

Mitigate Professional Social Parasites Like a Pro-

Version 0.21 2010.03.11

Jeff Setterholm



What better place to think?

Overview

For years I have criticized some of the conduct of professions, particularly the legal profession and the MBA-led business profession. My wife (Donna) and other people have used the trumping counter-argument: **“You can’t criticize the whole profession... you know many fine people who are thus employed.”** The second part is true, but the first part handicaps social inquiry. [Change is risky – Appendix “A” addresses cautions.]

“Mitigate” as used here means:

‘To cause to *contract* or *shrink* to the point of *not being a problem*.’

For purposes of this paper,

“Social Parasites” include entities (individuals, businesses, organizations, etc.) which do at least one of the following:

1. Consume more than they contribute to society.
2. Use artificial complexity and/or lies to justify & receive compensation.
3. Privatize public knowledge.
4. Lobby & vote for laws which foster “we win, you lose” outcomes.
5. Pretend to solve pressing problems and/or to “have a constructive plan”.
6. Intentionally undermine local, national, or global social cohesiveness.

Further careful thought will improve the list.

Now narrow the ‘entities’ under discussion to **individuals who consider themselves to be members of a profession**, and the corresponding professions. My first point is:

Some of the professions *which are sufficiently organized to have societies, associations, bars, clubs, etc.* directly or indirectly shield members from criticism. In some professions ‘social parasites’ operate on the fringe of professions as exceptions to the rule. In some other cases, being a social parasite is closer to the norm. Creating the publicly shared attitude of personal accountability for the shielding of social parasites within one’s profession will benefit society.

My perception is that *professional social parasites are running America into the ground*. Surely there are some parasites at work. If professions are able to mitigate their own social parasites then society won't need to intervene; voluntary solutions support *choices* which are a key component of *freedom*.

Time will tell, but I doubt that *profession will cleanse themselves of social parasites*. Self-directing professions that control their own compensation/fees/rewards/perks/'golden parachutes'/ etc. become increasingly self-serving, at society's expense, rather than decreasingly self-serving. Hence my follow-on point is:

Society's thoughtful, sustained discouragement of individual social parasites, and their shielding by professions - reining in the most selfish and dysfunctional first – will *probably* be necessary to achieve mitigation.

In the title, “**Like a Pro-**“implies both *in a professional way* (efficiently) and *with more emphasis on advocacy than opposition* (not centrally in an anti- way). “Anti - _____” slogans offer voids, not visions. E.g.: Russian Communism was mitigated under our banner of “anti-communism”, but what was ‘the plan’ after that? Whose plan was it? How is the plan working out?

Are social parasites a real problem? ...a fair question - problems can be real.

President Dwight Eisenhower, as astute a leader as America has produced, warned the entire nation in the 1950's about the rise of our “the military-industrial complex”... to no avail. Consider that, in the 1960's, there was an extrapolated prediction that, by 2030, the entire national budget of America would purchase only one military airplane; the implication - *that national defense would become completely unaffordable* - was surprising then & visionary now.

We have incorporated parasitic entities into our **national governance mechanism**. Problems are elevated to national attention for the primary purpose of sustained redirection of money for personal gain, while suppressing consideration of the unsolved problems that are established personal “cash cows”. Problem *solving* efficiently is counter-productive to parasitic reward; the products of argumentation and debate are praised as insights, whereas historical lessons, expertise, and synergies are treated as irrelevancies. Dysfunctional human resources decisions cement incompetent decision makers in place – assuring festering problems as well as a dearth of constructive innovations.

Entities that “milk the system” protect themselves using lobbyists with deep pockets.

People's fears are played upon by elevating worst-case hypothetical nightmares to top national priorities – with occasional follow-up using military force (our conflict in Iraq comes to mind). The measured Old Testament admonition of: “*An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.*” ...would have yielded a far more moderate response. We attacked the nation of Afghanistan and then attacked the nation of Iraq, and continue to fight in both places, because of the local destruction caused by three hijacked airliners on 9/11/2001?

The idea of “turning the other cheek” seems to have vanished from the deliberations of our national government – which contrasts with *references to the importance of faith* in the

speeches of many politicians. [Being able to *peacefully leave* (e.g. abusive situations) deserves consideration as *a basic human right*.... a *bully buster*.]

“No child left behind“... “no child will get ahead”; the privatization of useful knowledge (e.g. copyrighting software “tools”) makes a joke of “public education”; advances in information technology have failed to bring a rapid decline in the cost of an *excellent education*, public or private. Education is a misfit within the paradigm of ‘competition’.

In national decision making *artificial complexity* reigns. Pending national healthcare legislation in one house of congress was said to be more than 1000 pages long, and in the other house of congress, more than 2000 pages long – longer than Leo Tolstoy’s War and Peace. Clear concise rules could establish core principles.

American society has funded many people to be experts in economics, but financial crises recur. Financial crises and panics, and the financing of conflicts (i.e. parasites funding predators), have a long, and frequently well-engineered history. The Creature from Jekyll Island, A Second Look at the Federal Reserve, 3rd edition, by G Edward Griffin, 1998, ISBN 0-912986-21-2, provides in-depth analysis of pervasive clandestine financial dysfunction on an international scale spanning centuries to the present. On page 150, Griffin writes:

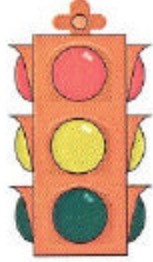
“It is an amazing fact of history that the Byzantine Empire flourished as the center of world commerce for eight-hundred years without falling into bankruptcy nor, for that matter, even into debt. Not once during this period did it devalue its money.”

