

TIME-BINDINGS

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TIME-BINDINGS

An IGS Newsletter

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Submission Guidelines

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Deadlines: Spring—March 1; Summer— June 1; Fall—September 1; Winter—December 1.

PERSPECTIVES

FROM THE EDITOR Last month I noted that statistics indicate nigh nothing about any particular individual. How might this play out in a medical office? A few years ago, I had severe sciatic pain, despite heavy pain medication, following a surgical bleed. A highly competent pain management specialist, to whom I would return should I need treatment again, administered a nerve block injection. I was feeling very much better when I returned for a follow-up visit one month later.

We discussed the advantages and small risk of another injection and I decided to go ahead with it. Okay, I knew the routine, so I rolled over on my side to be prepped. When I was ready, including a topical anesthesia, the physician approached, syringe in hand. Suddenly I had a great realization. "Wait, I'm lying on the wrong side!" Well, we all paused, somewhat in shock. "Oh, this has never happened with any other patient. 99% of people are in too much pain to lie on the wrong side," he said.

I rolled over and received the block in the right place. And I administered a lesson in practical statistics. "The patient before you can always be the 1% exception. Check each time before `shooting'."

For now, Susan Presby Kodish



BUILDING BRIDGES

BY LAURA BERTONE
The "Either/Or" Syndrome

In my first column in these pages, I referred to the "allness disease" and its negative consequences on the Argentine society. I will refer now to another bad habit, the negative pervasive impact of which is becoming especially visible at the present time: the "either/or" syndrome.

While this syndrome is not exclusively Argentine, an advantage of taking the Argentine case is that the deterioration of the system here has been so systematic that today it offers fewer nuances than other situations and thus becomes a better case study: the clarity of the negative aspects makes the message obvious for anybody who cares to have a look and to learn from it.

Back at the beginning of what we may consider the origins of the country as such, we already find the "either/or trap": either royalists or independents; Spaniards or Indians; "unitarians" or "federals"; the metropolis versus the colonies; the capital city versus the provinces; etc. But the negative consequences of this restrictive thinking and verbal habit were not then perceivably obvious. Towards the middle of the twentieth century, Peron's totalitarian policies and his "allness disease" reinforced the pattern to the point of psychologically breaking the society in two: peronists and anti-peronists. Positions were so emotional that it was difficult to jointly evaluate policies in a manner that might help society to evolve.

<i>Mark Your Calendar</i> Coming in 2004 March 12-14: Weekend seminar in Fort Worth
June 14-19: Seminar-Workshop at Alverno College, Milwaukee
June 25-27: Weekend seminar in Fort Worth
Sep 25-26: Weekend seminar in Fort Worth
Dec 28-30: Teaching Development Con- ference at Institute of General Semantics
GS Organizations Australian General Semantics Society: c/o Laurence Cox, Unit 15, "The Commodore," 12-16 Walton Crescent, Abbotsford, 2046, N.S.W., Australia
Dallas-Fort Worth Center for General Semantics: P.O. Box 1565 Fort Worth, TX 76101-1565 Phone: 972-897-5620
International Society for General Semantics: P.O. Box 728, Concord, CA 94522 Phone: 925-798-0311
New York Society For

General Semantics: c/o Allen Flagg, 144 East 36th St., New York, NY 10016 Phone: 212-532-8042

San Francisco Chapter ISGS: 248 Alma St., San Francisco, CA 94117-4224

GS on the Internet

European Society for General Semantics at http://www.esgs.org (French, English, Spanish, Italian, German and Polish)

Dallas-Fort Worth Center for GS: http://www.dfwcgs.net

Institute of General Semantics: http://www.general-semantics.org

International Society for General Semantics: http://www.generalsemantics.org

The political situation at present seems to prove that the absence of such evaluation produced quite a lot of harm. But the important lesson to me is that the fracture did not end there: disrupture went on and on, producing other fractures: our last presidential elections in April of this year, for example, forced us to choose between two peronist candidates. The opposition party, dismissed during the first ballot, had also presented two options.

