

Houston Objectivism Society Newsletter

Vol. 8, No. 1

January 1995

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AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. ANDREW BERNSTEIN

by Sean M. Rainer

I guess the obvious question, the question you get asked once a day: how is the novel going?

Oh boy, there is a lot of interest in *Heart of a Pagan*. I'm glad to see that. I do get asked that question a lot. It's very gratifying. Let me tell you the scoop. The book is twelve chapters long. Eight chapters are done. The final four chapters are written in second draft form, but they need to be polished.

Could you give us a plot summary?

The first three chapters have been published in the Atlantean Review--Patricia LaChavalier's organization in Colorado. The background of the story is college basketball, but what the book is about is essentially religion.

The story line is about the best basketball player in the country, his name is Swoop, who goes to this small school in the Midwest because that's a challenge to his pride to take this bunch of scrubs to the National Championship. When he gets there he finds that the school is dominated with born again Christians. Swoop is a real cocky, very proud, self confident athlete. As Patricia LaChavalier described him, he is a swaggering basketball hero. It's a swashbuckling story, really. His cocky pride and the Christian's humility don't hit it off so well.

The thematic conflict is Swoop's pagan virtues and values versus Judeo-Christian's. Swoop is a Homeric, pagan classical Greek kind of character. The virtues he stands for are pride, courage, prowess, and excellence. Of course, the Christians stand for meekness, charity, humility, and all of that stuff. The real conflict is between him and the Christian players on the team who hate him because of his swaggering pride.

Then the conflict is complicated by the narrator who is a crippled philosophy major whom Swoop names Digs. Digs is an Aristotelian, and a brilliant

philosophy student. He was born lame, so he is the trainer of the basketball team. Because he is lame, he is vicariously attracted to athletics as a means of participating in some form in health and strength. Digs' attraction to Swoop is ambivalent. On the one hand he really admires Swoop's health, strength, prowess, and courage; on the other hand he experiences Swoop's strength as a rebuke, as a slap across the face. He's angry and attracted at the same time. He hates the Christians because they coddle him. They want to carry his bags-- they treat him as if he was helpless. Swoop says, "Digs, I like you. I'm going to let you carry my bags."

The conflict reaches a turning point when Swoop is crippled in a game. The surgeons say that Swoop will never play ball again. The Christian pietists say that it is a punishment from God for his hubris. The Christian humanists feel sorry for Swoop and they want to succor him and hold his hand. Digs tries to tell Swoop that he has got to accept that his playing days are over. Swoop is the only one who is confident. He says, "I'm going to work out like a slave 20 hours a day and I'm coming back better than ever." Digs says that it can't be done, you have to accept it, Swoop replies, "I'm tired of your bellyaching about being a wimpy, nerdy cripple. I'm working out and you're working out with me and in six months we're both going to be dunking the basketball."

That takes us to chapter six, which is the rebuilding which really forms the heart of *Heart of a Pagan*-- the effort of the two cripples to return to full vitality and health.

Besides your novel, what else are you doing?

I'm teaching five classes this semester at four different colleges. I'm teaching logic and modern and contemporary philosophy at Pace Uni-

HOUSTON LYCEUM

There will be no HOS meeting in February. In its place, the 21st Century Objectivist Conference will be held the weekend of February 10-12 at the Holiday Inn-Intercontinental Airport.

The conference will feature Dr. Andrew Bernstein, Dr. Gary Hull, and Richard Salsman.

Dr. Bernstein will deliver a lecture titled "Ayn Rand's Fictional Characters as Philosophical Archetypes". In his talk, Dr. Bernstein will analyze the philosophical principles that comprise many of the leading characters in *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*.

Dr. Hull will lecture on "Integration: The Dynamo of Reason". "The purpose of this course is to chew integration so that it becomes a guiding principle in your thinking." (From the conference catalog.)

Richard Salsman will deliver a lecture called "Rational Self-Interest: The Indispensable Basis of Economics". In his lecture, Mr. Salsman will explain why rationality and self-interest are a prerequisite for economic progress.

Additional information regarding the conference can be obtained by contacting Lyceum International at (206) 876-5868.

versity; business ethics at Marymount College and at Concordia College; and logic at SUNY Purchase. I'm doing the 21st Century Conferences, and a bunch of talks for the campus clubs for The Ayn Rand Institute.