The end of the Byzantine Empire is dated by the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, about 50 years after the impoverished 4th Crusade vanquished the Eastern Orthodox Christian inhabitants of the city - as stipulated by Venetian moneylenders. Beyond being a tragedy of the middle ages, parasitic behavior in world finance still thrives on a grand scale.

‘Feathering one’s nest’ distracts from ‘manning the helm’; social parasites lack mettle in areas that are not of direct personal benefit. Our Navy was founded to fight pirates, but ‘privateers’ functioned as our licensed pirates. In recent years, unwillingness to draft citizens into our military led to use of, and excesses by, our private security forces in Iraq, which became an international embarrassment for America.

In the spirit of “running up the flag” before firing the first shot in a naval engagement ...

“How It Was”
is History...



“How It Is”
is Physics and Red Tape...

“How It Ought To Be”
is Engineering!

Jeff Setterholm

... which is optimistic compared to:

“How It Ought To Be”
is more Parasitics! ... our present path.

If “**How It Ought To Be is Engineering**” is a tautology,
 it may be an *instructive* tautology.

A familiar claim in my youth,
“Utopians are fools”, reflected an unwillingness
 to learn from non-parasitic social experiments.

“War is inevitable” because social parasites
have dropped the ball and/or *profit*.

Before advocating reforms, here's a list of my pro-'s...

America should strive to:

1. Clarify & update for everyone both
“What is us” and “What is not us”, and why.
2. Identify national goals that pleasantly interest humanity, including us.
(E.g.: *equality of opportunity*, *affordable contentment*, and *constructive adventure*.)
3. Value self-restraint more than self-control.
4. Respect the lives, health, property, and natural resources of foreigners.
5. Find *resilient* solutions to national problems.
6. Expand mass production of commodities – efficiently - on-shore.
7. Simplify and standardize what is known, including computation.
8. Use knowledge primarily for education.
9. Drive the funded cost of an excellent education toward zero.
10. Use balanced, comprehensible, transparent public decision models.
11. Evolve to paying people primarily for work and welfare.
12. Constructively define the difference between work and welfare.
13. \$-compensate work in an unenviable way ... perhaps including...
close the compensation range to a factor of 10.
14. Migrate professions (at least partially) toward amateurs and volunteers.
15. Simplify/clarify laws/justice so that half+ of our high school graduates
“know the rules” sufficiently to defend themselves in court.
16. Facilitate a gradual, peaceful decrease in the Earth's human population.
17. Distribute 95%+ of estates to intended beneficiaries, after taxes.
18. Recognize that extreme assumptions incapacitate social decision making.

The preceding list is representative of my intent in advocating “reform”; if realized, my advocacies would affect how American society operates.

One level removed in abstraction, & hence less obviously *operational*, is...

Learning Together in a Diverse World.pdf, 34 pages, July 2004, posted at www.setterholm.com
The one page *philosophy of philosophies* therein is included here as appendix ‘B’. “**The Peacefully Adaptive School**” outlines & overviews *how to avoid social parasites on an ongoing basis*.. “Dealing off the top of the deck” and having “a level playing field” both advocate *clear, enforced rules for games*. “Skill” creates *advantage*. Beyond clear rules, the option of acquiring skills efficiently is necessary to create *equality of opportunity*. If humanity decides to “share high quality skills” on a worldwide scale, then “The Peacefully Adaptive School” offers a place to begin the quest.

The list above and the “reforms” that follow are, loosely coupled. Thoughtful improvements by many other people could inter-&-intra-link many efficiencies for social, professional, business, and scientific life, creating resilient synergies.

(‘Synergy’: when *the whole* is greater *than the sum of its parts*.)

Reforms:

1. Enact “The Honest Attorney Amendment” to the U.S. Constitution

In writing contracts, any attorneys involved will represent the interests of all the parties, as if every party to the contract were represented individually by a competent attorney.

Thus, for example, the party or parties arranging for attorney involvement do not receive preferential treatment in negotiations. Furthermore, clarify that this amendment applies to international negotiations as well as negotiations within the USA. Vigorous enforcement of this amendment will enable our attorneys to develop a worldwide reputation for contractual honesty. Let it be said:

"The involvement of even one American attorney assures a square deal."

This change would peacefully send a message to our citizens, people around the world, and the legal profession that America is finally beginning to provide and enforce a **constitutional basis for just dealings** by our lawyers - a break from the centuries-old Anglo-American legal tradition. Social tolerance isn't a given; let's make good use of the present opportunity to reform in a thoughtful way. The world will recognize that we 'Yanks' are intent on being constructively ingenious.

But in the meantime:

- A. Read and understand all the conditions of contracts before signing them, including the secondary documents referenced by the contract (insist on seeing them). In the four-page *beneficiary designation contract* of a well known financial institution, the institution reserves the right, prior to your death, to transfer funds out of your account to another account, without transferring the beneficiaries to the new account. (There is no alternate form with less objectionable terms.)
- B. Look up all the words that you don't know, study the phrases, and ask questions. e.g.: Find out what the common phrase “indemnify and hold harmless” implies.
- C. Reread run-on sentences as many times as it takes to understand them (ten times sometimes suffices).

2. Implement change gradually.

Implementing change gradually and thoughtfully, over five-to-ten years, provides time to enhance intended benefits and disappoint scoundrels, while giving citizens time to gracefully adapt to the evolving opportunities and constraints.

