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This is a single issue of TIPS. Eventually, we will be catching up again with our publication lag, if need be by means of a double or triple issue. We will carry only two major themes in this TIPS: The Social Role Valorization issue of deviancy-imaging of people as subhuman animals; and the topic of social advocacy.

The Animal-Imaging of Humans

In our work, we have identified ten negative role interpretations, and images that go with them, that people commonly attach to others whom they devalue. The role of the subhuman animal, vegetable (plant life) or object is only one expression of one of these, namely, the non-human role. The others are the roles of menace or object of dread, garbage or waste material, trivium or object of ridicule, object of pity, burden or object of charity, child—eternally or once again, holy innocent, sick or diseased organism, and dead/dying/almost dead/should be dead creature.

Humans have a strong tendency to abrogate human status from people whom they severely devalue, and/or want to insult. David Vail was a pioneer in writing on this phenomenon (see Vail, D. J. (1966). Dehumanization and the institutional career. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas). Being animal-imaged is particularly detrimental to the image of a party that (a) is already highly at risk of being viewed as subhuman (people of other races, retarded people, violent people, etc.), and that (b) gets images of lesser-valued animals attached to it.

We will look at the imaging of humans—mostly those who are societally devalued—as animals, and break the means by which such images are created into several major categories. One might call this issue the "million-and-one ways of animal-imaging devalued people."

Animal-Imaging by Person-Animal Juxtapositions

A rather obvious way of creating an image in people's minds that a person or class is subhuman, animal-like, or at least has an affinity to animals is by juxtaposing the person or class to animals, especially if the person or class already tends to be viewed as animalistic, or as similar to a particular animal to which the person or class gets juxtaposed. What many kinds of animal-image juxtapositions de facto accomplish—whether they meant to or not—is to cast the people thusly imaged into the subhuman animal role.
In order to celebrate the UN International Day of Disabled Persons on 3 Dec. 95, a party in the Australian state of New South Wales was held—at a zoo, with complimentary zoo access to all participants (source item from Judy Ellis).

Child protection societies in the US were initially formed by animal protection societies, and there has been a linkage ever since. This is exemplified by several humane societies of the Macon, Georgia, area holding a candlelight vigil "for children and animals" in 1988. Children were allowed to attend the event, as well as animals, provided they were "on a short lead" (Macon Senior Citizens Newspaper, 10/88; source item from Barbara Fisher).

What we call an "animal service" person brought a troupe of exotic birds, miniature pigs, and capuchin monkeys to an old-age home in Syracuse. The local paper ran a picture of the old people playing with some of the monkeys, and quite appropriately captioned it, "Monkeying Around" (SHJ, 18/3/95).

A 5/89 AP news item was headed "Monkeys train for lifetime of service to quadriplegics," and explained how, under a program based in Boston and named "Helping Hands," baby monkeys were first placed into "foster families" for 3 years to both raise and train them to become "monkey helpers." (Source clipping from Guy Caruso.)

With support from the Florida chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Disney World in Florida has started a breeding facility for Capuchin monkeys who are to serve as "helping hands" for handicapped people (NYS Advocate, 10/88).

Helping mouth. A television advertisement for "Canine Companions" being broadcast in December 1995 conveyed some really awful imagery about physically handicapped people. (The ad used the currently politically correct language of "physically challenged" about the people being served.) (Canine Companions matches helper-dogs to physically handicapped people, to do things for them, run errands, etc., much like seeing-eye dogs for blind people.) It showed a helper-dog retrieving several packages of food—one from the refrigerator, one from the kitchen counter—in its mouth, and picking up a dropped eating utensil in its mouth, and placing these all on the table where the handicapped people were eating. The non-handicapped narrator—a pro football star—appeared obviously grossed out by the idea of eating what had been in the dog's mouth, but the handicapped people smiled about it and about his discomfort, and went right ahead without cleaning in any way what the dog had gotten for them. Thus, not only were handicapped persons intimately juxtaposed to animals, but also put into a position of eating like animals, without concern for hygiene. By the way, we often sing "Canine Companion..." to the tune of "Deep River."

There is an organization called Support Dogs for the Handicapped in Columbus, Ohio. As far as we know, there are no support cats, but it seems to us that we have heard of support swine, and further below, we will report on life-saver swine.

The ABC TV news on 6 Feb. 86 carried a story about inmates at a US federal prison training dogs rescued from the local pound as service dogs to sick or handicapped people. Wouldn't it be better if the inmates trained dogs as watchdogs for wealthy people so they will not be burglarized or assaulted?

The Evansville Psychiatric Children's Center in Indiana announced proudly (10/1982 Grapevine) that it had a "new furry female employee, named Angel, working one shift a day as a canine therapist with emotionally disturbed children." (Journal issue provided by Mike Morton.) Like probably many of the children, Angel was once a dog nobody wanted who had been rescued from a humane shelter (Evansville Press, 4/11/82).

When the TIPS editor did research in England as a post-doctoral fellow in the 1960s, he collected data at the Saint Lawrence Hospital, a large institution for mentally retarded people, located in Caterham, a township on the southern edge of London. At that facility, there were a number of people with spina
bifida, and some who had hydrocephaly as a result. One of the most amazing deviancy image juxtapositions he ever witnessed was the fact that the institution had a cat—and the cat had a huge spinal meningocele, i.e., a form of spina bifida in which a sac of spinal fluid extrudes outside the spine. The cat’s meningocele was rather sizeable and extruded over her back, just anterior to her tail. Nevertheless, she was in every other respect a normal cat and even had kittens. In animal-loving England, one could easily conceive of ads or slogans such as “we cater to cases of meningocele or spina bifida in cats or kids.”

In previous issues, we have repeatedly pointed to some of the absurdities of animal therapists and animal companions for handicapped or devalued people. Much as devalued staff are often juxtaposed to devalued clients, one could easily foresee a trend under which valued animals are juxtaposed to valued people, and devalued animals to devalued people—especially if the devalued animals are cast into the therapist role. Thus, instead of having merely hearing-ear dogs, monkey helpers and cat therapists, we might have blind hearing-ear dogs, tailless monkeys and emotionally disturbed cat therapists who have spina bifida and delinquent tom offspring.

Creating Juxtapositions Between Devalued People & Animal-Imaged Facilities

We have already given several examples above that involve animal-people juxtapositions. Here are a few more.

* We learned of a so-called "intermediate care facility for mentally retarded people" being located on Sheep Pasture Road, which certainly images the mentally retarded people served as lowly and stupid animals, perhaps being "put out to pasture."

* The Institute of Art and Disabilities in Richmond, California, held an exhibition of new works—but unfortunately, it held it at the Nanny Goat Hill Gallery, and the announcement was accompanied by an exceedingly bizarre picture.

* On an interstate highway through Connecticut, the sign for the State Veterans’ Home and Hospital also directs travelers to the Dinosaur State Park, which happens to be located across the road from the veterans’ home.