Do you meet any resistance in the philosophy department?

They don't care what I teach, actually. The *Fountainhead* is the main text in every ethics course I teach and nobody has ever said a word about that. I teach Objectivism now at Marymount College. Even though the administration there hates Ayn Rand, they are willing to let me teach because they see students like it.

What about the students? How do they react?

At a lot of the schools, the students I teach are weak business majors, so philosophy doesn't mean much to them in, general. Most of it goes over their heads. If they respond to anything at all, it would be to *The Fountainhead*. The one exception to that is at Marymount where I teach adults. I teach in their weekend program. All of the students

are adults who have responsible jobs and they are very serious students. They tend to love *The Fountainhead*. The Objectivism course there is by popular demand. The students went to the administration and said we want more Ayn Rand.

When did you first discover Ayn Rand?

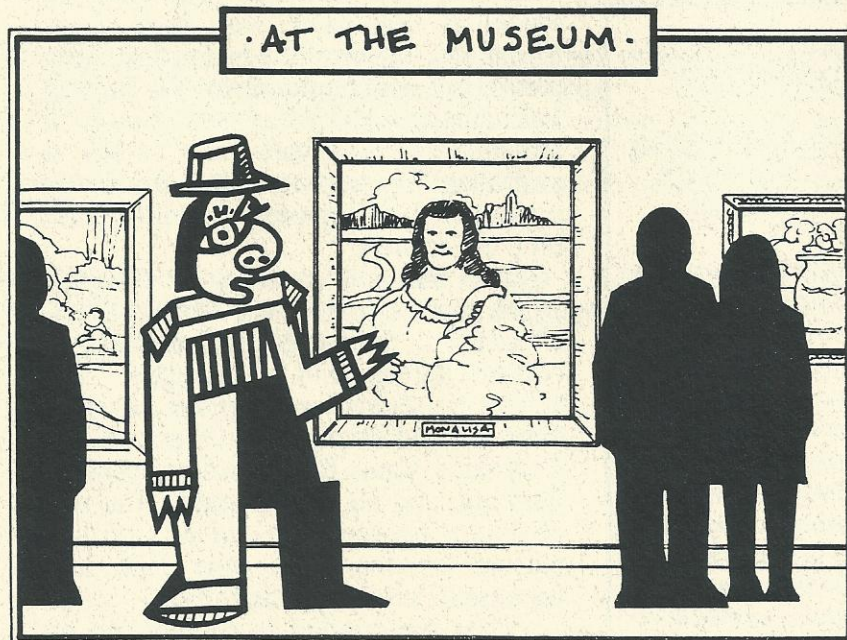
In 1968 I was lucky enough to have a high school teacher who was an Objectivist and he introduced me Ayn Rand's books. I read them when I was sixteen. I read *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* and I knew immediately how great this was-- both the novels and the philosophy expressed in the novels.

Did you ever meet Ayn Rand?

Yes, I met Ayn Rand briefly twice. I was very struck by the reason/ emotion integration of her personality. I think Barbara Branden's title for her book is very apt-- noting else in the book is. *The Passion of Ayn Rand* is a very appropriate title. Ayn Rand came across as an extremely impassioned personality even in just the few minutes that I met her. There was a zestful emotional quality about her. You'll go a long way to find anybody who is as fully alive.

YUKS

by Jeff Phillips and Brian Phillips



"I don't get it!"

Which of Ayn Rand's novels is your favorite?

For years and years, going back to when I first read Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* was always my personal favorite. I recognized, even as a teenager, that *Atlas Shrugged* was objectively the greatest novel I'd ever read. The plot is simply mind boggling. There has never been a story written like that. Not to mention the philosophic theme that she has integrated so intimately into that plot.

What I've always loved about *The Fountainhead* is the focus on the individual hero. The way that Howard Roark simply dominates the book. In fact, in teaching writing, I have a principle which I call the Roark principle. It is that the hero initiates, sustains, and carries home to a successful conclusion the story's conflict. Roark utterly dominates the story, he towers over it. In *Atlas Shrugged*, Galt does also, but he's behind the scenes for two-thirds of the story. In *The Fountainhead*, Roark is in the open at the perceptual level and you see the hero dominating all opposition. I just love that at an emotional level.