E.g.: The ‘Honest Attorney Amendment’ could be enacted soon, but take effect on January 1, 2016. That way, the supporting laws could be crafted thoughtfully in advance, rather than being debated in haste and cobbled together at the last legislative minute. Not having supporting law in place well before 2016 would be a disservice to smooth transition by the legal profession; arrange the rules so that attorneys can ‘opt in’ early.

3. Expand mass production of commodities – efficiently - on-shore.

Using “making pie” as a caricature of “manufacturing physical commodities“: when a nation makes lots of pie, there’s plenty to go around. As business leaders move pie making offshore, there are more and more political squabbles about who will get pieces of the smaller pie that’s left.

I have deep admiration for American institutions that mass produce physical commodities at a reasonable price on-shore; America’s farmers, though proportionately few in number, provide more than enough food for everyone in the nation. Our utilities are marvels of predictable distribution, e.g. delivering drinkable water. A final specific example: years ago, I saw a TV documentary on a factory in New England that produced wallboard for the walls of homes; as I recall, less than 10 people were involved in the day-to-day operation; raw materials poured in, and smooth, dimensionally-predictable wallboard flowed out, as a marvel of automated, interconnected large machinery realized a very useful physical commodity that sold in local stores at a remarkably low price. Automation can ‘make pie’ efficiently.

Larger American companies have had excellent design teams in place in the past, producing robust, enduring designs. Into the 1970’s, General Motors was such a place. In subsequently building less reliable vehicles, GM may have made more money on auto repair in the 1980’s and 1990’s, but eventually the company collapsed. Microsoft is a world leader in mass producing software tools that, by both intention and copyright, have decreased utility within a few years. In vivid contrast, **Adobe’s “Readers” for their “*.pdf” file format** offer *enduring access to written documents across many computing platforms*. (Your copy of this document is output from my old version 4 .pdf file writer.) *Hurray! & Bravo! & Wow! – a software tool that is useful, stable, supported, and improve with time.*

Limited-quantity production runs reduce the size of the aftermarket for a product, making spare parts expensive or unobtainable years later. My personal example of enduring product support centers on a John Deere Model 420 that my Dad’s Dad purchased in the mid 1950’s; in the early 2000’s, the tractor was still in use because (the original design was robust and) spare parts were available through the original dealer, at a very reasonable cost, within a few weeks. The use of *standard* parts is another way of extending the lives of products; e.g. the specification of *automobile tire/rim interfaces* enables tires to be a reasonably priced commodity for a wide range of automobiles of various ages.

Perhaps the emphasis on creation of jobs in small, new businesses isn’t particularly rewarding for most of the people involved, e.g. the collapse of Silicon Valley’s high tech investment bubble may have benefited wealthy bottom feeders more than the individual workers and small investors. Certainly fortunes are made, but has anyone counted the total costs of all the accompanying small failures? In retail sales, non-franchise businesses have a very high mortality rate within the first five years.

America’s ability to ‘make pie’ may not be well-served by locking our technologists in competitive struggles ‘reinventing the wheel’. Having many companies compete in (e.g.) building rockets leads to a lot of high-cost duplication of effort within the various

enterprises. (Large rocket parts haven't yet made the transition to being a commodity.) I'm told that American nuclear power plants are individual designs, whereas the French reuse a standard design; the French now generate 85% of their electricity using nuclear power.

4. Treat computer hardware, operating systems, and software as “tools”.

In science and business, computers have become centrally important *tools*; **patents** should have limited the extent of associated “intellectual property”- thus assuring the orderly use and enduring support of computing environments, just as older cars can be repaired and maintained at a number of garages outside of the manufacturer's auto dealerships.

Instead, **copyrights** (previously restricted to “forms of expression”, e.g. paintings) have been allowed to be used. **The results have been disastrous:**

- A. Withdrawal of operating systems & support from the marketplace – no one could withdraw tools once they were patented. Software tools are rendered useless by the whim of distant software marketeers who are callously indifferent - if not clueless.
- B. Prohibitions against “reverse engineering” in license agreements – formerly a time-honored practice. Technical inquiry deserves consideration as a scientific right.
- C. Allocating vast amounts of employee time “reinventing the wheel” in the course of remaining competitive - a pure waste of technical brain space.
- D. Disappearance of common analytical understandings behind the veils of proprietary software packages.

Legal, historic, genealogic, and geodetic databases, to name a few, are integral to the use of many software tools. Hence the duration and nature of protection of databases as ‘intellectual property’ needs to be reconsidered outside the present context of copyrights.

The present situation is a boon to the lazy and a fantasy-come-true for litigator's, but a huge burden on the public. Burning the next CD or DVD to copy of a piece of software costs a fraction of a dollar; fortunes are being made that involve very little work, with primary emphasis on parasitic maneuvering. The situation could be corrected...

The U.S. Army developed RTEMS – the *Real Time Executive for Missile Systems*. A public domain, compact, real-time, multitasking computer Operating System (**OS**). OAR Corp. in Huntsville, Alabama manages the software. A number of our deep space probes use it. Consider – managed by The National Institute of Standards & Technology (**NIST**), and with the help of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (**JPL**) eliminating ‘bloat code’, create the following public-domain computation environment:

Build a DOS-size (fits on a floppy disk) computer OS based on RTEMS.

Keep the entire software environment within half of a single CD (~320 megabytes) uncompressed.

Tie RTEMS into OpenGL graphics, including 3-D stereo graphics.

