



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR REMINISCENCE AND LIFE REVIEW

The Center For Continuing Education/Extension - University of Wisconsin-Superior

Fall 2006 - Vol 1, Issue 1

<http://reminiscenceandlifereview.org>

Greetings from the President



Florence Gray-Soltys

Greetings and welcome to our first newsletter. We

hope it will grow and provide an opportunity to enlarge the organization and enhance communications among those interested in life review and reminiscence.

Thanks to the leadership and creativity of

John Kunz and the generosity of the University of Wisconsin at Superior, our first conference was held in Superior in 1995. The attendees were stimulated with the presence of Dr. Robert Butler, who offered sage advice and insight into the

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Call for proposals for the Int'l Reminiscence & Life Review Conference 2007 - San Francisco

This biennial conference brings together researchers, clinicians, educators, students and older adults themselves together to further expand the field of reminiscence and life review. The audience includes physicians, social workers, psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, dieticians, and gerontologists. There will be a combination of invited speakers for plenary sessions and symposia as well as the selection of poster sessions in the areas of research and practice that will be selected in response to the conference call for proposals.

2005 Reminiscence Conference Highlights from the Past President



Jeffrey D. Webster

As most of you will remember, nature conspired, in the

form of not one, but two hurricanes – Katrina in our originally intended meeting place of New Orleans, and Wilma in Florida, to jeopardize the 10th International Reminiscence and Life Review conference. Perseverance, passion, and

commitment to the cause by both organizers and intrepid participants, meant that we prevailed despite the chaos and uncertainty of the time. Memories of this conference will surely form important reminiscences in the future

and be woven into evolving dimensions of our lifestories.

A few of the many highlights of the conference which stood out for me concerned the supportive collegiality of the participants and the diversity of content of presenta-

tions. In terms of the former, it is such a delight to exchange views, trade ideas, and share insights with an intimate and enthusiastic group of participants. When a small conference is dedicated to a single domain, attendees' creative energy becomes con-

centrated and contagious. Networking opportunities were frequent and fruitful; I certainly enjoyed and benefited by meeting new colleagues, one of whom kindly included me in their research project. Rather than the typical

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A Tribute To Myrna Lewis

By John A. Kunz

There I was in her beautiful apartment overlooking Central Park in New York City interviewing Myrna Lewis, noted for her work as a psychotherapist, researcher, author, gerontologist, women's rights advocate and much more. Her husband and decades-long intellectual collaborator, Robert Butler, and their daughter, Alexandria, later joined us.

I was to learn a great deal from the courageous, compassionate, brilliant and hilarious Myrna Lewis and her family. Although the strengths-based concept of mental health wouldn't emerge until years after she began her career,

Myrna embodied this approach in her work and writing all along. Now, as she approached the possibility of death from brain cancer, she drew on her own strengths and those of her family and friends.

Robert Butler is the first person to acknowledge that Myrna was the quieter partner in their collaborative efforts. Together, they researched life review and other aspects of reminiscence. Together, they wrote *Aging and Mental Health*, the first comprehensive handbook on mental health and aging, originally published in 1977, the text is now in its fifth edition and is still in use in medical

schools and universities across the United States.

Their partnership also produced influential research and writing on sexuality and aging, including *Love and Sex After Sixty* (New York City: Perennial Library, 1988); their publications on this topic have been translated into numerous languages and distributed around the world.

Myrna is proud to state that she grew up on farm in rural Minnesota where she learned to drive a tractor and do other farm chores when she was just a young girl. True to her roots, she was sure to bring family furniture and other memora-

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New Publications

Thomas Pierce, Newsletter Editor

Publications below represent just a few of the interesting articles and books that have appeared over the past year or so. Each issue of the newsletter will provide additional listings. Please help us to identify articles, books, and upcoming presentations that would be of interest to Institute members. You can forward suggestions to me at: tpierce@radford.edu

Autobiographical Memory and the Narrative Self over the Life Span by James Birren and J. F. Schroots. Handbook of the Psychology of Aging (6th ed.). 2006, Birren, J. E & Schaie, K. W. (Eds.), Elsevier, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Reminiscence and Vivid Personal Memories Across the Lifespan by Jeffrey Webster and Odette Gould. International Journal of Aging and Human Development, In Press.

