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And We Weren't There

Female Publishing Professionals — The Men and the Pendulum by Nat Bodian (Publisher's Marketing Consultant)



I've always felt that the listings in the "People" column of *Publishers Weekly* were a good indicator of employment and promotional trends in the publishing industry. Thus, when my *PW* arrived recently, I opened to "People" and gave it a quick scan. One of the things that seemed apparent is that the names were mainly female. I counted: there were 32 female appointments and promotions out of a total of 41 entries. I went to the earlier issue of *PW* on my desk and did another count: again, female names dominated — 26 out of 41 entries.

I recalled that years back, female names and appointments were sharply in the minority. Things had changed in 1994. I went to my file of comparable *PW* issues in 1984, a decade earlier. In that year, here is how the percentages stacked up in two comparable "People" columns: in one, of 22 listings, 16 were male; in the other, of 34 listings, 20 were male.

Truly the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction. The female publishing professional has come into her own! ♣

Jane Burke Interview

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ATG: That's kind of refreshing. Tell us more about yourself. You are married to a librarian, right?

JB: I am married to **J. Michael O'Brien**. He is the Director of the Suburban Library System in Chicago. He is more of a librarian than I am. Michael was brought up in a library. He actually grew up living in the library. I mean it. His mother was Director of the Scotia Public Library, and when Mike was born he went from the hospital to the library.

"... researchers want access to many things beyond their own library catalogs."

There are pictures of him giving story hours when he was eight years old.

ATG: How about your family? Tell us about them.

JB: I don't have librarianship roots like my husband does. I had a lovely Midwestern upbringing in a family that was willing to encourage me to do whatever I could do. My father worked for a division of General Motors that made locomotives and my mother's favorite thing to say is that "you are never going to learn any younger."

ATG: You are a young person. Are you planning on leaving NOTIS at some point? What about your personal mentors — who have they been? And what do you consider some of your significant contributions?

JB: I have been privileged to be involved with a number of very good libraries and very good customers. Our customers are not only very smart but very supportive. We have to listen. **John McGowan** mentored me and I owe a lot to him and his work. He made sure the support was there. Early in my career

Walt Winshall mentored me at CLSI. If you listen, and you listen hard, and

"I don't believe that you will see us doing paper copies or faxes as document delivery for long."

you ask a lot of questions, and you are willing to spend most of your life on an airplane, you understand what to do. It's not very hard at all.

I used to threaten to do something else, but I have discovered that there are lots and lots of opportunities at NOTIS.

ATG: What do you do personally, when you're not on an airplane, that is. What are your hobbies?

JB: When I'm not on an airplane, I garden and read.

Jane Burke is an incredible woman to talk to. She gets right to the point! Let's look for her in Miami! — KS

Jane Burke was born in Naperville, Illinois. She got her degree in general history (American and European) from St. Dominic College in St. Charles, Illinois, a college which closed even before it was accredited. Her MLS is from Rosary College in Illinois and her MBA is from Northwestern. She says she is not a techie type, not technologically literate at all. Does she have a computer at home? An old one that doesn't work anymore, she opines.