I always knew in the back of my mind that at one point *Atlas Shrugged* was going to become my favorite and it did this past year. I read it very closely to prepare for my lecture on *Atlas Shrugged* for the Second Renaissance Conference, much more carefully than I ever had before. I took about one hundred pages of notes on it. I fell in love with it-- the symbolism, the irony, it's so subtle, it's so brilliant. I've read great novels: Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Hugo, Shakespeare's great tragedies. There is nothing that exceeds it literarily, and philosophically there is nothing that comes close. So, *Atlas Shrugged* at this point now is my favorite.

And your favorite character?

It's a toss between Francisco and Ragnar. I would say Francisco-- not only do you see more of him in the story, but I've got to respond to him at a sense of life level. He is the swashbuckling, Errol Flynn type that I was always in love with going back to the time I was three years old.

Of all Ayn Rand's characters?

Howard Roark has always been my favorite character in all of literature going back for twenty some years now. I guess if you pushed me to the wall on this, I would have to pick Roark.

What about We the Living?

Heartbreaking book. I've read it twice-- I'll never read it again. I can't stand the end when Kira is murdered. I just cried and cried and cried. It's heartbreaking, as it has to be to dramatize her theme. I can't take that-- it's too painful. But that in itself is a measure of Ayn Rand's greatness as a novelist-- that she can make me feel that strongly.

You mentioned that you've been a lot of public speaking. What are some of the topics?

I did a talk at a mini-conference in October entitled "The Philosophical Foundation of Heroism". Heroism is a topic that interests me very much. The talk was very good for me because I did a lot of the spade work, working on my ideas on this. Eventually, I'm going to write a book on the nature of heroism.

It's a fascinating topic to me, because heroes, the moral giants, have always interested me intensely. My cat is lying here next to me-- his name is Hero.

How do you define a hero?

I think of a hero as somebody who is a moral giant of great prowess who fights for rational values against any and all forms of opposition. Basically, heroism amounts to the creation and/ or defense of rational values in the teeth of opposition.

Do you see any modern heroes in real life?

Ayn Rand is the most obvious example of the greatest hero of the 20th century. She stood up against almost the entire world in creating and defending a rational philosophy.

Do you see any heroes outside of Objectivism?

In a military context it would come up all the time. Anybody who defends freedom against a dictator or a totalitarian state. Police officers defend honest men against criminals and risk their lives to do so. It's harder to find intellectual heroes in our culture.

Do you think that athletes should properly be considered heroes?

In a certain way-- at the physical level, but not intellectually. In the sense that they strive for excellence, they compete to be champions. For instance, I think Michael Jordan could properly be defined as a hero and looked up to as a role model. He stands for excellence. He worked very hard to be as good as he is.

The heroism of an athlete is more metaphorical-- it's what they stand for, not so much what they do, because they're not creating or defending rational values in the teeth of any opposition. The opposition they have is purely a competition.

It's a metaphor. It's not like Hank Rearden creating a new product and then fighting the entire world to get it on the market.

In sports, you can rise to heroic greatness. Like warfare, you can rise to heroic greatness, except in sports nobody has to get killed or even hurt. When the going gets tough you look to that one great leader to carry you through. Like Michael Jordan carried the Bulls or Joe Montana carried the 49ers to four Super Bowls.

There is no question in my mind that Objectivism is going to win, because it has reality backing it up! I think it is a long, slow growth process, but I can see signs in the culture already.

I remember watching the 49ers play a bunch of times. In the late minutes of the game, they are losing, and everyone is screaming and yelling. I never saw anybody as absolutely unflappable under pressure as Joe Montana was. Everybody in the place is going crazy and here is your great leader, Joe Montana, who is as calm as if he were sitting in his living room eating Doritos. Then he proceeds to take the team 88 yards down the field to score the winning touchdown in the final 6 seconds. Now that's heroism.

At Williamsburg a couple of years ago, Leonard Peikoff made an interesting comment. He was talking about why he thinks so many people are sports fans and why it is understandable. He said it's one of the last places in the culture where excellence is glorified. As he put it, there are no points for mercy.

How did you begin to study the concept of hero?