Preserve/improve, and clarify the hardware control features of RTEMS

Create an instant boot-from-ROM OS configuration “that's ~ always there” within a few seconds after power-up, e.g.. that computer viruses can't penetrate. Said another way: strive to preserve autonomous computer control and diagnosis in the face of software and/or mass storage failures... a self-cleaning system.

Provide *mechanical* write protection for mass storage devices as a standard feature.

Include compilers for:

1. C, C+, or C++ (as the C community chooses) -with access to OpenGL

2. Old-fashioned Basic - with access to OpenGL
3. Fortran (as the Fortran community chooses) -with access to OpenGL
(Dr. William Mitchell at NIST tied Fortran to OpenGL a decade ago!)
4. **Assembly Language** - with access to OpenGL
5. ... perhaps a scripting language
6. other, TBD.

Place the source code of this standard environment in the public domain.

Make the object codes of the various compilers link-compatible.

Include a robust visual simulation package (including 3-D stereo graphics)

Evolve the gold-standard (unpatented/post-patent/public) computer aiding tools for design, finite element analysis, fluid dynamics, geodesy, production planning, optimization, etc.

The favorable outcomes:

- A. People only have to learn to use one OS for their lifetime.
- B. Small computer systems are upward compatible with large computer systems.
- C. Software moves beyond “mass production” to free “worldwide instantiation”.
- D. Everyone has access to visual simulation from small-on.
- E. The same OS is embeddable in real systems.
- F. The cost of software worldwide asymptotically approaches zero.
- G. The last bugs disappear from algorithms in common use worldwide.
- H. Technical education is standardized without being stifling
(because the compilers support personal modifications).
- I. Being able to control hardware using computers is a ubiquitous skill.
- J. Core human knowledge (as in “an excellent education”) condenses.
- K. Software provides *less parasitic drag* and more *tools* for progress.
- L. Improving the computer operating system will become an amateur sport.

Let’s defer to ‘the common good’.

5. [Define social words instructively.](#)

Social *English* words are under discussion. In Learning Together in a Diverse World, I compared the lack of clarity of the social word ‘*friend*’ to the clarity of the scientific word ‘*meter*’... which was a poor comparison because ‘*friendship*’ is multi-dimensional and relational whereas ‘*meter*’ is one-dimensional and ‘length’ is an independent concept within physics.

A more enlightening comparison may be between *instructive social words* [there are presently few, if any] and *compact computer codes realizing mathematical transforms*. Transforms re-express multi-dimensional inputs as multi-dimensional outputs. The compact computer codes are instructive – teaching how to go from inputs to outputs. Transforms are sometimes improved, working: more quickly, more directly, more robustly, etc.. (Some programmers embed their transforms in ‘bloat code’, which is too large to comprehend short of complete mental immersion – leaving little or no free brain space for creative progress.)

Social words are presently inferior to bloat code in that they are *the un-instructive rag bag* of scoundrels, parasites, and predators. In one of my old dictionaries the poly-choice definition of “friend” includes: “as in ‘*a friend of commerce*’” - but commercial exploitation can be vicious, not friendly. There are people who are ‘friends’ of *human*

trafficking in the present day. Queen Elizabeth wanted a pen mightier than a sword, and Shakespeare obliged: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” While society ponders the answer, social parasites plan to abuse the “free market”. The fact that “free market” has no succinct elements leaves us uninstructed about the perils that await us.

English teachers *report* the poly-meanings of words, but make no effort to improve the definitions. In the mid 1960’s, my college freshman English class was repeated exercises in construing alternative meanings to well-known literary works; the world of word poly-meanings is bottomless by design, intent, and instruction. Word meaning confusion is far, far removed from the transparent elegance and instructiveness of technology’s efficient transforms. My definition of “social parasites” on page one offers an instructive list of professional behaviors that need to be mitigated.

Making English social words *instructive* is the achievable ‘goal’ of this reform. Beyond lies an ‘aspiration’, which may or may not be achievable, **to make a significant fraction of social words invertible in a logical sense** e.g.: bi-directionally concept preserving. Such an accomplishment would take social words to new heights of instructiveness and utility. Paradigm changes are conceived when blinders are removed. Removing blinders doesn’t guarantee a live birth. My enthusiasm for the power of matrix concatenation + inversion is apparent within the .pdf documents at www.setterholm.com in the /geodesy and the /optics subdirectories.

6. Reconsider the relationship of health, life, longevity, and diagnostics.

The idea of “priceless” human life is free-for-adoption by anyone as a matter of personal religious conviction. However, this extreme position has offspring which are *entirely contrary*: many people are treated as *worthless*, without any quantitative defense because they’re indeed *without price*; the fact that large numbers of our citizens can’t afford healthcare is, in much the same sense, priceless.

Part of the firm foundation of our national healthcare squabble is the “priceless human life”. Besides being a matter of *deep religious conviction* for some people, the idea is *the perfect goldmine* for a host of parasites.

Let me digress for a bit:

For centuries, Eskimos have been one of the native peoples who have lived on the periphery of the Arctic Ocean; an individual’s “social safety net” was the tribe. Periodic scarcity demanded rational decision making in order for the Eskimos to survive. (Unconfirmed...) The story goes that, when starvation loomed, the old people literally “took a hike” with minimal gear – & that the outcome was foreseen and expected by the rest of the tribe.

Individual human health eventually declines in old age; hence, maintaining health is ultimately a lost battle. In our present healthcare debate, politicians accused of considering *bounding* old-age-healthcare are *uniformly* in public denial. Both the accusing and the denying politicians *are out of touch with Earthly life’s physical constraints*.