* A family began to lodge unwanted babies in a barn on their farm. Because the supply of babies was somewhat unpredictable, they began to take in sick elderly people, with the avowed purpose of helping them to get well. Thus, because people came to the barn in order to get well there, it was called Barnwell. Then even after the barn was no longer used for that purpose, and as the facility enlarged itself with modern buildings, it was still called Barnwell.

Animal-Imaging by Bringing Effigies of Animals Into Juxtaposition With Devalued People

* On a 1984 trip in Europe, the TIPS editor passed through a railroad station in the Netherlands which had an office to help homeless people, i.e., vagabonds who either might arrive by train or go to the train station to find shelter. The presence of the office was announced by a huge poster that showed a rat looking out of a grate in a street gutter.

* A 1991 issue of the Norwegian Public Service Workers Union journal was devoted to the theme of "caring"—and the cover showed a picture of a woman carrying a heavy pig to a bed, which not only interprets clients as animals, but as very burdensome. (Source item from Kristjana Kristiansen.) This is one of the worst, most blatant, unconscious and yet really meant of this type of animal role interpretation we have ever seen.

* The county home and hospital (named VanDuyn, which sounds like dyin’) that serves the county in which Syracuse is located accommodates largely elderly people. As a way of helping it users to recognize what floor they were on, different bird themes were prominently displayed on each floor. Thus, much as in educational and recreational programs for children, elderly people might be identified with birds such as the robins, etc.
*An unbelievably deviancy-imaged poster was put out by a college counseling office. It was headed with the caption, "Volunteers required--to assist disabled students attending so-and-so campus. Could you lend a hand?" The picture that went with it showed a dog and a child (not a college student!) bent over on crutches looking deeply into each other's eyes, so one had to assume that it was the dog that was lending a "hand" to the "disabled student."

*Newsweek (25/7/94) carried a story about a woman with three handicapped boys who were shown in an accompanying picture. While the woman's efforts were heroic, her understanding of SRV was atrocious. One boy who had Down's syndrome wore a T-shirt with a fish on it that is named a crappie, plus the very word "Crappie" was very prominently printed on the shirt. Another of the boys wore a T-shirt with a bear on it, because this boy could not speak but only roar, and had been nicknamed Mr. Bear. The least handicapped of the boys was spared all this, wearing a baseball shirt.

*In one state institution for the retarded in New York State, there was a barber shop which had pictures of apes in its windows. Several staff protested that such pictures did nothing to enhance the image of the retarded residents, but these claims of a deviancy image juxtaposition were dismissed...until, as a result of a state budget crunch, some state employees had to be laid off. The director of the institution decided to lay off, among others, the institution's barber, who promptly put a picture of the institution director on the windows among the pictures of the apes. When this was reported to one of the higher-level staff, all of the pictures were removed. Thus, there was more concern for how the institution director's image would be affected by juxtaposition with pictures of apes than with how those pictures would affect the image of the handicapped residents.

**Attachment of Animal Effigies to Discourse About Devalued People**

*A 1995 conference near Pittsburgh on "Assessment and Treatment of Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Needs" was announced via a flyer that featured a picture of two dogs, one of them in a snarling pose. Among other things, this invited the image that such people had "gone to the dogs." There was no explanation for this motif on the cover. The conference was sponsored by the Center for Continuing Education in the Health Sciences of the University of Pittsburgh, the state's Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic Office of Education and Regional Programming, and a local mental health and mental retardation service program. It seems they all need education in community education and SRV. (Flyer from Guy Caruso.)

*We have commented before on the problematic nature of the Disability Rag, written by handicapped people for handicapped people. The periodical decided to develop a tag that can be put on cars of people who inexcusably park in spaces reserved for the handicapped--but the tag contains a cartoon of a rat, identified as "Disability Rat" in a wheelchair, admonishing the offender (Jan/Feb 85).

*A number of organizations and news media around the world dealing with handicapped people use the name LINK. In September 1983, the Daily Mail newspaper in Great Britain juxtaposed the picture of a monkey peeling a banana to an announcement of a radio program on handicapped people, called Link. (Clipping and interpretation furnished by Paul Williams.)

*The cover of a 1989 book on Transition from School to Work for Persons with Disabilities shows fish turning into birds, implying that handicapped people can be turned from one kind of animal into another--but remain animals nonetheless.

**Discourse About (Devalued) People That Implies That They are Animals**

*People somewhat familiar with the sideshow and freakery scene will undoubtedly have heard of Lobster Boy, a man who is claw-handed as a result of a congenital deformity. We regret to report that his wife let out a contract to have him killed. At her trial, she invoked a battered-wife defense, and her attorney said that Lobster Boy was a "brute who deserved to die." The jury compromised with a manslaughter verdict (SHJ, 29/7/94).
*In 5/92, we ran across an advertisement for institutional furniture (by Intempo Manufacturing in Oklahoma) that said it was "gorilla-proof," and showed a gorilla jumping up and down on one of the beds.

*A classical example of a human service being interpreted as bestowing humanity on a presumably previous nonhuman organism was spelled out in the Journal of Mental Health Administration (Dana, 1986), under the title, "Rehumanization: A Mission for the Developmental Center."

Animal Imagery in the Names of Services to, or Service-Related Resources for, Devalued People

*A program in Ohio offers horseback riding for handicapped persons--but calls itself The Centaur Program. A centaur is a creature that was like a horse but with a human torso. It would therefore appear that this name images handicapped people as half-animals. (Source item from Griff Hogan.)

*Everybody remembers Lassie, the clever collie star of many Hollywood movies and TV shows. Often, male collies are called "Laddie." Then came along Laddi Academy in California--which one would naturally expect to be a training or obedience school for dogs--but not so. Instead, it is "an academic, residential institute for the post-high school years"... "for those handicapped young adults of college age" (from wealthy families) "who say 'but why can't I go away to school too.'" (Advertised in Exceptional Parent.)

*Dolphin Aquatics in New Brunswick provides swimming and camping for handicapped children, and also runs Camp Broken Wing. However, after 4 years of operation, the camp decided in 1986 to recruit non-handicapped campers to provide integrative experiences to the handicapped ones. (Source information from Peggy Campbell.)

*Someone at the Idaho State School and Hospital for the mentally retarded arranged for the residents to attend "donkey basketball games," and whatever these are, one would think that only asses would be interested in them. (Others attended the "first annual low adaptive development special olympics" at the institution.) (Source item supplied by Mike Day.)

*The dispensers of liquid soap in an institution for the mentally retarded proclaim that they use "Twenty-Mule Team" lotion soap. Presumably, it takes nothing less than 20-mule soap to cleanse dirty retarded people.

*A decorating company in Britain has been advertising "Urine Resistant Carpet" for--puppies and people with incontinence problems (CMH Newsletter, Autumn 86).

*A weekend recreational program for children with physical handicaps, most of whom use wheelchairs, is entitled "Iron Butterflies." This name almost gives the message that the children would be butterflies if only they weren't chained by the iron weight of their wheelchairs (submitted by Judy McGill).

