

The Safeguards Letter

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VITAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Here are several upcoming opportunities for readers to consider some vital learning. These events respond to the deepest and most crucial issues that, today, face those interested in the well-being of societally devalued people.

August 25-September 1, Blue Mountain Lake, NY (Minnowbrook Conference Center), 2004
Northeast Summer Inclusion Institute: Moving Inclusion from a Good Idea to Everyday Life. Directed by Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien, Mike Green, and Jan Fitzgerald. From the description: "This workshop is for the thinkers and doers – those who know there are no easy answers...join a group of highly motivated individuals who are seeking new ways of thinking and acting."

Contact: The Adirondack Arc, 518-891-6565, ext. 114 (Les Parker)

September 13-15, Pittsburgh, PA (Holiday Inn, East). **Introduction to Social Role Valorization.** Taught by Darcy Elks. This is an overview of the principle of social role valorization and its applications in the lives of people who have been societally devalued. Participation in a workshop like this is a prerequisite for PASSING training.

Contact: Elizabeth Neuville, Keystone Institute, 717-541-8248

October 25-29, Andover, MA (Franciscan Center). **Crafting a Coherent Moral Stance on the Sanctity of All Human Life, Especially in Light of Contemporary Society's Legitimization & Practice of "Deathmaking" of Unwanted & Devalued People.** Presented by Wolf Wolfensberger and associates. The title quite clearly says what this event is about.

Contact: Jack Yates, 508-946-9718

November 14-19, Shrewsbury, MA (Calvary Retreat Center). **SRV Practicum Using PASSING (Program Analysis of Service Systems' Implementation of Normalization Goals).** Led by associates of the SRV Implementation Project. This workshop engages participants in teams, in a hands-on experience, to develop understanding of the impact of services on the lives of their recipients, to assess quality, and to help with service design.

Contact: Jack Yates, 508-946-9718

Each event listed above offers the most challenging kind of experience available as "training" or "continuing education" in human services. Any of these events would be worth serious consideration.

FUNDS TO SUPPORT PUBLICATION

For many years we have not recorded "subscriptions" to *The Safeguards Letter* – and we're not about to start doing that now. We have not used a subscription-system because of the extra work of maintaining it – expirations, billings, and so forth.

Instead of having subscribers we have had financial supporters. These have been people who saw some value in the publication of *The Letter* and who sent small donations of money to keep it going. Those donations have paid for printing and mailing costs. Because we have started to make *The Letter* available on the internet, those costs are reduced. We don't expect, though, that we will entirely stop sending print copies to readers who do not use computers or who really prefer to have *The Letter* come on paper in their mailboxes.

So, this little section of this edition of *The Letter* is an appeal to donors to send small contributions and to be, therefore, supporters of *The Letter*. If everyone who receives or is notified about *The Safeguards Letter* were to send between \$5 and \$10, all of a year's costs for printing and mailing would be met. Also, donors receive the gratitude of OHIO SAFEGUARDS.

If you want to contribute, you can send your donation (it's tax-deductible, if that matters) to: OHIO SAFEGUARDS, 3421 Dawn Drive, Hamilton, OH 45011.

RICH IN THINGS, POOR IN TIME:

Wolfgang Sachs

A tourist focuses in on a most idyllic picture: a man in simple clothes dozing in a fishing boat that has been pulled out of the waves which come rolling up the sandy beach. The camera clicks, the fisherman awakens. The tourist offers him a cigarette and launches into a conversation: "The weather is great, there is plenty of fish, why are you lying around instead of going out and catching more?"

The fisherman replies: "Because I caught enough this morning."

"But just imagine," the tourist says, "you would go out there three or four times a day, bringing home three or four times as much fish! You know what could happen?" The fisherman shakes his head. "After about a year you could buy yourself a motor-boat," says the tourist. "After two years you could buy a second one, and after three years you could have a cutter or two. And just think! One day you might be able to build a freezing plant or a smoke house, you might eventually even get your own helicopter for tracing shoals of fish and guiding your fleet of cutters, or you could acquire your own trucks to ship your fish to the capital, and then..."

"And then?" asks the fisherman.

"And then," the tourist continues triumphantly, "you could be calmly sitting at the beachside, dozing in the sun and looking at the beautiful ocean!" The fisherman looks at the tourist: "But that is exactly what I was doing before you came along!"

The story – told by writer Heinrich Boll – plays upon the hopes and fears of the rich. The tourist, upon seeing the lazy fisherman dozing in the sun, remembers his fears of becoming poor, of getting stuck in a situation in which he has no options. At the same time, he instinctively projects the hope of the rich upon the poor. Without thinking twice, he outlines a road map to expand productivity. And at the end, holds out a promise that is supposed to give meaning to all these efforts: achieving freedom from one's labour and gaining mastery over time.