From the time I was a kid I was always fascinated by heroes. Any story that has a hero, whether a novel, a play, or a movie, if it has a hero I am emotionally grabbed by it even though intellectually I might recognize that the story is weak.

If it's got a strong main character who is purposeful and is goal directed and is trying to pursue strong values, I am emotionally caught up in it.

When I got older and I started studying philosophy, I was more able to articulate this. I realized explicitly that what I always loved was heroes. Then I thought, "What does it actually mean to be a hero?" "How does one get to be a hero?" "What forces and what theories oppose a hero?"

Growing up, who were some of your own personal heroes?

There's real life and there is fiction. In real life, I always read a great deal of biographies of the great men of the American Revolution-- George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin. Those were great heroes. I also read about some of the frontiersmen and the pioneers who moved Westward-- traditional childhood heroes like Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett.

In fiction, my taste as a kid ranged all the way from Marvel Comics-- I read everything from Spiderman and the Fantastic Four-- all the way to more serious novels. I always loved the romantic swashbucklers like

Sabotini's books-- *Scarmouche* and *Captain Blood*-- and writers like Alastair McLean and Alexandre Dumas. My favorite authors are those who write about gigantic, swaggering, larger-than-life heroes. I love the larger-than-life, the grand scale, the swashbucklers-- Cyrano is perfect-- who takes on a hundred men because life is too tame. I love the view of human nature that man is capable of being a giant. That's what I always responded to.

Did you watch many movies when you were growing up?

Yes. We're talking in the Sixties, when John Wayne was still alive and making Westerns. I used to watch all of the old ones on TV-- I used to stay up all night. Instead of going to high school, which I hated, I used to stay up all night and watch the Late Show, the Late Late Show, and the Late Late Late Show. The good news in the Sixties was they were still showing the old Hollywood classics late at night.

So I was watching Errol Flynn, Clark Gable, John Wayne, and all of the great Hollywood heroes of the 1930s and the 1940s in the middle of the night. I loved those movies.

What do you see as the future of Objectivism?

I'm very bullish on the future of Objectivism. There is no question in my mind that Objectivism is going to win, because it has reality backing it up! I think it is a long, slow growth process, but I can see signs in the culture already. Twenty years from now, fifty years from now, one hundred years from now, you are going to see the influence of Ayn Rand much more. The longer the term you look, the more influence you're going to see. Objectivism has just been born.

To what extent do you think that conflicts within Objectivism are damaging?

In the long term, zero. Those conflicts are troubling personally. I'd like to think that having a rational philosophy would allow people to be able to solve interpersonal conflicts more easily. What that shows me is that people have been unable to integrate the philosophy into their actual lives. But in the long term it's irrelevant.

It really doesn't matter what Nathaniel Branden or David Kelley or those people do or say. It's Ayn Rand's books and Leonard Peikoff's books that are going to be the main means of changing the culture. *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* are out there-- millions of copies. And *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand* will become increasingly so.

One final question: Do you think the Rockets can repeat?

Could they-- yes. Will they-- I don't think so. My take on the NBA is that if Phoenix is healthy, I think they've got the best team in the league.

Thomas Jefferson and Religion

by Matt Gerber

Searching the vast assemblage of newspapers and periodicals on display for an article or essay based on objective fact finding and a sense of urgency is a frustrating chore. Rarely does one find a gem among the clutter of obfuscation, hearsay, and linguistic nonsense. I recently discovered such a find, however, in the December, 1994 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. The essay, entitled "Jefferson and Religious Freedom," was written by Merrill Peterson, a noted Jeffersonian scholar. The importance of the essay lies not only in its contemporary relevance on matters of church and state but also in its implicit support of philosophical activism.

Thomas Jefferson did not draft the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom (a direct precursor to the First Amendment of the United States Constitution) in a vacuum. Rather, his creation was a revolutionary document in an age in which the church was an active player in political life, though a much derided one, thanks to the rebelliousness of a young country lawyer named Patrick Henry. In 1763 Henry defended a parish levy collector against a claim for breach of contract in "The Parsons' Cause." A minister of the Anglican Church was the claimant, and though the case turned ostensibly on contractual law, and more specifically, the right of the British government to render a colonial law void from its inception, Henry transformed the issue into a broadside attack on the established Church and its history of meddling into Virginia's legislative affairs. Calling ministers of the Church "rapacious harpies," Henry convinced the jury to award the plaintiff only one penny in damages.