Identity and Story: Creating Self in Practice (book) by Dan McAdams, Ruthellen Josselson, and Amia Lieblich. 2006, American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

The Effects of Guided Autobiography for the Elderly by Mihoko Mori. Japanese Journal of Counseling Science, 2005, Vol. 38 (3), pp. 247-258.

Study on Effects of Life Review Activities on the Quality of Life of the Elderly: A Randomized Controlled Trial by Hideaki Hanaoka and Hitoshi Okamura. Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, 2004, Vol. 73 (5), pp. 302-311.

The Effects of Group Reminiscence Therapy on Depression, Self Esteem, and Life Satisfaction of Elderly Nursing Home Residents by Chao SY. The Journal of Nursing Research, 2006, Vol. 14 (1), pp. 36-45.

Structured Reminiscence: An Intervention to Decrease Depression and Increase Self-Transcendence in Older Women by Stinson CK. Journal of Clinical Nursing, 2006, Vol. 15 (2), pp. 208-218.

Functions of Reminiscence and Mental Health in Later Life by P. Cappeliez, N. O'Rourke, and H. Chadbury. Aging and Mental Health, 2005, Vol. 9 (4), pp. 295-301.

Parent-Child Reminiscing Locates the Self in the Past by Robyn Fivush and Katherine Nelson. British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 2006, Vol. 24 (1). Pp. 235-251.

Making Memories Matter: A Project of the European Reminiscence Network by Pam Schweitzer. The International Journal of Social Research and Practice, 2005, Vol. 4(3), pp. 450.

Uses of Reminiscence: Functions and Benefits by Peter Coleman. Aging and Mental Health, 2005, Vol. 9 (4), pp. 291-294.

A Tale of Three Functions: The Self-Reported Uses of Autobiographical Memory by Susan Bluck, Nicole Alea, and Tilmann Habermas. Social Cognition, 2005, Vol. 23 (1), pp. 91-117.

Reminiscence in Ageing People with Intellectual Disabilities: An Exploratory Study by Joris Van Puyenbroek and Bea Maes. British Journal of Developmental Disabilities, 2005, Vol. 51 (100, Pt1), pp. 3-16.

Transformational Reminiscence: Life Story Work (book) by John A. Kunz and Florence Gray Soltys (with contributors). Springer Publishing Company, New York, NY, In Press.

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 Health and Human Issues division of the Center for Continuing Education/Extension 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 Society for Reminiscence and Life Review as a follow up to that conference. The Society board of directors and interested participants have met at the 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005 Reminiscence and Life Review conferences sponsored by UW-Superior.

Join and Receive These Participant Benefits

- Identify yourself as a leader in the field
- "Members only" list serve to network, identify and address issues, and develop collaborative opportunities
- Online semi-annual newsletter
- Your listing on the Institute's official website
- Opportunity to electronically advertise your services

Annual fee: \$48 US dollars

\$24 US dollars for full time students and those who are both over 55 years of age and retired.

Contact:

Donna Sislo (dsislo@uwsuper.edu) or John Kunz (jkunz@uwsuper.edu) or call 715-394-8170.

<http://reminiscenceandlifereview.org>

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“overload” of possible topics which can eventually seem overwhelming in larger conferences, being able to focus on a particular interest is invigorating. This is not to say that the scope of presentations were limited and content redundant; in contrast, and relating to my second highlight, the diversity within the overall theme of reminiscence and life review was truly inspiring. To start, the international community was clearly well represented with presenters hailing from Spain, Canada, England, Japan, and the Netherlands, in addition to the US. Moreover, the inclusion of clinical/applied and research/experimental “streams” (a hallmark of most of our past conferences) continues to provide opportunities for each to be informed by the other. Perhaps most illustrative of the breadth with which contemporary reminiscence and life review work has extended is the diversity of the presentations themselves. Scanning the conference brochure, one sees papers on group therapy; cultural differences; memory and mood; reminiscence and dreams; war trauma; narrative identity; creativity; bereavement; sociohistory; and many more. This wealth of topics certainly speaks

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field of reminiscence. Dr. Barbara Haight, professor at the University of South Carolina became the first president and offered leadership for the fledging organization.

