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This issue of TIPS is a double issue, as so many issues of TIPS are becoming. In fact, it seems that single issues of TIPS will be the exception rather than the norm. This is the case both because a double issue allows us to treat a topic in greater depth and roundedness, and because postage for TIPS (which is very high) is less if we do fewer mailings, even if those mailings are bulkier. This is an important factor especially since our subscription remains low. New subscribers keep signing up, but old ones also keep dropping off. Subscribers can rest assured that they are still getting their money's worth, since each double issue carries as much copy as two single issues.

Whenever we do issues on specific themes, the general news categories start piling up. Therefore we use this issue to catch up on human service and other news.

**Human Service-Related News**

**Human Service-Related Publications**

*News Flash.* The TIPS editor has written lengthy chapters in two books that have just been published, both of which chapters are in the nature of dismantling human service crazes, about which much has been written in previous issues of TIPS. The chapters and publications are as follows.


St., San Diego, CA 92105-1197, or toll-free via 1-800/521-8545 (from Australia, 0014-800/128-144), or fax 1-800/SPG-TEXT. Only very partly in jest, we recommend that people obtain these books just for the TIPS editor's chapters, and particularly so with the book on quality of life. In fact, once one has read this chapter, one hardly needs to read the rest of the book!

*An unfortunate coincidence is that a man by the name of Goodwill wrote a textbook on Rehabilitation of the Physically Disabled Adult.

*One must never assume that works written in order to positively affect the attitudes of people toward handicapped or other devalued persons are competently crafted with awareness of the relevant change agentry and attitudinal change principles. For instance, the same set of authors have written Lee, The Rabbit with Epilepsy and Shelley, The Hyperactive Turtle, both intended to educate children about handicap. But in both books, the unfortunate animals end up with doctors who put them on "medications," after which they are okay again. While hardly anyone decries this sort of nonsense, woe, woe, woe if the first title had been Lee, The Epileptic Rabbit.


*We are very amused by a book, A Rock and a Hard Place, that is alleged to have been written by a 15-year old boy who has AIDS, TB, an amputated leg and a chronic high fever, who lives with his adoptive mother and is supposed to be blond and blue-eyed. No one has ever met the boy, and we strongly suspect that someone is pulling a superb literary conceit on the world, in particular on the PC crowd, and is capitalizing on poster child imagery.

*Joe Osburn has drawn our attention to the fact that there exists an entire magazine, Breaking New Ground, published by Purdue University, intended entirely for farmers with physical impairments. It has apparently existed since 1982.

*In winter 1990, a new periodical was launched out of Boston, "of and by adults with developmental disabilities," with the name On Our Own. There is something to be said about a periodical that would be at a reading level suitable for most retarded adults, and with relevant items of interest, but of course one big challenge for such a periodical would be to avoid being child-imaged. But one big drawback of the first issue of On Our Own was that there were a great many drawings, apparently by retarded persons, that looked very childish indeed. (Source material from Peter Dunphy.)

*Los Angeles has so many gang members that there are now gang magazines there which are big business.

News Related to Social Role Valorization (SRV)

*In previous issues of TIPS, we had announced the May 10-13, 1994 conference in Ottawa, Canada, that was to mark the 25th anniversary of the publication of the book Changing Patterns in Residential Services, and thus the 25th anniversary of the normalization/SRV movement. We are happy to report that the conference was held and was a resounding success. Almost 400 people participated, from 13 countries. Although some of the early lights of the normalization movement—especially the dead ones—were unable to attend, Bengt Nirje was there, as was Wolfensberger, and many people from both the early and later days of normalization and SRV training and implementation. Dr. Robert Flynn and Raymond Lemay, who organized the conference, will be publishing a book with selected
edited conference proceedings, and since presentations were given in both French and English (with simultaneous translations), there will probably be both a French and English version of the book. Conference participants will be informed when the book is ready, but those who were unable to attend, but do want to purchase the book, can contact Flynn for further information: Robert J. Flynn, School of Psychology, University of Ottawa, 11 Marie Curie, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6N5, telephone 613/564-9469 or 613/564-6875, or fax 613/564-7407.

*A team of people from the University of Ottawa, Laval University, the University of Montreal, and approximately 20 consumer groups and public and private organizations have received a 3-year (1994-1997) research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to establish an international information and research network on the social integration and participation of "disabled" persons. The purpose of the network is to encourage research on "disabled" persons' social integration and participation, particularly on factors in the physical and social environment that are likely to be either obstacles to, or facilitators of, social integration and participation. Anyone interested in becoming a member of this new network should make themselves known to Robert J. Flynn, School of Psychology, University of Ottawa, 11 Marie Curie, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6N5, telephone 613/564-9469 or 613/564-6875, or fax 613/564-7407.

*A well-known American billionaire apparently never showers, and has body odor of epic proportions. Nonetheless, wherever he goes, people cluster eagerly about him even though they have to breathe through their mouths (Time, 5 Aug. 91). This shows that people will overlook the "disabilities" of others who have high status and valued roles.

*It has come to our attention that some states have defined retarded persons as being "elderly" once they attain the age of 40—which certainly defies all normative concepts of elderliness, and may entail some dying role elements. For instance, one cannot join the American Association for Retired People until one is 50, or draw Social Security retirement benefits until one is 62.

*Old people were at one time highly valued in numerous societies and cultures, including in the Caucasus region of eastern Europe, and throughout Russia. In Russia, old women are called "babushkas," and they are said to have once been "Russia's anchor" of wisdom and life experience. However, with the collapse of Communism, the collapse of social institutions in the former Soviet Union, and the influx of modernism and modernistic values, these babushkas are being pushed out of what was once their valued place in society. As the headline of a 28 March 1994 Newsweek article put it, "Babushkas have lost their traditional roles" (p. 37). Like old people in western societies, they are becoming subject to much abuse by their children and grandchildren with whom they are often forced to live in very crowded quarters, they are becoming very socially isolated, they can hardly afford the bare necessities of life such as food and heat, and they are being taken advantage of by unscrupulous investors.

Their plight also illustrates a point we make in our sanctity of life events, namely, that when societal stresses increase (as they have dramatically in Russia), and when vulnerable people become decommunitized (as the elderly have in Russia; as one old woman put it, "There was a society then, now I am alone"), then deathmaking may break out, especially when the value inhibitions against deathmaking also collapse. And indeed, as one Moscow prosecutor put it, "Understanding of spirituality and morality are gone," so the elderly people are very easy prey.

*Senior Australian physicians have warned everyone that it is very bad when physicians refer to the people they serve as clients instead of patients, because
this constitutes "denial of access to the sick role," and therefore loss of certain rights that are generally accorded to people in that role. They also marshalled a series of additional arguments, such as that "care and compassion" are not conveyed by the term clienthood, while presumably they are conveyed by "patienthood."

*In 1992, it was discovered that a mental health facility in a remote part of western Australia had constructed outdoor cages without bedding or toilet facilities in which it kept mentally disordered aboriginal inmates, much like animals in a zoo (Adelaide Advertiser, 10 Dec. 92; in TEC newsletter, 11&12/92).

*How is one to explain certain recurring themes and parallel issues in the history of social devaluation? In Shanghai, Western colonists used to post signs on certain properties that said "No dogs or Chinese" (Newsweek, 28/3/94, p. 30). In the US in ca. 1940, there were still beaches that had warning signs, "No Jews or dogs allowed" (Newsweek, 4/4/94, p. 68).

*When psychiatric centers sponsor or co-sponsor conferences on violence, they automatically image mentally afflicted people as violent, and thereby reinforce old stereotypes that they claim to be trying to combat. Even worse, at least one such center (in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada) has co-sponsored such a conference every year for several years.

*A striking example of status differential between staff and clients was revealed in 1991 in Australia, where staff at Victoria's biggest mental institution received meals that cost nearly six times more than the meals of the residents. Furthermore, the food of the residents was of low quality, and often served cold. To add insult to injury, the residents had their meals delivered to their living units by the institution's garbage collector right after he had made his rounds picking up the garbage. An Australian newspaper editorial (The Age, 26/1/91) called this "crazy catering" (source item from Peter Millier).

*In Australia, one "tips out" the garbage, and not inappropriately, dumping people out of institutions is called "tipping out," and being dumped is "being tipped out."

*The National Cristina Foundation accepts donations (tax deductible) of commercially obsolete computer hardware and software, and audio and video equipment, and then distributes these free to human service organizations that train handicapped and disadvantaged people for "today's work force." No wonder the graduates of our human service programs have such astronomic unemployment rates (Modern Maturity, 4&5/91).

*We were amused to read that the Catholic school system in the diocese in which Syracuse is located planned to bring a "well-known author and speaker on autistic children and adults" to the diocese as part of its examination on how to include handicapped children. This speaker was interpreted as being "extremely effective ... because she herself is autistic." We never knew that autism made for good speakership, and have begun to wonder about Dr. Wolfensberger's mentality (Catholic Sun, 27/6/91).

*An excellent example of where a one-to-one service interaction is inferior to serving an entire group of clients is pediatric counseling of new mothers on childcare. It has been found that pediatricians do it better when they do it with a small group than when they do it with one mother by herself (SHJ, 21/7/92).

*We suddenly discovered in fall 1992 that the word "inclusive" is being used by a lot of people to mean no more or no less than what we have been calling
"integrated." Others use "inclusive" to mean only physical presence. However, in this new lingo, people are no longer segregated but "excluded," and there are no longer integrated and segregated activities, but inclusive and exclusive ones (Entourage, Summer 1992).

*A German physician once noted "that Rosa Miller is retarded one can readily see from the questions that others ask her."

*We kid you not, but Newsweek (29/3/93) said that with Clinton being able to appoint a more liberal judiciary, "gays, blacks, the terminally ill seeking the right to die, the press and the criminally accused are all likely to benefit." One could almost call this the deviancy image juxtaposition kiss of death.

*A 1960 Spanish film by M. Ferreri called "El Cochecito" (the little coach) is a black comedy that tells a unique story. The main character is an elderly man who lives with his family, but he is not well treated by them and is very lonely. A mobility-impaired friend of his obtains a motorized wheelchair--really something like a motor-scooter with three wheels--which enables him to go all around the city independently. They become friends with a group of people who all use such wheelchairs to get around, and the old man becomes so fond of their company, and so jealous of their good times, that he manages to obtain such a chair for himself, even though his legs work perfectly well. There is more to the film--some of it lugubrious--but the above suffices to bring out an interesting point. What struck us was how rarely (if ever) nowadays people would intentionally and purposely take on the stigma of using a wheelchair, just so that they could be with their physically handicapped friends.

However, in California, a child went bald after undergoing therapy against cancer. All his male classmates, plus the teacher, then shaved their own heads (SHA, 12 June 1994). This was one way to minimize the child's image loss.

*A 1988 article said that placing handicapped children into regular education without special supports is maindumping rather than mainstreaming--a phrase that is very appealing to us.

*Lozano, B. (1993). Independent living: Relation among training, skills, and success. American Journal on Mental Retardation, 98(2), 249-262. In a study of 1500 mentally retarded people over seven years, Lozano found that success in their independent living depended heavily on two factors: (a) the presence of some kind of a supportive benefactor, who might even be a paid human service worker; and (b) the actual experience of living independently. These factors made a much greater contribution than formal training in independent living, or the amount of other human services that were provided with the intent of supporting independent living. Of course, these findings provide strong support for the validity of Citizen Advocacy and of the strategy of pedagogic verisimilitude that is a corollary of Social Role Valorization.

*A Lutheran service for retarded adults in Milwaukee has the name Kindcare. Now it just so happens that probably the majority of Lutherans in the US are of German extraction, and particularly so in Wisconsin where the majority of residents have German ancestry. Since in German, Kind means child, and since many Lutherans of Germanic extraction still know a smattering of German, they might easily read Kindcare as childcare, even if only unconsciously--as happened to the TIPS editor, until he saw a note that the agency serves adults.

*How strongly the child role expectancy for certain devalued people can shape one's perception was underlined when a 30-year old woman who acted as an advocate for a 22-year old man was frequently mistaken as his mother. Obviously, once people have perceived an adult as a child, they may perceive another adult who
acts in a protective relationship to the impaired adult as being vastly older than he or she is, overriding their ordinary perceptual judgments of somebody's age (Values Into Action, Spring 93, p. 4).

*College campus support groups for people with Down's syndrome call themselves Student Advocates Down Syndrome, or SADS (DS News, 7/8/92).

*SADS, DIS, and ADIS are instruments which are used as part of psychiatric interviews and ratings—thankfully not in mental retardation, but in the mainstream of psychiatric practice. As we have pointed out for many years, Dis, as in "disability" is a word or word root connected with a Greek god of death and the underworld, and with innumerable other bad things. Readers who are not familiar with our article on this can receive a reprint upon sending a self-addressed envelope (stamped if within the US).

*A self-help support group for people with multiple personalities and other dissociative disorders in Winnipeg calls itself the "amoebas," apparently because amoebas reproduce by splitting (source item from David Wetherow).

*Unfortunately, there is a suicide risk assessment procedure with the vegetable image acronym MA'SSALAD, with the letters standing for mental status, attempts previously, social support, sex, age, loss, alcohol, and drugs (IAETF Update, 1&2/93).

*We never cease to be amazed by the ingenuity of people in managing to find ways of deviancy-imaging devalued people. A group that supposedly advocates for school integration of handicapped pupils managed to call itself People for Inclusive School and Community Education Services, which yields the acronym PISCES. First of all, this is the Latin word (in the plural) for fish, and secondly, it has a very unsavory clang association with excrement. It is this acronym which is actually displayed in large letters at the top of the letterhead rather than the group's real name.