Virginia was the setting for a number of religious revivals in the 18th century, with the most active taking place in the late 1760's and early 1770's. Methodists, Presbyterians, and especially Baptist itinerant preachers faced constant harassment from British colonial officials actively encouraging rock throwing, shouting, random arrests, and other violent actions against the non-Anglican preachers. In 1772, the Virginia Assembly took up the issue of the application of the 1689 Act of Toleration to the colonies. Attorney General John Randolph allowed that the Act tolerated religious freedom but not in cases in which the "publick peace" was disturbed. Such a broad interpretation did not sit well with Henry, who, by this time, had won the reputation as the finest orator since Cicero. Henry effectively promoted a new law blocking the state from harassing the preachers.

Peterson begins his essay by introducing Thomas Jefferson into this charged environment. Having composed the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson took his seat in the Virginia Assembly determined to apply the ideas of the Enlightenment (and its progenitors, Bacon, Newton, Locke, among others) to

the laws of Virginia. The Virginia constitution of 1776 left the Anglican establishment still in place, yet contained, in its Declaration of Rights, an assertion that "All men are equally entitled to the full exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience." This display of natural right was placed in the constitution at the behest of James Madison, a delegate from the heavily Baptist-populated Orange County. Originally, as drafted by George Mason, the article had guaranteed only the "fullest Toleration in the exercise of religion." Toleration was a far cry from a natural right, as Thomas Paine aptly pointed out, since "it is not the *opposite* of intolerance, but is the *counterfeit* of it. Both are despotisms. The one assumes to itself the right of withholding liberty of conscience, and the other of granting it."

Jefferson expressed his view of the subject in a speech delivered to the Assembly in November, 1776. He noted that Virginia's legal code still contained medieval punishments for heresy which, though dormant, might conceivably be used again. He also pointed to the continuing repression of Baptist ministers and the forced taxation of dissenters to support the Anglican Church. Before posing the fundamental question of state involvement in matters of religion, Jefferson asked if any true patriot could express loyalty to a state government which discriminated against her citizens on behalf of an institution associated with the British enemy.

"Has the state a right to adopt an opinion in matters of religion?" No, answered Jefferson. Religious conscience is a private matter, not dependent upon civil authority. Coercion and religion do not mix, since religion by its very nature depends upon the inward persuasions of the mind. Expanding upon this issue, Jefferson declared in his *Notes on Virginia* that the "legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no god. It neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg." He continued, "Millions of innocent men, women, and children since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned, yet we have not advanced one inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, the other half hypocrites."

The Assembly subsequently repealed some of the oppressive statutes and exempted dissenters from taxes levied to support the Anglican Church, but still recognized the Church as established and refused to entirely abolish parish levies on the Church's members. Patrick Henry quickly drew up a plan advocating a general assessment which would tax all citizens for the support of all Christian ministers without regard to sect,

Jefferson rejected any notion that the survival of the United States rests upon the foundation of Judeo-Christian belief. Peterson remarks, "He sought to raise the republic on the inalienable rights of man, allowing every citizen sovereignty over his own mind and conscience."

based upon the notion that the state retained powers to diffuse knowledge, restrain vice, and promote the peace and safety of society. In response, Jefferson introduced in 1779 his Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, a wholesale rejection of any civil authority in matters of conscience and an affirmation of freedom of belief and worship. The preamble focussed on the sanctity of the human mind and the need for both religious and intellectual liberty. It declared that religion and government are separate spheres, and "our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions," and that "truth is great and will prevail if left to herself." Interestingly, while Jefferson believed that each successive generation could alter the laws enacted by a previous generation, here he put future generations on notice, "If any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right."

