crumble.

2. Don't concede premises

This is sometimes a difficult principle to keep in mind because often your opponent's argument has its own internal contradictions. Clark warned that conceding your opponent's premise in hopes of catching inconsistencies could lead to losing sight of your own premise. Clark gave the example of the futility of arguing for abortion rights if you allow that a fetus is an actual human life. In this argument it is the "anti-abortionist" who now has the moral high ground and can claim the title "pro-life".

3. Focus on essentials

This is most relevant when your opponent throws out a number of reasons at once to support his claim. One of them is probably close to his premise, Clark said. The opposite approach, taking on any and every assertion he throws out, is laboriously time consuming and usually futile. Since most informal debates are short, it is crucial that you bring out the main points and focus on those. One particular tool of diversion is statistics. Many people will replace ideology with statistics and write off your argument because you haven't any statistics to support your claim.

To concretize these three principles, Hamilton arranged two arguments between an Objectivist and a "non-Objectivist". The bad guys were played by HOS members Brian Phillips and Sean Rainer. They were selected beforehand. The rational side was defended by volunteers David Willens and Steve Miller.

The two staged arguments presented a somewhat realistic situation where an Objectivist is asked to defend his position in the face of irrationality.

The two went after it, a pair at

a time, for 10 minutes each. After they were pulled apart, all the members discussed the arguing techniques of the Objectivists and their opponents.

1995 HOS Schedule

The 1995 planning meeting was held on November 12. Twenty-four members took part in the meeting, which was hosted by Janet Wich and Warren Ross.

The following schedule was agreed to:

- December-- Christmas party
- January-- Zoning, Brian Phillips
- February-- Objectivist conference
- March-- Philosophical detection, Johnnie McCulloch
- April-- Architecture, Pete Jamison
- May-- Heroes, Neil Arian
- June-- Ayn Rand Appreciation Day, Sean Rainer
- July-- Fiction analysis, Janet Wich
- August-- Thinking in essentials, Warren Ross
- September-- Ethical crisis in science, Steve Miller
- October-- News Analysis, Jim Brents

Details regarding each of these meetings will be announced in the month prior to the meeting.

The Executive Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the planning meeting, as well as those who have volunteered to host meetings and bring refreshments. We look forward to another fun and informative year.

From the Editor

In the last issue of the newsletter, Dwyane thanked many people who have contributed to the success of the newsletter and HOS. In a rare display of humbleness,

Dwyane did not cite his own contributions. I would like to correct that oversight.

Under Dwyane's editorship, the HOS Newsletter has become the finest Objectivist community newsletter in the nation. I would like to thank him for the job he did, which often went unacknowledged.

Dwyane's participation in both HOS activities and the many study groups we have had proved to be among the most intellectually rewarding experiences in my life. He often prodded us to examine an issue more fully than we might otherwise have, which greatly improved our understanding of that issue.

I have gained a tremendous amount from Objectivism, but one of the greatest values is the friendship I have shared with Dwyane.

In the years I have known Dwyane, I have been struck by two characteristics: his commitment to reason and his benevolence. Dwyane has never used his intelligence or knowledge to intimidate others. I have witnessed, on many occasions, Dwyane patiently explaining an issue on which others (including myself) were confused.

On behalf of HOS, I would like to extend best wishes to Dwyane and Jeri on their "honeymoon" in London.

I do not anticipate many changes in the newsletter. I intend to continue to print at least one essay per issue. I would like to see greater participation of HOS members in writing for the newsletter. Toward this end, Sean Rainer has agreed to write the summaries of all HOS meetings. If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter, please feel free to contact me. Many others have agreed to help with the production and mailing of the newsletter. Their efforts will be greatly appreciated.

As Ayn Rand often noted, the

battle for a free society is an intellectual battle. Many HOS members regularly engage in intellectual activism, and I would like to report those activities in this newsletter. I would like to be informed of all intellectual activism, regardless of the scale or the apparent success.

Reporting these activities in the newsletter can serve three functions: 1. It recognizes the efforts of HOS members; 2. It provides encouragement and motivation for others; 3. It provides instruction on successful methods and opportunities for intellectual activism.