*In summer 1993, we either learned, or at least noticed, for the first time that some people are speaking in terms of life arrangements for devalued people "based on the principles of an ordinary life," which to us sounds like a reformulation of Nirje's formulation of the normalization principle. This is of course different from Social Role Valorization, and Wolfensberger's formulation of normalization before that.

*Since about the late 1980s, many people have assumed that SRV can only be valid or useful if it conforms to the peculiar mentality of what has come to be called "political correctness." Accordingly, many people have made heroic efforts to shape SRV into such a conformity. However, the two constructs of political correctness (PC) and SRV are by no means identical, even though they may overlap on certain points. People who are sympathetic to the political correctness ideology must either choose which to embrace, or must learn to live in tension trying to apply two partially incompatible systems, perhaps picking and choosing from both; but what they should not do is to simply redefine SRV selectively.

Strange Shrinkery News (Is There Any Other Kind!)

*A 17-year old young woman in Italy had a mental episode in 1938 and was put into a mental institution. Not long after, when she was supposed to have been released, a clerical error was made, and she was listed as "deceased" instead of "released." Accordingly, the family was told she was dead, and because they were too poor to come and claim the body, they had no reason to believe that she was not--until 56 years later when it was discovered accidentally that she was still
alive in the mental institution. Apparently, she had not been able to advocate on her own behalf and to contact her family, which by 1994 still consisted of not only several brothers but also nieces. (1994 Reuters clipping from Guy Caruso.)

*When Jeffrey Dahmer was tried in Milwaukee in early 1992 for the killing of 15 young males with whom he had been involved in homosexual activities, his defense was that he suffered from the "mental illness" of necrophilia, which gave him uncontrollable urges to kill and then have sex with the corpses (AP in SHI, 4 Feb. 92).

*We are amazed but not surprised to learn that some hospitals and psychiatric centers have begun to operate special residential units for the "clinical treatment of satanism," and more such may be in the offing. One of these is called a "Center for the Treatment of Ritualistic Deviance." Apparently, ritualistic deviance is now a category of insanity (11/90 clipping from Hank Bersani).

*At some mental institutions, at least in New York State, inmates who want to smoke have to take the cigarette in their mouth, and then stick it through a hole in the wall and suck on it as an attendant lights it from the other side (CW, 10&11/92).

*In the US, the states vary dramatically in the amount of money they spend on mental health. 1987 figures showed that the lowest per-capita spending was in Idaho with $17 per citizen, and the highest in New York State with $140. However, the amazing thing is that some of the states with the highest expenditures also have the worst mental health programs, showing yet once again that the quality of service is at least partially independent of the amount of money being spent (NY Times, 24/3/91).

*A study sponsored by Public Citizen Health Research Group concluded that the Canadian province of British Columbia had better public mental health services than any of the US states—and that at a cost lower than eight of the most expensive US states. However, such surveys have always been rather suspect to us, and that this one should also be considered suspect is pointed out by the fact that it listed New York State, which is absolutely pitiful, in 7th place among the states (Health Letter, 10/93).

*Armstrong, L. (1993). And they call it help: The psychiatric policing of America's children. New York: Addison-Wesley. Yet another indictment of the shrink service system in the US for children is that apparently, moving children about endlessly is one of the hallmarks of this system nationwide. In some states, involuntary restraint of children is illegal, but it is not illegal to restrain a child and transport the child to another state where restraints are legal, at government or private insurance expense. The author says that one of the worst parts of it all is that the psychiatric veneer of imperialism "can really get you to doubt yourself." We know the feeling.

*According to the investigative CBS-TV program "60 Minutes" (12 May 91), 250,000 adolescents in the US are put into some kind of mental facility each year. The program also showed one such setting which looked pitifully institutional, but which was interpreted by the psychologist who was interviewed as being "family-like," and that the youth and the staff there were "like a large family." The program interpreted itself, and was interpreted by the TV program, as an exemplary success.

*The New York State Office of Mental Health claims that 28% of the state's children suffer from mental disorder (Connections, Spring 92). A 3/93 study (by
the Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled) of the children's mental health system in New York State found that once a child is taken into residential service because of mental health problems (in 80% of cases preceded by family abuse or neglect), such a placement is normatively the beginning of an "odyssey," not only from one setting to another but also one agency to another, which deprives these children "for extended periods of many of the attributes of a normal childhood." The NY Office of Mental Health spends $210 million a year on residential care for such children, and of this, 95% is spent on institutional services at a cost of $210,000 per "bed" per year or similarly expensive residential settings. The majority of children are kept in such settings merely because service within a family context or in community residences is not available, even though this would cost only a fraction of the above.

*The New York State Protection and Advocacy Office took a look in 1992 at the children's and adolescents' psychiatric units of community hospitals in the state and found the following kinds of practices: great filthiness, sometimes attended by roach infestations; widespread use of mechanical restraints; psychoactive drugging of even very young children; children required to wear hospital pajamas all day, for weeks on end; no personal day clothing available at all; no doors or curtains on shower and toilet stalls; no toilet paper or even toilet paper holders in toilet stalls; extremely limited access to placing or receiving telephone calls; no opportunities for the children to ever go outside; lack of shades or curtains on the windows; total lack of pictures on the walls of many areas; totally barren bedrooms, often without bed linens; no furniture in which children could keep any of their possessions (Quality of Care, 6&7/93).

The above theme was continued in the 9&10/93 issue of Quality of Care. Children's psychiatric units in 1993 still or again had many of the features that we associate with the institutional snakepits from the 1960s: 50% did not have toilet paper, soap and towels in bathrooms, 30% did not have personal toothbrushes, 90% did not have outdoor recreational opportunities, and 80% had no provision for religious service attendance, or for privacy in making phone calls to family members. One of the reasons was that the bureaucratic procedures for staff to get even clothing and supplies for the children had become virtually unmanageable.

*An old German proverb says that what is an owl to one person is a nightingale to another. Between 1975 and 1990, many political dissidents in Cuba were put in mental institutions. There, their brains were often fried with electric shock and/or drugs, which they were said to need because they suffered from "acute paranoia, with delusions of being defenders of human rights" (APA Monitor, 5/91). Thus, we can see here another example that what is clearly a perversion by shrinkdom, or even a delusion of it, is a valid measure or innovation to someone else, and vice versa.

**"Me Tertullian; you Bozo."** During that time of the Roman Empire when bloody persecutions of Christians occasionally erupted, an emperor advised one of his administrators in Asia Minor that Christians should not be specifically sought out, but if someone were to present Christians for trial, then they should be prosecuted. To this, one of the Christian church leaders, Tertullian, made a reply that is still well remembered as an example of logic: If Christians were indeed guilty, why should they not be sought out for persecution? And if they were innocent, why should they be prosecuted when presented to the courts?

The insanity of the sanity police can often be astonishing. A resident of a state insane asylum in Syracuse (Hutchings Psychiatric Center) decided to set his shirt on fire, and there was some slight fire damage to his room. The officials of the insane asylum called in the police. The police arrested the man and called in a psychiatry professor to assess the man's mental condition (SHJ, 17/6/91). If there was any question about his sanity, why was he in the asylum in
the first place? And if he was in the insane asylum without being insane, wouldn't it be a sane thing to do to try to burn it down?


The Commercialization of Human Service

*In the US nursing home sector, 75% of all nursing homes and 71% of all beds are in the for-profit sector. There is also a lively business of investing in nursing home real estate. Altogether, this means that the US nursing home business with 1.5 million beds is a massive cash cow for entrepreneurs, nursing home operators, and speculators (Health Letter, 1/92).

*Peter Millier has made the observation that organizations related to human services or charities have increasingly begun to advertise their higher-level organizational positions as being in the management or business category, rather than in the human service category. When advertising their openings, they may not even mention that the job is in an organization related to human service or affliction. Accordingly, they do indeed recruit people who know nothing about human services, and may even be incapable of identifying with the kinds of afflicted and devalued people with whom the organization deals.

*For some years now, we have noticed that agencies and organizations have been reporting that they have delivered so many "units of service" to so many people. Only in 9/91 were we struck by the fact that this is an utterly meaningless phrase. What is a unit of service in a residential service, a vocational one, and an advocacy organization? Is an advocacy unit equivalent to an institutional unit of service? Can one add one unit of each and call it two units of "service"? How many units of service did the good Samaritan provide? If one goes for a meal to a restaurant, how many units does one receive? How does a unit of service in an expensive French restaurant compare to picking up a hamburger at Burger King?

*A scientist has come up with the fascinating observation that over time, almost everything sold in the US converges to a price of about $3.22 per pound. For instance, bread and peanut butter have been moving up toward this figure, while automobiles and computers have been moving down to it. He concluded that one way of resolving the Pentagon purchase scandals is to simply allow the Defense Department to buy a certain number of pounds annually at an average price of $3.22 each (Science, 4 October 85). To this, we would add the proposal that human service agencies should be paid according to how many pounds of clients they serve, adjusted to hours of service, the new unit of service to be called the kilogramhour.

*Certain private health sectors in the US refer to the diagnosis and treatment of cancer as a "product line" (Health Letter, 3/91).

*In our opinion, there are few things as noble as wanting to adopt a child who otherwise would not have a proper home. However, we were taken aback to find a "want ad" by a couple seeking to adopt a child interspersed among other "want ads" looking for antique pool tables, pianos, waterbeds, etc. (Pennysaver, Nepean, Ontario, 18/2/90; source item from Jacques Pelletier). Pelletier tells us that this is a common occurrence. It reinforces the perception of newborn babies as commodities, to be disposed of either before or after birth.
Legalism, Formalization & Bureaucratization in Human Services

*One reason why about three million handicapped and elderly Americans are not receiving governmental medical benefits to which they are entitled is because the application process is too complicated for them. It includes a 27-page form (AP in SHJ, 24/3/93).

*The driver of a shuttle bus for handicapped and elderly people encountered an accident scene where a child had been hit by a car. She got out and remained by the child until an ambulance arrived—for which she was fired because it violated company policy (SHJ, 4 Aug. 92).

*Things are becoming so bureaucratized in human services that in response to successful lawsuits, at least 55% of the residents of each locked ward of psychiatric centers in New York State must be permitted to go out 16 days a month in the first quarter, 75% in the second quarter, and 95% in the third quarter, including at least one weekend day during the month and at least two weekend days on separate weekends during the month in the fourth quarter. When bad weather prevents inmates from having outdoor access this must be documented on logs, and "temperature standards" set by a ward or institution as a rationale for not permitting outdoor access must be recorded on innumerable documents, and sent to at least two legal service bodies (OMH News, 2/94). How can people gaze at such realities and blatantly deny that human services are in a state of collapse and gridlock?

*In 1986, "black" parents in California won a statewide court ban on using IQ tests to assess their impaired children. Now another group of minority parents is counter-suing. One family of mixed ethnic background pointed out that if they registered their son as hispanic, he could be tested, but if they registered him as black, he could not be (AP in SHJ, 29/7/91). We suggest solomically that only half of the boy be tested—either his upper or lower half, or his left or right half.

*A Seattle firm advertises, "make better IEPs and IPPs using our 448 goals and 27,389 objectives." This is a computer program one can buy that can cost up to $900, but it only covers children through 12th grade, which leaves hundreds of thousands of more objectives for older people, and in relation to things other than child development and education.

*We heard one service worker say that "my job makes my job impossible," meaning that the absurd requirements attached to the job make it impossible to properly perform the work.

*In a previous issue, we ran 3 instructive parodies of the parable of the Good Samaritan. We have since found a fourth. "A Samaritan, upon finding an injured man by the roadside, telephoned the Jerusalem and Jericho Joint Hospital Board. Owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding between the two depots, there was a delay of five hours in sending an ambulance and by the time it arrived the victim had died.

No possible blame can be attached to the Samaritan for doing so little. It must be remembered that he was the citizen of a suspect Power. Moreover, the visa on his passport was probably out of date, and if he had fallen into the hands of the local police he would have been thrown into jail or deported by the Jewish authorities as an undesirable alien..." (Tabori, 1959, p. 118).

Higher Education News

*Page Smith has recently written a biting critique of American higher education, chiding it for flight from teaching; the meretriciousness of most
academic research; the disintegration of the disciplines; the alliance of the universities with the Department of Defense; the corruptions incident to "big-time" collegiate sports; and for the impoverishment of the spirit by "academic fundamentalism," hence the title of the book, *Killing the Spirit*, by which he means a loss of a broader human, or even humanistic, vision, and a narrowing of academic mentalities. We believe that many of his criticisms are valid.

*A 1991 research study found that higher education lecturers in the humanities are the poorest speakers (with the exception of those in philosophy), barely above those in the social sciences, with lecturers in the natural sciences being way on top. English professors did the worst, and biology professors were the best (Science, 29/3/91).*

*We were amazed to discover that a professor of anthropology at the University of California in Santa Cruz has written a *Human Evolution Coloring Book* which is actually used in undergraduate college classes for anthropology students—not only in classes by that professor but also at other universities, including Syracuse University. In fact, the book has become "hugely popular," as its preface notes, despite the fact that the coloring that is asked for has, in most cases, no relevance at all to what is being taught by the respective pictures at issue. We see this as a classical case of the "dumbing-down" of American college education.*

*An headline story in US News & World Report (8 Jan. 90) carried a shocking exposé of the phoniness and deception of college and university sports. At colleges that are in the sports news, about 75% of athletes in those sports that are very much in the public eye (football and basketball being the major examples) never even graduate, and the rate comes close to 100% with minority group athletes. Our noble institutions of higher learning spew out the athlete students either when they get injured, when they go on drugs, or when they approach graduation without the necessary academic achievements. Athletes are often carried along with the illusion that they might make it into pro sports, but even this is not true for most of them. For instance, of close to 18,000 young men playing near the top in basketball and football, only about 150 reach the big leagues, and only a few of these last more than a year. The article called this "an expensive circus, driven by an insatiable appetite for winning, and amateur athletes are getting neither the moral guidance nor the education they bargained for." Even as the students are being deceived and cheated, college coaches may earn as much as a $1 million a year in salary and endorsement fees. Yet only a few of the colleges really benefit. For instance, the bowl finalist took away $55 million, and the big basketball colleges are raking in about $115 million a year. Yet overall, because of the high costs involved, most colleges lose money. Only about 45 athletic departments end up in the black each year, and only a very small handful do so consistently. For instance, just sending a team to one of the bowls costs close to $1 million. This sort of thing is thoroughly American and should not be surprising, with the exception that it is one of our institutions that makes the highest claims to nobility that is perpetrating this scam.*
In comparison to other nations, the US used to have a better educated working class, which contributed to its high rate of productivity. At this time, the laboring force in the US has higher rates of functional illiteracy and high school drop-out than those of all of its major competitors, and this has contributed heavily to the inability of US products to compete in terms of quality (Science, 18/12/87).