In military field hospitals “triage”, *who-gets-what-immediate-medical-care*, is a standard feature. In harsh circumstances, some still-living soldiers are “allowed” to die; resource

constraints force well-meaning medical people to make tough choices. I don't recall anyone grumbling about the practice; everyone hoped that it was done right.

Healthy, functional adults have no less right-to-life than any other segment of humanity, and certainly no less right than the unborn (irrespective of "life" status). In the military services, death yields *finite* compensation to the next-of-kin, not *infinite* compensation. Outside of faith, *priceless human life* is a figure of speech, not an operational consideration. On the positive side, the lives of our troops are not *worthless*.

Fighting in our Vietnam-era military service made me much less sentimental about my own life.

As a mental exercise: Imagine a society without an external safety net – like the Eskimos of old. (Without medical intervention, my death from pneumonia in ~1958 would have spared you my viewpoint today.)

As the follow-on mental exercise:

If : *Healthcare is in somewhat short supply.* (It is, eh?)

Then: *To whom should healthcare be allocated? Or Triaged?*

... **so that few people grumble about it**

... except, perhaps, the parasites whose goldmines are closed.

Few people will grumble about healthcare that becomes comparable to the healthcare of members of Congress; leadership by positive example is refreshingly enlightening.

As for health insurance... consider *isolating diagnostics from insurer control*. Withholding diagnostics (e.g. MRI's) is **excessively tempting**: no diagnostics → no confirmed problem → no justified reason for medical intervention → no medical intervention → no benefits paid → more 'profit' for the insurer. Doctors decide, but haven't had the will, as a profession, to reform the insurers' discouragement of reasonable diagnostic. Following a severe shoulder injury in early 2008, I was on the short end of the sequence, though on paper I had, and was paying for, "Cadillac" health insurance. The initial doctor's advice - to return to using the shoulder as I was able - led to further injury.

MRI screening of (white?) men over age 55 would reveal that 1/3rd need **arthroscopic** surgery to remove bone spurs in their shoulders which precipitate the kind of injury that I experienced. The trait is inherited from fathers to sons; if one shoulder has the problem, the other shoulder does too. As part of *fair disclosure*, health insurance companies could be required to list all the known preventable health problems affecting more than 5% of the populace under age 70 that will not be diagnosed.

7. Shun artificial complexity.

By 1980, working in military R&D, I recognized that, although longer study *simplified* what I knew about *most subjects of interest to me* [an exception – how ladies thought], the world seemed to become progressively more complex. A couple of years of reflection yielded "**Complexity Theory**":

(In military R&D, if not elsewhere...) People are paid and promoted based on the perceived complexity of what they do, and successful individuals simply play the game, irrespective of competence. I observed & identified four strategies at the time:

- A. **Hide simplicity**: e.g. report a system with 35 clear, independent variables as having 1000 variables. (Everyone was happy; no one could be expected to grasp someone else's 1000 variables.)
- B. **Knowing the solution, reveal it only gradually** – “The dance of the seven veils.” Pump up the problem (that solved) until other people demand a funded solution; then look promising - create a plausible roadmap (omitting the destination); etc. [In 1980 it didn't occur to me that the 'problems' might be pretend; pretend problems offer such delicious complexity options.]
- C. **Being competent – assemble a team of graduate students, interns, and so on.** Parcel out to each team member a small slice of the problem, limit a broader view of the project, and have the individual team members report their work. Due to inexperience, lack of scope, and specialization, each team member will report the complexity of their slice in depth. Avoid unifying the comprehension of progress for anyone involved.
- D. **Be incompetent**, but avoid the pitfall of publicly simplifying what you know. [The complex reports that CAD produces have since been a windfall for this group.]

On the government's side (if) the bureaucracies can be viewed as a *procurement hierarchies*, with the people at the bottom buying nuts & bolts, and the people at the top buying weapon systems; (then) **adding complexity is self-promoting. Complexity is easier to fund than non-complexity** – because veto power is more broadly distributed than approval power within bureaucracies. Furthermore **enduring complexity translates into job security** for bureaucrats – continuation funding is easier to obtain than initial funding. If managers within industry had any reservation about funding complexities, **the multi-year flow of funds from government** allayed the concerns many decades ago.

America still has technologists who are masters of simplification; for years, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in California was a stronghold of such people. My concern is that simplifiers may be a dying breed of people in this country; efficient solutions are ill-suited to the purposes of parasites. Consider having the civil service become *the employer of last resort* for technologists who both solve problems and shun artificial complexity. Recruiting young people to be Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEM) professionals, consider setting the last-resort compensation at or above the poverty level.

At the high end of the compensation spectrum, everyone wants a 'Golden Parachute', but who needs and/or deserves the special treatment? A common justification is: “to attract the kind of people we need”... industrial-strength professional parasites? You recall the 'wizards' of Wall Street being described as geniuses by the press, again and again, prior to the American financial mishaps of the last two decades. Senior business leaders haven't yet embraced *personal satisfaction in a job well done* as a key component of their compensation. Leadership by positive example would be refreshing.

Some of the sacrifices at *the altar of complexity* can be amusing; watch for them. Declaring a problem 'unsolvable', but staying on the job as a 'professional', is particularly funny.

Creating *prizes* for the solution of 'unsolvable' problems has gained some traction; that approach delivered *human-powered flight* at a reasonable price & in a timely manner.

8. Use knowledge to educate people.

Why does any country allow foreigners to own its press? At best, third rate national advice follows - after the foreign interests of the owner, and the interests of the owner's friends, have been served.