In the sixties and seventies, the Argentine society was shattered by an unprecedented terrorist movement in this part of the world. We were then witnesses—and victims—of other types of either/or extremes. "Those who are not with us are against us," warned the military, for example. (By the way, there's another dichotomy here: military/civilian government.) And, guite unprepared to face the terrorists, we nevertheless had to do so by ourselves: in those days, the rest of the world seemed concerned with other problems and remained unaware or indifferent to what we went through. Panic ensued, causing emotions to run rampant. In such a situation, it becomes more difficult than ever to make sound decisions. These emerge from a harmonious balance in people, not from fear. We can understand the fear that some limited situations can trigger. And when I say "understand," I mean that we lived these situations and consequently understand them from "inside." But that understanding does not mitigate the consequences of unsound decisions.

The terrorist enemy was so harsh, so unexpected, so violent, respecting no rules, no territories, no ages, or conditions, that the institutional response also went overboard (extreme threat/ | Ten of them submitted brief essays

extreme response.) A civilian government asked the military to put an end to the threat, no matter how. So they did. This was a big mistake, as the military has only now started to perceive. The "either/or" attitude has not led us out of our problems. And both terrorists and the military who defeated them are being blamed by the Argentine society today, the latter even more strongly. (As if the battle had been fought on two simultaneous battlefields: the military won in one of them; the enemies seemed to this day to have won with the press.)

It would seem that Argentine leadership reacted with the immediate, emotional fight or flight response. In ancient times, when dangers were great for people in the forest, this response was necessary to survive the encounter. The "either/or" trap pushes us back into such primitive animal-like reactions propelled by fear. We need courage --- and intelligence, and solidarity, and wisdomto overcome it and, together, find other ways and means to share and evolve. We need to reanalyze "anguish" in order to get out of the aristotelian "either/or" logic. A wider larger vision encouraged by using "Etc." can help us get out of the "either/or" trap, and into the vast middle ground between extremes.



WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT? BY FRANK GASTNER Wouldn't it be great if general semantics formulations were taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade? This question was posed to a group of young women who had just completed a term of GS at Alverno College, taught by Andrea Johnson.

on the subject. The students were uniformly positive, and all agreed that learning GS prior to college would have benefited them a great deal.

If you are of the same opinion—that something should be available for pre-college students—now you have the opportunity to make it happen. A group of us, including some members of our Board, have started formulating a curriculum. 'Abstracting' material from *ETC*, Mary Morain's books, old *General Semantics Bulletins*, insights from seminars, other texts, etc., some lesson plans have been created. Susan Presby Kodish has graciously edited some of this work.



This course of study will not be called General Semantics. The working title is "Critical Evaluation and Communication." ("Critical" courtesy of Bruce Kodish; "Evaluation" courtesy of Bob Pula) In the main, it will consist of brief exercises introducing GS formulations to students at each grade level. The course will not replace existing curricula, but integrate with them. In this respect it will differ from other GS courses that were taught briefly in the past.

Bob Pula has supplied me with a GS curriculum prepared for the Baltimore schools nearly forty years ago, and Gregg Hoffmann has supplied his monograph, *Mapping the Media*. While these have proved helpful, we need plenty of additional assistance. For example:

• Did you ever teach GS in school? Do you have lesson plans?

- Do you know of any research done regarding the efficacy of GS?
- Will you make time to edit some of

the material as it is prepared?

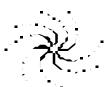
• Do you know what happened to the classes begun in Chicago by Catherine Minteer?

• Do you have any connection with the education bureaucracy?

• Do you have any connection with a potential funding source, in case the one we already contacted does not come through?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, we need your help. Contact me, Frank Gastner, at www.gastnerfj@bigplanet.com or 610-459-2758. I hope to hear from many of you. Thanks!

[Editor's Note: In addition to encouraging you to respond directly to Frank, I encourage you to submit your comments on the project to *Time-Bindings*.]



IN MEMORIAM: CHARLOTTE SELVER

By SUSAN PRESBY KODISH Charlotte Selver, renowned Sensory Awareness teacher, and friend of the Institute and general semantics, died on August 22, 2003. She was born in Germany in 1901, and taught physical education at Leipzig University until the Nazis purged Jewish faculty members. She came from there to New York City where, elaborating on the work of Elsa Gindler, she developed her approach to sensory awareness—meditation in action—which she taught to many.