In Japan, even students in the humanities learn as much or more math than math majors learn in the US. The discrepancy between American and both Chinese and Japanese pupils starts in the first grade and gets ever bigger, but despite the poor performance of American students, US parents have consistently expressed satisfaction with the status quo (Science, 1/1/93).

A fascinating research finding is that immigrant children to the US start out doing better in school than their American classmates, but the longer they live in the US, and the more they become Americanized, the more their performance declines (AP in SHJ, 23/2/94).

One of the more recent crazes is a demand from "black" radicals and the PC crowd that there be separate classes for "black" males, or even entire self-segregated schools. USA Today (11 Oct. 90) called this "a bold experiment."

Another report of a national group noted that "the average 12th-grade black student writes only slightly better than the average 4th-grade white student." Unfortunately, the response of one Yale child psychiatrist was that schools must draw in more mental health specialists (USN&WR, 22/10/90).

Only 10% of US high school students have had as much as 3 years of study of the same foreign language. If they had any foreign language at all, most of them have only had 1 year of it. One of the benefits of learning any foreign language whatsoever is that it enables one to think in a different way about things, because each language opens up nuances of thinking that are not available in other languages. Thus, even if one never practiced a foreign language that one learns, one's mind would be immensely enriched in dealing with the phenomena of living (Newsweek, 1990 Education Issue).

A recent US government report claimed that one out of every five youngsters below the age of 18 was, in so many words, mentally junked, having either learning impairments, developmental delays, behavioral problems, and so on (NC Register, 17/2/91).

The only books some children still read are textbooks that are required in school. With some schools replacing such textbooks with video presentations, even that reading vestige may disappear for many children. This shows again just how stupid educators can be, and that one cannot leave important matters to the experts in their fields, or, as one of the better-known Catholic leaders (the Jesuit Dulles) said in early 1991, that the Gulf War should have been left to the generals.

We learned in 2/91 that in our schools, geography is being taught by means of rap songs on TV sets.

More than half of the school superintendents of large US cities at any given time in recent years have been on their jobs only 1-2 years. The retiring Detroit superintendent said that the right conditions for education in cities simply no longer exist, and programs such as those promoted by Harvard University that focus on shaping up "better superintendents" simply won't work (Time, 3 Dec. 90).
The education system in New York City is institutionalized nuthousery. The New York City school system has 1000 buildings, 950,000 students, and close to 100,000 teachers. In 1988-89, there were 33,000 unfulfilled requests for building repairs, 9,000 reports of violence, and 1,900 weapons were confiscated (AP in SHJ, 24/5/90). The system is so bureaucratized that only 50% of all the money allocated to high school education ever reaches the schools (USN&WR, 1 Oct. 90). The school system has had 6 chancellors in 12 years. With 12.5% of school children in special education, special education costs are 23% of the total budget (New York, 21/1/91).

*However, all this is merely a subset of state-wide nuthousery in education. How little difference money makes in assuring service quality was underlined by statistics that reported that in 1990-91, New York State had the highest per pupil education expenditure in the US ($8,680), and yet the school system in the state is in shambles and so many children are not learning (SHJ, 8 May 91). Local schools in New York State have claimed that they are so hard pinched for funds that they have "cut the fat and gone straight to the nerve" (e.g., SHJ, 31/3/92)—but then one discovers (CBS "60 Minutes" in 9/93) that in New York City, there are many school janitors who earn as much as $60,000 a year but show up for work only 2-3 hours a day, in addition to having all sorts of expenses paid to them such as being given free Jeeps. Some of these janitors even have their own personal secretaries who often are each other's relatives. At the same time, the union claimed that the janitors were underpaid. Some nerve alright! A superintendent of a vocational training office in New York State was given $963,000 in unused vacation and sick leave time when he retired. It also came to light that the school district had signed an agreement with the man under which he would have been able to accumulate sick leave for as long as three years even after he had died. No wonder our children do not learn anything in school when those who run the schools are of the mentality that pays dead people sick leave, and gives away millions of dollars frivolously (SHJ, 26/1/93).

*As of the 1993-94 school year, high school students in Maryland had to log up 75 hours of unpaid work in human services in order to graduate. The bad news is that this is called "volunteering" (AP in SHJ, 30/7/92).

*Home schooling has become so popular that one can now sign up for home instruction programs through the mail.

**Special Education News**

*Goodman, J.F. (1992). When slow is fast enough: Educating the delayed preschool child. New York: Guilford Press. This book by a child psychologist concerns early educational "intervention" with mentally handicapped—specifically retarded—children. The author seems to have deep insight into young children, and to be sophisticated about assumptions underlying service and models of service. She says that if one observes typical early education for the handicapped, one will note: (a) a contrast between what children do spontaneously and what is asked of them; (b) a discrepancy between the "work" that is offered or required, and the mental age of the children; and (c) poor responsiveness of the children to teacher directions, in good part because of a and b. As a result, she says, teachers in such programs end up "cheating" or "disguising" the real delayedness of the children through various strategies such as giving outright false interpretations of what the children and their motives and desires are, excessively shaping the children's responses, and even supplying the right answers. The end result, she claims, is that the children learn to please the teacher, and to believe the teacher's interpretation rather than their own feelings and experiences.

Goodman notes that different educational strategies should be employed with young children depending on what is being taught or conveyed. She suggests that
the family constitutes a good model of (a) how the way of conveying something to a child differs markedly depending on what is being conveyed, and (b) how even children very close in age may be treated very differently because there can be such vast differences between children of even just a year or two apart.

Goodman also notes that elementary school settings are probably inappropriate settings for early education programs, because of the different demands of school administrators, and the different abilities and stages of development between elementary school-aged children and children as young as 2 or 4.

She also notes the ridiculous and constraining nature of IEPs, particularly with very young children.

Goodman is one of the few writers who recognizes that mental retardation affects the will as well as the intellect.

*If one reads the professional literature in special education, one might get the impression that segregated education of the handicapped has been virtually abolished, but at the very least, we have to take note of the fact that there are wide variations in educational integration among different educational jurisdictions. For instance, a 1990 report on the situation in New York State said that the proportion of handicapped children in New York State who are educated in a segregated context has remained virtually unchanged since 1975.

*An agriculture science teacher had been teaching his special education students about castration of farm animals. He also mentioned how his own college professor once had taught how to castrate such animals orally, perhaps when one was in a hurry and had no implements handy. Soon after, the teacher brought some pigs to class, and before he could do anything about it, one of his students who had put two and two together bent down and castrated one of the big pigs with his teeth. In Syracuse, this created a local sensation, e.g., "School Chief Weighs Pig Controversy" headlines. The superintendent of schools said, "We have never had anything like it before." There was an investigation, a lengthy public hearing that drew 60 witnesses, another hearing, reviews of the case, etc. (SHJ, 13/2/93). Maybe this demonstrates yet one more reason to integrate special education students so that they can observe and imitate more appropriate behaviors.

*A US study of a very large sample of special education teachers (6,600) revealed that new special education teachers lasted on the average seven years in special education. Most likely to leave special education were younger women, and teachers with higher aptitude scores, the latter finding being consistent with a widespread impression that on the average, special education teachers are a cut below regular teachers (Exceptional Children, 12/92).

*A 1993 California law banned the use of pain or trauma for dealing with the behavior problems of special education students.

*We were told the story of a boy who had some learning and behavioral problems that his local school seemed to be totally incapable of properly addressing. The parents found a private school 100 miles away that would take the boy. The mother drove the boy to the school (about two hours) in the morning, then went to the near-by home of her sister and slept there during the day, then drove the boy back home in the afternoon—and then went to work on the night shift in a factory. In very short order, the boy blossomed in unimagined ways and made vast gains not only in behavior but also in achievement.

News About the Family as it Relates to Adaptive Procreation & Progeny

News about the family is almost 100% bad.
*According to the World Health Organization, there are in the world every day at least 100 million acts of heterosexual intercourse which result in only 910,000 conceptions (less than 1 per hundred), but also in 365,000 transmissions of what are now called "sexually transmitted diseases." In other words, these days, intercourse is almost half as frequently likely to transmit disease as new life. Also, of the 910,000 conceptions, 150,000 a day are terminated by deliberate abortion (Time, 6 July 1992).

*In the US, fewer women have babies by age 30, but more women above 30 still expect to have babies (SHJ, 10 March 92).

*More and more older women are now seeking to become pregnant and have babies with the assistance of new medical reproductive technology (e.g., CBS News, 11 July 1991). One 59-year old woman, already the mother of nine grown children, said she wanted to again become pregnant and have a baby, with the rationale that just because she was born 30 years too soon (before this technology was developed) was no reason she should not be able to take advantage of it. Some reproductive technologies centers will not attempt to impregnate women over 45 because of the chance that they may die before the child is grown, but at least one physician interviewed had no objections to trying to fulfill this woman's wish. In fact, by 1/94, it was announced that fertility clinics had managed to artificially impregnate women 59 and 61 years old. A British woman gave birth to artificially conceived twins at age 59, and a 61-year old woman in Italy conceived by this method. One thing that is clear to us is that this is once more both an issue of humans insisting on being in control, and biomedical technology insisting idolatrously on doing everything that it is possible to do, if for no other reason than to demonstrate what humans can accomplish. We are utterly convinced that if medical technology could enable 100-year old senile and demented women to conceive, it will do so--and would even do it to senile demented men of that age if they could find a way. The issue of control became apparent by the fact that the 61-year old woman had lost her only previous child a year earlier in a car crash. This was apparently "not acceptable."

*In 9/91, a 5,000-year old mummified man was found in a glacier in the Alps between Austria and Italy. A slew of women have since stepped forward and volunteered to be impregnated with his sperm, if it could be reconstructed with newly-developed laboratory techniques. Thousands of others have written either that they are related to the iceman, or that they have communicated with him (Time, 26/10/92).

*The late 1993 news that a human embryo had been "cloned" was another false claim. What was done is technically called "twinning," not cloning. We will withhold belief that human cloning can be done until it happens, i.e., we have a (cosmic) sense that it will not work, or not produce a viable human being.

*Women who let themselves be voluntarily artificially fertilized by men other than their husbands are pathetic, and in a way, stupid. This is underlined by the episode of Dr. Cecil Jacobson who ran an artificial insemination clinic in Virginia. It turned out that the elderly doctor inseminated his gullible and pathetic female clients with his own sperm, and fathered somewhere between 15 and 75 children, in addition to seven with his wife. He also was a big liar, telling his clients many untruths. However, one of his clients testified in his defense, saying--we kid you not--that "it's almost inconceivable that that would happen to this ... wonderful person," referring to his conviction for fraud and perjury (SHJ, 5 March 92 and other clippings). This scandal also served to reveal that other physicians had been doing the same thing when they "ran out of fresh sperm" (SHA, 9 Feb. 92).
*Women who seek artificial insemination from strangers are making ever more extravagant demands as to donor characteristics: good teeth, high math/SAT scores, musical virtuosity, athletic prowess, good dispositions in the morning, and one woman specifically requested sperm from a man with large genitalia (Redbook, 2/92; source item from Karen Barker).

*Among liberals and feminists, a now explicitly spelled-out no-no is "familism" (which becomes familist as an adjective) that is put roughly on the same level as racism and other bad isms. Government policies and community service ideologies have been assaulted as reflecting "familist ideology." To antifamilists, a better ism is "collectivism" (source item from Kristjana Kristiansen).

*The US government's hostility toward families is underlined by all sorts of tax incentives against being married. Two adults with children who have been married to each other might incur a tax penalty of as much as $4000 per year (First Things, 6&7/93). We much prefer sin taxes to virtue taxes.

*Between 1960-1988, US households without any children rose from 49% to 62%.

*In 1992, several major US universities decided to extend health benefits, library privileges and other fringe benefits to the homosexual partners of faculty, staff and students. In early 1993, the mayor of New York City created a registry for unmarried heterosexual and homosexual couples who were living together so as to be able to accord to them rights formerly reserved to spouses and close relatives, such as visiting rights in hospitals and jails, eligibility for housing, inheritance of leases, and child care leave (NC Register, 14/2/93). Such individuals may also fill out yet another form to indicate that they have terminated their relationship. At a time when the family is under stress and attack, this is yet another way to undermine it.

*An Australia-wide study found that an increasing number of people are putting their own needs ahead of those of their family and its members. This change has apparently been most dramatic among women, with only 24% putting the needs of their husbands and children ahead of their own, while 45% of the men are prepared to surrender their needs for their families. Also, men are more likely than women to want to marry for children, but apparently there will be fewer marriages because more young women and young men are content to live the single life. These dramatic changes have happened in just 10 years, with the growing emphasis on individualism and the pursuit of "self-actualization" (The West Australian, 3 March 93; source item from Robert Jackson). It hardly seems to matter that this study is from Australia, since similar trends appear to be normative in all of modernistic culture.

