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ETC:

A Review of General Semantics

et cetera



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“THIS IS THE FIRST opportunity I have had to write a ‘credo,’ where I do not need to go into theoretical explanations,” notes Alfred Korzybski in his *What I Believe*. He gives us clear and reader-friendly insights into his life’s work in this article originally written for the Symposium, *The Faith I Live By*, compiled and edited by Krishna M. Talgeri.

We offer three articles demonstrating the value of general semantics in the classroom. Katherine Liepe-Levinson and Martin H. Levinson suggest techniques for addressing bullying, a serious and growing problem in American schools, in *A General Semantics Approach to School-age Bullying*. In *Evaluating with Cartoons*, Evelyn Stagg recounts her experiences using cartoons and comics to teach children the skills of inference detection and abstraction awareness. And David Maas bemoans how students try to evade responsibility by *Short-Circuiting Achievement and Performance with Elementalistic Pseudo-Bifurcation*.

Another trilogy of articles introduces us to 21st century concepts with thought-provoking connections to general semantics. In *The Medium is the Moblog*, Gary Mielo traces the latest Internet communications fad to its roots in McLuhan's global village. Nora Miller tells us that a community of Internet users has deliberately chosen to blur the lines between writing and reading, in *Wikipedia and The Disappearing "Author."* And *Time-Binding in the Information Age*, by Brad Reed, warns 20th century business owners of possible paradigm problems when facing the need to manage 21st century knowledge workers.

Communication follows certain patterns and the metaphors of music can provide us with a different way of understanding those patterns, according to Ray Gozzi in this issue's *Metaphors in Action* feature. Milton Dawes agrees, although in a somewhat different vein, in his article *Our Lives as a Complex of Rhythms*.

Korzybski told us "Those who rule the symbols, rule us." With this *ETC*, we introduce a new feature, *Calling out the Symbol Rulers*, with reporting, commentary and correspondence on up-to-the-moment issues that concern us all. Each quarter, this feature will focus the lens of general semantics on an aspect of recent world events and offer a variety of perspectives on how language and thought habits influence our daily lives. In this introductory edition, devoted to the recent Presidential election, Gregg Hoffmann ruminates on the 2004 conventions of the two major parties in *Political Conventions, Images, and Spin*, while Nora Miller offers *Anti-Spin: Using Internet Resources to Unwind Political Claims*, an overview of non-partisan Internet resources that emerged in reaction to the widely-perceived need for "fact-checking." And in *Correspondence*, two readers write to tell us their reactions to the use and abuse of language during the campaigns.