Ms. Selver introduced the work to general semanticists at Institute seminar-workshops in the early fifties. Her friend and student, Charlotte Schuchardt Read, continued this work at later seminars and through articles in the *General Semantics Bulletin*. Selver established the Sensory Awareness Foundation (SAF), now in Mill Valley, CA. The SAF website at www.sensoryawareness.org/ is an excellent source for becoming more familiar with her work. Also recommended is a book by her second husband, Charles V. W. Brooks, *Sensory Awareness: The Rediscovery of Experiencing*, New York: The Viking Press, 1974 (available from the Institute). For Selver's own description, see "Sensory Awareness and Total Functioning," *General Semantics Bulletin* 22, 1957, pp. 5-16.



Charlotte Selver

I attended a workshop taught by Selver in New York City in 1981. A large gymnasium-type room was filled with enough students to allow just enough room for us to sit, lie down and move. At that time, Charlotte was already quite deaf and so was assisted by Brooks. Nonetheless, she had a commanding presence and contributed greatly to my understanding of and ability to engage in sensory awareness.

She continued teaching until recently. As she realized that she was weakening and approaching death, she accepted the inevitable and encouraged friends to surround her, as she gradually let go more and more—a fitting and touching application of her work and an inspiration for others.

LIME ROCK NOW & THEN

By STEVE STOCKDALE Recently I traveled to the New York/ Connecticut area to take care of a few items of Institute-related business. I had the good fortune to spend one night with Irene Ross Mayper in Ridgefield, CT, and one night with Bob and Ginny Potter in Cornwall, CT.

Cornwall sits, locates and otherwise exists just a few minutes from Lime Rock. Since I had never visited that area. Bob drove me over to the Lime Rock cemetery where the graves of Korzybski, Mira, Kendig and Lynn Gates rest, locate and otherwise exist. We took advantage of a glorious New England late afternoon spring day to sit before the grave markers and reflect on the four of them, as well as Allen Walker Read and Charlotte. (Bob informed me that Allen and Charlotte's markers will be placed with the Read family plot in Illinois.)

From the cemetery, Bob drove me by the grand house that was home to Kendig and the Institute from 1946 until the early 1980s. He stopped the car in front of the house and pointed out various details to me, comparing how things had changed over the past thirty years. As we sat there gazing around, a car pulled out of the driveway onto the road beside us. A woman, presumably an owner or occupant, rolled her window down and asked if she could be of help.

Bob explained who we constituted and why we had an interest in the house. She seemed as interested in talking with us as we were with her ... "Oh, you were associated with the old school that was here? Would you like to come in and look around?"

We jumped at the chance and she was a very accommodating tour guide. Those of you who were familiar with the house should be pleased to know that the owners have invested heavily in restoring, renovating and remodeling the old mansion. We got to visit all three floors, including the second floor that had either five or seven bedrooms and at least two large bathrooms, and the third floor where young Dave Bourland once 'protected' AK's personal library. The third-floor built-in bookshelves remain in Lime Rock, while AK's books now sit, locate and otherwise exist within my reach here in Fort Worth.

I committed to send to the current owner as many old pictures as I could locate in the archives—scanned, on a CD—as she was very interested in seeing how the old place was previously furnished and decorated. All in all, this half-hour or so constituted the highlight of my trip.

As I drove back to Texas over the next three days, I reflected quite a bit on what a shame it was that the Institute had been forced to sell the house after Kendig's death. However, in the early '80s the dire financial condition of the Institute necessitated the sale. The proceeds of the sale allowed the Institute to function over the next few years, including a three-year move to Baltimore when Bob Pula served as Director. At that time, under those circumstances, the Institute needed the cash in the bank more than they needed the house in Connecticut.

I could not help but imagine how wonderful it would be to again have such a 'permanent' home for general semantics somewhere, at some point in the future.



BOOK REVIEW BY SUSAN PRESBY KODISH Negotiate for Success: Effective Strategies for Realizing Your Goals. Juliet Nierenberg and Irene S. Ross. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2003.

This new book by the team of Nierenberg, and Ross (Mayper), authors of *Women and the Art of Negotiating*, is part of a series called "Positive Business." Although oriented toward those in the "business world," *Negotiate for Success* has applications for any negotiating situation. It can be use by anyone in the business of living.