What makes the anecdote so puzzling is the circular structure of the story; the rich strive to arrive where the poor began. A paradox is offered, which throws up a set of unsettling questions for the affluent. Why all the pains and efforts of development, if the rich attain only what the poor seem to have all along? Or, worse, how come that the rich, despite all the hustle and bustle, appear never even to reach the state enjoyed by the poor? For if the tale of development consists in progressively acquiring a wealth

of goods to attain a wealth of time, then rich societies today have evidently missed the mark. What went wrong?

In remembrance of time.

As is often noted, the economy of time is at the core of any economic action. From Arkwright's Spinning Jenny to Bill Gates' web browser Explorer we know that most the technology employed for the pursuit of progress is used in the belief that doing more things faster is better than doing few things slower. Indeed, the ability to save time has always been the hallmark of productivity revolutions, which have transformed patterns of production and consumption over the last 200 years.

From the very start, far-sighted men and women saw the reign of freedom rising at the horizon, a realm where toil would finally cease, vastly increasing the ability of people to engage in activities of their own liking. Hunting in the morning, fishing in the afternoon, raising animals in the evening, engaging in literary criticism after dinner. This imaginary day was an ideal not just of the young Karl Marx. But what happened to this utopia? Where has all the time gone?

The use of the automobile can serve as a case in point. From the outset, it was hailed as the ultimate time-saver, dramatically shortening the time it takes to reach a desired destination. But contrary to popular belief, drivers do not spend less time than non-drivers in moving from one place to the other. They travel to more distant destinations. The power of speed is converted to more kilometers on the road. And time saved is reinvested into longer distances. As a consequence, the average German citizen today travels 15,000 km a year as opposed to only 2,000 km in 1950.

Across many sectors—from transport to communications, from production to entertainment—time saved is constantly transformed into greater distances, more appointments, larger outputs and increasing

activity. The hours saved are eaten up by new growth. And, after a while, this expansion generates new pressure for time-saving devices—starting the cycle all over again.

Gigantic gains in productivity have by no means been converted into less work and more time. On the contrary, they have, for the most part, been transformed into new rounds of output and commodities. It is evident that everyone could afford to spend much less time for all kinds of daily chores if levels of aspiration had not also changed. It is the relentless expansion in output and aspirations that continues to eat up each generation of productivity gains. The utopia of affluence has undercut the utopia of liberation.

Why is there never enough?

The fisherman in our story would be amazed at the never-ending urge for more in already rich societies. After all, he was satisfied with his morning catch and could then afford to rest. The issue is one that has been examined before: John Maynard Keynes, one of the master thinkers of twentieth-century economics, wondered if an exceedingly successful economy would not at some point reach a state of saturation. In his "Essays in Persuasion" he speculated that the imperative of productivity might lose significance under conditions of affluence, as abundance makes it less and less important to allocate means optimally. But rich societies still fail to conform to that expectation. They are hooked upon the principle of non-saturation. Why do they ignore the notion of "enough?"

What matters in such a society is the symbolic power of goods and services; they are less than ever simply vehicles of utility; they serve an expressive function. What counts is what goods say, not what they do. In modern societies goods are means of communication. They constitute a system of "signs" through which a purchaser makes statements about him- or herself. While in the old days goods informed about social

status, today they signal allegiance to a particular lifestyle.

Many products have by now been perfected and cannot be developed any further; new buyers can be found only when these goods offer more symbolic capital. Cars that cannot become faster and more comfortable are designed to be technological wonders. Watches that cannot show the time more accurately take on a sportive flair when they become diving watches. Television sets whose images cannot become clearer take on a cinematic effect with wider screens. Designers and advertisers are continually offering consumers new thrills and new identities, while the product's utility is taken for granted.

In such a context, the relationship between consumer and product is shaped mainly by imagination, which is infinitely malleable. Feelings and meanings are anything but stable; their plasticity and ease of obsolescence can be exploited by designers in an unending variety of ways. Imagination, in effect, is an inexhaustible fuel for maintaining a growing supply of goods and services. And for that reason, the expectation that rich societies should one day reach a level of saturation has not come about; when commodities become cultural symbols, there is no end to economic expansion.

