



# INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR REMINISCENCE AND LIFE REVIEW

## The Center For Continuing Education - University of Wisconsin-Superior

December 2017

<http://reminiscenceandlifereview.org>

### *Message from the President*

*Juliette Shellman*

Greetings to all,

Once again, I am pleased to communicate directly to you through the newsletter. Special thank you to Philippe Cappeliez, Donna Sislo, and Esther Gieschen for all their efforts in putting together the newsletter.

I will first address a serious issue confronting the future of the Institute. As most of you know, the IIRLR has operated as a program of the University of Wisconsin – Superior (UWS) Center for Continuing Education (CCE) since 1997, when John Kunz, founder of the IIRLR, was a program manager in the CCE. In February, 2017, Esther Gieschen, current program manager with CCE informed the Executive Committee of the IIRLR Advisory Board of the decision by CCE that they could not continue to host the IIRLR long-term. She said the CCE would continue to provide the support they currently do, including coordinating the 2018 conference, through June 30, 2019 – if that was the desire of the IIRLR advisory board.

This means the IIRLR is facing an existential challenge. This calls for creative and aggressive action on the part of the Advisory Board and our membership. We have begun to discuss the challenges we face because of this decision. Our goal is to have recommendations ready for a vote by the membership at the 2018 conference in Boston. In the meantime, I urge you to contact me with your ideas as to how we can move forward. We will keep you informed about our deliberations through email and the spring newsletter.

As you read the newsletter, I would direct your attention to the publication, *Reminiscence, Life Review and Life Story Work: International Perspectives* edited by Faith Gibson. This is an exciting step as many of our members are contributors. This book will expand the understanding of reminiscence, life review, and life story work across the globe and can be utilized by researchers, practitioners and, faculty.

Over the summer, many members attended The International Association

for Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) and the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) 21st World conference on Gerontology and Geriatrics in San Francisco. Our members have reported positive impressions on the quality of the symposium and the enthusiastic participation in the Reminiscence, Life Story, and Narrative - Research and Practice Interest Group. Our ability to continue to participate in international and national conferences is extremely important in the dissemination of our reminiscence work and expanding the field. We must continue to look for opportunities to disseminate the great work you are doing in the field of reminiscence and life review.

Best wishes for a Happy Holiday and may the New Year bring us all peace and good health

Sincerely,

Juliette Shellman

### *Upcoming issue of the Journal*

*Thomas Pierce*

The Institute's peer-reviewed online journal *The International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review* is publishing a new issue in December, which features a Special Section titled "Reminiscence through a Cultural Lens" edited by Philippe Cappeliez and Jeffrey Webster. The Special Section includes articles by Philippe Cappeliez and Jeffrey Webster (Reminiscence through a Cultural Lens); Nicole Alea, Sideeka Ali, and Mary Jane Arneaud (Why I Value What I Remember: Values and the Functions of Memory in a Trinidadian Lifespan Sample); Juliette Shellman, Melissa Mokel, Nayomi Walton, and Karen Bailey-Addison (Development of a Culturally Tailored Peer-led Reminiscence Intervention to Decrease Depressive Symptoms in Older Black Adults); and Loriena Yancura (Ho'omana'o: A cultural Framework for Reminiscence Interventions with Native Hawaiian Elders). The issue also includes a shared reminiscence by George Dubell (My World War II Experience: Part III) and an editorial by Tom Pierce (The Case for Community-Specific Reminiscence).

## ***A New Book on Reminiscence and Life Review Edited by Faith Gibson***

Faith Gibson

Reminiscence, Life Review and Life Story Work: International Perspectives is due to be published by Jessica Kingsley of London and Philadelphia in late 2018. It is intended to be an authoritative collection of writings by 26 contemporary international scholars and practitioners, many of them members of the IIRLR, who review research, theory building, and practical and clinical applications of the narrative methods loosely known as reminiscence, life review and life story work. The book, edited by Faith Gibson, presents critical accounts of a rapidly growing, extensive global literature. Evidence of effectiveness from recent empirical research studies utilizing quantitative and qualitative methodologies is evaluated. Practical projects involving people of all ages from across the life span, drawn from varied countries, life circumstances and levels of physical and cognitive functioning are included.

This comprehensive volume will provide an up-to-date guide to the nuanced critical appraisal of effectiveness, relevance, methods of engagement and creativity arising from the purposeful recall of our personal pasts, both as a lively means of engaging with ourselves in a self-reflective process, and with others, in sociable exchanges in the here and now. The use of these narrative methods with individuals, couples and small groups is well illustrated throughout. Practice examples demonstrate their relevance to people contending with various health issues, including dementia and other neurocognitive and mental health issues. Some of the methods discussed are highly structured while others use free flowing creative artistic interventions or computer technology to prompt recall, preserve and share personal, family and community history, regardless of age, health, ethnicity, geography, gender, economic and social circumstances.

