

The Safeguards Letter

A Publication of OHIO SAFEGUARDS

NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

AUTUMN, 1992

DESIGN FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT WORKSHOP

The ninth annual January workshop sponsored by OHIO SAFEGUARDS will be *Design for Accomplishment: A Workshop about Planning*, with John O'Brien of Responsive Systems Associates, Atlanta, GA. This event will take place Monday, January 25 through Wednesday, January 27, 1993 at the Fawcett Center for Tomorrow (OSU), 2400 Olentangy River Road, Columbus, OH 43210. The registration fee for the workshop will be \$200.00.

This event is intended for anyone who is involved in or concerned about making plans for how organizations or communities must change so that people with disabilities can be enabled to live richer lives. The workshop's design allows those who attend (people are encouraged to come in groups, representing their communities) to search together for better ways to organize "human service resources" in their own communities. Participants at previous workshops of this kind have included: members of families of people with disabilities, administrators of both state and local organizations, Board members of both public and private agencies, and staff members who offer direct help to people with disabilities (e.g., in finding or keeping jobs, in acquiring or maintaining a home, etc.). This event offers planners (or those interested in the plans that get made) a unique opportunity both to hear about exciting ideas that may affect their organizations or communities and to work together with others at devising ways to apply those ideas "back home".

This workshop has been previously offered in Columbus in 1986, 1987, and 1988, and in Canton in 1990. For more information, or to ensure receipt of a flyer about the workshop, contact OHIO SAFEGUARDS.

ABOUT KNOWLEDGE Alan Tyne

You can, if you wish, believe in "The Truth". Whether individuals really have any choice in the matter of belief is hard to say. We often speak of being "drawn" or "driven" to belief, and that's probably a genuine reflection of our feelings. Many observers suggest the social groups and organisations we adhere to affect the formation of our beliefs--churches, for instance, or "the Academic Community", or political parties often seem to provide a basis for belief in "The Truth". Whether we have choice, belief seems to reflect decisions made to act as if certain things were so. Some decisions we make clearly, some contrarywise, on some we dither, prevaricate, and hold simultaneous

and conflicting positions. Thus is the basis of our belief.

You can believe, too, that "The Truth" is organised in what by good fortune, seems to us--Western, 20th century men and women--as a sensible way. Often this is portrayed neatly as a hierarchy, or a kind of tree, but drawn upside down so the big ideas are at the top, and the little ones lower down. Believing that truth is organised like this is again a decision, if not a choice.

The decision that you personally have access to "The Truth" is another belief. In varying degrees it may reflect arrogance, or

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simply a current stage in a struggle to comprehend better a small but accessible slice of the universe. To be convinced unswervingly, with no doubts at all, that you have identified clearly the main trunk and branches, and have a clear sense of where the many smaller bits go, is probably arrogance. Our paths through life teach us we may each have some good fortune in identifying the twiggy bits near to us, checking them against accumulated experience and that of our friends--those we've come (by whatever process) to respect. We sometimes have a little success too, at spotting some of the connections between things--or, at least, what *seem* like connections...here...now. But the chances that any one of us, or even a decent sized group, might gain access to the whole thing, or that the connections we see here, now, might be all there is to see--these chances really do seem quite small.

Nevertheless, you can if you want discount the probabilities, and lay claim to "Authority". Like the climbers on the mountain, you may choose to pin your own personal flag (or that of the group you adhere to or who helped you the most) there. The outcomes will probably depend a lot on who recognizes your flag.

You may believe instead in truth (No Capitals), and that belief comes in several kinds. One has it that truth consists of the little bit of "The Truth" that we personally in our hazy, incomplete and faulty (that is to say, "human") way have managed to comprehend so far. A second has it that there may or may not be "Truth", and that we will likely never know, for sure. Our quest for understanding will always be bounded by human frailty and will always lead us to be dealing, at best, with truth, rather than The Truth. A third belief has it that there is definitely no Truth--and that seems to be about as arrogant as the claim to Authority.

If you are in the business of dealing with truth (of whichever kind), rather than Truth, images of the hierarchical organisation of knowledge are more likely to be seen as simply helpful devices we've invented to help calm our panics when confronted by what seems (honestly) like chaotic information. Knowledge

and truth are more likely to be depicted as irregular, unclear, almost certainly untidy and profoundly inconvenient. If the debility that goes with belief in The Truth is likely to be arrogance--claiming an authority not rightfully yours--then the debility that goes with belief in truth is likely to be irresponsibility--denial of any sense or meaning in things, the relativity of everything, the ascendancy of style and transitory fads, the futility of commitment--and so on.