Action on the contentious issue finally commenced in 1785. The influential Presbytery of Hanover County (Henry's constituency) supported the general tax plan. With this endorsement, all religious groups but the Baptists were prepared to advocate the general assessment. Just as the bill was about to pass, two important events transpired. Henry left his seat in the Assembly to become the governor, and Madison wrote his *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*. Endorsing the connection between reason and individual rights, Madison held that tax support subverted religion: "Who does not see that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other religions, may establish with the same ease any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other sects?" As a result of Madison's pamphlet, of the hundred or so petitions facing the Assembly, only eleven supported the general assessment plan, while the others, with some 11,000 signatures, were copies of Madison's essay. The Hanover Presbytery changed its mind, and on January 16, 1786, Jefferson's bill became law.

Peterson's approach to the matter of church and state is refreshing, placing Jefferson squarely at odds with today's religious right. He mentions that Jefferson conclusively denied that government could intrude in

matters of religion even if the intrusion is on a neutral or nonpreferential basis; even forcing one to support a teacher of his own religious bent is fundamentally wrong. Jefferson rejected any notion that the survival of the United States rests upon the foundation of Judeo-Christian belief. Peterson remarks, "He sought to raise the republic on the inalienable rights of man, allowing every citizen sovereignty over his own mind and conscience."

Peterson correctly points out that Jefferson was not an atheist, but rather a Deist, supporting the freedom to pursue religious truth wherever reason and conscience led. Because he could not ground his metaphysics in objective reality, Jefferson advocated broad-based public education as the means of disseminating both the traditional curriculum and moral ideas. (On August 15, 1820, Jefferson wrote to John Adams: "To give rest to my mind, I was obliged to recur ultimately to my habitual anodyne, 'I feel, therefore I exist.'") Peterson accepts Jefferson's premises and rues that this part of Jefferson's reform program was not passed by the Virginia Assembly. This unfortunate sidebar to the essay, however, does not detract from the overall brilliance of its exposition. Indeed, in the last paragraph of the essay, Peterson quotes one of Jefferson's most famous aphorisms: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

The importance of this essay is threefold in nature: 1) the understanding that freedom is absolutely necessary for rational thought to flourish; 2) highlighting of those philosophical activists who advocated freedom of conscience; and 3) the practical efficacy of philosophical activism. I want to expound briefly on this last point. In 1785, when the cause of freedom of conscience looked lost, James Madison wrote his *Memorial and Remonstrance* and garnered thousands of signatures for distribution. Gathering signatures on petitions is an oft-ignored art in contemporary America. Not every American can write a statement on the immorality of zoning or socialized medicine with the same perspicacity as an Objectivist, but if one is rational, he will recognize the value of tightly reasoned argument and will append his signature. Petitioning is a particularly effective method of introducing rational ideas (and to a certain extent, the philosophy of Objectivism) to the average American, especially when in the process of persuading a congressional representative to vote in a certain manner on an important issue. Receiving a position paper or pamphlet from an intellectual or an interest group is one thing; receiving a petition from an intellectual and a large group of *individual* constituents is another.

INTELLECTUAL ACTIVISM

KPRC Radio November 23, 1994

On November 23 Dale Schwartz was a call-in guest on *The Jon Matthews Show* on KPRC Radio. During his call, Dale noted that a recent speech by Labor Secretary Robert Reich reeked of Marxism. (Reich's speech had compared tax breaks for corporations to welfare programs.)

Bay City Daily Tribune November 24, 1994

I voted almost straight-ticket-Republican and I totally oppose the "prayer in school amendment" idea.

Though I'm in agreement with the proposition that society would improve were morality consulted more often, I warn against any attempt to prescribe that morality. Moral choice is the province of the free individual, not the political faction of the moment, with which you or I may or may not agree.

The principle laid down by the Founding Fathers that separated church and state has saved generations of Americans from repeating such examples as that of the English, who experienced hundreds of years of warfare as different religious factions fought for control of the legislature.

In prohibiting the political use of matter of belief, the American system is clearly the superior one.

Let's keep it that way.

Pete Jamison

HOS MEETING SUMMARIES

HOS HOLIDAY PARTY

The third annual HOS Christmas party was held on December 10 in the Telegraph Hill Club Room. Twenty-four members and guests attended.

The evening started with a pot luck dinner provided by those attending the party. Dinner was enjoyed in a festive atmosphere provided by Janet Wich and her merry elves.

Dinner was followed with a progressive gift exchange, during which many members revealed secret desires by the gifts they coveted.