*Most educated people have heard of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), but not that many have heard of a children's adaptation of it, unfortunately called the Robert's Apperception Test for children, which really abbreviates to RAT, though it is usually listed as RATC--which still sound like "rats."

*A whole new series of books about handicaps, written for small children, including a book about retarded children, is unfortunately entitled Turtle Books. Their logo is a turtle. These are advertised as designed to "help very young children with disabilities to develop very positive self images." Turtles are proverbially slow animals; moreover, they die when they accidentally get flipped on their backs.

*In a 11/85 list of educational computer software programs, we noted four animal-imaged ones: comma cat, dictionary dog, monster math, and turtle power. (The latter sounds like the name of a program for slow learners.) This was reported in a school of education newsletter.
*Would you believe that there exists a "Creeping Turtles and Dead Butterflies" scouting program for the handicapped? We are not saying at this time that there is such a thing, but merely asking you whether you would believe it if there were. Be honest!

Animal Imagery in the Etiquetting of Devalued People

The term "etiquetting" has been used in Europe to refer to the names, titles, epithets, etc., that get attached to people. This is a much superior concept and term than "labelling."

*Interestingly, modern French-English dictionaries (e.g., Cassell’s) tell us that the French word bêta (female bêtasse) means "a bit of a blockhead, rather a simpleton." French etymological dictionaries trace bêta to bête, i.e., beast, brute or animal, derived from Latin bestia. Thus, French equates a dullard with animality, and thus contributes to the tradition of viewing mentally afflicted people as animalistic. We are thus glad that Beta House (for mentally handicapped people) in Massachusetts changed its name.

*It is amazing that in a period of only about 10 years, we have had 3 books by parents of retarded children with overwhelming animal imagery in the titles. The best known was Moose: A Very Special Person (1982). Another was Bethy and the Mouse: God’s Gifts in Special Packages (1985), which dealt with a family with two handicapped children, Bethy having Down’s syndrome, and another child with microcephaly called the Mouse.

Symbols/Signs for/About Animals are Juxtaposed to Symbols/Signs for/About Devalued Humans

*Chris Liuzzo saw a road sign that had two placards on it, one being a caution sign with a wheelchair logo on it, and the other one a warning, "animal crossing" (copy received from Guy Caruso in 9/94).

*A road sign displayed two lines in very large letters. The first line said "LIVESTOCK PASSAGE," and the second line said "DIAGNOSTIC CENTER" (Foundations for Community Living, 1995).

*We are not opposed to certain kinds of publicity that promote the adoption of children, but once in a while, one of these tactics goes too far. For instance, in Louisiana in 1988, pictures of children available for adoption were shown along with cats and dogs from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. (The Times/Beaver newspaper; source clipping 3/90 from A. J. Hildebrand.)

Animal Imagery in Other Discourse About Devalued People

*The Courier Journal in Louisville, KY, carried a brief item that invited people to "Adopt a Child" and had that title. It was placed (but without pictures) precisely adjacent to another item entitled "Adopt a Pet" (28/5/90; source item from Milton Tyree). Also, the descriptions of the children and the pets sound about the same.

*We discovered an anti-deinstitutionalization article written in 1976 by a professor of social psychiatry and chairman of the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard School of Public Health (no less!), Alexander H. Leighton, MD (who is rather well-known). The article was entitled "The Legend of the Fabulous Zoo," and told a parable in which the zoo stood for an institution, and the animals were the residents whom the author enumerated as "timid deer, fierce tigers, wild elephants, brilliant green swallows, warthogs, sneaky coyotes, wild asses, snakes in the grass, lazy sloths, great apes, laughing hyenas, goony birds, red-faced boobies," etc. The workers in the zoo were referred to as "kindly keepers." In time, they and their "happy children" decided that the animals had to be liberated. The keepers said that they would let the animals out just as fast as they could teach them to behave, but the children could not wait, so one day, the cage doors were opened. Quickly, the animals ate the kindly keepers and their children—and then each other. The parable tells us a lot about how even the highest-placed people in mental health view mentally wounded people.
*We were rather distressed to note that a psychology professor at Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts gave a talk in 1994 entitled "Research on the Humane Treatment of Institutionalized People and Captive Animals: How Each Can Benefit the Other" (Source item from Steve Holburn).

*A service for retarded people that the TIPS editor visited in Montpellier, France, in September 1967 was named Les Cigales, i.e., the grasshoppers, probably in an infelicitous allusion to La Fontaine’s poem, "La Cigale et la Fourmi," in which the grasshopper is a happy-go-lucky character who prefers to sing instead of work, and then in wintertime tries to sponge off her cousin, the ant, who has a work ethic. Sure enough, Les Cigales had an arts-and-crafts rather than work orientation.

*An article in the 1/84 issue of the American Journal of Mental Deficiency had the unfortunate title "Long-term Learning Deficits of Mentally Retarded Monkeys."

*Tear gas grenades used by police to smoke out suspects or disturbed people are called "ferret barricade penetrators." By using the name ferret, this ammunition implies that the people being smoked out are animals like ferrets that live in burrows. (Source item from Shirley Burghard.)

*In a British publication, a Professor Rabbit of the University of Manchester announced openings for research assistants and student assistantships for conducting research on cognitive skills via video games played by people between the ages of 3 and 90 (Source item supplied by Paul Williams).

*Upon his retirement, the head of the Spastic Society of Britain was asked if he could envision the day when a person with spasticity would head that charity. "That'd be like putting dogs and cats in charge of the Humane Society," he quipped (Mouth, 1994 sample copy).

*To our amazement, we discovered a 1983 article, entitled "Primitive Reflexes in Down's Syndrome," that investigated the "snout reflex" of people with Down’s syndrome, and found that they were more likely to have that reflex than a control group. We looked up "snout reflex" in several medical and psychological dictionaries, and were unable to find it. Could it be that the term had been coined exclusively in order to characterize people with Down’s syndrome?

*Scientists tried to teach a chimpanzee sign language. They named him Nim, which was an unfortunate historical image juxtaposition considering what nincompoop means (which comes from the Latin legal term, non compos mentis), and that one of the "royal lines of degeneracy" (with many retarded members) of the eugenic movement was called the Nam family.

*In order to conduct research on certain human diseases, it is often useful to work on the same, or an analogous condition, in animals, which is called an "animal model" of the human condition. An example is the problems confronted in the study of leprosy, where not too long ago, it was discovered that leprosy can be carried by, or transmitted to--of all things--armadillos. Now that we finally have an animal species that catches leprosy about like humans do, leprosy research should be facilitated.

In recent years, there has been some publicity about the discovery--even the "creation"--of a "mouse model for trisomy 21," also known as Down's syndrome (formerly Mongolism). Two noteworthy observations about this development are that the model is actually not a real model of trisomy 21, and that some of these models certainly can cast a peculiar image on humans who have the condition being modeled.