Knowledge is used for personal advantage. A recurring abuse by people on the parasitic fringe is to *achieve excessive legal control of (largely public) knowledge for a lifetime*. The copyrighting of computational *tools* is a prime example. Access to useful knowledge is restricted from free public education, or free introductory knowledge produces dependencies that must be paid for later in software 'upgrades'. Licenses - "seats" - to use CAD packages sometimes cost thousands of dollars (e.g. in geodetic planning, computational fluid dynamics, structural optimization, etc., etc.) If 'seats' remain under copyrighted private ownership then foreigners will eventually dominate the game, because foreigners constitute 80% of the world's technologists, & our children's children will be computational serfs. An English group asserts copyright of the revised *Lord's Prayer* in the current Lutheran (ELCA) Hymnal; *copyrighting the words of the Lord* - an example of copyright abuse made in Heaven.

Many parents want their children to be educated; more and more is spent on education - but without a corresponding empowerment for their children. I see no good reason why an excellent education (the lifelong empowerment with useful tools, skills, comprehensions, and predictive expectations) hasn't become uniformly inexpensive. Lots of reasons are apparent, but no 'good' reasons.

Many American technologist spend time in re-creating solutions that already exist... "re-inventing the wheel".

I spent a year successfully generating a solution for converting raw GPS ephemerides & pseudoranges, and also inertial measurement unit (IMU) delta-V/delta-Theta measurements, to six-degree-of-freedom GPS/INS navigation solutions. When finished, I could recognize well-written papers on INS/GPS integration, but not before. The U.S. government had solved these problems many years ago, but offered only the outline of the solution in the public domain in the mid 1990's - as ICD-GPS-200. (A pleasant irony of the story is that I knew the man who originated the mathematics underlying the present day GPS system - Verne Schwab of the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory - as the father of a good friend of mine in High School.)

Copyrighting rewards redundant solutions. Silicon Graphics' OpenGL and Microsoft's DirectX compete as graphics languages. But to what long-term benefit for humanity? At what cost to our ability to educate our children within a shared environment? Either graphics solution drives computationally-intense dynamic graphics rendering down to the hardware level, which empowers visual communication, but the solutions are incompatible, which is wasteful. If both Silicon Graphics and Microsoft had been obligated to patent their technologies, then the inventions, or lack of them, would be far more apparent, and the best of both technologies would be available to evolve. The longer these artificial 'houses of cards' are propped up, the more disruptive their collapse will be.

The privatization, partition, and licensed CAD'ing of knowledge create surreal patent disputes. E.g.: Poor approximations of previously-known precise solutions pass for inventions and are given traction as “intellectual property”.

Pursue the paths under discussion here and STEM will become much more of an amateur sport. Foreseeing the empowerment, productivity, and intellectual curiosity of motivated amateurs, perhaps we'll end up needing far fewer STEM professionals than farmers. And the amateurs worldwide will have a common context in which to communicate results to everyone. Both amateurs and people in industry will create useful results; academia should be forthright in acknowledging creative contributors, irrespective of personal credentials.

9. Streamline & confirm estate distribution intent during a person's lifetime.

American estate settlements can be a zoo. After a person's death, the parasitic opportunities abound; non-beneficiaries line up at the trough using a myriad of clever ploys; institutions “forget” that they hold assets of an estate; institutional records are outright falsified to conceal assets; a church claims that a pledge of a deceased hasn't been paid, when the records clearly show otherwise! Relatives challenge the will of the deceased. After months of honest, diligent research, the quest for estate justice can still resemble an exotic alloy of unaffordium and unobtanium. Many of these parasites wouldn't exist if the deceased were still alive to nail down the facts for beneficiaries.

10. Augment and eventually supplant the “top-leader” function with transparent decision models guided by a diverse group of experienced people within each enterprise. Share, compare, and improve the models over time.

Who wants to proceed on *illuminated* paths with excellent leadership? Raise your hands.

Within government, there is another reason to moderate the autonomy of leaders. Governance is a balancing act wherein ‘freedom’ and ‘anarchy’ are two of many dimensions in play. Anarchies can arise at the top of governments as well as within the citizenry. My 1956 dictionary's first definition of Anarchism is: *1. The theory that all government is an evil.* A few commentators with radio-based pulpits still claim that we didn't make American financial markets free enough for long enough (16 years of permissive irresponsibility was insufficient time for the *free market* to demonstrate its profound and lasting social value to humanity). Ufda. ← Denotes my trans-finite skepticism.

11. Stop killing people in foreign lands by remote control.

(I am **anti-** remote harming of humans.)

In general terms, Sylvia Brown's brilliant placement of warfare in human affairs is:

The Tenets of Novus Spiritus - XVII: War is profane, defense is compulsory.

Ref. ISBN 13:978-1-4019-0648-1, ~sixth page.

By definition, predators pose a more immediate threat than parasites. Lethality skills have become too diffused to achieve sustained dominance through force. Opponents with options will react to being attacked. I paint a dark picture of the fruits of ‘arrogant force projection’ within Appendix “A”.

Closing remark:

Parasites gorge themselves & multiply; host death is usually accidental.
“Oops.” and “Oh Well.” are not appropriate responses.

In thoughtful, non-exclusive groups,
let’s try to figure out
where on Earth we are going, and why.

Improvements interest me; peacefully useful ideas that I completely missed are delights:

Jeff Setterholm
The Philosophy Works®
8095 230th St. E.
Lakeville, Minnesota 55044-8287
USA

© 2010 Jeffrey M. Setterholm
This document and its two appendices may be further
distributed and printed, in entirety, without permission.