Whilst it's likely none of us will avoid a life full of error, it's probably best for us and others if we work at avoiding error nonetheless. With effort and some luck we may avoid excesses both of arrogance and irresponsibility. At the same time, we may aspire to some of the virtues of both beliefs--staunchness and fixity of purpose on the one hand, a willingness to tolerate uncertainty and chaos on the other.

We work in wide and disparate fields, linked by some shared visions and purpose, connected through friendship, locality, networks and associations, formal organisation. As individuals and groups we make our tracks using the maps of belief we've decided (or are still trying to decide) on. In our discourse with one another the natural scope for rivalry, competition, mean pettiness and other human frailty is often compounded by accidental inaccuracy, failures of understanding, thoughts poorly expressed and communicated.

We can, though, work to avoid some of these, not just for our own ease, but for the sake of the vision and the purpose we *do* share--that those we serve be better served.

- To say, for instance, that someone "Does not tell The Truth", may make a limited kind of sense to people who can see the Capital T's. But it may confuse people who only deal in the truth. People who can see that may think the confusion was on purpose. Thus grows distrust, and a little more elbow-room for mean pettiness to creep in.

- To speak of a "denial of Authority" may make a little sense (again, capital letters

and theories of knowledge permitting), but only within the field of discourse bounded and acknowledged by belief in The Truth. Among humble seekers of the truth, it spreads confusion. Seeing that, we may think it was purposefully done; distrust will do its corrosive work.

• To be disdainful of the teaching and learning that grows out of day-to-day struggle with the chaos, irrationality and cupidity of the human service system may encourage more people to keep their hands clean in the Pursuit of Truth. The flight from engagement with practical action and all its awful compromise leaves

much truth undiscovered. To characterize all such work, even by default, as irresponsible, is arrogance indeed.

In our sharing of vision and purpose we can afford disagreement (even about the nature of disagreement), but we cannot afford disrespect. We've come to our different decisions about truth or Truth often enough for good and sufficient reasons. It is time to welcome, celebrate, clarify and *respect* the differences, I think.

Alan Tyne
Colchester, England

THANKS VERY MUCH!

During 1992, OHIO SAFEGUARDS received contributions in support of *The Safeguards Letter* from the following individuals and groups:

Ann Hinkle, Troy, OH
Nancy Ray, Columbus, OH
Jeff Smith, Chillicothe, OH
Marjorie Sellers, Jackson, OH
Jack Yates, Stoughton, MA
Mary Ann Roncker, Cincinnati, OH
Vicki Grosh, Columbus, OH
Bertha Blaney-Young, Attleboro, MA
Louise Heidler, Hamilton, OH
Teresa O'Connell, Marysville, OH
Loren Phelps, New Concord, OH
The Arc of Ohio, Columbus, OH
Jo Krippenstapel, Columbus, IN
Renate Pealer, Chillicothe, OH
C. Koor, Revere, MA
E. Feralto, Revere, MA
D. Tufo, Revere, MA
RADD, Inc., Fairfield, OH

Our thanks to one and all!

SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION WORKSHOPS IN INDIANA

The **Indiana Safeguards Initiative** (OHIO SAFEGUARDS' western kin) announces a schedule of workshops that will take place during the spring of 1993. There will be three 3-day introductory workshops on **Social Role Valorization** that will review in depth many of the critical issues concerning the provision of quality human services including public attitudes and community acceptance, physical and social integration, and personal service supports. These workshops will be conducted in a reflective

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format that allows for much individual and group reflection on devaluation and social role valorization. They are designed to facilitate introspection regarding the manifestations of devaluation and how to address it on a personal, community, agency, and societal level. The workshops will be led by Darcy Miller Elks of Syracuse, NY and Joe Osburn from the Indiana Safeguards Initiative. These introductory workshops will take place:

March 15-17, 1993 in New Albany, IN
March 19-21, 1993 in Mitchell, IN
May 10-12, 1993 in Indianapolis (Beech Grove)

A five-day workshop on PASSING--a method for evaluating the quality of human services according to social role valorization- derived criteria--will be held in Indianapolis (Beech Grove) between May 31 and June 4, 1993. Persons intending to go to the PASSING workshop must have attended one of the earlier workshops (or equivalent training) as a prerequisite.