Founded in 1965, the John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Education and Human Development at George Peabody College in Nashville, Tenn., had been one of 12 national centers for research on mental retardation and related conditions. In early 1982, the center sent out a PR package of five large cards, each featuring a large picture, a large caption, and a brief explanation of one of its projects. One of the five captions was "animal models for mental retardation research," and the accompanying picture showed a human hand holding a rodent which most people would probably interpret as being a mouse or rat (it is actually a mouse). (Material submitted by Jerry Kiracofe).
In the past, some senior members of the center had acquired a reputation of not exactly being supporters of the normalization principle. Promotion of this kind of imagery certainly helps one understand why.

*Now here is a very bad image juxtaposition. An article in Science of 30 July '82 noted that "the human female falls between the beagle and monkey in spontaneous mammary tumor incidence" (p. 425). A prominent implication of this is that beagles and monkeys are excellent animals in which to study the likelihood that a substance will cause breast cancer in women.

*As one drives along the highway, one occasionally confronts signs proclaiming "cattle crossing," "deer crossing," or "railroad crossing." In Holyoke, Massachusetts, there has been a sign on a street for 15 years saying "slow blind boy crossing." The sign was probably meant to signal that motorists should go slow because a blind boy might be crossing here, but without punctuation, it can be read to mean that a slow blind boy is crossing. Presumably, the slow blind boy has in the meantime become a slow blind man--assuming of course that "blind boy" is not the name of a deer, cow, locomotive or elite passenger train. (Source item submitted by David Wetherow.)

Actors Behave in a Fashion That Reveals That They View Certain People as Animals/Animalistic

*David Hagner pointed out to us that Edward Tyson (1651-1708) was an early physical anthropologist who published the first detailed dissection of a chimpanzee, showing how it resembled the human more than other apes. Apparently based largely on this study, he became the director of the Bethlehem asylum for the insane in London. Apparently, it was felt that his expertise with apes qualified him eminently for dealing with the insane.

*At the Yerkes Primate Center at Atlanta's Emory University, a set of geometric symbols was developed in order to teach chimpanzees to communicate. This system has been called "Yerkish," giving the impression that it is a language even though it has only about 225 symbols. In 1981, researchers started teaching the system to retarded children who, unfortunately, generally performed much poorer than the chimps. Next, retarded children in a Georgia public school were taught Yerkish. The craze dissipated rather soon, as most crazes tend to do, but it certainly constituted a rather devastating deviancy image juxtaposition. The fact that an article in Newsweek that reported all this (8 July 85) prominently featured the picture of a chimp in front of a Yerkish communication board did not help any. If one's motive had been to explore symbol systems with retarded children rather than unconsciously acting out one's animal perceptions of such children, then one might have worked with the Bliss symbols which have at least as much logic as Yerkish, or a rebus system which has rarely been tried with the retarded.

*We learned (SHJ, 30/1/92) that rather peculiarly, a lot of people donate pet food to food banks for the poor. At last in part, this probably reflects an unconscious perception of the needy poor as subhuman. On the other hand, of course, a lot of elderly people eat canned dog food because it is cheap. Maybe the poor elderly "like to eat dog food," and maybe "everybody know this."

*A Northwestern University professor has been spending 8 hours every day training a parrot to speak, with the hope that this will help one understand autistic children or, as the article title put it, "Smart Parrot Offers Hope for Autistic Kids" (Daily Gazette, 24/5/90; source item from Linda Letendre).

*A participant at one of our workshops noted that mentally retarded people tend to get treated like dogs, whereas mentally disordered people get treated as if they were mad dogs.

Animal-Imagining by Other, or Multiple, Means

Note that some of the vignettes below involve both discourse and other juxtapositions.
*An organization in California made up mostly of medical people described as "pediatric physician intensivists" started a "center for fragile children" which it unfortunately called Kangaroo Kids. Its telephone number is 714/KID-7070. The reason for this unfortunate imaging became clearer from the logo, which showed a father and a mother kangaroo with a baby kangaroo in the mother's pouch (source item from Pam Walker).

*Will old watch dogs learn new tricks? We hate to be catty about it, but we found an article in the Sayre Pennsylvania Times to be both exceedingly funny as well as bizarre. The article announced that the county humane shelter would have new hours, and that the Humane Society was the primary shelter would have new hours, and that the Humane Society was the primary sponsor of a new pet therapy program for nursing homes in the county. The first pet therapy session was to be led by a person who was a "trained and experienced sociologist and counselor" who, believe it or not, was also a member of an organization called Community Watch Dogs. The pet therapy was to be accompanied by music and songs such as "How Much Is That Doggie In The Window?" and "Old Dog Tray."

*In Western Massachusetts, a 1988 picnic for handicapped people was sponsored by the International Order of Trench Rats, a veterans group. (Source item from Debi Reidy.)

*Niko Tinbergen is famous for his work on animal behavior, for which he received a Nobel Prize. We do not consider it particularly positive imagery that he and his wife have authored a book in 1983 entitled Autistic Children: New Hope for Cure. This development is much along the line of so many others that equate devalued people and animals--and that often even put animals at a higher level than handicapped people.

*It is hard to believe that a 1988 book with the title "Where's Chimpy?" should deal with a child that has Down's syndrome, though thankfully the child's name is actually Misty, and Chimpy is her stuffed monkey. However, all one knows when one sees the book cover is the picture of a child with Down's syndrome and the title, "Where's Chimpy?". That such a potent image juxtaposition of Down's syndrome and monkeyness should be produced by human service workers (as this one was), and receive positive reviews (without reservations about the animal-imaging) by parent organizations, shows how much further we have to go on the image issue. The newsletter of the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (founded by parents of retarded children) which carried such a positive review (SACL Dialect, 1&2/91) carried--at the same time--several items in support of some of the recent language crazes that are supposed to be positive.

*One of several image associations between unintelligent people and monkeys is found in the medieval practice of making gaping human heads out of clay, with the mouth being used as a receptacle for flambeaus that were used as a means of illumination. In German, these heads were called "mouthapes" (Maulaffen) because they "gaped" the way stupid people were commonly imaged as gaping, as if they were monkeys.

*Canada's first and only theatre company made up of blind actors unfortunately has been putting on some pretty image-jeopardizing performances. Their first play was "Duck Tales," in which the blind people portrayed all sorts of animals, as members of something like a barnyard (source item from Max Korn).

*A veterinarian served as a member of a 6-person assessment team of the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities that visited state institutions offering advice on service quality. Now if one saw a psychotherapist as a member of a team evaluating dog pounds, one might infer that the dogs were considered human.

*Hitler loved dogs, and early during his dictatorship, he was often depicted in the media with his German Shepherds. One day he realized that this constituted a negative image juxtaposition and thereafter refused to be depicted with any dogs. He thus caught on to what the people in show business had known
for generations, namely, that it was always bad to follow a dog act. Only the most junior performers who could not do anything about it would permit themselves to be cast immediately after a dog act. The principle was still known during the days of the Ed Sullivan TV show where no established performers would accept the spot after a dog show—which was a not uncommon act in his variety show. Yet there are still millions of human service (and other) people who deny the reality of image juxtapositions and image transfer.