Following the gift exchange, Lisa and Chris Land served as hosts for a game of "Objectivist Jeopardy". The game served to further reveal the competitive side of many members.

Thanks to all who participated in an evening of benevolence and jocularity.

ZONING, ROUND 2

The January 14 meeting began with a report from pamphleteering coordinator Janet Wich. She noted that HOS members had pledged to distribute 672 pamphlets before the November 1995 meeting. Janet unveiled a bar graph to illustrate our progress in meeting that goal. To date, 28 pamphlets have been distributed.

Brian Phillips then presented a history of zoning in Houston to 24 members and guests.

On November 2, 1993 Houston voters rejected zoning for the third time this century. However, as in the past, zoning proponents were unsatisfied with this outcome. In late 1994 they unleashed another attempt to bring zoning to Houston.

The first sign of this renewed effort as a proposal for "neighborhood" zoning. This proposal would allow for individual neighborhoods to implement zoning

by a vote of property owners.

Mayor Lanier initially favored the idea, which is not legal in Texas. He said he would ask the Texas Legislature to pass an act to allow the city to implement neighborhood zoning. The mayor later changed his mind.

Shortly after neighborhood zoning was making headlines, Herman Lauhoff, a former State Representative and a vocal zoning advocate, wrote an OpEd article for *The Houston Post*. Lauhoff rejected neighborhood zoning as simply a sop, and called for a new referendum on zoning in 1995.

These two developments make it clear that zoning advocates have not gone away.

HOS members, under the auspices of The Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Property Rights (AHC DPR), played an influential role in the 1993 referendum. Brian, who chaired that organization, summarized AHC DPR's activities, such as writing pamphlets, newsletters, and giving speeches. He estimated that approximately 7,000 pieces of literature were distributed. In addition, he was quoted in both papers and wrote an OpEd article for *The Chronicle*.

These efforts seemed to have a definite impact on the debate over zoning. Brian presented several anecdotes to demonstrate that his ideas were taken seriously by zoning proponents.

Brian then unveiled plans to renew efforts to combat zoning, and more broadly, a series of ordinances which violate property rights. A new name has been chosen for the organization--Committee for Property Rights (CPR).

A new pamphlet is being written and will soon be distributed to businessmen, the media, and politicians. This pamphlet addresses many of the arguments raised by zoning advocates during

the last debate, identifies the principles underlying those arguments, and demonstrates why those principles are harmful to human welfare. A copy of the pamphlet will be mailed to all HOS members upon its completion.

Brian also announced the formation of 4 sub-committees and their chairmen: Media, Sean Rainer; Politicians, Janet Wich; Business, Steve Miller; and Public, Johnnie McCulloch. After volunteers for each committee were solicited, the

committees met briefly to discuss their goals and division of labor.

Members who are interested in volunteering time or donating money to this effort should contact Brian at 271-5145.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

\$ 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.

\$ The HOS Executive Committee would like to publish a Directory of Members in the spring. Members will be included only if they request so. The directory will be distributed only to those who are included in the directory. The cost will be \$1 per copy. The directory is being published to facilitate member contact and to help members utilize the professional services of other members, as well as find members who share interests. Those wishing to be included in the directory should send the following information to Brian Phillips: occupation, professional services offered, and a list of interests.

\$ Johnnie McCulloch is forming an investment club consisting of 6-15 individuals. Meetings are tentatively scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. The initial investment is \$1000, split equally among the members. The minimum monthly investment per member is \$25. No experience required. If you're interested in joining, call Johnnie at 665-2868 (home) or 966-1432 (work).

\$ Chris and Lisa Land are expecting their first child in July. Congratulations Chris and Lisa! They will name the child after the person giving them the largest cash gift.

\$ Dr. Andrew Bernstein will be speaking at the University of Houston on February 9. The title of his talk is "The Mind as Hero in *Atlas Shrugged*". The talk will begin at 7 p.m. in the Houston Room in the University Center on the University of Houston campus. The event is free of charge. Those donating \$10 or more will be invited to have dinner with Dr. Bernstein prior to his talk. For more information, contact Sean Rainer at 479-4246.

\$ Chris Land has organized a study group to discuss *The Fountainhead*. The group will meet on Friday nights in various homes in the Clear Lake City area. For more information, call Chris at 335-1584.