Following in Dwyane's footsteps as editor of the newsletter is both a challenge and an opportunity. I look forward to demonstrating that I am worthy of both.

Brian Phillips

Intellectual Activism

The following letter was sent to the American Geophysical Union in response to a resolution opposing Creationism. The letter was not published in their newsletter EOS. It is printed here to provide an example of a succinct and clearly argued letter.

To the Editor,

I'm writing in response to F. Mims' letter on "Creationism and Science: An Impossible Union?", and your response to it in the August 23 issue of *EOS*. You take a very apologetic tone in your response to him, denying that the American Geophysical Union Council's resolution against Creationism is atheistic. I would contend that science (and by implication the resolution) is, and ought to be, atheistic. Despite the actual beliefs of those great scientists who did (and do) believe in a God, science and religion are in fact logically incompatible. If

there really were a supernatural, all-powerful being, who could conduct miracles and violate natural law at will if he chose, could anyone logically argue that the natural world would be immune from such interventions? Would there be any reason to say Creationism is wrong if there really were such a being and he said the Bible is truth? The only logical basis for opposing Creationism, and I emphasize *only*, is that there is no such being and in fact no possibility of one. God may be a comfort to some, but the idea is simply a fiction, a story, with not a single bit of evidence (I'm disregarding the amply refuted standard arguments: Design, First Cause, etc.). It must be accepted on *faith*, which is the antithesis of reason and science.

Rather than evading, apologizing for or denying it, it is time the advocates of reason went on the offensive and stated plainly (and proudly) that science is atheistic in its essence. And so is any argument or resolution against Creationism if it has a valid logical foundation. Once we do proclaim the basis of our views, we can consistently defend science's investigation of the natural world by the method of reason. If we don't, we sanction the views of our intellectual opponents, putting science and all rational pursuits in jeopardy.

Warren S. Ross

\$ \$ \$

On October 10 Michael Mazzone spoke at a Columbus Day celebration in Bell Park. The following is the text of his speech.

**Columbus Day Celebration
Bell Park
October 10, 1994**

When I was attending

Christopher Columbus High School in the Italian section of Boston, I never thought I would become a lawyer and I certainly never thought I would ever need to defend Columbus.

But today, as we celebrate another Columbus Day, the statement "Christopher Columbus discovered America" is regarded as controversial, and to many, offensive. To many, Columbus Day should not be celebrated. To many, Columbus brought death and destruction to America.

These attacks are absurd.

Columbus was a hero, a giant because Columbus *did* discover America. This does not mean that no other humans were here before him. There were others here first. It means instead, that Columbus brought America to the attention of Western Civilization. Columbus brought reason, logic, and natural law-- and everything which rests upon these foundations-- to America.

Columbus was a hero, a giant because had tremendous strength of character. He was committed to reason (including committed to his own judgment about navigation). He was committed to long-range planning (he persevered for many years with his plan). He was committed to his own self-interest (he was not trying to discover America just because he thought it was there; he wanted to find a direct trade route to the Indies because he knew he would be greatly rewarded for it). He was courageous (he risked death from starvation, disease, and drowning to pursue his goals).

We value and respect these character traits now because history proves the importance of such character traits. What better way to teach our children these virtues than by proving their worth by pointing to examples like Columbus. Columbus' discovery follows from putting these virtues into practice. Without these

virtues, Columbus could not have discovered America. Hence the importance of teaching history, and teaching it correctly.

Columbus was a hero, a giant because of the resulting change that he personally made in the direction-- for the good-- of human progress. He personally blazed the trail that led to the United States of America-- man's greatest political and economic achievement.

When we celebrate Columbus, we celebrate Western Civilization. We celebrate reason, science, self-reliance, individualism, ambition, and productive achievement; as opposed to fatalism, passivity, and superstition. We celebrate Aristotle, Newton, and Vivaldi; as opposed to tribal warriors living from hand-to-mouth.

We should identify with Columbus. We should celebrate Columbus Day.

Happy Columbus Day.