*The Carlsbad, NM, Association for Retarded Citizens sought an executive director in 1988 for its operation which was interpreted to include "7 group homes...100 day service clients...and 6000 chickens" (flyer from Hank Bersani).

*We kick you not! A 1991 ad showed a kicking ass, advertising Ass-Pirin Acres, which listed membership in the Empire State Council on Horsemanship for the Disabled. (Source item from Chris Liuzzo.)

*In Blackburn, England, there is (or was) an institution for mentally handicapped people called Brock Hall. Brock is a colloquial English word for badger, an animal which is commonly viewed as a pest. Some of the staff at Brock Hall, after having gone through normalization training, objected to the picture of a rodent-like badger which adorned the stationery of the institution. However, there were yet other workers who wanted to keep the badger on the stationery. Eventually, the staff split into two factions, and in order to pacify both of them, the administration decided to have two sets of stationery printed up: one retaining the badger logo, and the other without the badger and with the words "Brock Hall Hospital" in small print. Thus, those employees who wanted to send letters without the deviancy-imaging logo could do so. However, a picture of a badger still continued to appear on all letters posted from Brock Hall, in that the words "Brock Hall—caring for people who are mentally handicapped" and a picture of a rat-like badger were printed onto each letter by the institution's postage metering machine. This had been going on for some time, but the people who had fought so hard to have the badger removed from the stationery did not realize it, until we received a letter from them and inquired what in the world that peculiar animal was doing on their envelope. They were very surprised to find that after all their efforts, the badger still appeared, if not on the stationery, then on the envelope.

*In St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada, there is headquartered a "Consumer Organization of Disabled People of Newfoundland and Labrador." Its acronym is COD, and its logo is a big fish (presumably a cod) limping along on two crutches. (Source item submitted by Michael Steer.)

*An incredibly poor-taste deviancy image was contained in a full-page advertisement in the June 1984 issue of the Exceptional Parent. The advertisement featured a computer-based machine that upon the touch of one or more keys will speak messages, print them out on a paper strip, and display them on a scanner. So far so good, but sitting on top of the machine was a parrot or parakeet, and big letters said TAWK!...TAWK!...TAWK! This evokes the image of the handicapped communicator being a talking bird. It also does not help that historically, birds have been used as an icon in art for mental disorder and folly.

*There is an "animal rehabilitation center" in Georgia known as Noah's Ark which is described as a "home for unwanted animals." In 1993 it added a 10-bedroom building, right in the center of its 122 acre grounds, for unwanted foster children, and there were plans to also erect buildings for terminally ill babies and abused children where they could "live the rest of their lives." This is a multi-whammy: the concept of people rehab. is juxtaposed to animal rehab., and throw-away children and throw-away animals are actually physically co-located.

*There are all sorts of rehabilitation centers (for humans), but their image was not enhanced by the launching of a "raptor rehabilitation center" in Oregon (1993 news item).
*In the ad section of the Guardian (20/1/93), Paul Williams found advertisements for anti-poverty service managers, social policy strategists, and disability care workers placed right next to an ad for a zoo manager.

*When members of an organization of handicapped people in Syracuse get together, the Call-a-Bus cannot manage to take care of all their transportation needs, and so they get the only accessible big bus--one decorated all over with animals, and the big words "Zoo bus" on it, because it ordinarily runs to the zoo. (Source information from Hank Bersani and Rannveig Traustadottir.)

*The owner of a private zoo in New Jersey refused to admit children with Down's syndrome to the monkey house because he claimed that they would upset his chimpanzees (USN&WR, 18/9/89). We would have thought that the image juxtaposition would have upset the children's parents.

*The cover of UC People of Fall '83 showed a picture of a group of people at the 1983 National Cerebral Palsy (athletic) Games. At least nine of them were in wheelchairs, holding up signs such as "Dallas" and "Houston Challengers"--but one of them, who unfortunately appeared to be Spanish-American, held up the sign "Austin Animals."

*A very bad image juxtaposition was created in Syracuse when the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals asked food banks for the poor to give it food that they could not use (SHJ, 30/1/92).

*Humane societies have long put to death unwanted pets, but now they have a new alternative: give them to older people. At least 15 humane societies have joined the "Purina Pets for People Program" in which the Ralston Purina Company (well-known for dog food) provides a pet starter set of resources, undoubtedly looking forward to eventually benefitting from the pet food that the older people will buy—if not for themselves, then at least for their new pet.

*Retarded people can have the worst kind of luck. An 11-year-old mentally retarded boy in Texas was drowning. That's the bad news; the good news was that he was saved; the bad news was that he was saved--by a swimming pig, and pictures re-enacting the scene or showing the boy and the pig nuzzling were published by UPI and many local papers in 1984.

Conclusion to Animal Imagery

Obviously, the interpretation of devalued people as subhuman animals is—so to speak—alive and well; in fact, we can safely assume that it is a timeless universal, found everywhere in human history and in our future.

Not all animal imagery will be read as negative. For instance, some animals have positive connotations, such as eagles and lions. Some have mixed connotations, such as dogs. Some have almost exclusively negative connotations, such as insects, worms, and rats. But isn't it remarkable how rarely devalued people are shown in juxtaposition to animals in ways that are highly positive? Even this would not be without risk if the devalued people at issue were ones that are commonly perceived as subhuman; after all, even lions and eagles are still animals, and in our culture are considered "killable."

The Social Advocacies

The last time we carried social advocacy as a major theme was in the Aug./Oct./Dec. 1995 issue.

The Need for Personal Advocacy

No amount of collective advocacy can replace the need for personal advocacy, preferably of the one-to-one kind.
Here is a striking example of what can happen when a very devalued person has no personal advocate, and no involved family. A homeless man in Baltimore was jailed on suspicion of having set fire to a car. Somehow, his case never came to arraignment, and when the man asked a social worker when his court date would be, and to please look into it, he was ignored. Not being particularly assertive himself, he languished in jail for a year, and neither the local prosecutor nor the public defender were aware of his existence in the chaotic large local jail. In fact, the state of Maryland around that time had to take control of the jail because the local authorities had lost control of it (AP in SHJ, 14/8/91) -- a fact not widely known.

Officials at a public housing project in England were notified that children were seen jumping out of the windows of an apartment. They sent someone to investigate. Unable to get into the apartment, the housing authority the same day had it boarded up. It turned out that inside lived a 74-year-old deaf mentally retarded man who may or may not have been alive when the apartment was boarded up. At any rate, his body was found several weeks later after one of his sisters reported him missing (Sunday Times, 3/9/95; source item from Michael Steer).

In Queens, a borough of New York City, a 70-year-old mother died, leaving two severely retarded sons, age 38 and 45. Unable to fend for themselves and without anyone looking in on the family, they both died of starvation, apparently aggravated by lack of heating.

* Doren, B., Bullis, M., & Benz, M. R. (1996). Predictors of victimization experiences of adolescents with disabilities in transition. Exceptional Children, 63(1), 7-18. This is yet another study that showed that emotionally disturbed adolescents who have low social skills are more likely to be violated or otherwise victimized than either people with other impairments, or with higher social skills.