Additionally, Dr. Peter Coleman (England) and Jeff Webster (Canada) have ably steered the organization over the years. Meetings have been held in Superior, New York, Chicago, Vancouver, and Orlando. Our mission statement is to further define and develop the interdisciplinary field of reminiscence and life review through discussion and collaboration in practice, research, education, volunteer and individual application across the life span.

Our meeting in Orlando on November 17, 2005 (moved from New Orleans) included more of an international flavor. We now have liaisons from Holland, Puerto Rico, Argentina, Spain, Brazil and Japan. Of course, the past support from England and Ireland will continue.

We hope to grow this area and expand into Africa and other areas not currently represented. It is with great regret that we accept the resignation of Susan Melia, who had been selected as president elect. Her efforts with our

well to the vitality of the field and helps generate important questions for consideration. For instance, is the above mentioned diversity all positive? How far can the parameters of reminiscence be stretched before the conceptual clarity becomes weakened? Perhaps we can speak about such issues at future conferences.

In addition to exciting research and application presentations, we were delighted to inaugurate two important awards, the Robert Butler and Myrna Lewis Exemplar Research Award and the James and Betty Birren Exemplar Practice Award. These pioneers, innovators, and giants in the field continue to inspire researchers and practitioners alike to produce their own contributions to our area. Unfortunately, as many of you may know, health concerns for James and the untimely passing of Myrna precluded an in-person presentation of the awards. Nevertheless, John Kunz skillfully coordinated a video tribute and in absentia presentation which was later sent to those involved. Again, we are honored to have such eminent patrons. With many thanks to the conference organizers and sponsors, I hope you found the conference stimulating

group have been very much appreciated. We welcome her continued support of our organization despite the fact that her academic schedule conflicts with our regular conference meeting time.

The board now welcomes Brian de Vries to the board and has selected him as President Elect. The President Elect leads the planning for the conference when he or she is installed as President. Since Brian is at San Francisco State University he will be instrumental in making our next conference a smashing success.



Under the leadership of Jeff Webster, we gave two inaugural awards at our last meeting: The Robert Butler and Myrna Lewis Exemplar Research Award and The James and Betty Birren Exemplar Practice Award. All four of these individuals have provided the im-

and rewarding if you were able to attend; I look forward to meeting many of you again, and some of you for the first time, during our next conference in San Francisco.

International Board of Directors

Past Presidents: Dr. Peter Coleman (United Kingdom), Dr. Barbara Haight (USA), Jeffrey Webster (Canada)

President: Florence Gray Soltys (USA)

President Elect: Brian de Vries (USA & Canada)

Members: Susan Melia (USA), Susan Perlstein (USA), Toyoko Nomura (Japan) and Joanna Bornat (United Kingdom), Thomas Pierce (USA)

Liaisons: Juan Pedro Serrano Selva (Spain), Sharon McKenzie (USA), Ernst Bohlmeijer (Netherlands), Ricardo Acub (Argentina), Diana Taylor (Brazil)

petus for the growth and discovery in the field. We will again present these awards at our San Francisco meeting. Thank you Jeff for your leadership.

Beyond the development of this newsletter under the able editorship of Tom Pierce we hope to implement a peer reviewed journal to be published online for bringing more current and exciting clinical and research information to our members. As this develops you will receive more information.

We hope you will consider membership in the organization to assist in defraying costs: \$48 for members and \$24 for students. This would include reduced rates for conferences and access to the website discussion groups.

Checks should be made to:

University of Wisconsin Superior
Center for Continuing Education
PO Box 2000 Room 102
Superior, Wisconsin 54880

Call or email: John Kunz
(jkunz@uwsuper.edu)
Donna Sislo (dsislo@uwsuper.edu)
715-394-8170.