This book is both scholarly, accessible and international in scope. It is intended to be equally relevant to academic researchers, students and practitioners, be they artists, carers, criminal justice staff, family and local historians, health and social care professionals and volunteers, librarians and teachers. Anyone who wishes to take stock of their life using these varied approaches should find this book invaluable - for without a knowledge of our past we are adrift in the present and less likely to contemplate the future with equanimity.

## ***The IIRLR Symposium at the 21st World conference on Gerontology and Geriatrics in San Francisco***

Gerben Westerhof

The International Association for Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) and the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) organized the 21st World conference on Gerontology and Geriatrics in San Francisco, July 23-27.

The IIRLR organized a symposium which took place at this huge conference (over 6,000 participants). The topic of the symposium was "Innovations in Interventions for Reminiscence and Life Review". The abstracts of the symposium as well as the individual contributions are added below.

Unfortunately, the symposium was struck by the absence of some presenters, all for good personal reasons! During the conference, we changed the program somewhat. Only the presentations on Life Story Books and Online Life Review Therapy could be held. Luckily Jeff Webster, who was about to act as a discussant during the symposium, was willing to present some of his own recent work under the title "Identity, time perspective, and narrative awareness". His study addressed the relations between identity, time perspective, narrative awareness, and flourishing in an ethnically diverse sample (age range 17-57 years; n=208). Informational and diffuse identity styles were related to flourishing which was partly mediated by balanced time perspective and narrative awareness. In turn, balanced time perspective mediated the relationships between identity style and narrative awareness.

With only three presentations, there was some more time for a general discussion which Jeff Webster kicked off. Some fifty people attended the symposium and contributed to a good discussion that covered many of the essentials of reminiscence and life review. Despite the setbacks, I now look back on a good and inspiring symposium!

## Innovations in Interventions for Reminiscence and Life Review

This symposium focuses on innovations in interventions for reminiscence and life review. First, diversity in aging is increasingly recognized in studies on reminiscence and life review. Interventions are discussed that are tailored to specific target groups, like persons with dementia, minority elders, or older adults with depression. Second, societal change plays a role in how interventions are delivered. Given the contemporary focus on selfmanagement in (mental) health, peers play an increasingly important role in supporting each other in reminiscence and life review interventions. Third, technological advancements are taken up in this symposium. New methods to induce autobiographical memories are studied. Innovative information and communication technologies are discussed: digital life story books, online therapy, virtual reality, and smart environments. Fourth, the symposium brings together multiple research methods in assessing how acceptable innovations are for older adults themselves and how effective they are in contributing to lifespan development. Together, the four papers present a design process, from accumulating existing knowledge in a systematic review, the cocreation of interventions in community-based methods, the proof of concept of new technologies in experiments to the evaluation of innovations in randomized controlled trials and interviews. The symposium brings American, Dutch, Spanish, and Canadian researchers together, who are members of the International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review.

## The Use of Life Story Books for People with Dementia: A Systematic Review

Teuntje Elfrink, Gerben J. Westerhof  
University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands.

Life story books (LSB) are frequently used to support reminiscence therapy for people with dementia. We conducted a systematic review to study its use and effectiveness. Three electronic databases were searched. Out of the 62 studies found, 19 were eligible. Most LSB were tangible, non-technical, whereas some were digital. The LSB were sometimes part of another intervention, like support for daily routines. Most of the LSB were created in (max. 12) individual sessions in nursing homes. Some studies focused on the person with dementia, whilst others also examined effects on caregivers. Most studies used a single case or (pilot) RCT approach with small sample sizes. The aims varied from improving cognitive functions, wellbeing, and conversation skills to decreasing depressive symptoms. This systematic review confirms that the use of LSB to support reminiscence therapy and personalized

## Development of a Culturally Tailored Reminiscence Intervention for Minority Elders

Juliette M. Shellman<sup>1</sup>, Melissa Mokol<sup>2</sup>, Nayomi Walton<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Connecticut School of Nursing, Storrs, CT, United States.

<sup>2</sup> St. Joseph University, West Hartford, CT, United States.

The Peer Reminiscence Intervention for Minority Elders (PRIME) is a culturally-tailored reminiscence intervention that utilizes the strengths of oral traditions of older Black adults as well as their informal support networks to mitigate barriers associated with underutilization of mental health services and decrease depressive symptoms and prevent major depression. Using community-based research methods older Black adults at an urban senior center in partnership with an academic institution developed the Reminiscence Resource Guide that structures the reminiscence intervention. Two phases of six focus groups (N = 36) provided insight into culturally appropriate learning styles and strategies for discussing culturally sensitive terms as well as understandability, cultural acceptability, and feasibility of the Guide. The Guide is utilized to train peer facilitators to deliver the integrative reminiscence intervention and to provide linkages to mental health services to impact the disparities that exist in the provision of mental health services for older Black adults.