Principles as a Foreign Policy: In Haiti...

by J. Brian Phillips

On October 15, the Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide returned to Haiti to serve the remainder of his Presidency. His return came one month after President Clinton announced that he had ordered American troops to prepare to depose Haiti's military dictators.

Clinton explained his actions: "Now the United States must protect our interests-- to stop the brutal atrocities that threaten tens of thousands of Haitians, to secure our borders and to preserve stability and promote democracy in our hemisphere and to uphold the reliability of the commitments we make, and the commitments others make to us."

Initially, both the public and Congress opposed the invasion.

When critics of the invasion pointed to the brutalities occurring in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Cuba, Clinton responded by citing a policy of "selective engagement". Such a policy takes into consideration three things: 1. America's interests in the particular nation; 2. The proximity to America; 3. As the President has put it, whether "the mission is achievable".

The initial opposition to the invasion quickly faded. The President's critics were unable to present a convincing argument, giving Clinton's position an air of plausibility to the general public. Most Americans agree that a proper foreign policy should be based on America's interest. Most Americans agree that we should protect our borders from invaders. Most Americans would agree that spreading democracy is important.

But the plausibility of the President's argument rests on an unspoken premise-- a premise which, we will soon see, most of his critics also accept.

Foreign policy sets the principles which guide a nation's interactions with other nations. As a part of politics, a proper foreign policy is formulated based upon the same standard as a proper politics-- the protection of liberty. Those who formulate foreign policy are charged with the task of applying principles aimed at that standard.

Clinton might claim to agree with this. He would say that spreading democracy, protecting our borders, etc. are all a part of protecting American freedom. The more freedom and democracy there is in the world, the better off Americans will be. But what do these terms mean? And what premises underlie them?

Democracy and altruism

Throughout his presidency, Clinton has stated that restoring democracy was his goal in regard to Haiti. To most people, democ-

racy means freedom and capitalism.

But in fact, democracy means neither. Democracy is unlimited majority rule. It is a system in which the majority may violate the rights of the minority, with the justification that the majority is always right.

The ethical foundation of democracy is altruism. Altruism holds that the individual must place the welfare of others (such as "society", "the community", or "the majority") above his own interests. According to altruism, those who refuse to do so "voluntarily" are immoral, and may properly be forced to sacrifice.

In a democracy, individual rights are in principle as non-existent as in a dictatorship. This repeated support for democracy is neither an accident nor a sloppy use of terms. Individual rights are not the President's concern-- in neither Haiti nor in America.

In regard to Haiti, Clinton has continually stated a belief that democracy will somehow restore the Haitian economy. He believes that simply having the right to vote for one's oppressors constitutes freedom and is sufficient to improve one's standard of living.

Aristide is an avowed Marxist, a fact which Bill Clinton finds either irrelevant or perhaps appealing. That Clinton actually pursues socialist policies in America demonstrates his ideological kinship with Aristide. To Bill Clinton, Marxism might be the answer in Haiti, despite its obvious failings across the globe. And even if Marxism has failed in every country which has tried it, it is the right of Haitians to choose their own political system.

Twenty years ago, in regard to another senseless military engagement, Ayn Rand wrote: "[T]he proclaimed purpose of the war [in Vietnam] was not to protect freedom or individual rights, it was not to establish capitalism or any

particular social system-- it was to uphold the South Vietnamese right to 'national self-determination', i.e., the right to vote themselves into any sort of system (including communism, as American propagandists kept proclaiming)." ("The Lessons of Vietnam," *The Ayn Rand Letter*, August 26, 1974)

As a college student, Bill Clinton protested American efforts to protect "national self-determination" in Vietnam. As commander-in-chief, he is sending American troops to Haiti for the same purpose, and based on the same premise. Most people attribute this switch to "maturity", but it is revealing that Clinton opposed "self-determination" when it stood in the way of a communist dictatorship, but supports it when it promotes a socialist dictatorship.

Appearance of Self-Interest

Bill Clinton is an altruist. He believes that individuals must sacrifice for the well-being of others. But at times, he paradoxically cloaks altruism in terms that sound like an appeal to self-interest.