Do not use my registered trademark:
The Philosophy Works®.

I encourage broader consideration
and improvement of the ideas expressed herein.

Do not use my trademark at the upper right of page #1.

Web search engines are slow to find improved versions of my web documents, but seem to have a longer memory for my original document names.

Hence this document is posted at www.setterholm.com as:

SocialParasites.pdf , without a version number in the title.

A later upgraded version, if any, will have the same name when posted.

I suggest that, in saving the .pdf on your computer and/or further distributing the .pdf, that you rename the file:

SocialParasites021.pdf , to reflect **version 0.21**

This supercedes (**with minor cleanup**): version 0.2 which I released two days ago.

Appendix “A” Cautions accompanying SocialParasites.pdf v0.2:

Ideas can be dangerous. Cautiously approach anyone’s innovations. To illustrate the point:

Consider a subset of the contributions of our nation’s foremost political philosopher and 3rd President Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826); his skill with thoughts and words elevated him to greatness. Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, and later his writings became *the guiding light* of the Southern Confederacy *during* the American Civil War (1861-1865) which was the armed conflict most lethal to U.S. citizens in our Nation’s history. A deeply grateful nation completed the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C (38.88129° N, -77.03641° W) in the early 1940’s during World War II.

What’s wrong with the picture is that carefully-crafted words (like shaped-charge explosives) can focus (un)intended destruction. E.g.: Free people are *convinced* to undertake wars.

Both *question* and *improve upon* anyone’s social conjectures... preferably as part of a *non-exclusive group*. When personal compensation is involved, less constructive change may come from your exclusive group than from yourself, because exclusive groups may amplify selfishness more than *achievement of constructive purpose*. I suggest that major social problems would have been solved *a century ago* if exclusive groups of people *were able to solve them...* and subsequent social progress would have rivaled subsequent technical progress in the 20th century. (A rewind historical clock with no World War I and no World War II **is** difficult to imagine.)

Furthermore, in “improving” the present, substantial discernment is needed to retain or replace existing know-how. Consider Ralph Nader’s criticism of Chevrolet’s Corvair: Unsafe at Any Speed ...the rear-mounted engine moved the weight aft, the vehicle sometimes swapped-ends while moving fast on slippery roads... written in the 1960’s: We owned a Corvair; Dad lost control - on ice - and was thrown from the vehicle into a snow bank (~uninjured); the book had personal relevance. However, at the time, and into the 1970’s, General Motors designed and built some very reliable vehicles; our 1972 Oldsmobile Cutlass (Donna’s dowry) ran for 230,000 miles on the original the power train (engine, transmission, differential, et.al.). Conversely, the engine on our 1983 Oldsmobile Cutlass failed at 70,000 miles, and GM charged \$2,000 for the replacement; years later an automotive engineer said that the life expectancy of the engine had been only 30,000 miles. The auto ran to 280,000 miles on the 2nd engine, but was at the dealers shop over and over again for repairs costing several hundred dollars each. ‘Uncertainty’ is the essence of ‘adventure’, but involuntary adventures are usually unpleasant. For decades, GM’s autos had been the only ones I’d buy; I was a slow learner.

In contrast to GM, Toyota focused on building reliable automobiles, including our 2004 Corolla. (See ConsumerReports’s annual evaluation of used vehicle repair histories; I did.) Donna experienced un-commanded acceleration of the Corolla once, but the dealer couldn’t duplicate the problem, nor could we; problems that won’t duplicate are hard to diagnose. Meanwhile, Toyota’s technical decisions outclassed the technical decisions at General Motors; e.g.: “What happened to the electric car?” GM recalled and scrapped theirs; Toyota built the Prius. When problems arise: allow *sustained demonstration of competence* to create some credits. Critics always have semi-infinite choice, because each

of us travel only a finite number of real paths in one lifetime; & hindsight in the forward direction is an oxymoron, even for critics, e.g.: me.

Thomas Jefferson popularized the idea that individual people, not just kings, have “inalienable rights”. Thus, another useful dimension – the idea of *personal rights* - was added to everyday social thought. But extreme social positions... e.g. *inalienable* anything... deserve suspicion as the first reaction... for the lack of *balance*. Jefferson didn't confer ‘inalienable rights’ on his slaves, he conferred *slavery* upon them. ‘Finding *balance*’ has been a theme within oriental philosophy for many centuries. ‘Finding balance’ is related to the idea of ‘depolarization’, and to ‘resilience’ - having an optimistic & reasonable guess about what tomorrow will bring, via either “Plan A”, or the available fallback position: “Plan B”, whereas extreme positions can have as a bedfellow another far-removed extreme (like ‘priceless’ ⇔ ‘worthless’).

When copyrights block the dissemination of information society is not well served, e.g. when high quality copyrighted books are withdrawn from publication. Our best historians have provided profound insights into past events; for: compactness, scope, factualness, even-handed-insight, humility, and elegance of expression, The Lessons of History - by Will and Ariel Durant, ~102 pages, Simon & Schuster, 1968 – is a consummate masterpiece. The Durant's book is out of print.

Tools and understandings impart skills. Skills can be used both constructively and destructively. Can humanity develop sufficient *shared self restraint* to employ skills constructively? That's a tall order. My sense (since 1967) has been that increased ‘education’ beyond high school leads to increased selfishness; if true, then a counter-intuitive – bizarre - result. Would graduating skilled students from public high school help to stabilize society? Who knows?