Our appreciation and applause goes to John Kunz, whose leadership, commitment, and compassion has nurtured this organization and continues to do so. Our sincere thanks also to Donna Sislo and the University of Wisconsin at Superior. Looking forward to seeing you in San Francisco in 2007.

Our next meeting will be held in San Francisco (just prior to the GSA meeting) on November 15 (evening session) with our keynote speaker, Dr. Gene Cohen, author of *The Mature Mind*. His work on creativity and exploring the growth in our brain as we mature is both exciting and stimulating.

A call for papers and posters is included in this newsletter and are available at <http://reminiscence-andlifereview.org>. Hopefully you will plan and hold this time for a very substantive meeting.

Tribute, from page 1

bilias to Washington, D.C., and later Manhattan as reminders of her rural girlhood. She also brought along the basic values she learned on the farm. With a thirst for knowledge that began when she was a child and collected discarded library books, she maintained her gift of speaking the plain truth throughout her career.

As an adult woman, Myrna didn't define her life as one of having a family with a career on the side or vice versa. Instead, she integrated both while transcending the confines of such roles. A graduate of the Columbia University School of Social Work, she started her career as a social worker, and I would say that her lifelong job description remained true to her roots in that profession: At all levels of professional and social interaction, she worked to improve the lives of those who were undervalued and underprivileged.

When Robert was first appointed as the first director of the National Institute on Aging (NIA) in 1976, he and Myrna launched a longitudinal study on aging. Myrna was shocked to hear that they were only enrolling males the study. Given Myrna's advocacy for women's equality, the study protocol quickly changed and she volunteered to be the first woman to take part.

In her interview with me, Myrna said that she had found other signs of the exclusion of women from the research agenda. At an NIA laboratory, she once encountered a technician carrying a large cage of white mice. When she asked where they were going, she learned the mice were to be incinerated because they were females. The technician told Myrna that female hormones made female mice too difficult to study. Once again, Myrna intervened to put the sexes on an equal footing. Now scientists are required to enroll both male and female subjects in all studies except those focused on sex-specific disorders and treatments.

Beyond such matters of basic scientific research, Myrna maintained a strong interest in women's rights in areas of health and wellness and especially in the area of financial health. She was quick to point out statistics about the higher percentage of older women living in poverty versus men of the same age. She developed and led financial programs for women and was proud to discuss the ways she has encouraged her daughter and stepdaughter to do their own financial planning to ensure that they would be economically prepared for old age.

In her early years in working with older adults, Myrna was impressed by the resilience of her clients and by the strengths they brought to dealing with the challenges of life. Her observations offered a sharp contrast to what the literature on aging at the time described as rigidity, weak-

ness and other obstacles to mental health that supposedly come with old age.

At that point, Myrna switched from focusing on what was wrong with her older clients to emphasizing their strengths and what they were doing that was working. This new perspective led her to publishing more about life-review therapy and about putting memories to work in helping older people achieve a sense of serenity and of pride in their lives in view of the challenges they have faced.

In working with elders, Myrna would consistently encourage her clients to acknowledge the music that they had inside themselves—the unique mix of values, experiences, memories, and understanding of self and others that can give older adults wisdom.

If they hadn't already done so, Myrna would facilitate their coming to terms with their own excellence and core human values. She recognized that this process sustains and builds strengths in older adults, often leading to new forms of creativity in later life.

During the interview she gave me, Myrna was forthright in discussing the effects of her brain cancer on her own life and on her family. She maintained her lifelong professional interests—even becoming part of a study funded by the same institutions that had once incinerated female mice. She worked hard at maintaining her strength, keeping up with her clients and family. From time to time, she would let her mind and body rest and rejuvenate, only to come back with her eternal spirit.

As her daughter, Alex, said, her mother's influence also encouraged the entire family to focus on visits with each other and friends. As Myrna faced her illness, she helped those around her understand the importance of time for tea and honest conversation and personal connection—a priority she had learned back on the farm in Minnesota. The simple values she had acquired in girlhood thus again came to the fore as one of her great strengths at the end of her life.