Prior to the invasion, it was reported that as many as 300,000 Haitians were preparing to flee their country for Florida. Such a massive influx of immigrants, the argument went, would threaten all of south Florida. Therefore, it is in our best interest to prevent this migration by creating a more stable government in Haiti.

But underlying this appearance of self-interest, it is the acceptance of altruism which makes this argument plausible. It is the acceptance of altruism which makes immigrants a threat. It is the acceptance of altruism which creates the social welfare programs which will be overburdened by the Haitian immigrants.

By forcing us to be our brother's keeper, altruism makes us resent each new brother. Each new immigrant represents another

mouth to feed and body to shelter. Each new immigrant is another expense for the productive members of society, and another competitor for the parasites. In logic, the principle of open borders is incompatible with the principle of a welfare state.

In his September 15 address, Clinton noted that nearly 14,000 Haitians were living at the American naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. "The American people," he said, "have already expended almost \$200 million to support them, to maintain the economic embargo, and the prospect of millions and millions more being spent every month for an indefinite period of time loom ahead unless we act."

Although this justification has the ring of self-interest, the unspoken premise underlying it is altruism. Clinton did not question whether we should support the Haitian refugees-- they had a need, and it was America's duty to fulfill it. In fact, the entire invasion is based on the need of Haitians-- they need to have democracy restored in order to prosper.

Conservatives have not argued against welfare-- not on principle. Some have suggested that we deny welfare to Haitians (and perhaps all immigrants for some period, such as one year), but have not suggested doing away with welfare entirely. Remember that Ronald Reagan argued that the government should provide a "safety net" for all Americans. In principle, conservatives accept altruism, and they simply want to argue over the details.

America's interest

Clinton claimed that the invasion of Haiti served "America's interests". (And conservatives have attacked the invasion because it doesn't serve "America's interests".) But what does Bill Clinton (and the conservatives) mean when he speaks of "America's in-

terest”?

In principle, altruism holds that the interests of men necessarily conflict. In practice, altruism creates conditions in which virtually unresolvable conflicts result, e.g., the welfare state.

Decades of altruist-inspired policies-- both domestic and foreign-- have created the current conflict between citizens of America and those who wish to immigrate to America. When Bill Clinton speaks of “America’s interests,” it is this conflict to which he refers. But it is a conflict which need not exist-- it is a conflict created by an improper ethics.

To an Objectivist the term “America’s interest” means the interests of individual Americans. In the context of politics, this means the protection of liberty.

In a nation which does not force its citizens to support others, immigrants do not pose an objective threat. In a nation in which individual liberty is protected, immigrants are no more of a threat to one’s freedom than any other individual. An immigrant who does not initiate force, i.e., violate anyone’s rights, should not be considered a criminal.

In this regard, America’s interests are no different than in any other issue. The government’s proper role is to identify and define those acts which constitute an initiation of force, and to prosecute and punish those who engage in such acts. But to do so, the government must begin by ending its own transgressions.

A proper Haitian policy

If we reject altruism, Clinton’s arguments collapse. If we reject altruism, democracy is no longer a political ideal. If we reject altruism, our concern regarding welfare becomes its abolishment, rather than overburdening the system.

But simply rejecting altruism is not enough. We must also em-

brace the proper ethics-- the ethics of rational self-interest. Such a code makes a consistent, and intelligible, foreign policy possible.

Deposing military dictators is certainly desirable; however, replacing them with a Marxist theist can hardly be considered an improvement.

Protecting our borders from an invasion is proper; however, to properly use the concept “invasion” the threat must be of a military nature, and the unarmed Haitian immigrants are hardly a military threat.

Spreading freedom is in America’s interest; however, establishing democracies is not a means to that end. As the Founding Fathers knew when they established a constitutional republic, democracies can be as anti-freedom as a military dictator.

A proper foreign policy is derived from the purpose of government-- the protection of liberty. The purpose of America’s foreign policy must be the protection of American liberty, i.e., the liberty of individual Americans.