**The Need For Collective Advocacy**

Personal advocacy, and advocacy for collectivities, complement each other.

In an open society, when powerful interests of societally valued people feel themselves threatened or insulted, they are highly apt to organize themselves and fight back with vigor. Indeed, powerful groups will usually fight even if it is only their image that has been wounded. The same is rarely true when devalued groups suffer injury.

In the 1970s, the record industry began to market a large number of a certain kind of record that depicted women on their covers who were being physically brutalized -- and who gave every indication of enjoying it. For instance, the Rolling Stones album "Black and Blue" was advertised by a picture that depicted a woman bound and bruised -- smiling and looking very seductive. Producers of these kinds of albums were taken to court by a group called Women Against Violence Against Women. One company that was taken to court for engaging in this kind of advertising was Warner Communications, Inc. It took two years of litigation to overcome the resistance of Warner Communications, who finally capitulated with the pious declaration that "the Warner Communications, Inc. record group opposes the depiction of violence--against women or men--on album covers and in related promotional material."

Women have become a very powerful class in society. The problem is that many devalued groups do not have such powerful self-advocacy capacities, and the advocacy (if any) carried out on their behalf by others is often ideologically deficient. For instance, advocacy on behalf of handicapped people is often carried out by groups who feel themselves dependent upon certain funders (charitable contributions, or public and governmental sources) whom they do not wish to alienate. One of the worst offenders along these lines has been the Muscular Dystrophy Association which has engaged in, and condoned, orgies of devaluing imagery in order to raise the charity dollar, even though the association is fully aware of the criticism that has widely been voiced against its fund-raising strategies. Obviously, women in society are free of at least this type of constraint, as are all sorts of other normative special interest groups. In fact, some special interest groups feel so powerful that they are virtually oblivious to whom they offend, how often, and how many of them. One example of the latter has long been the American Medical Association. More recently, some homosexual groups (e.g., ACT-UP) have apparently felt the same way.
In contrast to the women above who felt it offensive that women were depicted as enjoying being brutalized, we might look at an ad by a manufacturer of physical restraints to be used in psychiatric settings. One such ad shows a person strapped into a restraint—smiling happily. There was no outcry, no forming of action organizations, no suing of the manufacturer—not even by the already existing advocacy groups in mental health and mental retardation. Indeed, had a suit been filed, it would probably have been dismissed with laughter.

The Conflict of Interest Issue

The issue of conflict of interest is at the heart of advocacy. The less a party has a conflict of interests with another party, the better it is in a position to advocate for the interests of the latter party.

*It is very common for advertising and lobbying firms to simultaneously or successively represent diametrically opposed interests. For instance, one of the more prominent such firms in the US simultaneously got hired to represent tobacco interests while lobbying for health research funds (Newsweek, 17/6/96).

*Pie behind the dike. In the late 1970s, the government of the Netherlands introduced a most generous scheme of interrelated human service subsidies, pensions and benefits for dependent people at a level so immense it staggers our imagination. One single person would get the cost of the residential service and of all personal adaptive devices, a clothing allowance, a vacation allowance, a travel allowance, a personal spending allowance, etc., etc. Handicapped persons who otherwise would be poor were suddenly able to dispose of a gratifying amount of surplus funds after covering their basic living expenses. After a few months, they began to acquire radios, stereo sets, television sets and other items. Once these common desires were sated, people began to put more money into their savings accounts. All these developments resulted in a remarkable increase in people’s interest in the welfare of handicapped people, and there was a dramatic increase in petitions, by family members and others, for guardianship over handicapped people. It appears that on the one hand, people were concerned that handicapped people would spend their money unwisely, and were attempting to prevent this by gaining guardianship over the handicapped person. On the other hand, other individuals apparently wanted to gain control over, or even access to, the money which handicapped people were receiving and/or accumulating. At any rate, the benevolent increase in pensions above the minimum poverty level had the paradoxical result of increasing the amount of structure and legal control exercised over handicapped persons.

In a disfunctional world, it is hard "to win."

*Three group homes run by the British association of parents of retarded people in Birmingham were taken over by the local government after the service in the homes was ruled to be of unacceptable quality, and that the residents were worse off than if they had stayed in an institution (Times, 28/7/95; in Speak Out 7/96). Similarly, there were revelations of mistreatment of pupils at a school run by the national voluntary organization concerned with people with cerebral palsy in Britain (Daily Express, 2/2/96). These news items also once again underline two facts. (a) Parents do not necessarily "know best," and cannot be assumed automatically to be the best advocates for their children, as we so often hear blabbered in a mindless fashion. (b) An organization cannot expect to be able to both run a service and to be an advocate for the people it serves without eventually finding that the two functions are incompatible.

*A gruesome example of one kind of associational death as a result of having become a service empire with a conflict of interests is an association of parents and friends of retarded people in a certain city where this association had long operated a mammoth service empire, including a highly segregated school for a large number of retarded children. When proposals were advanced by some association members that the school ought to be taken over by the public school system, the staff became so threatened that they got all of their family members to join the association, to subsequently pack the annual meeting, and to vote in their own slate of officers. What this then meant was that the staff of the association had become their own bosses in a self-serving empire, where the staff were also the principal clients in the sense that the school could be viewed as existing to provide them with the kinds of jobs and setting they wanted for themselves.
Citizen Advocacy

Citizen Advocacy is an advocacy form in which one individual, competent citizen volunteer is matched as a personal advocate to one impaired or otherwise disadvantaged person. The volunteer is called a citizen advocate, and the needy person is called a protégé. The citizen advocate is not compensated with money or other goods for the advocacy, so as to avoid conflicts of interest. The citizen advocate can fill a wide range of roles and functions from that of an informal friend-advocate to that of a legal guardian, depending on the protégé's needs and the advocate's capabilities and desires. In most cases, these advocacy commitments should be long-term and open-ended. Thus, some may last for life. The advocate and protégé are matched via an independent Citizen Advocacy office—indepenent in its funding and governance of human services against which advocates may have to advocate, so as to enable maximal freedom from conflict of interest. This Citizen Advocacy office also provides ongoing support and advice to the advocate and protégé, as needed.

*We were told that of all the Citizen Advocacy relationships established by the Citizen Advocacy branch offices under the umbrella of the Georgia Advocacy Office (at least through 1995), none had ever entailed a relationship hurtful to the protégé, and requiring the intervention of Citizen Advocacy office staff.

*One sure way to damage Citizen Advocacy is to call everything but Citizen Advocacy "citizen advocacy." An example of this is the Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled in New York State referring to boards of visitors of state institutions as constituting "citizen advocacy" (e.g., Quality of Care, March/April 1982). Each of the state's institutions for the mentally retarded or disordered has such a board of visitors. These are legislatively established but essentially play only an advisory role to the respective superintendents of the institutions.