A couple of months after my interview with Myrna in New York City, I had the honor of reading a short paper by Robert Butler at the World Congress of Gerontology in Brazil. Titled "The Nature of Memory, Life Review and Elementality," the paper returns to the concept called elementality that Robert and Myrna had written about earlier in their work. The concepts in the paper reflect the fundamental strengths that illuminated Myrna's final years:

By middle age, we begin to be concerned with the number of years left to life. The elemental things of life such as children, friendship, human touching (physical and emotional), colors

and shapes assume greater significance as people sort out the more important from the less important. Simple pleasure comes from breathing in the air, tasting the water and chewing food....

This is revitalization, a return to spontaneity of childhood and its pleasures. Old age can become a time of emotional and sensory awareness and enjoyment. Elementality helps define wisdom... Old age has a limited future, with the fading-but not elimination-of dreams and opportunity. One of the tasks of late life is learning not to think as much in terms of the future but to confront and deal with the past, and to live to the fullest in the moment, emphasizing the quality of the time remaining rather than the quantity.

Yet again, in what appears to be a somewhat autobiographical paper by Robert Butler, we no doubt hear echoes of the voice of Myrna, the quieter person in this long marital and intellectual collaboration. Using her own experience in facing terminal illness, she helped show the rest of the world how to draw on elemental strengths to face an always unknown future. Myrna Lewis died on Nov. 15, 2005

John Kunz is the program manager and is a graduate faculty member at the International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review at the University of Wisconsin, Superior.



Myrna Lewis and Robert Butler with daughter Alexandria, May 2005

Masthead photographs with permission for use provided in part by Elder's Share the Arts, Roots and Branches, Stagebridge, Memoirs, Inc., Life Story Services, University of Wisconsin - Superior. Montage design by John A. Kunz and Patrick Lind.

International Reminiscence and Life Review Conference 2007

The Ramada Plaza Hotel, San Francisco, CA

November 15-16, 2007

Call for presentations

The University of Wisconsin - Superior will hold the 7th biennial International Reminiscence and Life Review Conference November 15-16, 2007, at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, San Francisco, CA. The conference draws presenters and participants from around the world, including those most prominent in the field of reminiscence and life review. You are cordially invited to submit a proposal to present at this conference. The abstracts will be printed in the conference proceedings book. You also have the opportunity to submit a four to six page research brief, program description or written material to be published in the proceedings book. Please follow the proposal outlines in this brochure or use the template at the conference web site <http://ReminiscenceandLifeReview.org>. Please submit your proposal by email to dsislo@uwsuper.edu or call 715-394-8170, if you do not have access to email. All presenters must register for the conference and pay the special presenter's fee.

Tentative Schedule

Thursday, November 15, 2007

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Preconference Sessions
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Registration
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Opening Session - Keynote <i>The Mature Mind</i> - Gene Cohen, MD, PhD
	Presentation of awards
8:00 PM - 8:45 PM	Reception, cash bar
8:45 PM - 9:30 PM	Stagebridge Performance

Friday, November 16, 2007

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Plenary Session
10:00 AM - 10:15 AM	Break, Networking, Poster Session Set-up
10:15 AM - 11:00 AM	View Research Poster Sessions
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM	Plenary Discussant Presentation of Poster Session
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	2007 Award Winner Presentations
12:30 PM - 01:30 PM	Ala Carte Lunch w/focused roundtable discussions
01:30 PM - 02:45 PM	Plenary Session
02:45 PM - 03:00 PM	Break, Program Exchange Set-up
03:00 PM - 03:45 PM	View Program Practice, Educational and Individual Applications Exchanges
03:45 PM - 04:15 PM	Plenary Discussant Presentation of Above
04:15 PM - 05:00 PM	Plenary Session & Wrap Up, Brian de Vries, PhD
05:15 PM - 06:30 PM	Open Board Meeting

CONFERENCE MISSION

The conference mission is to bring together the wide range of individuals who are utilizing or would like to utilize reminiscence and life review in their work in order to further define and expand the field in the areas of research, theory, practice, education and everyday use. Those attending may include physicians, social workers, nurses, psychologists, counselors, social service employees, educators, home care providers, activity professionals, oral historians, life narrative scholars, journalists, performing arts professionals, music and art therapists, clergy, chaplains, administrators, students, volunteers and other interested parties.