The influence of general semantics on their formulating is suggested in the authors' Foreword (p. 8): "We met at a 24-hour marathon conference on General Semantics (a discipline devoted to exploring and understanding how we know what we know), in which we are both interested. In our conversations, we found that we shared an interest in negotiation as well-Irene, as a lawyer and a judge; Juliet as a former teacher who had started working for the Negotiation Institute, founded by her husband, Gerard, a pioneer in the field of negotiation."

The text of *Negotiate for Success* seems obviously informed by such general-semantics principles as: allowing for nigh inevitable change; individual differences in abstracting; differentiating facts and inferences; organism-as- a-whole-in-an-environment, etc. Thus, their five Foundation elements, as diagrammed on page 5: Pause for Reflection (taking into account that the negotiation may

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evolve in unexpected directions, flexibility is recommended; Agree on the Facts (which includes appreciating how others involved arrived at their 'facts', as well as how interpretations can diverge); Control the Climate (taking the environment into account); Search for Needs: Your Needs, Their Needs; and Meet Your Objectives.

The overall goal is to work from the philosophy of "Everybody wins," in other words, all parties are satisfied. In controlling the environment, the authors do not advocate giving up on your objectives in order to achieve "peace"; rather, working toward everybody winning, while staying firm on the essential needs of all, can lead to satisfaction for all.

The book packs a lot into its160 pages, which include an index. However, it doesn't appear packed or densely presented. The layout is attractive and includes sidebars of diagrams and summary points, the material is clearly and coherently organized, and each section includes a one-page "Work Solution" checklist.

I particularly liked the authors' focus on how best to ask questions (including a question map); their inclusion of Maslow's hierarchy of needs; and the importance of knowing when a decision has been made (or not) and what that decision entails.

I also like their delineation of a plain speaking campaign, that is, speaking directly and minimizing such qualifiers as "Before I forget...." However, I question their limited use of the term "meta-talk" to refer to phrases which suggest indirection. As I understand the term, as used in the communication and psychology fields, it refers to any comments about comments. In other words, meta-talk can include any higherlevel statements about lower-order statements; useful for clarification as well as obfuscation.

In sum, I recommend *Negotiate for Success* for anyone who is not a hermit, and commend Nierenberg and Ross on their achievement.

ALFRED KORZYBSKI COLLECTED WRITINGS NUMBER 19 IN A SERIES BY ROBERT P. PULA

"General Semantics and You-The Foundations of a Science of Man: Excerpts from Forum luncheon address at City Club of Chicago, March 27, 1939."

This striking address seems made even more striking precisely because it was delivered to 'shakers and movers' in Chicago after the 'Anschluss" (Austria), after Munich (the appeasement regarding Czechoslovakia, and six months before the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. Let's review this from the historical perspective as well as from the korzybskian formulational one, since it seems to reverberate with the current world situation.

First, the City Club of Chicago's spokesman: "Count Korzybski, a Polish Nobleman and engineer by training, is the founder and director of the Institute of General Semantics, established in Chicago last year. His approach to the science of general evaluation, expounded in his books 'Manhood of Humanity' and 'Science and Sanity', has made a profound impression upon leading scientists throughout the world and has been acclaimed as a significant advance in general evaluation." In this excerpt, Korzybski begins by giving the historical background of the term 'semantics'. Affirming that the "original science of semantics is dead at present" since it didn't deal with life issues, he says: "I introduced the term General Semantics to indicate a general theory of values, a general theory of evaluation of facts, relations, 'feelings', etc., not of meanings by mere verbal definition. ...the term evaluation involves both 'emotions' and 'intellect', and so automatically does not split the personality into verbalistic fictions of separate 'emotions' and 'intellect'. In General Semantics we are interested in actual evaluational reactions, and not only what we say about them."



Bob Pula at work in the Korzybski Archives

He fleshes out the term evaluation: "Thus when we form a 'judgment' we evaluate. Sciences and mathematics represent a process of evaluations. If we hate or love someone, etc., we are evaluating; in fact, most of socalled 'psychological' reactions may be said to represent evaluations. Even a blush or a genuine smile may be considered organismal evaluations. It may be said that 'sanity' is proper evaluation, and that 'insanity' represents mis-evaluation."