For more information about any of these events, contact the Indiana Safeguards Initiative at 2421 Willowbrook Parkway, Indianapolis, IN 46205; phone (317) 254-2065.

REVIEW: *Crossing the River: Creating a Conceptual Revolution in Community and Disability*, by David Schwartz, et al. (Brookline Books, 1992)

On several occasions in my life, after completing a certain book, I can recall saying, either to myself or to others, "I wish I had written that." I'm sure I said it at the end of Wendell Berry's *A Place on Earth*; I think it every time I finish *Lord of the Rings*. That's pure wishful thinking, though. I could never have written either of those favorites, both because I suspect I lack the talent for fiction and because my experience of life has been very different from Berry's or Tolkien's. Of *Crossing the River*, however, I am able not only to say "I wish...;" I can also say "I might have...." What I mean by that is that David Schwartz and his colleagues have written about the field and the period that covers my own professional experience. As I read, I sometimes wondered whether the authors had been involved in some conversations in which I remember taking part. Then I remembered: probably they were. They just had the good sense to write things down, and *Crossing the River* is the helpful result.

As its subtitle indicates, *Crossing the River* is an examination of a major shift (Schwartz calls it a "sea change") in ideas about people with disabilities and what may help them toward full membership in community life. The book relies on an idea borrowed from Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*--the concept of the "paradigm shift". Kuhn's book is about how change occurs in the formal sciences, and his carefully wrought terminology cannot be transferred directly into other fields. Schwartz, however, uses the notion of "paradigm shift" metaphorically and, thus, offers a helpful image of the kind of change of which he wishes to speak.

David Schwartz was actively involved (as was I) in the rapid development of "community services" for people with mental retardation/developmental disabilities that were intended to replace and supersede the old-style institutions during the 1970's and early 1980's. He describes the disillusion that accompanied the reluctant discovery that what he (and I) worked so hard for was not "the answer". Schwartz' characterization of the current situation of service-systems for people with developmental disabilities is that the field is weighed down by five issues, which he further describes as "symptoms of ... change at work within the field." These are:

- 1) Widespread abuse and neglect of people with disabilities within the "community services" that were supposed to be better than the institutions that they replaced. This is coupled with administration of

psychotropic drugs to people with developmental disabilities at rates that are often higher than the rates in institutions. As Schwartz comments, these things were just not supposed to happen in "community services".

2) A staff "retention and recruitment" crisis. This is not just an issue of high "turnover" rates, although those rates are certainly unacceptably high. Schwartz also examines the meaning of "turnover" from the point-of-view of the people who receive "service"; if the "essence of service" is in the relationship between those who are helping and those who are to be helped, what does staff turnover mean for the quality of the lives of people with disabilities? Schwartz captures the gist of the crisis when he characterizes it as "...a managerial description of settings in which those with the economic freedom to leave consistently do so."

3) Isolation of people with developmental disabilities from community life. Schwartz speculates, for example, that, were there an instrument that--from the sky--tracked the movement of people in and out of a setting but that ignored the presence of professional workers, that instrument would show the homes of many people with developmental disabilities standing by themselves--far away from other people.

4) An increasing clinicalization of the field. The author notices, for example, that the work of assisting people with developmental disabilities has come to be seen as "a field", when that was not true in earlier times. He observes:

This new social movement ("deinstitutionalization") involved by design the creation of thousands of new settings. These settings, the group homes and fledgling agencies, formed the seeds of communities, called together by vision and opposition. They were, like most new settings from marriage to nations, forges of growth and personal transformation for all involved in them. It was a heady time in social reform.

That heady time is now undeniably past. The new settings and the new "alternative" community system they collectively formed are now riddled with seemingly intractable problems. Task forces on finance, on abuse, on staff recruitment and retention meet urgently. Remedial actions are proposed. Yet underneath such actions lies a sense that the breakdown of our precious new settings is proceeding so rapidly that our efforts, redoubled though they might be, are insufficient and in vain....

5) The "retarding effects" of the service system itself on the lives of those who find themselves reliant on it. People with developmental disabilities are, observes Schwartz, diverted from richer lives by the chronically low expectations of them that are held by "community services". He offers as example the not-uncommon retention of the best-producing workers by sheltered workshops so that contract-quotas can be met.