## New Technologies to Improve Mood by Eliciting Autobiographical Memories in Older Adults

Juan Pedro Serrano Selva, Luz F. Aguilar, Laura Ros Segura, Jorge J. J. Ricarte Trives, Marta Nieto López,  
José M. Latorre Postigo  
University Castilla- La Mancha, Albacete, Spain.

New technologies such as virtual reality and smart environments allow for innovative ways of eliciting autobiographical memories. Several experiments were carried out to evaluate how new technologies can contribute to the recollection of autobiographical memories that raise positive emotions. The first experiment used autobiographical pictures about the participant. The second experiment used virtual reality and audio stimuli to facilitate memory retrieval and positive feelings. The third experiment used an adaptation of REVISEP (a life review based on remembering specific positive events in active aging) in a visual format, that shows questions and pictures reflecting autobiographical memories in each participant at the same time.

## A Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation of an Online Life-Review Intervention for Depression

Ernst Bohlmeijer, Sanne Lamers, Marloes Postel, Gerben J. Westerhof  
University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands.

This study assessed an online life review intervention for depressed middle-aged and older adults. Participants were randomized to a waiting list group (n=19), online life review with a trained counselor (n=19) or online life review with peer feedback (n=20). They filled out questionnaires on depression as primary outcome at four measurement points up to twelve months after baseline. Semi-structured interviews (n=33) assessed participants' experiences. All three groups improved significantly on depressive symptoms across time. There were no significant differences between the conditions, but there was a strong effect size for the counselor-led intervention (cohen's d=.83), but not for the peer-feedback intervention (cohen's d=.28). Participants evaluated the online delivery positively, but were more critical about peer feedback. An online delivery seems suitable and promising for a life-review intervention, in particular when led by a counselor. Adaptions are necessary to stimulate a positive and constructive atmosphere and communication within peer groups. The studies show that different cueing methods that are based in virtual reality and smart environments are useful to elicit autobiographical memories. The application of these information and communications technology to improve mood state in older adults are discussed.

## The GSA Interest Group at the 21st World conference on Gerontology and Geriatrics in San Francisco

Alison Kris & Loriena Yankura

The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics ("IAGG") hosted a meeting of the Gerontological Society of America Interest Group: Reminiscence, Life Story, and Narrative - Research and Practice, on July 25th 2017 in San Francisco, CA.

The meeting was well attended, with participants representing a diverse range of research interests in reminiscence, life story and narrative. The assembly of researchers spanned not only the spectrum of reminiscence study, but the globe as well – with attendees from nine different countries across three continents.

The group included senior scientists, as well as junior researchers just embarking on their exploration within the field. Participants shared their personal backgrounds and research interests, highlighted current ideas and projects, and discussed a variety of suggestions and solutions for methodological concerns. A lively discussion ensued, validating that reminiscence is becoming an increasingly important and relevant research topic worldwide.

There were updates provided regarding the next meeting of International Conference on Reminiscence and Life Review to be held November 12-13, 2018, in Boston, MA. In addition, plans were discussed for a special issue of the International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review, focused on the unique intersections of pedagogy and reminiscence work. This issue is slated to be guest edited by Dr. Alison Kris from Fairfield University and Dr. Loriena Yankura from University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

We look forward to building upon the momentum generated during the meeting at the IAGG and continuing to collaborate and share best practices. We look forward to seeing everyone once again in Boston.

## **Early Registration discount through January 15 for 2018 online Certificate in Reminiscence and Life Story Work**

As the third cohort of the Reminiscence and Life Story Work program is wrapping up Capstone projects, enrollment has started for the fourth cohort. Classes will start the end of March 2018 and run through early October 2018, followed by Capstone projects. Full details of the courses, certificate requirements, instructor bios and more are on the registration site <http://www.cvent.com/d/t5q3x8>.

IIRLR members are eligible for a reduced rate of \$1699 for the entire program and there is an additional 5% discount through January 15th, 2018.

If you have any questions please email Esther Gieschen at [egiesche@uwsuper.edu](mailto:egiesche@uwsuper.edu).

## **Invitation to the 2018 Conference of the Institute in Boston**

The University of Wisconsin - Superior will host the 12th International Reminiscence and Life Review Conference November 12-13, 2018, in Boston, MA, USA. The conference draws presenters and participants from around the world, including those most prominent in the field of reminiscence and life review. Jefferson Singer, widely known author in the field, will be the keynote speaker. His address is entitled: "The Varieties of Remembered Experience: Illustrating the Utility of Reminiscence Research." It is scheduled for November 12.

