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People Profile: Dona S. Straley

Editor

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Pauling to write a Foreword for the *Handbook* a few years before he died. He described how he studied the *Handbook* in slack periods while he had a summer job during graduate school paving roads in Oregon. He attributed the beginning of his interest in chemical bonding to his speculations, from looking at *Handbook* tables, as to the reason for observed trends in physical and chemical properties.

SB: *What is the process of producing each new edition? How many people are involved in it? Which institutions make an input (intellectual or financial) in it?*

DL: As Editor-in-Chief I have had full responsibility for the content of the book — choice of topics, selection of data, and generation of the index. Each December, I send the new and revised sections, mainly in digital form, to CRC headquarters, where my files are converted to the CRC typesetting format. Their very efficient production group takes it from there, producing proofs for me to check and then assembling the old and new material to send to the printer. The books appear about six months after I submit the new material.

The new and revised tables come from two sources. First, I have assembled a group of experts in various fields who contribute to the book; about 30 of these are listed in the current edition, many from other countries. Some make a one-time contribution; others send regular updates every two or three years. I rely on the expertise of these contributors to select and evaluate the data, but I edit their submissions as needed to assure conformity to international recommendations on units, symbols, terminology, and chemical nomenclature. Secondly, I personally produce and update a number of tables in areas of science that I am familiar with. For this purpose I draw heavily on evaluated data compilations published by organizations such as NIST, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, Government Agencies, and professional societies. The *Journal of Physical and Chemical Reference Data* and the reports from IUPAC projects are rich sources of high quality data. Here the main challenge is to select the most important compounds and materials from these very large databases, because space in the *Handbook* is always limited

SB: *Being the editor of such a publication comes with a great responsibility, because so many scientists rely on the accuracy of the data in it. What is the process of verifying the data published in the "Handbook?"*

DL: Quality control is certainly a top priority, and I feel this is what distinguishes the *CRC Handbook* from the voluminous data sources that one can find, especially on the Internet. As pointed out in the previous answer, I use as many data as possible from secondary sources in which I have confidence, sources in which the data have been verified by going through a variety of tests such as those developed by the Standard Reference Data program at NIST.

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against the grain people profile

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Dona S. Straley

BORN AND LIVED: Born in Ohio, lived in Scotland, Iran, Indiana and Arizona before coming back to Ohio.

EARLY LIFE: Raised on a farm and in a very small (really small!) town in south central Ohio, got a BA in history from **Ohio State** (the irony of coming back to work at the same institution!), a PhD in Arabic & Islamic Studies from the **University of Edinburgh** in Scotland, spent some time teaching English in Iran before being convinced by two close friends that librarianship was the career of the future. Got my MLS from **Indiana University**.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I've spent most of my career as a subject specialist in Middle East studies, primarily at **Ohio State**, and have been active at various times in ALA and the Middle East Librarians Association. A few years ago the opportunity arose for me to take on some additional duties at **Ohio State**, and I became coordinator for collections, in which I worked with collection managers to size and locate the physical collections of the libraries. I also spent a good deal of time planning for the collections in the renovated **Thompson Library**. I joined **OhioLINK** last fall for a two-year appointment, and keep a toehold at **Ohio State** as the Persian & Turkish Studies Subject Specialist.

FAMILY: One of the great things about coming back to Ohio has been getting to be close to my family and watching the kids grow up. My immediate family consists of **Grady, Kirby** and **Savannah** — all of the feline persuasion.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I garden (with varying success), knit, read, work puzzles, and cheer on the **Columbus Blue Jackets**. My friend (and Charleston regular) **Heidi Hoerman** and I travel to birdwatch, look at wildflowers, and generally enjoy less-congested parts of the US.

FAVORITE BOOKS: That's a hard one, because different books have appealed to me at different times of my life. I don't keep a very large personal library at home, but if I looked at the shelves I'd find the few books I've read over and over again, including *Gone with the Wind*, everything by **Richard Armour**, **Eric Newby's A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush**, lots of **Robert Heinlein**, and *Little Women* by **Louisa May Alcott**, which was the first "grown-up" book I read in my very early teens. But at the top of my list are the works of **Connie Willis** — the last two pages of *Lincoln's Dreams* still stun me, even after having read them several times.

PET PEEVES: People who don't use turn signals, misspelled words, and shrinking newspapers.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: I was awarded the **David H. Partington Award** for outstanding contributions to the profession by the Middle East Librarians Association in 2008. I had one of those "What? Me? Are You sure?" moments when I got the call. I had never thought about my work in that way — or perhaps I hadn't realized how long I'd been in the profession!

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Be retired, with time to do all the things I want to do, not that I have to do.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Libraries? We'll still be getting information into our users' hands and teaching them how to find it themselves, we'll still be building collections (just not necessarily as much of the paper kind), we'll still be providing patrons with space to study, read, socialize, meet, etc. We'll still be collaborating across campuses and across agencies, and identifying new partnerships. We may be doing these things in slightly different ways, but the needs are still there and we'll be meeting them.

Depositories? We'll continue to examine our collections, not just within a single system like **OhioLINK**, but across systems, and continue to think about who keeps what and how many to keep. We will be using — or at least considering — physical facilities that don't have the limitations of the high density model to use for categories of items that need to be more easily retrieved — journals that haven't yet been digitized and need to be scanned, books that circulate occasionally. As space on campus to house printed materials continues to constrict, we need to be prepared to circulate more, not less, from our depositories. 🐾