In the context of a field bedeviled by these five issues, Schwartz and his colleagues A.J. Hildebrand and Sharon Gretz describe and offer vignettes of what they call "a new conceptual revolution". Consciously borrowing from the work of Seymour Sarason and John McKnight (as well as Kuhn), Schwartz proposes (in my words, not his) that "community services" may be an oxymoron. What Sarason calls "the psychological sense of community"--a sense of being a part of things--is unlikely to occur in the context of professionally managed, bureaucratic systems. The revolution described begins, in small ways, to make real the vision of people with disabilities as citizens and community members. The major example of "revolution" offered in *Crossing the River* is that of a series of projects undertaken in Pennsylvania under the auspices of the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (of which David Schwartz is the Executive Director). From the Council's point-of-view, the objectives of these projects were: to encourage and legitimize the development of "anomalies"--new ways of doing things; and, to seek diversity of responses to diverse people in diverse places within the state. In essence, according to

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Schwartz, the projects were intended to try to answer the question: "Would ordinary citizens invite people with disabilities into their families, their communities, and their associational life, if one asked them in the right way? What was the right way to ask?"

When I had finished reading *Crossing the River*, just a few months ago, I had also (along with my friends and colleagues Sandra Landis and John Winnenberg) completed the publication-draft of *The Community Living Paper* for the Ohio DD Planning Council. I remember speaking to Sandy and John about David Schwartz's book--not so much to say "I wish I had...". Instead, my comments leaned a bit toward "...we might have...", but even more in the direction of "I'm glad we read this after we were finished with ours". Otherwise, I might have been discouraged from going on with our work. Why bother, when someone else has done this so well? I congratulate David Schwartz and his colleagues for their accurate description of where we are in this business of trying to help people with disabilities and where, if we work very hard, we may be going. I advise my friends to read *Crossing the River*.

Jack Pealer

THE GARDEN CLUB MUSE Sandra Landis

This Christmas marks the tenth one here. Only one other time have I spent nine years in the same neighborhood. That was a long time ago, in the place I did much of my growing up. My folks made the decision to move. I recall very little reluctance on my part. We were moving to the shore; I was fifteen, and it all seemed rather exciting to me.

Nearly twenty-five years later, the move to this place began with a couple of invitations from friends. Staying here has been a matter of love, determination, and in some ways, self-preservation. There haven't been many thoughts about leaving, and most of those are dreams about extended vacations, not resettling. Living my future in the place where I've been is a new experience for me.

In the past my ideas about the future have focused mostly on relationships with specific people and work opportunities. As I think about the future now, my thoughts are pretty clearly connected to this place as well. I don't think that I came here with the idea that this would be home for as long as I could imagine, but some time in the last few years that has happened.

There is a sense of calm and quiet that comes from understanding that change in me. I

know that for many years I wondered if feeling "rooted" in a place, like I belonged to a place, was something that I would ever experience. I frequently felt transplanted but not purposefully settled into a place where I would stay. I found the logic of Myles Horton's "bloom where you're planted" idea painfully clear, sound advice. What do you do when it seems

you've been planted in a dozen different plots? Just as there are things you learn from living in a variety of places, there are some things you never have a chance to learn if you're not around a place for an extended period of life.

I had a chance to think about all of this a couple of weeks ago, on a blustery day that threatened lots of snow. Despite the weather, four of us were on the way to the winter garden club meeting. Our meeting was outside of the county, at a specialty shop where we would listen to a short talk about winter greens and make a wreath to take home. The travel time passed quickly as I listened to three long time residents tell stories about people they've known and events they shared in common. It was a bit of a history lesson for me, especially because some stories were about the ridge and valley I live on now.

I think that my gardening tutor and friend has recruited me as a member of the club

because she understands a lot about how people learn. Without ever studying learning theories, she knows that surrounding someone who wants to learn with lots of knowledgeable people who, in respectful ways, share what they know nearly always results in learning for everybody involved. Talk about bringing "power" to the learner--as I sat there making my wreath and listening to the talk around the tables, I began to calculate the years of gardening experience around me. I stopped when I got past 200!

Some of that experience has helped me learn a few things in my five or six years as a gardener--things that apply to the rest of my life. One of the things I've tried to learn about is perennial gardens and what helps them thrive. One of the first things I learned is that a mature, healthy perennial garden takes a long time. The best of perennial gardens bloom over the longest possible season and are orderly even when at rest. For that to be possible, as indeed it is,

requires a diverse variety of plants and a routine that thins plants as they mature and adds new plants from time to time. New gardens are created by transplanting from the old.