*A bureaucrat's vision of Citizen Advocacy. A few years back, we received some information on how a government office in one of the Canadian provinces thought a citizen advocate should be linked up to a mentally retarded person. The request to be an advocate should first go to the government regional services director who conducts liaison with the regional mental retardation coordinator, who then consults with service providers and others and interviews the advocate and makes a recommendation to the regional director who may also interview the prospective advocate at this point, who then makes a recommendation to the provincial Public Trustee (a sort of public guardian) who also has the option of interviewing the advocate and who has the final word, and who must notify both the regional director and the advocate. Real Citizen Advocacy would never submit itself to such controls by people who will probably have to be advocated against, nor would it let citizen volunteerism be thusly degraded.

*Citizen Advocacy is like a cup of tea--isn't it? The clever little item below was carried a few years ago by the Lincoln (Neb.) ARC newsletter.

CITIZEN ADVOCATES ARE:
Like Fords .................................. they have better ideas.
Like Coke .................................. they're the real thing.
Like PanAm .................................. they make the going great.
Like Pepsi .................................. they've got a lot to give.
Like Standard Oil .......................... you expect more and you get it.
Like Dial Soap ............................. they care more, don't you wish everyone did.
Like VO Hair Spray ......................... their goodness holds in all kinds of weather.
Like Hallmark Cards ...................... they care enough to give the very best.
Most of All ................................ Citizen Advocates are like Frosted Flakes:

THEY'RE GRRRRRRRRRRRRREAT!
*Sample menu for a Citizen Advocacy banquet (to be held in the ballroom of the Normalizat Inn): Advocado salad with baked protectoes, French CrAPES, and café expressive-o (submitted by Susan Thomas).

*We draw attention to the fact that the Citizen Advocacy Forum is the only periodical in the world (other than newsletters of specific Citizen Advocacy offices) that is exclusively devoted to Citizen Advocacy. Subscribing to it is a must for anyone interested in this advocacy forum. Subscriptions are as follows from: P.O. Box 86, Beaver, PA 15009

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Advocacy by a Collectivity For A Collectivity

*During its early years, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) was concerned primarily with coming to the defense of people's very basic rights, and especially their free speech. In the early 1970s, something happened to the ACLU as it began to take on a series of rather incredible cases. For instance, it was instrumental in obtaining a Supreme Court ruling that female children could obtain abortions without parental consent or even knowledge. More recently, ACLU argued against outlawing of stores that specialize in the sale of drug-related accessories to juveniles. One wonders whether there is any kind of decadent society-destroying practice which ACLU might not wish to promote or defend.

*A noteworthy organization in the US is Common Cause which was founded in 1970 by John Gardner (author of Self-Renewal) in order to promote open, democratic and self-renewing processes within government. Membership continues to start at $20 per year, and includes a subscription to a very informative periodical (six times a year) called Common Cause. The address is 1250 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington DC 20036. The organization is nonpartisan, attempting to induce all parties, and government at all levels (particularly the national) to function in a fashion which is open, nonsecretive, objective, accessible, fair and just. In its early years, it had been gratifyingly effective in bringing about legislation designed to reduce secretiveness in government and public life, in making apportionment of voting districts fair, in combating the control over politicians by their contributors and by special interests, in passing "sunset" provisions under which legislation has expiration dates which will force legislators to re-examine legislation from time to time, in combating conflict of interests situations, in attaining civil service and regulatory reform, and in promoting energy conservation measures. However, the fact that structural efforts will be essentially in vain in a society in which the people simply lack(s) moral fiber is strikingly underlined by the fact that despite all of these successes, US elected officials are probably more controlled by money donors and special interests than prior to these reforms. Those who spend the most, especially in contributions to elected representatives, have the most to say about what kind of laws get passed or repealed.

*A very important role of voluntary associations on behalf of devalued groups is that of monitoring the public. One specific form of monitoring is through the formation of media watch committees which reward media for positive interpretations of a group of people at risk, while censoring them for devaluing portrayals. An example of a media watch success story comes from San Francisco, where a few years ago, a Gray Panthers media watch task force was able to get three radio stations to cease broadcasting the Christmas song (which first appeared in 1980) entitled "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer," which has the following words:

When we found her Christmas morning at the scene of the attack,
She had footprints on her forehead and incriminating Santa marks on her back.
She'd been drinkin' too much eggnog, and we begged her not to go,
But she forgot her medication and she staggered out the door.
Now we are all so proud of Grandpa, he's been taking it so well.
See him in there watching football, drinking beer, and playing cards with cousin Mel.
Now the goose is on the table, and the pudding made of fig,
And the blue and silver candles that would just have matched the hair of Grandma’s wig.
It’s not Christmas without Grandma, all the family dressed in black,
And we just can’t help but wonder, should we open up her gifts or send them back.

The task force told reporters that the lyrics trivialized, promoted and increased the acceptability of violence against women, especially elder women; that it perpetuated negative stereotypes of older men as uncaring and callous; and portrayed older women as expendable members of their families.

Other Social Advocacy Forms

*There is a private organization in NY City called Youth Advocacy Center. Founded in 1993, and supported by many foundations, it tries to "empower" (we dislike the term) youths in foster care to "advocate for themselves."

*Sufferers from ingrown toenails, unite! People’s social isolation and alienation in the midst of the crowds, their almost idolatrous expectations upon life, the proliferation of human service workers who are full of false promises, and other trends have combined so as to spawn not only myriads of "therapies" that promise "cure" of virtually any form of discomfort and suffering, but to also give rise to some really remarkable voluntary associations and self-help groups--practically one for every kind of human suffering or affliction. While the TI has steadfastly promoted the idea of citizen movements and voluntary associations (especially on behalf of people other than oneself, and on behalf of disadvantaged people), some of the voluntary associations that are now springing up are almost narcissistically preoccupied with their own suffering navels. An example is a group of "mothers of murdered teenagers." At one time, people died like flies, and death and mourning were taken for granted as an ordinary part of human existence. One might conceivably understand some kind of helping form or voluntary association dealing with bereavement, but becoming so specialized as to organizing only mothers, and only those of "murdered teenagers," goes too far. If one took this a few steps further, one might have voluntary associations made up only of people whose maternal grandmothers died of tuberculosis. Of course, the mental professions eat this sort of thing up, and develop highly specialized forms of counseling requiring special preparation, training programs, degrees, professional associations, special meetings, and of course a lot of research on adjustment patterns and complications of people who lost their maternal grandmothers to tuberculosis.

*In some legal jurisdictions, the cost of becoming a legal guardian of a person has skyrocketed dramatically because the guardianship process has become vastly more bureaucratized. This was probably done with the good intention of safeguarding it, but a major beneficiary of all this is now the legal profession. People who thought to safeguard the guardianship process probably had not anticipated this. It now also means that parents can become discouraged from seeking guardianship over their dependent son or daughter who has come of legal age.