HISTORY

1995 - Reminiscence and Life Review Conference 1995 held in Superior, WI, USA.
International Society for Reminiscence and Life Review forms
1997 - Reminiscence and Life Review Conference 1997 held in Superior, WI, USA
1999 - Reminiscence and Life Review Conference 1999 held in New York, NY, USA
International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review replaces former Society
2001 - International Reminiscence and Life Review Conference 2001 held in Chicago, IL, USA
2003 - International Reminiscence and Life Review Conference 2003 held in Vancouver, B.C., Canada
2005 - International Reminiscence and Life Review Conference 2005 held in Orlando, FL, USA
2007 - International Reminiscence and Life Review Conference to be held in San Francisco, CA, USA



CONFERENCE LOCATION
RAMADA PLAZA HOTEL
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Fees:

Members, presenter, or persons 65 years of age and older:
(before September 1, 2007)\$140 US
Early Registration (before September 1, 2007) \$160 US

Regular Conference
(between Aug. 13 & Sept. 30, 2007).....\$185 US
Late Conference (after September 30, 2007) . \$210 US
FULL-TIME Student \$ 90 US

For more information contact:

John Kunz (jkunz@uwsuper.edu) or Donna Sislo
(dsislo@uwsuper.edu) or call 715-394-8170.
UW-Superior, Center for Continuing Education/Extension,
PO Box 2000, Rm 102, Superior, WI 54880

Guidelines for Proposed Poster Sessions

Please consider submitting a proposal to present a poster session on research and/or practice at this conference. If accepted, your work will be viewed by all conference participants and critics and discussed by key authors and leaders in the field of reminiscence and life review. This is an excellent opportunity for researchers, practitioners and educators at all levels of experience to collaborate in this important area. We require that all presenters submit at least an abstract that includes contact information and affiliations. A short paper is also welcomed.

This biennial conference brings together researchers, clinicians, educators, students and older adults themselves together to further expand the field of reminiscence and life review. The audience includes physicians, social workers, psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, dieticians, and gerontologists. There will be a combination of invited speakers for plenary sessions and symposia as well as the selection of poster sessions in the areas of research and practice that will be selected in response to the conference call for proposals.

FORMAT

Concurrent poster displays highlight successful programs, specific research, or other topics related to the use of reminiscence and life review.

Research in Reminiscence and Life Review:

Presentations should focus on current research issues or problems. May include studies or research that are still in progress. May also include theoretical aspects of reminiscence and life review.

The Practice of Reminiscence and Life Review:

Presentations should focus on methods of practicing and applying reminiscence and life review theory within multiple disciplines. Topics may include reminiscence and life review with creative and performing arts, health care, counseling, psychotherapy and other therapy modalities, grief and pastoral care, life narrative and oral history approaches.

Educational Approaches:

Presentations should include the incorporation of reminiscence and life review in educational settings from early childhood to post-doctoral programs, in a variety of study, further developing educational programming focusing on reminiscence and life review, inter-generational programming, and other related topics.

Volunteer Approaches:

Presentations should include programs and methods involving volunteers in a variety of settings: working with isolated individuals, with older adults encountering physical and mental health problems, as well as programs designed to promote quality of life. Models for the use of reminiscence and life review techniques by individuals, older adults and their family members will also be included.

Abstract Outline:

1. Title
2. 100 word abstract
3. A 30 word professional biography with contact information to be used in the final program if the paper is accepted.

DEADLINE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Abstracts must be postmarked by April 15, 2007. Submit complete copy via email to both jkunz@uwsuper.edu AND dsislo@uwsuper.edu. Please call 715-394-8170 if unable to access email.

Please note that concurrent presenters must pay the conference fee.