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## People Profile: Leslie Straus

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Interview — Leslie Straus  
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raphy? Obviously, you haven't cut your ties with your native land. We also know that you have a cottage on a lake in Muskoka, Ontario. Can you tell us about that?

LS: Living in the DC area in 1970-72 when my husband was a postdoctoral student probably started it. The people he worked with and their spouses were so open, direct, and warm — much more “out there” than in Toronto (at least the Toronto of those days). At the same time it was troubling to be in DC when it was still badly scarred from the 1968 riots and walking downtown was dangerous. I guess all this grew into a fascination with U.S./Canada cultural differences which I believe originate from each country's roots. Hence, the interest in history, and there's so much good stuff out there to read!

As for the cottage, for me it's where many beautiful things come together — water, trees, magnificent rock faces, fresh air, lots of wildlife, the seasons. This is where I'm happiest. 🌿

Rumors  
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School of Library and Information Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Mike Shatzkin, Founder & CEO of The Idea Logical Company, a panel on “Changes in Selling and Acquisition of University Press Content” with Leila W. Salisbury, Director, University Press of Mississippi, Doug Armato, Director, University of Minnesota Press, Alison Muddit, Director, University of California Press. And that's just a few of our speakers.

<http://www.katina.info/conference/>

Was excited to learn that the fantastic Doug Armato has recently been named President of the American Association of American University Presses. Doug obviously knows where the action is which is why he is coming to Charleston!

Facebook is a fascinating place to visit “had I but world enough and time”! We have a Charleston Conference FB page. Have you visited? In fact, I saw news of several colleagues the other day when I happened to stumble into FB. Rebecca Cybulsky Walden was one of them. Rebecca used to work at EBSCO (left in 2008) and does a lot of freelance work for the American Library Association ([www.atyourlibrary.org](http://www.atyourlibrary.org)) and also some consulting for Dan Tonkery's company, Content Strategies and some STM publishers.

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against the grain  
people profile

President, SkyRiver Technology Solutions  
5850 Shellmound Way, Ste. 302, Emeryville, CA 94608  
Phone: (510) 520-8084 • Fax: (510) 450-6352  
<leslie@theskyriver.com> • [www.theskyriver.com](http://www.theskyriver.com)

Leslie Straus

**BORN/LIVED/EARLY LIFE:** Born in Kaslo, British Columbia near the end of WWII (then a relocation center for Japanese Canadians). At war's end the family moved to Waterloo, Ontario. Remained in Waterloo through graduation with a BA (English major) from the University of Waterloo, where I was fortunate to work two summers as a library assistant. Then came marriage, a move to Toronto, and a University of Toronto library degree.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** Started out as a Junior Cataloger at York University Libraries in Toronto, progressing to Serials Cataloger, then Senior Cataloger before becoming Head of (technical) Processing. (I have vivid memories from those pre-MARC days of cataloging in a manual setting — endless searching and endless filing — fantasizing how wonderful it would be if only the NUC quarterly and monthly printed catalogs were somehow computerized). After that, there was a hiatus of two years as a stay-at-home mom in the Washington, DC area where husband Neil was a post-doctoral student. Then it was back to Toronto, where I began to work part-time for Coutts Library Services, helping to set up the company's continuations service. Involvement with Coutts led to involvement with UTLAS in an electronic ordering pilot project, which led to a job offer from UTLAS to be Manager of Product Marketing. Among the products we brought on-board at UTLAS to market in Canada was INNOVACQ, a nascent acquisitions system developed by Innovative Interfaces when Innovative consisted of half-a-dozen people working in three rented rooms in Berkeley. That involvement led to a job offer from Innovative to be a trainer, which rather quickly evolved into a combination training/sales/contracts role. (Being the Eastern Time Zone person for a California start-up meant that it was easy to get to wear multiple hats.) Twenty-one years later, in 2006, I retired from Innovative as VP of worldwide sales and marketing. Although happy with that being the sum total of my career, I found myself accepting an invitation three years later to head up SkyRiver, a new bibliographic utility for cataloging. This was a good decision. It has been a great adventure, not to mention learning experience, to be able to help launch SkyRiver with technology that eclipses anything I could have imagined as a cataloger in the 1960s. So I've come full circle in a very serendipitous way.

**FAMILY:** Married to Neil Straus (University of Toronto Professor Emeritus); two sons.

**IN MY SPARE TIME:** Not much of this right now, but whenever possible it's spent in Muskoka, Ontario at our cottage on a lake, canoeing, hiking, foraging for berries and mushrooms, or just enjoying the view of rocks, trees, and water (or ice and pristine snow).

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** Biographies and history, particularly U.S. history. Having become a naturalized U.S. citizen, it's interesting to learn more about the “other guys” after being schooled from a British-centric perspective.

**PHILOSOPHY:** Be curious; be as useful as possible; laugh whenever possible; be open to ideas and people.

**MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT:** My role in bringing SkyRiver to the library community and introducing a cost-effective, full-service alternative for libraries when there wasn't one.

**GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW:** Having the good health, energy, and time to engage in whatever adventure presents itself then.

**HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:** Technology will continue to transform how information is managed and presented, but there will be no change in the need for bibliographic integrity and understanding the needs of information consumers. In fact, this will be even more vital because there will be so much more to deal with in so many different forms. It will be important for librarians to assert themselves in an industry that stands to learn a lot from their expertise and service commitment to patrons. Librarians who adapt to new technologies yet remain grounded in the fundamentals of librarianship will be important in keeping the world afloat in a sea of information, whether they're in libraries or in the industry. 🌿