*A Mennonite congregation in Goshen, Indiana, agreed to assume the guardianship of a retarded young man if his parents should die. They did this in response to an inquiry by the parents who were setting up their will. The plans include supervision of a trust fund, managing the retarded man’s living arrangements, and otherwise acting on his behalf in matters of health, education, welfare, social and religious life, etc. (Dialogue on Disabilities, Winter 1983). This kind of an arrangement is very unusual, and of course has many advantages, though its disadvantages must not be overlooked. These include the fact that eventually, guardianship-related activities always boil down to either action by one or more specific committed individuals on a voluntary basis, or by people paid to do so. Too often, assumption of guardianship by a collectivity is assumed to automatically take care of such things, rather than eventually devolving to specific individuals.
**Miscellaneous**

*The good news is that there appears to be a trend that forces nursing homes and other service agencies to admit both individual and collective advocates to the premises so that they can visit and talk with clients. However, legal access has sometimes been gained only under state access laws, and may be more difficult to obtain in those states that do not have such laws.

*In Germany, handicapped people have been conducting "cripple tribunals." Among the parties that were accused, tried, convicted and sentenced (mostly in absentia) were various governmental ministers, institutions, the rehabilitation "industry," voluntary associations in the field, pity-and charity-based private fund-raising efforts, and citizens who respond to such efforts. Among other things, one such tribunal pointed to all kinds of abuses which had hitherto not come into the light of day, and referred to them as being not exceptions but merely the tip of the iceberg. Unfortunately, one article that reported this development picked up the wrong message. Its headline said "They call themselves cripples."

**Perversion or Subversion of Advocacy**

*How bad guys respond to good guys. Below is a letter exchange between a committed human service worker and the principalities and powers of darkness at higher levels within his agency. The exchange started with the following letter by the advocate (David Schwartz) to a fellow worker in the same agency: "P. has recently complained to us that he is getting inadequate amounts of food at his Family Care Home. He reported that for breakfast this morning, he had cold cereal, juice and coffee. We looked at his lunch when he brought it in today and he had one thin peanut butter sandwich, one small cookie and one banana. We have noticed that P. has for some time been buying food at the store to supplement his regular meals. Although I understand that P. is a diabetic, and his diet is modified accordingly, the above seems clearly inadequate. One cannot expect P. to work a full day, for instance, with a breakfast composed of carbohydrates and a stimulant. P. does report that he gets eggs once a week on Saturday morning. P. also told us that he is and has been experiencing chest pains in the evening when he lies down after dinner. I am sure you will want to investigate this."

The following response came from the superior of the worker who had been addressed: "We are responding directly to your memo concerning P., but more specifically to the problem which this memo represents. For some time now our team has been concerned in regard to your intrusion into the clinical treatment of our patients, which is clearly outside the area of your responsibility or expertise. While we do appreciate your informing us of any problems or observations concerning our patients attending your programs, we must insist that you refrain from prescribing solutions or expressing opinions in your conversations with our patients unless these problems are directly related to their functioning in your program. If you wish, we will be happy to discuss this matter more fully at one of our future team meetings."

Nor was this all. The chief of the person who had been addressed by the advocate added a memo of his own to the advocate: "Mr. (name deleted)’s response to your letter more or less indicates the staff’s reaction and how they perceive your role. Interest and concern for patients could be expressed in ways that are detrimental to their welfare, and I have to agree with my staff here that this seems to be the case. Involvement is turning into interference and this might be a good time for all of us concerned to get together and discuss these things."

Obviously, the good news is that good people keep sticking out their necks. The bad news is that they’re highly apt to get them chopped off.

*In a headline, the APA Monitor (March 1982), official organ of the American Psychological Association, referred to self-help groups such as Recovery Inc. as a "back-up for professional therapy." It apparently never occurs to many highly professionalized people that in many instances, and in some areas in most instances, the artificial and boughten helping forms are really a very inferior back-up to the informal voluntary and culturally-embedded helping forms.
*An extremely subtle tactic of undermining a social advocacy effort occurs when the internal ombudsmans (essentially, collective staff advocates) of service agencies are so selected as to be either very young, and/or looking and dressing like hippies. In one such instance, an institutional staff advocate was a young man who might be mistaken for a college freshman (see pictures in This Month In Mental Health, March 1981, 3(11).) One can easily see the jeopardy that such ombudsmans are in when they try to advocate against senior professionals with vast amounts of training, experience, and maturity.

This approach contrasts sharply with the Scandinavian practice of selecting ombudsmans who are mature people who have established a positive reputation and who are highly apt to be trusted by most of the parties likely to be involved in a controversy.

*Help endangered recluses to remain reclusive! So-called "protective services" for elderly people can be extremely dangerous to them, as already noted in the early 1970s. One class of elderly people at risk of being "protected" are so-called "recluses." People who lead rather solitary lives that are on the odd side are apt to have society swoop down upon them, in essence forbidding them to lead their peculiar but harmless lifestyles, and quite often, the social intervention costs the recluses not only freedom and autonomy, but also whatever possessions they own. Recluses are often de facto incarcerated; while they are, their abodes may be bull-dozed and confiscated to pay for the "service" they receive, etc.

*Not only may advocates exercise bad judgment as to where they put their priorities, and when to escalate the level and formality of advocacy efforts, but a poor choice of priorities may actually become an out-and-out perversion of an advocacy effort, totally distract it from important issues, and possibly undermine its credibility. An example is a formal complaint, utilizing very legalese language and citation of various laws and regulations, placed by a "Mental Patients’ Advocacy Project" office with state officials because an employee reportedly had compared the communication ability of a client at issue with that of a dog. Such comparison certainly is not social role-valorizing, and suggests a need for education of employees in Social Role Valorization, and screening for their general ideological orientation, rather than a formal complaint, especially since the remark was not made in the presence of the client and thus could not even be construed to constitute a verbal abuse.

*In 1996, we even encountered the phrase "advocacy for the use of education technology," in part based on the absurd assertion that "educational technology is...a major vehicle in the movement toward education reform."

*When one single bank manager decided against opening an account for an employed mentally retarded man who applied for one, the entire state of Connecticut passed a law forbidding banks to discriminate in this fashion. This is another example of a typical contemporary overkill in the rights domain. Chances are overwhelming that an educational or persuasive approach would have changed the bank manager’s mind, and instead there was a rush to extreme and state-wide formalization, piling safeguards and laws on top of each other.

Miscellaneous Human Service New

*Favell, J. E., Realon, R. E., & Sutton, K. A. (1996). Measuring and increasing the happiness of people with profound mental retardation and physical handicaps. Behavioral Interventions, 11(1), 47-58. Jean Vanier has long said that mentally retarded people, not being people of intellect, are people of relationships and heart. This is why l’Arche communities are so intensely focused on relationships, and why so many mentally retarded people have flourished in such an atmosphere. This article is a formal “research” validation of Vanier’s insight. It found that one of the best ways to dramatically increase the happiness of at least certain mentally retarded people is by means of simple social interaction. This is certainly an extremely low-tech way of improving what so many people unfortunately call “quality of life,” and upon which they expend unimaginable intellectual effort.