The Haitian dictators posed no threat to Americans. Their weaponry was largely pre-World War II, and in fact, the Houston police department is a more potent military force than the Haitian army. The dictators had no delusions of grandeur-- they did not seek to invade other countries. They were content to plunder what little wealth remained in Haiti.

Throughout its history Haiti has been ruled by dictators. Aristide was the first democratically-elected leader of Haiti. But replacing a dictatorship created by a military coup with a dictatorship created by a democratic vote will do little to improve the living conditions of Haitians. Politics is not a primary.

Without the proper ideas, Haitians will not escape their poverty and misery. Without the proper ideas, Haiti will simply col-

lapse into further turmoil and violence.

As Peter Schwartz has noted, tyrants can be *deposed*, but freedom cannot be *imposed*. Freedom cannot be established simply by sending in the troops. Freedom requires an intellectual foundation, not the 10th Mountain Division.

But Bill Clinton is not sending that foundation to Haiti, for sadly, the President of the United States is as uneducated about the nature of freedom as the Haitian people.

...And in the Middle East

In Haiti, we witnessed the use of the American military when our interests were not threatened. In the Middle East, we have witnessed an awesome display of military prowess ordered to stop short of protecting America’s interests. In both regions, altruism is the cause.

Just as altruism demands that one place the interests of others before one’s own, altruism demands that one place the ideas and conclusions of others before one’s own. In other words, *altruism demands that one surrender one’s life and one’s mind to others.*

In Haiti, altruism demands that we satisfy whatever needs the Haitian people experience. In the Middle East, altruism demands that we abandon our own self-assertion in consideration of a consensus, placing the concerns, cultural norms, and religious preferences of others above our own.

(While both manifestations of altruism are evident in Haiti and the Middle East, there is a difference. In Haiti, altruism demands that we intervene where we have no interests; in the Middle East, altruism demands that we seek a consensus before acting in our interest. In both instances, altruism prevents us from acting in accordance with our own self-interest.)

Four years ago, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, seized its considerable oil fields, and held Americans hostage. The United States condemned the invasion and called the Iraqi dictator a "new Hitler".

Several months later, with the blessings of the United Nations, the United States military launched a war which turned the fourth largest army in the world into the second largest in Iraq.

Then-President Bush called a halt to the war, allowing Hussein to retain much of his military power and weaponry. Bush justified his action by citing United Nations resolutions which authorized him to drive Saddam from Kuwait, but did not authorize him to drive Saddam from power.

If Saddam were indeed the new Hitler, why would America allow him to stay in power, much less alive? For the same reason America invaded Haiti-- altruism.

At the time of the Gulf War, the nature of Saddam's character was well-known to most Americans. Evidence made available in the years since has done nothing but provide further substantiation.

In 1980 he had launched a bloody war with Iran, with the intent of capturing a major oil producing region and greater access to shipping. During that war, he used poison gas against Iranian soldiers. (He has allegedly used poison gas against rebels in his own country).

Saddam's invasion of Kuwait was precipitated for similar reasons-- Kuwait possesses approximately 20% of the world's oil reserves.

Saddam was a known sponsor of terrorism. More recently, it is believed that Iraq was behind the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York. Furthermore, in the past few months, Iraqi newspapers, i.e., the Iraqi government, have threat-

ened terrorist activities in the United States if U.N. sanctions are not lifted.

Saddam possessed weapons of mass destruction-- such as poison gas, and was developing both nuclear and a biological weapons. During the Gulf War, one of the great fears was that Saddam would use such weapons against American soldiers.

During the war, he launched unprovoked attacks on Israel. He launched Scud missiles, not at military targets, but at cities.

Prior to the war (and following it), he had demonstrated a ruthless ability to murder political opponents. Both Kurdish and Shiite rebels were ruthlessly slaughtered.

All of these facts reveal that Saddam is not a petty dictator-- such as Haiti's Cedras. Saddam has visions of much greater power, and he has sought the means to obtain it.

It could perhaps be argued that Saddam did not, and does not, pose a direct threat to the United States. What interest does the United States have in stopping him?

The answer lies in one word: oil.

