

November 2007

## People Profile; Leslie Burke

Editor

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### Recommended Citation

Editor (2007) "People Profile; Leslie Burke," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 19: Iss. 5, Article 25.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5292>

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to start pulling in those new technologies into the system as the organization is ready for it. These staff members should be encouraged to communicate to the rest of the group what is happening “out there” and provide ideas for how the new technologies may impact the library.<sup>2</sup>

New technical services tasks will include more teamwork and collaboration. These may include researching catalog alternatives, integrating streaming audio/video products, working with an electronic resource management system, contributing to the library staff blog, working with vendors on electronic exchange of information (for authority files, shared cataloging, MARC record loads), and with the reference staff to help identify challenges with electronic journals. Committee work, follow-up skills and meeting skills may need to be developed. Technical services staff may now need to work more closely with reference or collection development staff than they have previously and more people are involved. Learning to “play well with others” is an increasingly important skill.

### Reassign — Play to Your Staff's Strengths

The second task at hand is to reassign current personnel to the new tasks and procedures that have been identified. Reassignment may be the most problematic issue, and this will be the most dependent on organizational structure, human resource processes and possibly union rules and regulations. However, staff duties and assignments should be examined on a fairly regular basis.

When reassigning tasks, there are some important questions that supervisors must ask. What former technical services tasks no longer exist, or have shifted to another department in the library? Should you move staff along with those tasks or train others that are already part of those departments? What are your new staffing needs? What new skills do staff need? These are all important questions that must be asked to effectively incorporate new technologies.

To answer these questions it makes sense to start looking at the various tasks to be done and seeing how best to utilize the staff you have. Perhaps one part of one job should be moved to another person because it makes more sense with a new workflow. Can you teach your “old dogs” new tricks, or can you move these tasks to someone else? Don't assume employees do not want to learn, but some tasks may be best suited to certain skill sets and staff abilities. Conversely, the new technologies, like podcasting, blogging, using wikis, or exploiting the features of **Microsoft Office**, may often be more readily adopted and used by new staff members. This adaptability may give them an opportunity to be brought into the training program to help train those that are not aware of the new technologies or perhaps reticent to learn them on their own.

In addition to improved workflow and pro-

## against the grain people profile

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### Leslie D. Burke

**BORN & LIVED:** Born in St. Paul, MN, moved to Michigan at age four and have lived in Portage, MI and Grand Rapids, MI since.

**EARLY LIFE:** Spent too many days nursing broken arms due to a sense of adventure that was greater than physics apparently allowed.

**FAMILY:** Married (no children) to **Clyde Burke Jr.**

**EDUCATION:** B.A. English from **Grand Rapids Baptist College** (now **Cornerstone University**), AMLS from **University of Michigan School of Information and Library Studies** (now **School of Information**).

**FIRST JOB:** Waitressing at camp; first library job that paid (other than school), serials assistant at **Cornerstone University**.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** Acquisitions & Serials Librarian at **Western Theological Seminary**, Holland, MI; 11 ½ years as Corporate Librarian at **Amway Corporation**; Account Services Manager at **EBSCO Information Services** since 2000. Member of **SLA** (three-time chapter president of **Western Michigan Chapter** along with other offices). Member of **Michigan Library Association** and served on various roundtables and committees and boards.

**IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO:** Travel, shop, read, do logic problems and crosswords.

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** Mysteries, thrillers, historical fiction.

**PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD:** I try not to let too many things bother me.

**PHILOSOPHY:** My Dad always says, “Any dead fish can swim downstream,” which to me means that it's important to make an effort, and you don't have to do what everyone else is doing. Don't be afraid to lead.

**MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT:** Creating a vital corporate library that was respected and used (until major downsizing eliminated my job).

**GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW:** I hope to be still learning and growing so that my nieces and nephews don't think of me as an old lady, but their cool aunt.

**HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:** I see an industry where both content producers/publishers and librarians have figured out a more stable system for electronic content so that publishers are getting paid for their content and librarians are not forced to have to make so many hard choices due to costs and awkward access models (Well, I can hope can't I?). 🐾



ductivity, playing to staff strengths will make them feel important, satisfied and often happier. For example, perhaps you have a staff member who is a good writer but does not have a very good grasp of Web design or creation. Pairing that person with a person with good Web design skills, who may not be a great writer, makes both of these people more useful to the organization.

### Retrain — New Skills for All

After reassessing and reassigning, the third step is to retrain. In this age of minute-to-minute change, new skills are needed:

- More computer skills (including ftp, collaborative work environments, blogging, podcasting, utilizing the features of the ILS system, more use of MS Office suite, etc.)

- Better personal skills (such as networking, teamwork, and the ability to understand the library's mission and internal and external relationships.<sup>3</sup>

**Michael Stephens** of *Young Adult Library Services* says “My new mantra for all librarians is:

1. Learn to learn
2. Adapt to change
3. Scan the horizon.”<sup>3</sup>

For library staff to be effective in dealing with new technologies, they have to be in a continual learning environment. This environment needs to be welcoming, interesting and tolerant of the failures that may occur in the process.

In order for the library staff to be able to

*continued on page 62*