*Now that psychologists by and large have embraced the modernistic rejection of family and devotion to child-rearing, their "research" is beginning to find that adults without children are better adjusted (APA Monitor, 4/93).

*In 1960, only 7% of children lived in households without an adult male, which rose to 19% by 1988. In households without an adult male, income available per child was only a third of that in households with an adult male. Thus, much of the poverty among children is accounted for by the absence of an adult male in the household. At the same time, there was a dramatic increase in the proportion of married women with young children in the labor force. This is believed to have resulted in sharp decreases in home-cooked meals, help with children's homework, and other supports to children.

*After decades of denial by the "black" leadership and the PC crowd, everyone finally seems to be agreeing on the fact that the "black" family in the US is in...
its death throes—something Daniel Moynihan had pointed out 30 years earlier and which earned him nothing but severest punishment. A "black" child born today has only a 20% chance of being raised with two parents until the age of 16. Nor can this reality be attributed entirely to social class, because before 1950, "black" women were very significantly more likely to get married than "white" ones, and thus, the current pattern cannot just be written off as being an effect of slavery, as the apologists for the current situation are trying to do. Also, the discrepancies between "whites" and "blacks" even increase in the income brackets above $75,000 per year, where "black" women are almost ten times as likely as "white" ones to have children out of wedlock, while only being twice as likely to do so in the lowest income category (Newsweek, 30/8/93). All this, foretold, could have been at least partially prevented, but only by fostering traditional family life.

One consequence of the above disaster is poverty, which becomes particularly evident if one considers that family income of intact "black" families is now the same as that of intact "white" ones (PI, 9/92).

*There is a growing body of evidence that children who grow up under the tutelage of people other than their natural parents are more likely to fail in school, have social difficulties and get arrested (Time, 6 Sept 93). Even psychologists are finally beginning to admit that most children of divorce remain wounded for life, and that their parents' divorce remains a central issue in their psyche no matter how well-adjusted they appear to be. Children have a feeling that when their parents separate, they have been cheated out of something akin to a birthright. Even worse, such children tend to be underachieving, self-depreciating, worried, and often angry, and much more likely to be unsuccessful in their own marriages.

*It seems that the majority of American women with young children put their children into day care these days. What they probably do not know is that the typical American day care worker earns $5.35 per hour, and that there is an average 40% turnover every year (Newsweek, 8 June 92).

*Though child welfare agencies are taking more and more children away from their incompetent parents, their ability to find competent alternative homes is actually declining, and therefore the time interval is increasing between the child being taken away and placed into a viable foster or adoptive home. One thing that apparently has been speeding up is the legal proceeding for terminating parental rights, which used to take close to five years and now takes "only" about three (SHJ, 19/11/91).

*In the early 1980s, there were 225,000 children in the US on any given day in the foster care system. By 1990, this had become 360,000, and is expected to hit 500,000 by 1995. At the same time, the number of foster families has shrunk dramatically, down to about 100,000. Not surprisingly, the situation is worse in the bigger cities. One would think that one of the things the foster care system would do is be nice toward and facilitative to foster parents, but the opposite is the case (SHJ, 12 May 91).

*Between 12/1989 and 1/1993, the number of families in the US who received "supplemental social security" payments because of the presence of a child deemed to be "disabled" rose from 296,000 to 636,000. Each case requires 15-20 hours of formal testing of the child. Many parents in these families are dysfunctional, and use the money for things unrelated to child welfare, especially when they suddenly receive a very large check (e.g., in the tens of thousands of dollars) for retroactive payment (SHJ, 27/4/93).

*Every 10 years, between 1909 and 1970, a US president (7 altogether) convened "White House Conferences on Children." Each conference produced
voluminous reports and profound recommendations that had major news impact, and usually made front-page news—but hardly anything ever came of any of this. Furthermore, between 1983-1988, at least 22 national-level or federal governmental committees completed reports on the status of children and families, and virtually none of this impacted on public policy or even public opinion. The 1980 White House Conference on Families did not get very far after a divorced woman was named its executive director and the members started haggling about abortion and homosexuality. They could also not come up with a definition of what constitutes a family, and that was pretty much the end of it. In 6/91, yet another National Commission on Children (a bipartisan federal commission) issued a 519-page report that came up with the earth-shaking preference for 2-parent families, which was pronounced an "extraordinary achievement" by one government official, though this will probably invalidate the report for a significant minority of the population and its intellectuals (USNWR, 8 July 91).

*The International Year of the Family began in 1/94.

*With all the troubles that the state of Israel has had since its birth, services to the handicapped, and particularly the mentally retarded, have not been a very high priority. Yet in 1991, the government of Israel ordered that Jewish retarded children were no longer to be taken care of by Catholic nuns. There is irony in the fact that one orthodox Jewish leader berated the Jewish community for its failure to take care of the children, while the minister of welfare, who is a rabbi, cited traditional Jewish teaching that it is a disgrace to give up needy Jewish children into the "hands of strangers" (NCR, 2 June 91).

*Since the Ceausescu regime in Romania was overthrown in 12/89, the number of children in Romanian orphanages has grown from 85,000 to 98,000, despite the fact that many children had been adopted by Westerners. A big reason is continued or even increasing poverty in Romania, but the Western liberal press is blaming a shortage of contraceptive and abortive technology (SHJ, 18/2/93). Actually, most of these children are technically not orphans but abandoned.

News About Family Caretaking

*McGrath, M., & Grant, G. (1993). The life cycle and support networks of families with persons with a learning difficulty. Disability, Handicap & Society, 8(1), 25-41. McGrath and Grant (1993) found that the more behavior problems a handicapped person had, the smaller was that person's family support system. This is not exactly new news, in that behavior problems are often both the cause of family abandonment, and an effect thereof. Nor is its corollary big news: that people who need the most amount of family support are the least likely to get it. But at least, now that "research" has been done on it, it's finally official.

*In some of our teaching, when we stress the importance of establishing voluntary personal relationship commitments by valued people to devalued ones, we note that committed families are often one source of such relationships, and that committed family members can be very strong advocates for their impaired family member. One moving story along these lines concerns a 78-year old man who was institutionalized in 1919, at the age of 5, as "insane" (later it was thought that he was probably "autistic"), and whose sister, 10 years older than he, has continued to visit him all of his life, and advocated for him to move into a group home. Largely at her insistence, he was finally released into a community group home in 1989, when he was over 70, and when he had still not learned to dress himself. Now he can do that, as well as bathe himself, set his place at the table, do his laundry, and take care of his flower garden. At 88, she continues to visit him, and in 1991, the Autism Society of America created a Sibling Advocate Award and made her its first recipient (Cedar Rapids Gazette, 1 Dec. 91; source item from John Morris).
It is interesting that in the context of modernistic hedonism, even if a person voluntarily enters into, or continues in, a demanding service engagement, and perhaps even derives a great deal of personal reward from it, others may interpret that service commitment as an unfair demand, as not good for the server, as something from which the server needs respite and relief. For instance, we were told that two daughters of an elderly woman who had become quite frail and confused were managing to care for their mother without outside help. The mother lived with one daughter, and the other daughter came to the home to help out or to give her sister an opportunity to do something else. The two daughters themselves expressed that they loved their mother and were happy to do this for her— but in the newspaper, the story was reported as an example of carers being strained to the limit, and being denied needed assistance (source item from Michael Rungie).

A study of married daughters who are the major caregiver for a demented parent found that the greatest source of support was their friends, while their greatest source of stress was their own siblings, and the further away the sibling lived, the more trouble they caused to the caretaker (MM, 6&7/93).

The guardian of a handicapped woman usually received the woman's monthly pension check. However, one month the computer inexplicably searched its "closed" file on the woman, found an address therein, and sent the check to that address, which turned out to be the handicapped woman's stepmother. The stepmother had not been in contact with the handicapped woman for about 15 years. The woman had been at a state hospital then, kept manacled in a padded isolation cell, and the stepmother had stopped visiting her because staff had told her that it wouldn't be good for her stepdaughter. The stepmother had subsequently lost contact with the woman, and had not been notified when the woman moved into a community residence several towns away. When the stepmother received the check, she called the state hospital, but personnel there would tell her no more than the name of the town in which the woman now lived. The stepmother then drove to the town and inquired around until she found someone who knew where the community residence was, and then went to visit there, together with one of the handicapped woman's sisters. Thus, through a very fortuitous slip-up in the empire's processes of objectification and bureaucratization, a handicapped woman was joyously reunited with her sister and her stepmother. It also turned out that she had 8 additional siblings. This story illustrates how often, ties and relationships which have been discontinued may nonetheless still be very revivable, and that the nonhandicapped persons may be willing to invest quite a bit of time and energy to reestablish the relationship. (Story submitted to us by Deborah E. Reidy.)

Aging-Related News

Strangely enough, the news about elderly people is much better (or less worse) than that about children.

There are about 35,000 people in the US who are 100 years old or older (Newsweek, 4 May 92).

There are almost twice as many elderly people in Russia as in the US, but the number who live in nursing homes is 2% of US rates (AW, 25/4/92). Backwardness has its advantages.

A new movement has sprung up in France where people get together in order to engage in systematic mental exercises, particularly later in life, so as to prevent or minimize the likelihood of mental decline. Meetings often start with a rapid review of the week's events, followed by exercises designed to stimulate memory, perception, reasoning, concentration, vocabulary and imagination (Health Gazette, 1/92). This is the kind of endeavor that cannot do any harm but might in fact do a lot of good.
*A most peculiar development in Waterbury, Connecticut, is a very intense program of adult education events and activity programs aimed at elderly people, offered jointly by a local department store and a hospital, held in a store. (Source material from Guy Caruso.)

*In 1993, one of the most popular emeriti professors at Syracuse University was a 90-year old woman who taught in the English department. She was lively, enthusiastic, and engaging, and appeared to be spry and in good health, looking younger than her years. She has continued to teach occasional courses, about once a year, though these are often of the less demanding noncredit type. One of her 1993 literature courses had over 100 enrollees. She constituted a very good model both to aged people themselves, and to younger people, of an elderly person in a very valued role—though of course, if she were not healthy, this would be much more difficult for her to carry out.

*The new Clinton tax laws will make the tax situation of elderly retired people so complex that a yet larger proportion of them will have to turn to professional tax advisors for help. This sort of thing marginalizes elderly people, and makes them think they are demented.

*An acquaintance recently pointed out that elderly people get "duped" into human service clientage by being seduced to move into so-called "retirement villages" or "retirement housing." Typically, elderly people are told that they will live independently in such places, and yet all sorts of human services are provided in and through them. Also, the nursing home industry apparently uses such places very much as a major feeder of clients to itself. It is apparently much easier to induct someone from a retirement village into a nursing home than from a person's normative and habitual community dwelling. Perhaps this has something to do with people losing a great many of their neighborhood and relationship ties when they move away from where they have always lived, and into some retirement housing. Often, this even means moving out of one's community, and perhaps even to another state far away.

*An Australian report on the experience of elderly people in hospitals said that for them, a hospital stay can easily become a one-way slide to the nursing home. Hospitals have restrictive and disorienting environments that sap old people's physical and mental strength, and should be avoided "like the plague unless absolutely essential," in part because they also disrupt an elderly person's routine (2/93 Reuters clipping from Peter Millier).

*A new restraining device has been invented (mostly for elderly people), consisting of a contraption that looks like a tray that fits over a person's wheelchair, and assures that the person cannot get out of it. Because the device looks more like a tray table rather than a restraining gadget, it has been promoted as being "visually appealing" and "preserving the dignity" of the people on whom it is used. Very cleverly, the gadget is classified as an "orthotic device" which permits it to be reimbursable under Medicare. (Source item from Karen Barker.)

*Every year, 500,000 Americans are reduced to poverty by nursing home expenses and by now, 43% of all Americans can "look forward" to spending at least some time in a nursing home if they live to age 65 (SHA, 13/6/93).

*A very powerful critique of the treatment of the elderly in our society, including by the service system, is Gulag 65 by William Plank (1989). According to him, 9% of the elderly die within a week after admission to a nursing home, and another 36% die within the first 6 months.
*A writer entered a nursing home in Massachusetts and spent the better part of a year there, filling 90 notebooks of observations and then writing a book about it, Old Friends (Houghton Mifflin/Richard Todd, 1993) which everybody concerned with aging should probably read. He did not find the place a dull one, but the worst thing about it was that everything in the residents' lives had become pointless, and he saw people "end up dying long before life had lost its savor or their usefulness to others." He also characterized the life there as ingenious torments arranged by fate for people's last days (MM, 10&11/93).

*According to one research study, it appears that older Americans are the only older people in developed countries who worry about how to pay for their medical care (MM, 10&11/93).

*A public investigator has called "granny napping" "quite common" in at least one of the Australian states. The term refers to gaining control over an elderly person who has considerable financial assets, in order to exploit these assets for one's own benefit. This can be done by gaining power-of-attorney over such a person, drugging such persons so that they lose competence, putting such persons in a nursing home, or moving them around so often that they become disoriented, in all cases control going to the manipulators (The Age, 23/5/88; source item from Michael Steer).

*The US Senate has had a special subcommittee on long term care (meaning mostly nursing home care) for about 20 years. In one report after another, it keeps telling the same story without too much changing. As early as 1974, it stated that nursing homes were "a kind of purgatory as a first step into oblivion," preceded by protracted suffering. It also complained that there was no coherent national policy on the elderly. The consistency of the honest reporting of a bad situation is commendable, but it is strange that these reports come from the very people who could have been doing something about this situation, but haven't.