It is inarguably true that oil is the life-blood of Western economies. Without oil, much of what we take for granted would not be possible. Gasoline for automobiles is the most obvious example, but fertilizers, plastics, pesticides, and many other products which affect our daily lives are a result of oil.

Saddam's actions-- and stated convictions-- have revealed two essential things in this regard: 1. He seeks to control as much oil as he can; and 2. He is an enemy of the West.

(It must be noted the oil "owned" by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, etc. was nationalized from Western companies. Consequently, Saddam's seizure of Kuwait's oil was really the expropriation of

Western oil. Failures in foreign policy in previous decades have made solving problems like Iraq's invasion of Kuwait more difficult. In fact, such failures made such problems possible.)

Despite what was known about Saddam, Bush refused to assert American interests, instead deferring to the consensus of the United Nations. Had President Bush been a man of principles, he would have recognized that leaving Saddam in power would be similar to driving Hitler out of France, but stopping American forces at the Rhine.

In September 1994 Iraqi forces began assembling near the Kuwaiti border. Clinton responded by issuing a number of threats... and seeking United Nations approval for military action.

Saddam has not changed, not in character nor in his actions. He remains a brutal dictator intent on accumulating more power. He has sought to ignore virtually every aspect of his surrender treaty. He has solidified his power over Iraq by murdering political opponents and rebuilding his army, even as the Iraqi economy has crumbled and rations have been dramatically reduced.

Saddam was a threat to America in 1991. He remains one so long as he is alive and in power.

But to assert that, and to act accordingly, requires a man of conviction. It requires a man of intellectual independence, a man willing to stand on the veracity of his own judgment. It requires a man who has rejected altruism (and the handwringing appeasement which accompanies it) and embraced its antithesis-- rational egoism.

Unfortunately, it could be argued that such a man has not occupied the office of the President since the days of another threat from the Middle East-- the Barbary pirates.

Announcements

\$ Lyceum International is bringing its 21st Century Objectivist Conferences to Houston in February 1995. The conference, which will feature Andrew Bernstein, Gary Hull, and Richard Salsman, will be held at the Holiday Inn- Intercontinental Airport on February 10-12. For more information write to Lyceum International, P.O. Box 4315, South Colby, WA 98384.

\$ An article by J. Brian Phillips titled "How Houston Stopped Zoning" was printed in the summer and fall issues of the *AOB Newsletter*. For more information on The Association for Objectivist Businessmen, write to AOB, P.O. Box 370, Beverly, MA 01915.

\$ In September Janet Lee Wich graduated from the University of Houston with a Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. Congradulations Janet!

\$ The study group hosted by Brian Phillips meets every Sunday (except Sundays after an HOS meeting) at 10 a.m. in Brian's apartment. The group is currently engaged in a six-month study of ancient philosophy. Brian's phone number is 271-5145.

\$ Membership dues for 1995 should be sent to Warren Ross. A stamped envelope and registration form are enclosed for your convenience. Dues are \$15 per year. The registration form also includes areas for pledging donations to *The Fountainhead* and *Anthem* essay contests.

\$ Dr. Andrew Bernstein's speech, "The Philosophical Basis of a Woman's Right to an Abortion", which was scheduled for Octobe 18 has been re-scheduled for February. Details will be announced in the January newsletter.

\$ Warren Ross recommends *The Browning Version*. He says, "It is the inspiring story of the repressed classics teacher who thinks he has failed to communicate his love of the classics to his students. Then, after a gesture of respect from a young adult, the teacher begins to take charge of his life and assert himself in both private and professional arenas. The movie is based on Terrance Rattigan's excellent play of the same name. Although it has some significant flaws compared to the play, it is a rare romantic gem in today's theater." Showing at the River Oaks 3.

\$ An envelope stuffing party will be held in either December or January for both *The Fountainhead* essay contest and the physicians project. The time and location is undetermined at this time. Those wishing to participate should call either Brian or Warren.

\$ Warren and Alice Ross have moved. Their new address is 515 Nottingham Oaks, Houston, TX 77079. Their new phone number is 558-2293.

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