This helps me understand that there are some useful places for transplants. It helps me understand, too, that some gardens depend on compatible transplants to thrive. It doesn't take being there longest to belong. Accepting transplants creates some temporary disruption, but many are very successful in the long run.

This season I can finally accept and celebrate my lot as a transplant. I'm grateful I've landed in welcoming territory with sturdy, well-rooted neighbors. And I'm glad to have discovered that there is a place in membership for the listener.

Sandra Landis

BRIEF NOTICE: *You Can't Say You Can't Play*, by Vivian Gussin Paley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992)

How is the habit of rejection of other people acquired? How is it that people select some other people to be specifically excluded from taking part in games and, by extension, community life? Are there ways to prevent such habits from being acquired by people when they are young? *You Can't Say You Can't Play* is an exploration about such questions by Vivian Gussin Paley, a MacArthur fellow and a kindergarten teacher in the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools.

Ms. Paley introduced a new rule into her kindergarten classroom--a rule designed around the precept that "We must be told, when we are young, what rules to live by. The grown-ups must tell the children... so that myth and morality proclaim the same message while the children are still listening." The rule is: "you can't say you can't play." Rejection of others from playtime (and, later, from acting out parts in stories) is explicitly forbidden. But the introduction of the rule is prepared for by lengthy conversations--debate might be the better word--involving not only the kindergarten students but children in the higher grades as well. Ms. Paley relates the feelings and judgments of the students, both before and after the introduction of the rule, about her attempt to legislate moral behavior. She intersperses these dialogues and her reactions to them with the stories she told her students about Magpie, the magical bird who helps both children and adults learn to accept and care for each other.

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You Can't Say You Can't Play looks deceptively like a "children's book". It has, probably like the best books for children, a tough message: the exclusion or rejection of others is NOT the natural order of things. Rejection is a habit, and, like other habits it can be attacked and broken. Determined, sensitive teachers and other helpers can help children (and maybe older people too?) learn to live in communities that welcome all their members.

Jack Pealer

JUST QUOTES

I believe
That we walk pigmies where we should stand tall
As old Promethean giants, that the power
Of sharing in creative energy
Is written in the fibers of our being.
It does begin to seem as if the answers
Are not all in, as if the explanations
Based upon science and psychology
Remain inadequate. It seems our dreaming
May well excell our waking, that our hopes
Of being and belonging may be nearer
Reality that all our dismal fears.
In fact, the final truth could well be greater
Than our best expectation--we might be
Destined to pass all limitation, break
All bounds of space and time, and where the stars
Are sown like snowdrops in a mountain meadow,
We may walk finally as sons of light.

George Dell, from
"A Sermon in Pentameters", 1961

There is an old Amish quiltmaker who lives near Pfeifer's Station, a crossroads store and village I often frequent. Her immediate family is long gone and she lives now with somewhat distant relatives who, being nearest of kin, are pledged to care for her. Her quarters are a wee bit of a house connected to the main house by a covered walkway. I make up excuses to visit, pretending to be interested in quilts. I have no idea how old she is, other than ancient.

Around her I feel the kind of otherworldly peace I used to feel around nuns before they decided to dress up and hustle about like the rest of us. Her bedroom is just big enough for a bed and quilting frame; her kitchen is equally tiny. The boys of the family keep the walkway stacked with firewood for her stove. She has her own little garden. Children play on her doorstep.

She has her privacy but is surrounded by living love, not the dutiful professionalism of the old folks' home. And she still earns her way. Quilt buyers come, adding to her waiting list more quilts than her fingers, now slowed by arthritis, can ever catch up with. I love that scene. She still lives in the real world. If she were not Amish, she would have languished in some nursing home and no doubt be dead by now--from sheer boredom if nothing else.

from Gene Logsdon, "Amish Economics"
reprinted in *Community Service Newsletter*, September/October, 1992

During this past summer I got to ride along on another bus trip through France and England. On the last day that we spent in Normandy, at about 5:00 in the afternoon (rush hour), our bus was approaching St. Malo--the walled seacoast city from which Jacques Cartier launched his explorations of North America in the 17th century. The bus suddenly stopped and took its position in a long line of traffic. When we had moved forward to the next "rotary" we could see something spilled on the roadway. It was a huge pile of **potatoes**. Highway crews with heavy equipment were loading potatoes into dump trucks, to be hauled away. But, there was more than one heap. Local potato farmers had brought their produce to the city--not to sell it in the market but to dump it on the roadways at key intersections. We were caught in a protest over a government proposal to reduce farm subsidies. We witnessed what might have been a scheme devised by Alinsky; the Norman farmers might well have read *Reveille for Radicals*.