Frugality and well-being

Beyond a certain threshold, things can become the thieves of time. Goods have to be chosen, bought, set up, used, experienced, maintained, tidied away, dusted, repaired, stored and disposed of. Likewise, appointments have to be sought, co-ordinated, agreed upon, put into the diary, maintained, assessed and followed up. Even the most beautiful of objects and the most valuable of interactions gnaw away at our time – the most restricted of all resources. The number of possibilities – goods, services, events – has exploded in affluent societies, but the day in its conservative way continues to be just

twenty-four hours long. Scarcity of time is the nemesis of affluence. The rich may have plenty of things, but are poor in time. In fact, in a multi-option society people do not suffer from a lack but from an excess of opportunities. While well-being is threatened by a shortage of means in the first case, it is threatened by a confusion about goals in the second. The proliferation of options makes it increasingly difficult to know what one wants, to decide what one does not want, and to cherish what one has.

Human well-being has two dimensions: the material and the non-material. Anyone who buys food and prepares dinner has the material satisfaction of filling his or her stomach, and the non-material satisfaction of having enjoyed cooking a particular cuisine or partaking in good company. This non-material satisfaction requires attention, which means time. The full value of goods and services can only be experienced when they are given attention; they have to be properly used, adequately enjoyed and carefully cultivated. Having too many things makes time for non-material pleasure shrink; an over abundance of options can easily diminish full satisfaction. So poverty of time degrades the richness of goods. In other words, there is a limit to material satisfaction beyond which overall satisfaction is bound to decrease. Frugality, therefore, is a key to well-being.

Indeed, it is often the inability to exercise a certain degree of frugality that is at the core of the problem of time. The art of living requires a sense for the right measure. Less can definitely be more. The modern consumer society continually squanders the wealth of time. In an age of exploding options the ability to focus, which implies the sovereignty of saying no, becomes an important ingredient in creating a richer life. Without that ability, the lament of dramatist Odon von Horvarth may become the universal apology: "I am really an entirely different person; it's just that I never get around to showing it."

It goes without saying that without a wealth of time, there is bound to be less generosity, less compassion, less dedication and less freedom—a sort of modernized poverty which the fisherman innately understood, and the tourist only reluctantly became aware of.

Wolfgang Sachs is with the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy in Germany. His most recent book is *Planet Dialectics: Explorations in Environment and Development*. He has taught at Schumacher College and been a Schumacher Lecturer.

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About THE SAFEGUARDS LETTER

The Safeguards Letter is an occasional publication of OHIO SAFEGUARDS. The *Letter* is intended to be a vehicle to promote affiliation among people who are interested in and thoughtful about those who live outside the sphere of respected community membership—those who are the usual receivers of human services. All material in *The Safeguards Letter* is under OHIO SAFEGUARDS' copyright (©) unless otherwise attributed. Letters, ideas, and items for publication in the *Letter* can be sent to: Editor, *The Safeguards Letter*, 3421 Dawn Drive, Hamilton, OH 45011. We welcome our readers' ideas and reactions.

WE GET LETTERS

Jack, "Savage Discovery" is timely reading for me on several levels. On a very basic level, it captures the tension that exists for me between different kinds of knowing. In professional and policy circles, knowing is about measurement, scientific proof and documentable outcomes, which often take great liberties (as you note) in inferring cause or correlation.

But the older I get, the more I aim to rediscover and reclaim an intuitive way of knowing. Margaret Guenther, a woman who became an Episcopal priest later in life, wrote in *Toward Holy Ground: Spiritual Directions for the Second Half of Life*: "In the second half of life we begin to let go of the kind of knowing dedicated to the pursuit of the demonstrable, definable and provable. The amassing of data becomes just one more form of acquisition. And we begin to take for granted the knowing that expresses itself in useful competence. To offer a homely example: after decades in the kitchen, I 'know' cooking the way I know my native language. My hands know when bread dough has been kneaded sufficiently, and my ears know the 'whistle' of a perfectly sautéed mushroom. Cookbooks have become recreational or possibly inspirational reading to me; but the real 'knowing' of food preparation resides somewhere deep inside me."

I can't translate into numbers all that I've learned and absorbed by knowing people who are labeled or challenged in some way, but that's the knowledge that I trust the most, the knowledge that gives me a headache or some other bodily reaction if I act in ways inconsistent with it. Yet, it is the least valued (actually devalued) way of knowing. To get myself on the same page with policymakers, to speak in ways that they can hear me, I'm forever looking for the "facts" that "document" what I already know.

I think Ryan's observations on victim-blaming (especially the liberal, bleeding heart variety) are sobering, because it is something that I am capable of doing myself when not being thoughtful enough.