*The Canadian province of Alberta has a "Ministry Responsible for Seniors." In 1991, one of the provincial institutions for retarded people was transferred to this ministry from the Ministry of Family and Social Services, apparently not because the retarded residents had gotten smart, or even had gotten booted out to be replaced by elderly people, but because most of the residents still remaining in the institution were getting old.

Human Service Costs

*In just a span of roughly 10 years, ca. 1980-90, health care costs in the US doubled, and became one of the leading causes of personal and small business bankruptcies (Time, 10 Dec. 90). Time compared the US health care system to a cancer, in that it has been growing uncontrollably but becoming more dysfunctional the bigger it gets. It added that "everyone knows that the system is broken beyond repair." Perhaps the single biggest opponent to some kind of national health insurance is not even the American Medical Association anymore, but the private health insurance industry.

*In about 1991, the US government spent $52 billion annually on long-term care, mostly through Medicaid. In addition, an equal amount was paid by individuals.

*In many countries, and especially so Canada and the US, government agencies and private agencies sometimes provide the same services, such as running residential services for mentally handicapped people. Yet in many such countries, the government pays its own workers much more for the same work than it permits
private agencies which it subsidizes to pay their workers. Discrepancies can be
dramatic, 30% being not at all unusual.

* Medicaid fraud by medical services and patients cost New York state
governmental units alone up to $2.5 billion a year (AP in SHJ, 15/7/91).

* In the Australian state of Victoria, authorities were unable to find records
detailing four years of spending of $A76 million on handicapped children; and
according to a report that the government tried to keep secret, $A203 million was
severely mismanaged in the education of handicapped children, and particularly in
attempts at their integration in the schools (Advertiser, 6 April 92; source item
from Peter Millier).

* The highest paid chief executive officer in the US in 1992, with $127
million in annual salary and benefits, was the director of the Hospital
Corporation of America, the nation's largest for-profit hospital company (CC, Fall
93).

* It is interesting to contemplate that in at least some states, it costs more
to keep a mentally retarded person in a group home than an elderly person in a
skilled nursing home (Indianapolis Star, 24/11/93; source item from Joe Osburn).

* The US Social Security Disability Insurance Fund only has enough money to
pay benefits through about 1995, while the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund
only has enough money for somewhere between 1998-2000, unless Congress does
something different from the current situation. One reason the Disability
Insurance Trust Fund is going broke is because there has been an explosion in the
number of Americans who either claim themselves to be too disabled to work, or who
are being deemed too disabled by the government (AP in SHJ, 6 April 93).

Interdisciplinariness & "Team" Developments

* Participants at the American Psychological Association convention in 1993
were told that the curbing of escalating rates of violence among ethnic minority
youth would require "an interdisciplinary solution" (APA Monitor, 12/93).

* There is a discipline called neurophilosophy in which neurologists and
philosophers deal with issues of brain and mind.

* There is a new profession called "psychosocialist" which specializes in
population dynamics.

* A 1991 research study found that when human service workers get together to
work as a "team," they tend to "pool" their various control mechanisms over
clients, and thus end up being even more unwarrantedly controlling than they would
be if they had been working separately.

A New Craze Category of Service Clients: The "Difficult to Serve"

* There are many people in human services today who are designated as
"difficult to serve." However, this classification can include a wide range of
people, from those who have behaviors that others find offensive, to those who are
unwilling to accept service. One observer said that the thing that all these
people who are called "difficult to serve" do seem to have in common is that there
is no one (person or agency) who is willing to do what is needed to serve the
person. Thus, a failure of servers is interpreted as a deficit of the people
being served.
We were amused to be told that an elderly man of the street culture whom we have known "eats through social workers like a beaver through wood." What this means is that he has so many needs and afflictions on top of a somewhat ornery spirit that he could keep a small army of people busy working on his behalf and with him.

Jennifer Newton has invented the construct of "caseness," i.e., an index of the severity of symptoms in mental disorders (Preventing Mental Illness in Practice, Routledge, 1992). Thus, one can now inquire how much caseness someone has or is, and quantification may not be far behind, e.g., "her CQ (for caseness quotient) was 145."

There is a construct in human services that has been called "the therapeutic worth of a client." This refers to how worthwhile a human service worker, such as a social worker, thinks it is to undertake efforts on behalf of a client, and what it is about a client that is "motivating" to a worker. In extensive interviews with social workers, one study identified 8 factors that make a client "more worth serving well": (a) client's perceived motivation to want to change or improve; (b) client gratitude to the social worker; (c) client's not being angry, e.g., at services, at an agency, at the worker; (d) client deprivation, e.g., coming from a background of poverty; (e) client similarity to the social worker, thereby facilitating interpersonal identification; (f) length of treatment relationship, so that the longer a client had been served by a social worker, the more the worker felt obligated to the client; (g) presence of a relationship support system for a client, e.g., family, friends, advocates; (h) client youth, i.e., the younger the client, the more valued he/she was to the worker. (Source item from Michael Kendrick).

To begin with, human services attract a lot of people without a lick of common sense, but they also somehow manage to strip of common sense those people who had some before they went into human service. Unfortunately, many handicapped people also lack good sense, especially if they get together with each other or have been around human services too long.

In Minnesota, a mentally retarded man had a history of two previous sex offenses which had landed him in prison. One day, he was let out on probation and put into a group home in the very neighborhood in which he had previously assaulted two young girls, and as coincidence would have it, no one would have known if the mother of the girls had not spotted him. Not surprisingly, the neighbors got up in arms, but the stupid human service people began to interpret them as "narrow-minded, unwilling to listen" (AP in (Binghamton) Press & Sun-Bulletin, 14/12/92; source item from Susan Ruff).

Marcia Tewell sent us a picture of a poster developed by an association for retarded citizens that proclaimed in huge letters, "Mental retardation sure can be fun." Will we see posters next that proclaim "Leprosy can be fun," or "AIDS can be fun"

During the 1993-94 winter, Syracuse had record snowfalls and cold spells, with snow on occasion falling virtually every day for weeks at a time, and to a depth of 4 feet that partially iced up. For weeks, only major thoroughfares could be totally cleared for at least part of the time, while most side streets remained narrowed from the piled-up plowed snow. Many people had difficulty keeping their driveways clear, with some people simply abandoning their driveways and letting their cars get mummified by the snow in them. And yet in this kind of environment, a number of handicapped people began to complain because homeowners
were incapable of clearing sidewalks so that people in wheelchairs could navigate them. This is a good example of the kind of irrational entitlement attitude that has developed in some circles of handicapped people, and that has been encouraged by some advocacy and human service circles.

*There have been complaints from deaf people that society constructs "auditoriums" instead of "visitoriums."

*Since 1990, many children have received enormous benefits from cochlear implants, but the National Association of the Deaf has denounced this as "invasive surgery on defenseless children which robs them of their birthright of silence" (SU Magazine, Winter 93). By saying things like that, deaf people add fuel to the reputation of congenitally deaf people growing up unintelligent.

*We have mentioned several times before what a very mixed bag is the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), an "advocacy" group comprised largely of family members. The unconscious hatred of NAMI against mentally disordered people whom it claims to represent can be read from the things for which it advocates: liberal psychoactive drugging and institutionalization of mentally disordered people; making electric shock much more widely available, particularly to "the poor and to minorities" because it is not usually available to them at state and municipal hospitals; and opposition to the banning of smoking in psychiatric facilities (Quality of Care, 11&12/91). Another way in which it has been contributing to the menace-imaging of mentally disordered people is by urging facilities to register mentally disordered relatives with the police, so that if that person disappears, the police will know about the person beforehand and "be prepared." The first sentence of a recent promotion along these lines is "Sometime, during the course of your loved one's illness, you may need the police." The "Crisis Information Page" that NAMI suggests be filled out and filed at the local police station asks for "current primary diagnosis" and "secondary diagnosis" (presumably wanting to know whether the person is primarily schizophrenic and secondarily paranoid, or vice versa), "violent?", "date of last crisis," and various medical information and names and telephone numbers of contact persons. (Source item from Shirley Burkhart.)

Human Services Going to the Dogs

*A guide dog for the blind in Germany steered four successive owners to oblivion. He took his first master under a speeding bus, led the next one off a jetty so he drowned, pushed the third one under a running train, and abandoned the fourth on a traffic island during a peak traffic hour so that he was hit by a truck. The dog's trainer claims that he "just needed to brush up on a few elementary skills," that "he has a lovely temperament apart from a few epileptic fits," and that he is ready for his fifth master, who will not be told about the dog's past because "it would only make him nervous, and that would upset the dog." Apparently, all of this is the way it is, and not a joke (Adelaide Advertiser, 7 Dec. 93; source item from Peter Millier). Whatever else all this implies, it does not make human services look good.

*From seeing-eye dogs for the blind have sprung in recent years hearing-ear dogs for the deaf, and they in turn begat companion dogs for alcoholic people (would these be called sober dogs or teetotalling dogs?), on the theory that "alcoholics and people with deafness are a lot alike because they both have trouble listening to others." (Source item from Jan Doody.)

*After a leading dog show judge had to begin to use a wheelchair, he was excluded from further dog judging because this might disturb the dogs (Speak-Out, 2/91).
Human Service Pissiness

*We predict that the head of the Health and Community Services Department of the Australian state of Victoria has earned immortality in advocacy lore by making a big public point in 1993 that advocacy was nothing but "piss and wind." He might have attained less immortality but greater truth had he said that human services overall are little more than piss and wind, and in fact vastly more wind than piss. We now wonder whether the above mentioned PISCES advocacy group is all PISCES and WIND.

*Members of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps have been going around wearing T-shirts with large-letter inscriptions "Piss on Pity." Unfortunately, by doing so, they are extremely likely to be flushing a lot of compassion down the drain as well.

Other Human Service-Related Levity, Levity, and More Levity (at Least We Think These are Levitous)

We contemplated coding certain TIPS items with the letters HL, in order to indicate that an item carrying this code was written or dictated by the TIPS editor while he was convulsed with homeric laughter (HL). However, too many items would end up with this code.

*Nomen est omen. In 1985, a respiratory therapist by name of Ficken pled guilty to committing sexual acts with children in an Iowa hospital. (Source item from John Morris). Unfortunately, until the German tongue became anglicized, ficken used to be the vulgar German word for sexual intercourse.

*Here is another incredible coincidence: a French book on artificial insemination of humans was coauthored by a person whose name is Semenov (CMH, 12/84).

*A new debate has erupted whether male babies ought to be circumcised. Some people are going at this question with a vengeance. One group opposed to it has formed an organization called ETHIC which stands for End The Horror of Infant Circumcision. It maintains that "years of evolution put foreskin on man's body and if it wasn't meant to be there, it wouldn't be." Some adult men who were circumcised as babies are now "enraged," and see themselves deprived of an entitlement. One group in California, formed in 1989, calls itself RECAP, which stands for Recover a Penis, and is striving for "restoration." Its members and sympathizers are described as being anywhere from "mildly to extremely angry." One member, though already a 58-year old grandfather, has been pulling forward what he has left and taping it on with medical tape, but dissatisfied with the results, an engineer has invented a metal apparatus to hasten the restoration. Unfortunately, the apparatus is called "foreballs," and is a rather complicated appliance consisting of steel balls attached to the remaining skin to weigh it down and stretch it. One man who tried it said it took a year but that he had spectacular results. Physicians have said that this is a preferable procedure than to attempt reverse surgery, though some people have had it done for $20,000 "at a clip" (Ottawa Citizen, 13/3/92; source item from Ray Lemay).

*We were surprised to learn that at one Syracuse hospital at least, one can find polysomnographists, i.e., people who measure one while one sleeps.

*Physicians who do not have enough patients to support them in the style to which they aspire have been said by one wit to suffer from PDS, or Patient Deficiency Syndrome (CR, 2/88).
There is something of a snob club of bright people with certified "genius IQ," called Mensa, which is Latin for table. In a spoof thereof, someone has now launched DENSA, which stands for "diversely educated not seriously affected." Almost overnight, the organization picked up 600 members from all over the US who receive a "Dare to be Dense" bumpersticker and bimonthly newsletters. One of their slogans is "Why be tense when you can be dense?" There are no entrance requirements other than willingness to join, $5 membership dues, plus one test: applicants are asked to fill a bathtub with water, get into it, and if the person replaces any water s/he is judged dense enough to become a member. Get it?

A person who lost both hands in an accident in 1939 wrote an article in the Winter 1984 issue of Rehabilitation Literature. He insightfully discussed his subjection to special weeks, years, or decades of the disabled person, special housing projects for the disabled, and special religious services for them, but either with subtle humor or unaware of the ironies, the author used the metaphor that people's fingerprints were as unique and distinct as the person, and he introduced one paragraph with the phrase "on the other hand...", even though he has no hands at all, nor did he mention what "on the one hand..." was.

Angels might fear to tread in Angel's Haven for 26 retarded persons in Maryland which had its license revoked in 1985 because of numerous long-standing and serious violations.

We learned that there is such a thing as a Midwest Association for Comatose Care. One can only hope that all human services were comatose, because then they could do infinitely less harm than they are doing while wide awake and alert.

Now here is something real funny from the world of high research in mental retardation. A study published in the American Journal of Mental Deficiency (7/83) found that a laboratory-type discrimination learning task was positively correlated with what the article called "real-world adjustment within a residential institution." This was interpreted as meaning that laboratory tasks have "real-world" relevance, contrary to some criticism that many such experiments lacked ecological validity.