I put it to you, as a British barristerprosecutor might say, that that is as succinct, simple and profound as it gets. Take it in. Here is the telling historical aspect of Korzybski's talk I referred to above. Remember, this talk was delivered on March 25, 1939. Korzybski, in 1919, had written to Jozef Pilsudski offering his services as, at minimum, consultant to the newly established post-World War I Polish government. He remained a supporter of Marshall Pilsudski until the latter's death in 1935. In 1933, after Hitler's electoral victory and appointment as chancellor by von Hindenberg, Pilsudski, very familiar with Hitler's intentions (and the Weimar Republic's previous training of the Soviet Russian Army and the illegal German Army maneuvers in Russia) proposed to the French and British that, in consort with the Polish Army which was then stronger than the Wermacht, they 'preventively' take out Hitler within a week. The French leadership trembled at the prospect and the British deemed it unseemly, so it didn't happen. How would twentieth century history have been different if it had happened? To how many lives?



Thus Korzybski: "Any student must be amazed at the utter stupidity or treachery of those who control socalled `democracies'. Where was their predictability? All their calculations failed, unless of course they calculated treachery. They played with and on words. In the meantime, ignorant, mostly sick politicians with power, throw big words of `honesty', etc., yet they [Hitler, et al] utilize United States' [mob] gangster methods and the democracies are helpless, throwing verbal `protests' and accepting verbal `apologies'. How about facts: a mad race of armaments is going on, ultimately a slaughter is coming, and you and I pay the price in money and blood."

Korzybski makes a strong case for the link between proper evaluating and predictability, emphasizing their status as aspects of human behavior, "human living reactions." In introducing his, by then world-famous, map-territory analogy, he says, "I use the map-territory relationship because the characteristics are general for all existing forms of representation which include the structure of language." Of his three premises he says, "These three premises are childlike in their simplicity, and yet involve a flat denial of the fundamental present, yet very ancient, unrevised, harmful premises." Thus Jeff Mordkowitz's "Leading a revolution in human evaluating"!

Almost finally, I want to emphasize Korzybski's discussion (imagine his impact on a group of Chicago administrators, entrepreneurs, etc., in 1939!) of elementalism—an issue which I perceive that too many general semanticists honor in the breach:

"We know empirically that 'space' and 'time' do not exist separately, otherwise [in other words] they cannot be divided, and so the facts are non-elementalistic. We know, on the other hand, that verbally we can separate or split them into fictitious elements which do not exist as such."

General-semanticist fans of "Star Wars," 'time travel', and other follies, should ponder that, especially if they are teachers of 'general semantics' to young people. And would-be responsible psychotherapists should ponder similarly the 'mind-bodyproblem'. Finally (finally), a reason why you're reading this column: "The conclusions we must draw from these obvious [obvious to Korzybski] observations are startling and far-reaching, involving fundamentally the future of mankind and civilization."

CORRESPONDENCE

Milton Dawes' Response to "Comment on Dawes' 'A Speculation on Identifying'" (Barry Schwartz, Time-Bindings, Summer 2003, p. 7)

Let me start by reformulating Barry's formulation, "The word is not the thing it represents." I would offer: "A word is not the thing that I use that word to represent." I find that it helps me to clarify my thinking-and-evaluations (for myself, and I hope for others), and to avoid a great deal of misunderstanding and confusion, by accepting the following premises:

(1) Words, by themselves, do not have meanings. (The 'meanings' of words we read in a dictionary were assigned by lexicographers. And lexicographers depend on the meanings given to these words by other humans.)

(2) If I accepted that words by themselves had meanings, I would be acting elementalistically; I would be identifying; and I would be evaluating 'allistically'.

(3) 'Meaning' involves speakers/writers, their intentions; words they use to represent their intentions; my interpretation of those words; and my responses (conscious and non-conscious, verbal and non-verbal) based on my interpretation.
(4) Words do not mean... Humans give meanings. We are usually unaware that we do—but if we are very attentive, we can catch ourselves in the process.

Re "elementalism": I would be acting elementalistically in ignoring speakers or writers—their intentions, their meanings—by intensionally giving more importance and significance to the words they used as rep-

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resentations. Think of times when, in a discussion or conversation, someone responded with "I didn't mean that." Or times when a listener asked, "Do you mean... Are you saying that...?" Or times when reading, you thought, "I just can't make heads or tails of this."