Julie Pratt
Charleston, WV

JUST QUOTES

We have lived by the assumption that what was good for us would be good for the world. And this has been based on the even flimsier assumption that we could know with any certainty what was good even for us. We have fulfilled the danger of this by making our personal pride and greed the standard of our behavior toward the world – to the incalculable disadvantage of the world and every living thing in it. And now, perhaps very close to too late, our great error has become clear. It is not only our own creativity – our own capacity for life – that is stifled by our arrogant assumption; the creation itself is stifled.

We have been wrong. We must change our lives, so that it will be possible to live by the contrary assumption that what is good for the world will be good for us.

Wendell Berry
“A Native Hill”

... questions will be asked about us by our descendents, to whom we bequeath an impoverished planet. They will demand to know how we could have been party to such waste and ruin. They will have good reason to curse our memory.

Scott Russell Sanders
“Staying Put” (*Orion*, Winter 1992)

I lost a world the other day.
Has anybody found?
You'll know it by the row of stars
Around its forehead bound.

A rich man might not notice it;
Yet to my frugal eye
Of more esteem than ducats.
Oh, find it, sir, for me!

Emily Dickinson

I've heard it said that within our deathly culture, the most revolutionary thing anyone can do is follow one's heart. I would add that once you've begun to do that, the most moral and revolutionary thing you can do is help others find their hearts. Time is short. It's short for our planet, and it is even shorter for all of those students whose lives are slipping away from them with every awful tick of the clock on the classroom wall. There is much work to be done. What are we waiting for?

Derrick Jensen
“Reading, Writing, Revolution”
Orion, March/April 2004

JUST ONE MORE MEDICAID APPEAL

Joe Osburn

This is a transcript of a letter written by Mrs. Mary Goolsby, the grandmother of, David Cave, a very severely handicapped little boy. Mrs. Goolsby was appealing a Medicaid decision to deny in-home health and nursing care.

Mary Goolsby
1635 Walton St.
Anderson, Indiana
November 9, 1987

To whom it may concern:

I want to appeal the decision made by medicaid for nursing for my severely handicapped grandson who is in my care. We asked for eight hours a day five to seven days a week. And was given ten hours a week only for the month of November, 1987. David was born with severe cerebral Palsy, he also has seizures and obstructive apnea. David has a trach. And is fed by a G-tube. David can do nothing for his self. He is in pampers and will be all his life. I have three children of my own who are being neglected because all of my time is consumed with David's care; also I am unable to give any time to my other grandchild. I don't have any transportation and I have to take a city bus anywhere I go. With the hours given me I can't go pay bills, or take the kids to the doctor or get groceries or anything. Plus to keep my own sanity I need at least an hour or two during each day for my self. I can't hire just a regular babysitter because he needs someone that knows how to change his trach or G-tube and suction him when needed. This is an example of a regular days schedule with David.

6AM	give valium and actifed
7AM	give breathing treatment
8AM	disconnect Kangaroo pump
815AM	send him to preschool
1145AM	give Reglan
12NOON	give breathing treatment, dilantin, klonopin, Valium, actifed and augmentin
1215PM	feed him through G-tube
145PM	give Reglan
215PM	feed him through G-tube
430PM	give Reglan
5PM	feed him and give breathing treatment
6PM	give Valium, actifed, augmentin
730PM	give Reglan, prepare Kangaroo pump for night feeding
8PM	start pump
10PM	give breathing treatment
12midnite	give dilantin, Klonopin, valium, and augmentin

So as you can see I need some help. Ten hours a week is not enough. I have other responsibilities also. But on this schedule there is no time for anything else. Also between all of this he has to be given a bath, trach changed, G-tube dressing changed and be suctioned when ever needed. Plus I try to give him some exercises. So I would appreciate it if you could reconsider your decision and give me nursing care for eight hours a day, seven days a week.

Thank you

Mary Goolsby

Even though Mary was merely relating the facts of the matter to Medicaid--to which I can attest--her request was denied.
Joe Osburn

A VIEW FROM THE BACK WINDOW

“Schools, Arrrrgh!”

I’ve been thinking about why I should keep on worrying about schools – special education, IDEA, IEP’s, and all that. For more than 30 years lots of people I know have worked very hard to make good educations available to students with disabilities. At the same time, some schools keep on doing things like this:

Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 6, 2004. Scott Kendis, who developed a brain tumor when he was 6 and has endured years of health problems as a result, has waited a long time for a slow, 50-foot walk across an auditorium stage to get his high school diploma.

But the Beachwood School District will not let Scott graduate, even though the Ohio Department of Education has ruled that he is entitled to march with his senior class. *(The district is arguing with Scott and his family over who should pay for an additional year of vocational education. The state says the district should pay. Apparently the district is using Scott’s wish to take part in graduation as a weapon in this dispute. JRP)*

The district...came up with another compromise: letting Scott graduate if his parents pay \$10,000 for the extra year of education....