A British psychologist recommended that psychologists in clinical practice use a code phrase to announce over the telephone that they are dealing with a violent client. They recommend that the phrase, "The tea is almost hot," should be used to convey "I am in trouble. Get someone here immediately" (APA Monitor, 11/91). We thought that this was a very poor code phrase, much too transparent. Instead, we recommend "The tea was rotten; let's have another go."

A private residential school for children with "dyslexia" in Britain (yes, there are such things in Britain) advertised itself as headed by a "principal" after whose name the following initials appeared, just like this: PhDMScBAMSMEAFBPsSCPsych. Peter Millier, who sent us the clipping (Guardian Weekly, 22/11/92) asked: "I wonder how you would read these qualifications if you had dyslexia?"

A young man is being interviewed by a therapist. He is slightly above average intellectually and suffers from a severe spastic condition. He has to use an alphabetical table to communicate. He lifts his hand each time jerkily behind his head and forces it to indicate the letters. It takes him about five minutes before the therapist can make out the sentence: "I have difficulties in communicating" (Müller-Fahrenholz, 1979).

Dave Wetherow of Winnipeg sent us a hilariously sad cartoon that showed a man standing inside the Department of Unemployment Compensation studying a
directional map that advised the client "like your father and your father's father, you are here"—pointing out the spot on the map where the client was standing.

*Comedian Red Skelton used to tell the story of a little deaf boy who told his mother a dirty joke in sign language, with the mother punishing him by washing his fingers with soap. (Source item from Joe Osburn.)

**MEMORANDUM**

To: The Got-Bucks Foundation
From: Functionaries of the Institution
Re: Request for funds

The following request for funds is being made by your local institution serving handicapped people.

I. Rationale for Grant Application

We have many clients in the institution who aren't ready to move into the community yet. The institution is really good for such clients. We have a lot of professionals giving them therapy, and someday when these clients are ready, we will move them into the community. Of course, it may take years or decades with some patients—they are so disabled, and it takes a long time for our therapies to make an impact. We have asked them to be patient. We make this request because we have a measly budget of only $26,000,000 a year, and all that money is already being spent to provide good services. After all, we are doing the best we can with these limited, finite resources, and these clients are difficult and trying.

II. We Feel We Are Entitled to Some of Your Money for the Following Reasons

1. Your money comes from federal dollars, and since all our employees pay federal taxes, we deserve our equal share.

2. We have a long history of promoting integration. We have the following integration projects underway which we feel we should get credit for:
   a. We have boys' units located next to girls' units. We have worked very hard at this, and find that the boys and girls like to be together at the socials we hold 3 or 4 times a year. Of course, our close supervision of these events make them a success. In the three years this integration project has been underway, we have not had a girl get pregnant yet.
   b. We hold a number of integrative events each year outside the building. We have an ice cream social in back of the building each summer. Clients really like this—they like to get out in the sunshine and see other clients. Some say they didn't know the place was so big until they got out back of the building and saw three or four hundred other boys and girls. We have had trouble getting the elevators to accommodate everyone in wheelchairs going to this event, but we are changing the response cycle for the elevators so they will work better next summer. We also hope to go with new and different flavors of ice cream next year. This year, we only had chocolate and vanilla. We have appointed a committee to study this integration-related issue, and they have recommended strawberry and chocolate/vanilla twist for next year. Some of the residents don't like ice cream, but we force them to go anyway—after a few mouthfuls of ice cream, they say how much they like it. It's amazing how patients can be convinced to like integration with just a little push from the staff. These events make the staff feel good—to see a client take a mouthful of good nutritious ice cream is such a treat for everyone concerned. We often hear staff say how much they enjoyed going there. It's a good break in the day's hustle and bustle here.
   c. Another integrative event is the symphony presentation in our auditorium. Clients get all dressed up and are taken upstairs to the auditorium to hear the symphony perform. It's a big event for everyone. The auditorium is decorated with round tables, white tablecloths and we even serve grape juice as

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1 Hosted by Milton Baker
make-believe wine. People get personal invitations to this nice affair from the director. It's amazing how nice the residents behave at this event—why, we hardly have any deviant behavior. We use such words as "deviant" to describe certain behaviors because we have had normalization (now SRV) training.

d. In the past, we have had a "holiday gathering" in the gymnasium. We had to move this event to the gym because the auditorium will not accommodate the numbers of people who attend. Two years ago, we had 800 people attend. Everyone looked so nice all dressed up in their "bib and tucker," and acting so good. It was really a gala event. The trouble-makers in our organization weren't in favor of this. They think they are so smart, always talking normalization—why, they don't even know what it means to integrate a person. Isn't it better to integrate a resident with 799 other people than with only one or two other people? It's certainly more economical, money-wise and staff-wise. We have finite resources, so we have to use good judgment to guard the money spent by taxpayers in our decisions about providing programs. Last year, we encouraged staff to take people into their own homes as a change from the "holiday gathering." This was a success, so this year, we have sent a memo out to everyone telling them that state employees have a right to request all holidays off in order of seniority. This was done in the interest of the rights of staff. It now looks as if we will have to go back to the "holiday gathering."

e. We have submitted a proposal to deal with all the aggressive clients using the "discrete unit" approach. We have had our best professionals working on this project. This plan is a normalization project because it will change behaviors, and then, residents will be able to move into the community. We know that some "ivory tower" people don't like this plan, but we have to work with the problem every day and they don't. They have their book learning and we have the reality to deal with. These units work well elsewhere. Those people who say you can take people who have behaviors out into the community just don't understand how problematic some of these people are. We are going to set up safeguards so this will work. You can depend upon us, we know what we are doing.

f. Consistent with our long-standing commitment to treating the whole resident, we have just developed a Department of Quality of Religious Worship. Its advisory committee meets regularly to discuss ways of improving worship goal plans and programs. We are having some difficulty in getting religious goals for residents into behaviorally measurable terms, but we have learned that with determination and the right amount of commitment, there really is nothing we can't do. The residents will have religious goals written in their GOR (goal-oriented record). One problem we have been having with our religious services up in the auditorium is trying to make the service more understandable for the residents. When they understand the liturgy better and our religious goals are being met, then we will give some thought to taking them out to a community church. We are applying SRV principles by getting people ready to go into the community. We do not want to take people out to a church and have them rejected—when they are ready, we will take them out—that's our motto. Just because people go to church, they aren't saints—they have prejudices too.

g. We have a big push to get people out of the building for programming. We spend a lot of time documenting all these experiences with goal plans, methodologies, evaluations, and what have you. We have money allocated to lease space in the community by the square foot. As an example of our commitment to integration, we try to lease space which will accommodate more clients in one physical location than we have on any unit here in the institution. We do this so people can have interaction with each other on the institutional bus going to the program, over mealtime, and during program time when we all are working on goals. So as you can see, we have not gone into this effort without thought. There are many good learning experiences people have with this form of integration. Clients learn well by watching each other in group oral hygiene programs, dining programs, and particularly in the toilet. Our most recent request for lease space included
provision for toileting for 45 people. Although we were aware that our proposal asked for one of the biggest toilets in the state, perhaps in the entire world, we went ahead undaunted. We are not afraid to take on the impossible, nor are we afraid of failing—we do it all the time. At any rate, failing is not so bad, and sometimes, you can't tell the difference between success and failure anyway.

h. Our most recent effort at integration is to provide for communication about programs between the day and evening shift. We are doing this because the do, then we will do it! They are our biggest funding source—we had better do what they say or our funding will be cut and if that happens, we will be out of a job.

There are numerous other integrative choices we offer for residents, such as taking seizure people to community restaurants with football helmets on, taking clients from the back wards who have never been out of the building to the top restaurants (they spill food and are incontinent, but we believe there is no reason why other people in the community shouldn't adjust and respect the rights of residents), taking clients to a fair for institution residents only, taking residents to our in-house bowling alley, etc. If you knew all about our work in this area, you would be very surprised.

We could describe many more of our integration efforts, but this is probably enough to give you a general idea of what our commitments here are. We know there are some people who don't understand what we are all about, even after we explain in detail our work and our good intentions. We are not perfect, after all, but we do our best. Who knows, years from now someone may look back at us and say, "They sure lived up to a commitment—it was because of their tireless effort that we today have this or that circumstance."

3. Any discussion about our operation would be incomplete without saying something about how we are all wired up for the use of computers. We find that working with a computer is so satisfying, particularly for those of us who believe that solutions lie in concrete hardware rather than mere abstract values. We just love data in and data out. It's so much fun to push a button and see everything instantly printed out. Also, when used properly, computers give us considerable time to harass the few misguided people who say they are addressing values issues. We understand that some of you people are also into such frobnication. Your effort in this regard will be of immeasurable help to us, as we are attempting to convince everyone totally of the promises of computers and other technologies here. Now doesn't it stand to reason that an organization that has its own computer must be a good one, worthy of getting grant money for integration?

If you like the programs at the institution, we would be glad to co-author an article with you. We are the best, and do not take lightly our responsibility to teach others how to do it.

Other News

The Clinton Administration

*President Clinton is the very first President who has been part of the modernistic shrink culture, being the first President who has been in psychotherapy—in fact, with his entire family—as recently as in the mid-1980s (Time, 8 June 92). At the same time, Time marveled at all the family memories that Clinton has repressed, including crucial specific family incidents, and almost entire time periods.

*The Clinton administration's inaugural parade included a precision lawn-chair marching team (a good omen for the administration), but also several Elvis impersonators (bad news!) (Newsweek, 28/12/92).

*A 12-year old cerebrally palsyed boy from Ohio was one of the 53 "faces of hope" guests especially invited by Clinton and Gore to their inauguration. From
attending the event, the boy caught pneumonia which resisted treatment, and died (SHJ, 22/2/93). We interpret this as a very ominous sign for this administration.

*Schizophrenia is big in the Clinton administration. In one and the same fell swoop, President Clinton said he wanted to reduce the deficit, asked American citizens for sacrifices, reiterated the requirement that immigrants must be able to earn an income and not become public charges, and proposed a lifting of immigration restrictions on people who have AIDS, syphilis, and leprosy, even though an immigrant with AIDS could cost the US taxpayers several hundred thousand dollars in care, not to mention the cost of care of any persons that such an immigrant might infect (SHJ, 9 Feb. 93).

*Considering the executive orders passed by President Clinton in his first week in office, the governor of Mississippi said that "If you are a gay illegal alien looking for an abortion, it was a humdinger" (LA, 4/93).

*We were very much amused to read in Time (10 May 93) that "contradictions do not seem to bother the attorney general at all," referring to President Clinton's attorney general Janet Reno. For instance, while opposed to capital punishment, she sought the death penalty in 80 cases when she was state attorney in Florida. Apparently, not being "bothered by contradictions" was meant by Time to be a compliment, but we call it moral incoherency.

*Here is why nobody can understand Clinton's health care plan. Title 1, Subtitle B has this sentence: "(B) Family.--In the case of an individual enrolled under a health plan under a family class of enrollment (as defined in section 1011(c)(2)(A), the family out-of-pocket limit on cost sharing in the cost sharing schedule offered by the plan represents the amount of expenses that members of the individual's family, in the aggregate, may be required to incur under the plan in a year because of general deductible, separate deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance before the plan may no longer impose any cost sharing with respect to items or services covered by the comprehensive benefit package that are provided to any member of the individual's family, except as provided in subsections (d)(2)(D) and (e)(2)(D) of section 1115." There are 1300 pages like this (Time, 8 Nov. 93).

The War in Yugoslavia

*The full extent of the atrocities in former Yugoslavia were only slowly and belatedly revealed, apparently because the imperial powers of the Western world did not want to do anything serious about it. For instance, when there was reason to believe that 200,000 people had been killed, the media were still reporting only 17,000. The fact that rape of the women of the ethnic groups against whom they are warring had been instituted as an explicit Serbian policy, with soldiers often commanded to rape, was reported very late after the policy was clearly in place.

*With the Bosnians in extremis, the US government rushed emergency air drops to them, but it turned out that one of the medical air drops to one of the last Bosnian strongholds contained mostly huge amounts of antacid tablets and cancer drugs, and none of the surgical equipment needed for the wounded (SHA, 27/6/93). Apparently, someone had reasoned as follows: "The Bosnians are being slaughtered by the Serbs, and this must make the Bosnians very anxious and give them grief. Being anxious gives one stomach ulcers, and therefore what they need is antacid pills; bearing grief gives people cancer, so what they need is cancer drugs."
As Germans have gained access to the former East German intelligence files, there have been shocking revelations. East Germany had been converted into a nation of informants and betrayers. As of 1989, one out of every 16 East Germans was functioning as an informant for the communist security agency. People in all walks of life had been paid, blackmailed, intimidated or persuaded to inform on their fellow citizens. Ministers informed on their flocks, spouses on each other, lifelong friends on each other, and so on. One 45-year old Lutheran minister found that 20 of his friends had informed on him. Professors—including in theology—informed on their colleagues and students. Teachers even filled out forms on suspicious children, some as young as age 9. The government kept files on even very innocuous citizens—in fact, on 1/3 of the population, with even ordinary citizens perhaps having 3,000-page dossiers. The secret police sometimes took recourse to forced psychoactive drugging of people, explicitly in order to "disintegrate" their personality (Time, 3 Feb. 92). (Western psychiatry does not admit that people can disintegrate as a result of their prescription drugging.) Yet despite all of this intelligence, the regime was unable to anticipate its own collapse!

The relevance of all this to us is that it shows once again how relatively easy it is to get virtually anybody to do virtually anything, and that we are all terribly vulnerable to fear, seduction, brainwashing (think only of the success of the PC brainwashing now), and so on.