The 2018 Conference Planning Committee has been meeting to plan a full agenda including pre and or post conference workshops. Members of the committee include Juliette Shellman, Chair, Takeo Nagasaka, Gerben Westerhof, Robin Mintzer, Diana Taylor, Donna Sislo and Esther Gieschen. The conference venue and the full agenda will be announced early in 2018.

At this time, members are urged to submit proposals for presentations, to propose topics and presenters (including self-nominations) for pre/post conference workshops, and to recommend nominees for the student award.

## Call for proposals

**Poster and paper presentation proposals are due by April 12, 2018.** Guidelines for abstract submissions and descriptions of the four tracks for presentations are detailed at [www.ReminiscenceAndLifeReview.org](http://www.ReminiscenceAndLifeReview.org).

Abstracts of the accepted presentations will be published in the conference proceedings book, and we ask that posters and paper presentations be made in English. Any questions about proposals should be directed to Donna Sislo by email at [dsislo@uwsuper.edu](mailto:dsislo@uwsuper.edu).

## Call for student nominations for award

The Conference Planning Committee encourages members to start now to identify nominees for the **Florence Gray-Soltys Graduate Student Award for Exemplary Research or Practice in the Field of Reminiscence and Life Review**

This award is for exemplary research or practice in the field of reminiscence and life review that contributes to the IIRLR mission by a graduate student. Nominations will be accepted from faculty and others who believe the work of a graduate student significantly forwards the IIRLR mission. Requirements for nomination:

- Research, program or project completed during a graduate or post-graduate program in any field that furthers the IIRLR mission.
- Nomination letter that details the above and includes a resume of the nominee.
- Contact information for both the nominator and nominee

The graduate student selected will be awarded a physically displayable award, a complementary conference registration, two-night hotel stay, and invited to provide a 20-minute presentation at the conference.

## Call for nominations for all IIRLR awards

A formal call for nominations for the other IIRLR awards will be issued in early 2018. Those awards are the **Robert Butler and Myrna Lewis Exemplar Research Award, the James and Betty Birren Award for Excellence in Practice, and the John A. Kunz Award for Distinguished Service to the International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review. Criteria for each award and a list of past recipients are available at** [www.ReminiscenceAndLifeReview.org](http://www.ReminiscenceAndLifeReview.org).

Questions and suggestions related to the conference including pre/post conference sessions should be submitted to Dr. Juliette Shellman, Chair, at [juliette.shellman@uconn.edu](mailto:juliette.shellman@uconn.edu) or to Donna Sislo at [dsislo@uwsuper.edu](mailto:dsislo@uwsuper.edu).

# IIRLR

## International Institute For Reminiscence and Life Review

### MISSION

To further define and develop the interdisciplinary field of reminiscence and life review through discussion and collaboration in practice, research, education, volunteer and individual applications across the lifespan.

### GOALS

- Promote increased awareness, knowledge, and skill development in direct practice of reminiscence and life review.
- Further reminiscence and life review research activity, providing a venue for discussion of results as well as guidance for future research.
- Establish a working definition of reminiscence and life review.
- Further integrate research and practice.
- Educate others about reminiscence and life review practice, research, and ways to integrate the material in formal education, staff training, and volunteer organizations.

### HISTORY

The International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review is a program in the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Wisconsin-Superior. The Center sponsored the premiere National Reminiscence and Life Review Conference in 1995.

Major leaders in the field formed the International Reminiscence and Life Review as a follow up to that conference. The Board of Directors and interested participants have met at the 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015 International Reminiscence and Life Review conferences sponsored by UW-Superior.

## Become a member today

- Identify yourself as a leader in the field
- List yourself and your special areas of expertise in the Registry on the IIRLR website
- Promote the services you offer under Member Services on the IIRLR website
- Become eligible for leadership roles in the Institute's advisory board, conference planning committee, awards nomination process and more
- Receive advance notice of publication of on-line newsletter and Journal
- Support the Mission of the IIRLR – advance knowledge and practice of Reminiscence and Life Review

Annual fee: \$48 US dollars  
\$24 US dollars for full time students

### Contact:

Donna Sislo ([dsislo@uwsuper.edu](mailto:dsislo@uwsuper.edu)) 715-394-8170 or  
Esther Gieschen ([egiesche@uwsuper.edu](mailto:egiesche@uwsuper.edu))  
715-394-8529.

<http://reminiscenceandlifereview.org>

## IIRLR Membership Dues

This is a reminder that the IIRLR membership dues expire every year at the end of August. We are currently collecting dues for the 2017-2018 year. If you have not renewed your dues, please visit our [Membership site](#).

If you are not sure if these were paid or not, contact Donna at [dsislo@uwsuper.edu](mailto:dsislo@uwsuper.edu) or you can call her at 715.394.8170.