France has traditionally valued small-scale farming, and this value has, for a long time, been translated into government policies that subsidize growers of vegetables, livestock, grain, etc. The value runs deep, as Louis Bromfield observed:

The permanence, the continuity of France was not born of weariness and economic defeat, but was a living thing, anchored to the soil, to the very earth itself. Any French peasant, any French workingman with his little plot of ground and his modest home and wages, which by American standards were small, had more permanence, more solidity, more security, than the American workingman or white-collar worker who received, according to French standards, fabulous wages, who rented the home he lived in and was perpetually in debt for his car, his radio, his washing machine.

Sitting there it occurred to me that the high standard of living in America was an illusion, based upon credit and the installment plan, which threw a man and his family into the street and on public relief the moment his factory closed and he lost his job. It seemed to me that real continuity, real love of one's country, real permanence had to do not with mechanical inventions and high wages but with the earth and man's love of the soil upon which he lived. (*Pleasant Valley*)

The potatoes on the road spoke of the clash between that value--for small farms, personal engagement with the soil--and other values that may sometimes be obscured by such rally-around-able slogans as "free trade". Without the subsidies, the small agriculture of France may be unable to be sustained. Apparently, according to Wendell Berry and others, this is largely true of North American small farming as well (see Berry's "Our Tobacco Problem" in *The Progressive*, May, 1992). Thus, something of great value--personal attention to the earth and the growing of food or other goods on it--will be lost. In its place will be what can only be called "collective", impersonal farming that is carried out either by desperate small owners in fief to their bankers or by employees of large agricultural (or agri-business) corporations. Despite my wish to be able to continue drinking French wine occasionally (remember the U.S. government's threatened tariff in early December?), I'm on the side of the potato-dumpers. It makes little sense to me to transform small-scale enterprises that people willingly give their lives to into gigantisms that people must (sometimes) be forced to work for. It makes less sense that we may choose to do this through the mechanism of an international control structure (the GATT court) that is outside of our electoral influence. Tea, anyone?

What I'm mostly quibbling about, though, is the continuing pattern of exchanging small things for large ones--giving up patterns that may be known for ones that are beyond our capacity to understand. Four or five years ago, the state of Ohio started a new way (for state government, anyway)

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of trying to help people with developmental disabilities find and maintain homes. This new way, which was based on ideas already in practice in places like Madison, WI, Attleboro, MA, and New Lexington, Tiffin, and Wooster, OH was called "supported living". The state had a notion about small-scale and low overhead ways to enable people to have homes of their own--homes of their choice and under their control. These homes would, in a sense, be like French farms--small, personal, and (eventually) beloved.

Then, several things happened, and as they happened valuable possibilities began to be lost. First, the supported living notion began (as it had to, at the time) with money that was a windfall, which meant that the funds to support the program had to be found afresh during the next budget cycle. Second, though the fresh money was found, naught but "continuation" of supported living could be paid for; there was no way to expand this simple idea for other people using state funds. Third, no source of money (other than that for "supported living") was available to be used to help people with disabilities who were in serious trouble (so-called "crises") in Ohio communities. These developments hampered the achievement toward which supported living aimed.

And then the Federal government came to the rescue with the "Medicaid waiver". Imagine, spend a dollar helping someone with disabilities (in an approved way) and you'll get sixty cents back from Washington. Fill out all the papers and assemble all the "packets" in a form that fits requirements that are devised by people you'll never meet--that's the only way that you'll be able to help more people (saying nothing, of course, about the likely raised cost of each "service" that's paid for in this way). It just seems to me that there's an analogy of some sort between what's happened to supported living and what's happened to the French farmers. Follow the experts and buy more land, buy more and bigger tractors. To do a better job, buy more clerks and more powerful computers to handle the paperwork.

And that's saddening. And dangerous. There just has to be room in the world for French potato growers, who love where they are and what they do. There must be a low-tech, low-overhead way to support people with disabilities in homes that they choose and that they can come to love. I'm with the potato-growers. I long for the preservation of supported living in its original form.

Jack Pealer

OHIO SAFEGUARDS
Organization
P.O. Box 1943
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601

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