*An East German Protestant bishop invited all the church officials who had been collaborators with the secret police to come privately to him and confess their sins. Not a single person responded, and the bishop commented that all those who were identified from the files as having cooperated with the secret police either denied it, or trivialized what they did. He added that this itself would wreak as much spiritual damage on these people as their initial cooperation had done in the first place (AW, 16/6/90). This is just another example of how participation in evil is so destructive of soul and conscience, and how few people who have participated in evil for any length of time ever truly repent, in contrast to people who have "merely" committed sins.

*One great benefit to us of publishing TIPS is that so many people have begun to send us source items, and thus are a tremendous help to us in keeping abreast of certain developments, particularly those concerned with deathmaking. Also, we have begun to receive mail not only addressed to TIPS, but to specific columns. Thus, a reader recently sent us a letter addressed to "Bad News, TIPS editor."

*Many years ago, probably during WWII, James Edward Tobin wrote a poem, called "Song About Death," on the following newspaper headline: "Polish Underground Journal, Culture of Tomorrow, Flooded with Entries for Poetry Contest; Winners executed." In a small way, this is also true with TIPS. We sometimes have to withhold the name of a contributor lest such contributor experience professional and/or occupational execution. Who knows; maybe some day, the level of reality will escalate even more. Wouldn't that be exciting!

**News Related to Science & Technology**

*The finiteness of the human and of earth are brought powerfully to one's mind when one learns that our galaxy, the Milky Way, has a mass (weight) equivalent to 600-800 billion suns, of which only about 12-18% is visible. A type of heavenly body called a quasar can emit more energy in less than one second than...
the sun has given off during its entire lifetime of about 4.5 billion years (Smithsonian, 1/89, p. 44).

*Scientists have only named about 3000 species of bacteria, and yet in a single gram of temperate forest soil, there may be as many as 10,000 species. In a square meter of such soil, to a depth of 15 centimeters, there may be up to 6 million nematodes (a class of worms) of as many as 200 species, most of them unknown and unnamed (Science, 30/4/93).

*Very few people outside of science, and not even many within science, have as yet appreciated that science is living in a stage of very acute schizophrenia, insofar as the most peculiar world of quantum mechanics has been acknowledged to be for real, while people go on acting as if classical Newtonian physics were the only valid one. The reason why the two ways of interpreting the laws of nature have not been reconciled is that scientists have simply not been able to figure out how that is possible, or even precisely where the boundary line is that divides phenomena better explained by one system from those better explained by the other. One of the most bothersome experiments that has held up quite well so far is that when certain things are done to one particle of a particle pair, then its parallel particle will undergo the same change instantaneously even if it is somewhere else. This would imply that there is action across distance which physicists cannot explain, and which almost implies the action of an immaterial spiritual force. One implication is that experiments can be influenced by events elsewhere in the universe, and it even raises the question whether effects in classical physics that appear to be random, "error," or chaotic are really quantum effects. If quantum effects are present in classical physics, that itself would impose a major limit (ignoring for the time all other limits) on human knowledge, insofar as events may simply not be as inevitably lawful, repeatable, verifiable, etc., as classical science has taught us to believe. Indeed, the entire Western scientific method would experience a collapse, though probably not admit it.

*Discover is one of the few periodicals left in the US that aims to interpret science to the intelligent nonscientist. A major article in its 5/90 issue dealt with scientific developments that have begun to discredit the "clockwork mechanism" analogue or image of how nature functions. (This image, and the very terminology, was created by Newton in the late 1600s.) In fact, the article said that the very cosmology that underlay this conceptualization "is dead." So far, so good. But that science will be in for much schizophrenia for some time to come was underlined by the presence of another major article in the very same issue which applied the clockwork analogue with a vengeance to molecular genetics, underlined by a double-paged picture of clock parts, and another picture that showed a clockwork mechanism and a DNA chain embedded in a leaf! To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of the death of the clockwork analogue in science are definitely premature. That imagery will probably continue to spook around in the scientific and popular minds for at least another generation, because earlier generations established it with such vehemence and persistence.

*Scientists recently said that it is far better to get an approximate answer to the right question, even though right questions are often vague, than an exact answer to the wrong question which can quite commonly be made very precise (Science, 8/12/83). This insight is very helpful in understanding much of the research in the behavioral and social sciences, which often involves relatively precise answers to wrong questions.

Science Hubris

*The 1992 discovery of minute fluctuations or heterogeneities in the cosmic background heat radiation has been called the "discovery of the century, if not of
13/1/89), where low-level end-point technologies determine behaviors that should only be determined by very high-order worldviews, values and decisions. Such a tyranny of small technologies is very much evident in modern medicine, and in human service generally.

*Between 1927-93, the US Army Corps of Engineers did $25 billion worth of work on the Mississippi River in order to control flooding. Instead of improving things, they got worse. Even before the big flood of 1993 that did damage in double-figure billions, flood damage had risen to $2 billion a year—5-fold what it used to be. And more: one reason why the 1993 flood occurred was that the engineers failed to release water in time from the up-river dammed reservoirs because this would have interfered with the recreational use of the lakes, even though it was solely for flood control that the reservoirs had been created! Post-primary production economics (see 8&10/92 TIPS issue) reared their ugly head again.

*Bellini, J. (1989). High tech holocaust (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Sierra Club. (Paperback edition). This book is an analysis of how the lust affair with high technology of our contemporary developed society has been a major factor in the destruction of the environment, and has made medicine very dangerous. However, the book does not offer as high-level an analysis of the issue as is given in TI workshops. For example, according to Bellini, one of the possible reasons for our society's increased reliance on drugs is that lead levels in the brains of modern humans may be so high that certain regulatory functions are suppressed, which would make for higher anxiety levels. While there may be some truth to this, it is still a low level of explanation.

*During WWII, a special branch of psychology developed, sometimes called human factors psychology or analysis. It developed out of the need to design military equipment in such a fashion as to make it easily usable by personnel. Early studies involved such things as determining what shape dials should be, and what shape they should be if there were entire batteries of dials for different purposes, such as one might find in the cockpit of a plane. The amazing thing is that even though this area of psychology is now highly evolved and has a great deal of knowledge, it has been widely ignored in the design of supposedly state-of-the-art advanced and complex military equipment. Some of this is hard to believe. For instance, the emergency flasher on an airplane—indicating that the pilot should prepare for ejection—had long been so located that the light was covered by the pilot's knee so that he could not see it. An interesting paradox is that advanced military systems are now so designed that computers perform those perceptual-motor tasks which humans do exceedingly well, while increasing the demands on the operators to perform vigilance and monitoring tasks which humans do much less well. The net effect has been that automation has actually increased rather than decreased the mental load put on operators, and many weapons systems are now only functional at the very outer limits of human capacity. Other supposedly state-of-the-art weapons systems have been found to have the most incredible design defects. For instance, the US Army’s new first-line battle tank was so designed that when it travels with open hatches, the fenders did not protect the crew from rocks, dirt, and mud kicked up by the treads. Most amazingly, with closed hatches, the crew can see nothing within nine yards in front of the tank. Under battle conditions, the noise made by the tank (e.g., by rotation of the turret) is so high that crew members cannot hear what other crew members are saying. After only a few hours under battle conditions, almost all drivers have experienced such severe neck and back pain that they needed medical attention. The panel concluded that such debacles result from engineers and procurement personnel guiding specifications while being hypnotized by technology for its own sake that is, however, cut off from the goal-oriented functions of the equipment. All of this also has relevance to human services where one could say much the same thing.
all time" by one of the world's leading cosmologists, Stephen Hawking (Science, 8/92). Look forward to the next discovery of all time in the very near future.

*A member of a study panel on scientific misconduct said that in interviewing scientists, he found that they think "having a scientific degree confers infallibility or rectitude" on people (Science, 27/8/93).

Science Politics

*A most dangerous development has been the awarding of research and development grants to universities via congressional legislation rather than via the usual administrative and peer review process. This pattern was established in 1983 when Catholic University and Columbia University finagled to receive funds (for $9.2 and $3 million respectively) for scientific research centers, and Florida State University received a $7 million appropriation for a supercomputer center. Ever since, many US universities have gone over the heads of government granting bodies so that many grants and centers have been instead awarded through congressional legislation to universities that were not qualified for them, or not the best qualified, but who had the cleverest or crookedest representatives in Congress.

*The most coauthors that a manuscript in a professional journal ever had is 257, namely, in a nuclear physics journal in 1986. An article published in 1992 that documented one of the chromosomes of a strain of yeast had a mere 147 coauthors. The longest time on record it ever took for a paper to be published after being submitted was 26 years. The paper was submitted to a Japanese journal in 1960, and after numerous revisions, finally published by it in 1986 (Science, 25/8/86).

*The most extraordinary legal ruling has been rendered by the US Supreme Court in 6/93 which may result in courtroom havoc when it comes to deciding issues that involve scientific testimony. Under the 1923 Frye ruling, court testimony about scientific matters was to be resolved on the basis of whether a finding, procedure, bit of evidence or scientific claim had won "general acceptance in the particular field in which it belongs," which ultimately boiled down to peer judgment. This is the principle which was rejected by the Supreme Court ruling, with the argument that there may be scientific truths that are not as yet generally accepted. The problem is that at the same time, judges are now charged with the responsibility of insuring that the scientific experts who testify use "reasoning or methodology...that is scientifically valid," and that the conclusions presented in the testimony are "relevant and reliable." This puts a burden of scientific expertise on judges which most simply do not possess. Whatever the admitted shortcomings of peer review and science are, they are now multiplied a thousand-fold by making even less scientifically competent authorities responsible for the determination of scientific truth. We are now apt to see the courts flooded with "junk science," craze theories and pathological science being given vastly more standing and credence than ever before in courts of law. One likely consequence is that liability judgments (with huge awards to plaintiffs) are apt to multiply, particularly since juries already seem to be sympathetic to such plaintiffs even in cases that are outright ludicrous and greedy. For instance, one jury awarded $1 million to a woman who claimed that a CT scan had destroyed her psychic powers (Discover, 1/94).

Technology & Technology Lust

*In 1968, economist Alfred E. Kahn used the phrase "tyranny of small decisions" to refer to situations where failure to establish, or be consciously governed by, a very high-order policy results in a policy pattern emerging through a series of very low-order decisions. We can also observe that a similar situation can arise that can be called a "tyranny of small technologies" (Science,
Yet another example of the insane compulsion to use high-tech means for low-tech ends was the US military decision, in its 1989 attack upon Panama, to use a number of Stealth fighters, each worth $50 million, which dropped a mere two bombs of 2,000 pounds each on a communications site (USN&WR, 8 Jan. 90), even though the "enemy" had no radar, fighter planes or antiaircraft guns (Time, 8 Jan. 90). Furthermore, parachute drops of troops during the night being vastly more high-tech than advancing already favorably emplaced troops on the ground, parachute troops were dropped into a number of drop zones in Panama that were already under the control of the US Army on the ground. Even coming in with helicopters would have been simpler and lower-tech.

Computer Technology, Lust & Jinks

*There is a history of technology journal, American Heritage of Invention & Technology, that focuses mostly on North American history along these lines. It observed in its Fall 1990 issue that computers were invented as if they "carried some dreadful incubus." One of its major inventors, Alan Turing, was convicted of soliciting sexual favors from a teenage boy and was given a choice of prison or hormone treatments. Choosing hormones, he soon discovered that his body feminized; he despaired, mixed himself a cyanide poison in his laboratory, and committed suicide. Von Neumann, who did the breakthrough mathematical theorizing for computers, got bone cancer and spent his last few years in a state of mental terror. Kurt Goedel, who made a fundamental contribution to mathematical logic, suffered a form of insanity in his later years and starved himself to death. John Mauchly, a colleague of Neumann, who spent his later years in great bitterness believing that Neumann had cheated him, died from a disfiguring disease, and apparently in poverty.

*The TIPS editor noted that in recent years, a peculiar interpretive convention has arisen in science reporting. We never expected that reports of scientific projects would tell us that they used addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, or that they used a mechanical adding machine instead of adding up on paper or in one's head; and only in the most technical reporting would we expect to read what kind of statistical tests were used. But now, it happens quite often that we are told that scientists used a computer to handle their data. Not only is that somewhat inconsistent with traditional reporting conventions, but it would indeed be extraordinary these days if a computer were not used, since even most typewriters nowadays are computers. This reflection helps us to understand that invocation of computer use functions a bit like a magic formula in contemporary science.

*Every time information processing makes another advance, data recorded with earlier techniques become unrecoverable. For instance, the US census has lost valuable data every time it has shifted to more advanced recording techniques. Even data recorded as recently as 1960 for use with the Univac Computer became unrecoverable by 1975 because by then, only two such computers were left in the world, one in Japan and one at the Smithsonian Museum. Even if these machines had been available, they would not have been able to read the antiquated code in which the data had been entered. Specialists have noted that the technicians that work with new data methods have virtually zero interest in the past, and make no allowance for such problems. As a result, a special committee on government records noted that "the US is in danger of losing its memory" (Cobb, 1986).

*A weather forecasting service in Hartford, Connecticut, has a million dollars worth of equipment in its office, including 24 computer terminals. Its other equipment is stacked up along three walls of the office, but the one thing it does not have is a window to the outside, so someone would have to telephone them that it is raining or snowing outside (Meriden Record Journal, 20/10/91).
On a Monday afternoon in 1/1990, the AT&T US long distance telephone network crashed, as even its back-up systems were unable to prevent this, and it stayed down for nine hours. This was the most serious long-distance telephone breakdown in US history, and cost AT&T an estimated $75 million in lost revenues alone. Time, (29/1/90) even admitted in its story headline that this "dramatizes the vulnerability of complex computer systems everywhere," and invoked "the ghost in the machine." The problem turned out to be a relatively simple and single logic failure in the computer program which got into the system when an "improvement" was spliced into it. The breakdown occurred in the middle of an AT&T multimillion dollar "reliability" advertising campaign.