Let's be astute enough to avoid fighting wars that we've already lost. *Corporations* and *lawyers* assured an ongoing & powerful presence by wealthy foreigners in the American Colonies before the American Revolutionary War and in the United States of America afterwards. Paul Revere's ride was signaled by lanterns hung in a Boston church steeple; “One if by land, two if by sea” supposedly warned of the route of British attack. I'm arguing that Paul's ride was way-too-little, way-too-late to achieve independence. Legislators who can't agree on *this year's budget* are mentally ill-equipped to consider: the present threats to *equality of opportunity* and *affordable contentment* that will be manifest 20 to 50 years in the future.

I'm concerned about our national frenzy to realize robotic warfare under centralized control (~ a \$4,500,000,000. investment this year); we don't have a solid plan for **protecting ourselves from our own national leaders** in the future. Empowering everyone somewhat risks anarchy, but empowering only a few people risks despots.

In addition, the political enthusiasm for remote-control killing of our “opponents” using armed unmanned drones in far off places is short-sighted. The practice will lose more than half its luster *when* (not *if*) our opponents start the targeted autonomous injury & killing of people in America. For patient opponents, inexpensive attack options abound. Combat

veterans know that life as a potential human target on a recurring basis adds a new dimension to “being stressed”. We may eventually become accustomed to *robotic predation*, but life will be more of an ‘adventure’, in a less pleasant way, for all people, regardless of their social status.

We’ve been training foreign technologists in our universities for decades; in so doing we helped empower foreigners of many persuasions. But **arrogant force projection is a poor idea** for an even more important reason..

Years ago, when American Universities started teaching freshmen in college how to splice genes, the option of engineering bio-weapons – germs on a mission – began leveling the playing field of strategic warfare worldwide; America’s recent scuffle with the H1N1 virus serves as a reminder of our vulnerability... our on-shore vaccine manufacturing plants had all been shut down! Combat robots are no match for germs in lethality, longevity, stealth, or ease of delivery. A germy *letter* shut down a legislative office building in D.C. within recent memory. (Now, letters to our national government are first screened outside town.)

No library of *gloom and doom* is complete without: Pox Americana, The great smallpox epidemic of 1775-1782 by Elizabeth A. Fenn, The Great Mortality, an intimate history of the black death, the most devastating plague of all time, by John Kelly, America’s Forgotten Pandemic The Influenza of 1918 by Alfred W. Crosby, and The Mongol Art of War by Timothy May. (Surprisingly, Timothy May makes no mention that the ‘Black Death’ – bubonic plague – came to Europe in 1346 in the midst of the Mongol’s westward conquest.) Given informed communication & the option: many societies of the day might have chosen plague as an opponent - rather than almost-inevitable defeat and subjugation by the Mongols. I don’t mean to make light of biological pandemics, but the convergence of extreme selfishness, cleverness, power; & ruthlessness in a single individual - in any age – has had social effects as adverse as plagues (Genghis Kahn, Hitler, Stalin,...).

Nanotechnology’s future in weaponry is also worthy of concern. How far down that road will we travel, and at what expense? Many years ago a science fiction writer envisioned that the future use of nanotechnology, having evolved to be a complete nuisance on Earth, would be restricted to the far side of the Moon. ☺

Finishing Appendix “A” on a relatively positive note...

We can be blind to the useful work of experts. Raw petroleum comes from deep in the ground in (usually) distant places as a gooey mess. Delivering refined gasoline at a retail price of \$2.50/gallon to your neighborhood is remarkable; delivery at \$1.00/gallon was a marvel. In the last 10 years, I haven’t heard anyone complain about getting “a bad gallon of gas” from a filling station; the only complaints concern price. Though gasoline can explode and easily ignites, drivers of all ages, from all walks of life, fill their own fuel tanks with few accidents. A less-skilled petroleum industry *might have made* getting gas for your car, and then driving away, more of an adventure.

English:English* **The Peacefully Adaptive School** Version 2

A world view.

"Understanding":

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) accounts for past experience | 3) predicts future experience |
| 2) clarifies present experiences | 4) grasps bounds |
| | 5) can be communicated. |

OBJECTIVES:

- > To create a usable collection of understandings that will help humanity live peaceful, productive, happy, and (optionally) exciting lives, while enjoying religious freedom.
- > To make the understandings accessible and free to people around the globe.

BOUNDS:

- > Origins of faiths are fundamental (beyond reason).
- > Language is insubstantial, but can be very useful.
- > Human cognition (*brainspace*) is limited.
- > Hidden dimensions of secrecy do more harm than good.
- > Self-restraint is essential.

APPROACH:

Organize understanding.

- > Combine the understandings of many people.
- > Seek simplicity, brevity, clarity, resilience, and synergy.
- > Use committees to define words.
- > Characterize benefits and risks.
- > Anticipate scoundrels.
- > Explore better ways of teaching.
- > Evolve self-sustaining standards.

Encourage improvement.

- > Foster shared thinking.
- > Employ understandings as filters.
- > Experiment and simulate.
- > Shape dimensions and question limits.
- > Consider life-cycle issues.
- > Be patient.
- > Create useful attitudes.

Strive for integrity.

- > Avoid intentional hiding of assumptions, goals, and ignorance.
- > Respect individual right to a viewpoint.
- > Consider dissenting views.
- > Acknowledge contributors adequately.

*Translations by: Precision Language Services

© 2004 by Jeffrey M. Setterholm. **The Philosophy Works®**

"LTDW20.pdf" may be reproduced and printed in its entirety without permission.