Scott said he wants to graduate in June because he knows the senior class. He said he does not know students in the lower classes.

Siegel (*Scott’s attorney*) said, “All that everyone wants if for this child to walk 50 feet across the stage. It doesn’t cost them a penny.”

Recently, my personal inclination has been to give up on the schooling problem. I’ve been an appreciative reader of Ivan Illich (*Deschooling Society*) and, while I understand the present impracticability of eliminating schooling (which is, after all, a distinct concept from learning or even education), I remain entranced by the vision of doing so. But...

I’ve also been devoted for a long time to practice that has been called, sequentially, “mainstreaming,” “integration,” and “inclusion.” I know that those are not the same things, but we’ve only found that out through time and experience. I don’t think that the similar devotion that many people share has happened because schools are wonderful places for children to be. Some are, but many are not. I also don’t think that many are supporters of inclusion because teachers are universally skilled and understanding conduits for knowledge. Many teachers are, but some are not.

I presume that most people who support inclusion do so because the schools are the places in our communities where the other kids are. We appreciate that children learn best from and with other children. And, students with disabilities, therefore, simply belong with other students. As Inclusion Press puts it: “Together We’re Better. All Means All. Inclusion Means WITH – not just

IN." Being together is not only essential to mutual learning. It's also the foundation of future community life. As people, of all sorts, come to know one another, they make ways to live with each other more effectively.

So far, so good. So, what do we do about those maddening schools—those administrators, those rules, those policies, those lawyers, those state bureaucrats, those legislators, those folks who use a high school graduation ceremony as a bargaining chip?

Some time ago, a teacher made me read a book by Michael Lipsky. The title is *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service* (NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1980). Michael Lipsky describes the intersection between public service agencies (e.g., schools) as represented by their most direct workers (e.g., teachers, building principals, auxiliary personnel) and those he calls "clients" (e.g., the students at schools and their families). He defines "street-level bureaucrats" as: "public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work...." (p. 3)

In summarizing his argument, Lipsky writes:

I argue that the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively *become* (*emphasis in original*) the public policies they carry out. I argue that public policy is not best understood as made in legislatures or top-floor suites of high-ranking administrators, because in important ways it is actually made in the crowded offices and daily encounters of street-level workers. I point out that policy conflict is not only expressed as the contention of interest groups but is also located in the struggles between individual workers and citizens who challenge or submit to client-processing....

Ideally, and by training, street-level bureaucrats respond to the individual needs or characteristics of the people they serve or confront. In practice, they must deal with clients on a mass basis, since work requirements prohibit individualized service. Teachers should respond to the needs of the individual child; in practice, they must develop techniques to respond to children as a class....

At best, street-level bureaucrats invent benign modes of mass processing that more or less permit them to deal with the public fairly, appropriately, and successfully. At worst, they give in to favoritism, stereotyping, and routinizing—all of which serve private or agency purposes. (xii)

With regard to school inclusion, Lipsky points us, I think toward either despair or hope. It's toward despair if we find ourselves in this position: "On matters of the greatest urgency and moment, such as health care, education, justice, housing, and income, clients passively seek the benign intervention of public agencies when evidence and experience suggest that their hopes will go unrewarded." (Lipsky, xiv) Despair may ensue, for example, when we rely solely on established law, policy, or the opinions of managers without further action on a question so important as how a child will best learn.

Hope might be found, though, in the "crowded offices and daily encounters of street-level workers." If Lipsky is right—if street-level bureaucrats (read: teachers and other school personnel who deal directly with kids and families) do actually make policy through their daily actions with students, then we need to appreciate that fact and we need to intensify our work with them. Policy might be shaped. Some schools or some classrooms might be more

welcoming. Most of us know particular teachers, particular building principals, and maybe even particular “special ed coordinators” who share at least part of our vision about students learning together. We know what a difference those folks can make, when they choose to do so.

If we have to work with schools – because that’s where most of the kids are and all those kids are important to us – then it makes a difference how we do it. It may not make sense to have much confidence in laws or rules or court cases. Instead, we need to focus on the street (or classroom) level people whose daily work shapes potential welcome, sometimes in ignorance or even disregard of laws, rules, or court cases. One of my former supervisors had been and again became a school administrator. Her consistent advice about getting things done in or around schools was “work with the teachers.” Often those people, whose names we know, are capable of at least cooperation and sometimes leadership – capable of agreeing with our ideals and delivering on much of what we want. Michael Lipsky suggests that we had better learn to connect with and influence them.

Jack Pealer