Unhappily, it seems we are continually vindicated in our warnings about the dangers of technology, especially as it introduces complexities which are beyond the human capacity to manage. This vindication occurred again on 6 March 1992, when the Michelangelo computer "virus" struck. While the danger and the negative effects of such viruses and computer "bacteria" were downplayed in the US because it did little damage there, the virus did manage to strike 300 pharmacies in South Africa, which lost all their records, and one hospital in Budapest which lost 25 computer systems, including all its patient records (CBS Evening News & ABC World News Tonight, 6 March 1992).

The good news is that viruses infect more than one quarter of major US personal computers each month. By late 1991, virtually every major US company that is a heavy user of personal computers is expected to experience a virus infection on the average of once a month (AP in SHJ, 14/3/91).

Because computer storage might be jeopardized by electric power problems, viruses, and other things, one can now buy insurance policies on one's computer storage.

A recent flyer from the computer culture included, among other things, an announcement about a workshop "designed to increase awareness of the emerging national information landscape..."

People who want to be amused, or those who think they might actually benefit from it, can now buy computer psychotherapies, i.e., programs designed to function like psychotherapists. One is called Eliza, another one PC Therapist III (Discover, 3/92).

In 6/93, there was held what appears to be the first conference on "virtual reality and persons with disabilities." Whenever a new technology appears, human services go haywire trying to figure out how to wed themselves to it.

According to a poll, 73% of Americans are living under the delusion that computers have made their lives better (Time, 8 March 93).

Human Nature and Contemporary Society

Postman, N. (1985). Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business. New York: Penguin Books. This is a very insightful book that should make any thoughtful reader disengage him/herself from watching most television, including "news" and documentaries. It points out that television has such great power because it is a seducer rather than a tyrannical oppressor, and that while people will rise up and revolt against imprisonment, they will not against "a sea of amusements." Seduction is much more powerful in controlling people's epistemology than overt oppression because through it, people can be maneuvered into loving their oppression, "to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think." This is certainly true of modernistic society which does indeed adulate technology.
Postman analyzes how several technological developments profoundly affected how humans related to reality and nature, and perceived the world. For instance, the invention of eyeglasses in the 1100s suggested to humans that they need no longer be slaves to the happenings of nature or the ravages of time, and it was this idea which eventually, through many twists and turns, resulted in the splitting of human genetic material 800 years later. The invention of the clock had the effect of dissociating time from human events and from nature (e.g., the movement of the sun across the sky), and instead supported the idea of a world of mathematically measurable sequences, such as seconds or minutes. By adopting the clock as a way to mark time, humans have therefore become alienated from nature, and have set aside the authority of nature. Indeed, "Eternity ceased to serve as the measure and focus of human events. And thus, though few would have imagined the connection, the inexorable ticking of the clock may have had more to do with the weakening of God's supremacy than all the treatises produced by the philosophers of the Enlightenment..." This should not be surprising, given that the clock became widespread during the Enlightenment, a time when God was first declared irrelevant and human reason was seen as supreme.

Postman argues that until the advent of telegraphy and photography, the United States was a society that conversed largely through print, "thought" in print, and was very literate, including its lowlier members. However, telegraphy overcame the boundaries of distance and time, so that what happened in one place could be reported almost immediately far away; and photography shaped people's minds to conceive of all levels of reality as visual, pictorial images. Television brought together and actualized these two developments, and eventually shaped people's minds so that they are no longer oriented primarily to the printed word. This has had vast and harmful repercussions to the conduct of politics and government, education, and even religion.

Postman warns about interpreting technologies as neutral, and claims that "Each technology has an agenda of its own," and that only those who know nothing about the history of technology could hold to the belief that technology is neutral. While it is possible for a technology to be used so that its inherent logic and potentialities are not actualized—such as where television is so controlled by government as to serve merely as a radio with pictures, or as a propaganda machine—in fact, technologies push towards their logical actualization, which in the case of television is full-time, round-the-clock, year-round entertainment.

Postman notes that most of what is called "news" in modern society consists of bits of information which are totally irrelevant to any meaningful action on the part of those who take it in. For instance, what ordinary person in Syracuse, NY, can do much that is meaningful upon hearing about a million people starving in the Sudan? Prior to the age of telegraphy, what Postman calls the "information-action ratio" was sufficiently close that people had a much greater sense of being able to control or affect what they learned about, since what was conveyed to them as "news" was probably very close to home. This increase of irrelevant information led to a peculiar development, namely, the invention of ways and contexts in which to use otherwise useless information—such as via cocktail party chatter, quiz and game shows, crossword puzzles, and of course, the ultimate expression in the board game Trivial Pursuit.

How externalism, as in dependence on television, leads to here-and-now-ism was captured by Postman who noted that because television presents everything in the here-and-now, with no prerequisites to understanding and without any continuity and context, people whose minds are shaped by television are actually being rendered incapable of, or unfit for, remembering.

Elsewhere we have noted that contemporary Western societies—and American society in particular—believe that there are solutions to everything, that solutions should be quick-fix in nature, and that solutions lie in all sorts of technology. Postman notes that television commercials convey precisely this message.
In contrast to 99+% of the discourse on computers in education, which largely has to do with how to incorporate them into education, Postman raises a most important question about the use of computers in education. He wonders whether replacing with computers what a human teacher does—instruction, interaction with students, etc.—might not mean the loss of everything that is significant about education, even if the students do learn certain things.

Postman notes that just as the discourse on computers in education is on how and how much to use them, rather than whether they should be incorporated at all into education, so too the discourse on television revolves around such things as its content (e.g., is there too much violence and sex on television?), rather than on the reality that Americans have surrendered to television sovereignty over all of their social institutions.

Postman also notes that it is a modern idea that education must be entertaining. He notes that no educational philosopher, thinker or writer, from Confucius to Plato until the present age, ever made that assertion or promoted that idea. While they all have something to say about what facilitates learning, they have assumed that learning is difficult, that learning must be sequential, that perseverance and a certain measure of perspiration are indispensable, that individual pleasures must frequently be submerged in the interests of group cohesion, and that learning to be critical and to think conceptually and rigorously do not come easily...—ideas that would be, and indeed are being, totally rejected by modernistic people.

We are told so often by participants of our Training Institute workshops that our teaching format—lengthy lectures which demand close and undivided attention, followed by questions and discussion on all that has gone before—is too difficult for people, and is not the way that people can best learn. It is not atypical for people to react to this format by behaving very immorally, almost having temper tantrums at having to sit and listen for long periods of time. Yet Postman documents that in the US in the 1850s, in the famous debates between Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, one of them would sometimes speak for three hours, to which the other would respond for the same length of time. For all this, there were enthusiastic audiences composed of quite ordinary people who would not only sit through it all, but who would return for evening sessions of four more hours of lecture. This was normative! As we tell our audiences over and over, these are mental habits and disciplines that can be learned, even by ordinary people, and that are good for the mind to learn and practice.

Interestingly, Postman claims that some of the most eminent American jurists of the past believed that democracy "posed the danger of releasing an undisciplined individualism" (p. 56), and for this reason they tried to create rational law. Their fear certainly seems well-founded, given what democratic American society has evolved to be today.

*According to some experts, hardly anyone in the US is getting enough sleep. Teenagers are said to average about 2 hours less sleep a night than they did 80 years earlier, and this is one reason why they are not doing well in school. Television is widely blamed for this, but we would add that the explosion of the availability of cheap electricity may have something to do with it, insofar as people used to sleep more in accordance with the cycle of day and nighttime, which has been so widely defeated by the ubiquity of electric light (Science, 15/1/93).

*The future of the cities of modernism. Camden, NJ, had fewer than 100,000 residents in 1992, with two-thirds on welfare, but an amazingly large proportion of teenagers drove their own cars, including Lincolns and Mercedes, apparently paid for by drug-dealing. Half the population was under age 21, but there were 200 liquor stores and bars (1 per 250 adults) but not a single movie theater. Two percent of babies never reach their first birthday. Of the 35,000 jobs in the city, the majority are held by outsiders. Almost 100% of all its social workers, health care workers, teachers and church people live somewhere else in suburbia.
The suburbs of Camden used to have 46 sewage treatment plants but they closed them all down and instead pumped all their waste into Camden, which has begun to reek of human excrement and garbage (Time, 20/1/92).

*Thinkers have been trying to figure out what elements of social and intellectual evolution have been decisive in the astronomic increases in the rate of human social evolution in recent millennia. Some prominent theories propose that breakthroughs were provided by the development of certain tools, the invention of writing, etc. One theory (A Calculating People, by P. C. Cohen, 1983) proposes that a key step was the development of "numeracy," i.e., a certain mental discipline of thinking in quantitative terms which we take for granted today, but which supposedly is a quite recent development. This discipline is believed to be intertwined with spatial reasoning, quantitative judgment, and memory. It is the forerunner of more explicit utilization of numbers which, in turn, enables people to develop statistical concepts and reasoning, which itself is intertwined with the whole concept of probability.

*Discover (1/93) noted that vomiting has become a very popular motif in the media (to say nothing of former President Bush vomiting in public on his Japanese host). For instance, it is being shown with dramatically higher frequency—and sometimes much more detail—in movies and TV programs. Apparently, this meets a need to escalate sensory experiences in order to make an impact or satisfy the already sensorially satiated—if we may put it this way. Even at scientific meetings, sessions on vomiting (there called emesis) appear to have increased attendance. People who feel the need to study this topic in detail are urged to read this interesting article that explains vomiting from a scientific perspective.

*Ever heard of "demic expansion"? It has nothing to do with demons, or one's jeans getting too big, or one getting too big for one's jeans, but does account for you being where you are. It refers to the expansion of populations across geographic space.

**Human Nature, Contemporary Society & Animals**

*It used to be monkey see, monkey do. What it should have been like all along is monkey do, human see, human do. Research has shown that mistreatment of baby monkeys by their mothers can be dramatically reduced by providing a more livable environment, having other female monkeys around who help do the parenting, and giving inexperienced mothers good mothering role models. These are three conditions widely lacking in contemporary society, particularly among the urban poor (FI, 4/91).

*Many kinds of animals, such as elephants and chimpanzees, will make drawings and paintings which art experts have not only assumed to be by human artists, but to be exquisite (Discover, 2/91). We suggest that we have finally found a way to tell art apart from junk: if humans do the same thing that animals do, and people cannot tell the difference, then it is junk.

*Now that a certain highly visible lunatic fringe has been promoting so-called animal rights, certain members of academia have begun to argue even more insanely for robot rights (Discover, 7/93). One has to understand that these kinds of rights movements have behind them an unspoken agenda of destroying the rights of inferior humans, or of humans who are being declared non-human, e.g., because they allegedly lack "personhood."

*Each day, Americans spend $2 million on baby food, $4.8 million on cat food, and $8.6 million on dog food. It was also estimated that an adult could eat three square meals at McDonalds for $11.22 a day (IAETF, 8/90).
As long ago as 1835, the astute French observer of the American scene, de Tocqueville, noted that sooner or later, American society turns moral questions into legal ones—and that is still the way we do things.

A very sensible US development is the establishment of dispute settlement offices where parties at odds about something can go to submit themselves to an impartial process of either reconciling or arbitrating an issue without going to the courts. Skilled mediators, in a neutral setting, let both sides bring out their angles on a dispute, examining areas of agreement and disagreement, and searching for possible solutions. If both sides can agree to one, the mediator will help write the agreement which all then sign and have witnessed. Courts, police, community agencies or disputing parties themselves may serve as referrals. The process is conducted in a fashion that tries not to fix blame, uses simple language, keeps the matter private, and bypasses the acrimony, costs and time of "lawing" (source item from Carolyn Bardwell Wheeler).

Lawyers who take on medical malpractice suits on a so-called contingency fee usually get about one-third of the settlement as their reward. Total such contingency fee income by lawyers for personal injury cases alone was about $14 billion in circa 1992. In successful suits, lawyers average somewhere between $3000-$4000 per hour of work (Common Cause, Fall 93).

The Association of Trial Lawyers of America, which has 60,000 members, has been one of the biggest financial contributors to the Democratic Party, and has never ever lost an issue that it supported in Congress (CC, Fall 93).

In 1991, Ronald H. Coase received a Nobel prize in economics. Part of his work has dealt with the fact that formal legal ways of trying to resolve conflicts will either often accomplish the opposite, or dramatically increase the cost of conflict resolution. We have been teaching the same thing since the early 1970s. In fact, the mere knowledge that more formal legal ways of resolving a conflict exist and are relatively easily available is often the biggest obstacle to a conflict being settled quickly and inexpensively by the respective parties.

We have been saying for years that the over-legalization of society, which is largely due to its over-legalization, is extremely destructive. People have begun to catch on to this, and a wave of hostility against lawyers is breaking out. One sign is when the cartoon and humor world begins to generate significant amounts of negative jokes about a problem or field. Since the 1960s, there has been a great deal of such humor about shrinkery, more recently about medicine, and most recently about lawyers. Some of this humor even expresses homicidal intent, such as, "What do you call a hundred lawyers chained together at the bottom of the ocean?" The answer is "A good start." We doubt seriously that the legal profession will take heed and curb itself.

A physician provides medical care at his office two hours each week to those who cannot afford it, or have no health insurance. In return, the patients pledge two to three hours of work for some community service (Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin, 2 Apr. 93; source item from Sue Ruff). Since these are not the doctor's own services, nor ones in which he has a particular investment, he is contributing to building community. Since patients pay for their care with their labor, they do not feel they are getting something for nothing, they make a real and needed contribution, and community services are helped.