I would also be behaving elementalistically in ignoring my role as "interpreter-evaluator." We usually respond so fast, so automatically, so signally, to what we read and hear, we are most times unaware of our interpreting, evaluating, the memories, associations, etc., that went on, before we responded.

Re "identification": If I lived my life believing that words had meanings in and of themselves, I would be assuming-acting-identifying a word as being the same, in all respects, as a meaning. In other words, I would be unable to distinguish a word from a meaningsince a word would be 'its' meaning. If I believed a word by itself had meaning, I would be treating the meanings I gave to a speaker's or writer's words, as being the same as what a speaker or writer intended or meant by those words. I have never seen a word with meaning embedded. If words have meanings, I ask this: Does one have to be able to read—or is the meaning there for all to see? And if the meaning was not immediately visible, where would one look for this meaning? (I am not being sarcastic. So if a reader 'felt'-gave the meaning "sarcasm"-I was being sarcastic, where could one find this sarcasm?)

Re "allness": If I believed a word, in and of itself had meaning, I would be ignoring the factor that many words have been given different meanings over the years. I would be assuming that the meaning of a word was set for all times. I would assume-act on a belief that everyone hearing or reading a particular set of words would arrive at the same meaning. I would believe that a word had one and only one meaning or set of meanings (mainly mine). If words had meanings, I speculate there would be no disagreement resulting from different meanings. I would assume-act that a particular word would have the same meaning no matter what context, situation, culture, times, language, etc.

If words had meanings in and of themselves, I speculate there would be no need to decipher ancient texts; no need to decode coded messages; and there would be no need for translators. If words had meanings in and of themselves, I imagine there would be less puns, jokes, lies, disagreements, misinterpretations, and misunderstandings. And I speculate dictionaries would be quite different from present forms.

To paraphrase Niels Bohr : "The measurement we get when we measure something is not a property of the measured, but represents the result of an interaction between the measurer and whatever is being measured." Timebinding from this I would say: The meanings we give are not a property of the word we are giving meanings to, but are a function of our interpretations—based on our experiences, our memories, our language skills, age, education, prejudices, expectations, context we assign, etc.

Readers might try this experiment: Ask a few coworkers or acquaintances this question: "What does the word "friend" (or "success" or "justice") mean? Or what does the statement, "I think, therefore I am," mean? What do you notice? When I am conscious of abstracting (remembering to include myself as evaluator), I do not ask what a word means; I ask instead, "What does this mean to me? Or even more accurately, "What meanings can I give to this word, at this time?"

NEWS FROM THE INSTITUTE

The Institute Board of Trustees acknowledges a generous donation from the William G. Dilworth Estate. Bill was a great supporter of our work in his lifetime and it is gratifying that he wished to continue to support the Institute of General Semantics and, thus, future time-binders.

IGS member Gary Mayer recently received the 2003 College of Applied Arts and Sciences Teaching Excellence Award at Stephen F. Austin University. Mayer, associate professor of communication, has taught at SFA since 1992. Congratulations, Gary.

Coming in the next *Time-Bindings*: articles on Dr. Sanford Berman and his Annual Alfred Korzybski Lecture entitled, "General Semantics and the Philosophy of Science: From Pre-Aristotelian to Post-Einsteinian"; and Laurie Cox, 2003 J. Talbott Winchell Award winner.



Institute of General Semantics Trustees George Barenholtz, Jeff Mordkowitz, Milton Dawes, Lynn Schuldt and Susan Kodish meeting at the Dallas/Fort Worth Center for General Semantics

GENERAL SEMANTICS IN FORT WORTH

The IGS quarterly Trustees meeting and extra sessions on plans for the future were held on June 20-22 at the Dallas-Fort Worth Center for General Semantics, which houses the IGS library, Korzybski Archives, and photographs and memorabilia. See photographs (courtesy of George Barenholtz), on pages 5 and 7 and below.

Below is a picture of Steve Stockdale, IGS Director of Programs, and his daughter Stacy, who helps him in the office. Stacy attended a general-semantics seminar in July at Alverno College, taught by Andrea Johnson, Milton Dawes and Steve. Welcome to Stacy as she joins our community.



Stacy and Steve



Part of Alfred Korzybski's Personal Library



Irene Ross-Mayper with Portrait of Korzybski



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"How many things that served us yesterday as articles of faith, today are fables?" —Michel Eyquem de Montaigne