

NASIG Newsletter

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Profile

Eve Davis

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Eve is account services manager at EBSCO's Midwest Office, but is better known as "Eve from EBSCO." She has worked at EBSCO for about 18 years, and serves customers in Ohio and southern Indiana. Eve retires in November, and if you've ever talked with Eve you know she has had a fascinating career and is a very unique person. I spoke with her one afternoon and hope that this profile will at least give a flavor of the delightful and amusing stories she shared about herself. Reading about Eve is not the same as talking to Eve, believe me. One question I didn't even have to ask, because I already knew the answer, was that her favorite color is PINK!

Before I begin the story of Eve, I do need to let you know that we are not related. Eve's roots trace back to Lithuania and Russia, while my Davis ancestors came from Wales.

Eve was born and raised in Toledo, Ohio; so she is a native Buckeye. I knew that buckeyes were some sort of fruit or nut, and Eve explained they are a fruit that is said to look like the eye of a buck. Buckeye candy is all the rage in Ohio, but I have yet to have the pleasure of sampling some. She received her bachelor's degree from Mary Manse College, an all-women's college (now defunct—more on that later), where, under the tutelage of some special nuns in the Ursuline order (Ursulines of the Roman Union), she learned all about the social graces which later became one of Eve's

signature schtick. She remembers serving tea to Sister Rose Margaret, which was a very special privilege at Mary Manse. One significant fact that Eve learned about tea is that one sits to pour tea, but stands to pour coffee. Another nun, Sister Mary Lawrence, became best friends with Eve's mother. Mary Manse was a wonderful place with a real sense of community. Eve was much happier there than at a large state school. She was even president of her senior class—already cultivating that take-charge attitude!

History degree in hand, Eve spent two years in Israel on a kibbutz, when Syria decided to stage a surprise attack and blew up the kibbutz (1973). Eve's plans changed and she was able to find a job in the Toledo Lucas County Library System as a paraprofessional young adult librarian—and she was not that far removed from young adulthood herself! After about 18 months, Eve decided this was the career for her and went on to library school. Smart move, Eve!

I know I don't have all the nitty-gritty details, but Eve applied for the position of director of the St. Johns School Library in Waterloo, Belgium. Through a series of seemingly fated circumstances that included a message to call Belgium collect at 3am Toledo time (remember, this was before cell phones and commonplace international calling!), Eve was offered the job! Three days later she set off for Belgium to be a librarian in an English-speaking school run by French nuns who were all Irish! Eve had a wonderful experience in Europe. Paris was two hours away by train; there was a trip to England to buy books for the

school, as well as time spent in Germany and Luxembourg. Eve remembers that the Belgians were big beer drinkers (except for Hercule Poirot, a big one for a tisane) and there were lots of beer festivals. A Godiva chocolatier was right down the street, which is pretty cool since this was before Godiva was in every mall in the United States! After a year, Eve decided to head back to America. She realized that school librarianship was not where she wanted to spend her career, and she had accomplished what she set out to do—make the students excited about the library. Just imagine yourself as a kindergartner listening to Eve tell the *Chicken Little* story; it doesn't get more exciting than that, especially if you throw in a few Freudian slips with some of the other characters' names.

Returning stateside, Eve settled in Dallas where her sister was living. She had a short stint working in advertising before landing the position of branch manager in the Oak Lawn branch of the Dallas Public Library System. One highlight of her Texas experience was being invited to toss cow chips. I leave the visual for that activity totally to the reader's imagination. My only question is how do you keep your pink outfit pink? Eve enjoyed the social scene in Dallas, having a different sort of coming out party for herself!

After a few years, Eve moved back to Toledo and worked, again, for the Toledo Public Library System. She met Jane, her significant other, at this time. Jane had worked for Navy Armed Forces Radio as a hard rock DJ and newscaster, and now was the leading morning drive-time radio host in Toledo before going to law school. After graduating from law school, Jane became chief clerk to the Ohio State Supreme Court in Columbus. Eve became manager of magazines and newspapers (affectionately known as "mags and rags") for the Columbus Metropolitan Library.

So how did Eve end up at EBSCO? While in Columbus, Eve was recruited by Price Waterhouse's Management Horizon division to be a research/reference librarian, where she did online searches using their fabulous 9400 baud connection! You have to have been around awhile for that number to have significance. I remember being

excited about 2400 baud in the mid 1980s—that's the difference between corporate and academic libraries. However, corporate cutbacks meant the writing was on the wall for Eve's corporate library stint to be nearing an end. Eve got a tip from a former library school colleague that EBSCO was looking for a new representative. There is, naturally, more to the story; but, suffice to say, Eve got the job and realized it was the ideal job for her. Eve shared some great insights into what it's like to work as a vendor rep. Not everyone is suited for this type of position. In most cases, library positions in libraries are fairly structured; a vendor's job is not so structured, and you have to learn how to deal with that. You need to be self-motivated and accountable. You are out there on your own and must have the maturity and confidence to inspire your current and potential customers that your company can really provide the goods and services that you tout. In other words, you need to establish credibility. A really good sense of humor also goes a long way!

NASIG met Eve in 1995 at the 10th Anniversary Conference at Duke University. Eve had only been with EBSCO about a year, and had the good fortune of having Marcia Tuttle take her under her wing. Marcia was one of the great serials librarians of her era and knew loads of people. Eve quickly realized that "NASIG was made for her." She made lots of connections at the NASIG conference that quickly paid off. Everywhere she went, she knew someone or someone that that person knew. A common NASIG conference experience is one of the quickest ways to bond. Plus the informality of the conference is terrific! Eve has confidence that NASIG will be around for many more years. The organization has already shown it can evolve and change, and there are younger, newer people ready and willing to take the reins into the future.

I promised I would return to the Mary Manse story. Mary Manse was hit hard by the recession of the 1970s and unfortunately had to declare bankruptcy. Eve had been working as a reference librarian there when all of this came down. Ironically, Eve had written her master's thesis on establishing an archive, and the

archivist at Bowling Green University was her mentor. Eighteen months later Mary Manse closed and Eve had to ready the archives at Mary Manse for transfer to Bowling Green. Talk about full circle!

Eve is a proud honorary lifetime member of the Christian Librarians Association whose name tag has the Jewish star on it.

As to her personal life, Eve is very close to her sister, Barbara. They share a family resemblance for graciousness, humor and charm, although my understanding is that Barb is the charm-champion of the family. It sounds like the two of them get along like gang busters and even go on vacation together. Earlier this year Eve and her partner, Jane, went on a climbing vacation with Barb. Jane and Barb did the climbing, while Eve sensibly stayed at the hotel and read a book!

Eve and Jane have two dogs: Simba, a greyhound-collie mix; and Belle, a beagle-basset-dachshund-chihuahua - red tick-coonhound mix that they adopted in 2009. There are also some adopted rescue cats serving as additional playmates (or tormentors). The dogs go to doggie daycare, where they get to do fun things like splash in the kiddie pool on a hot day and play old beagle games! Eve has wide-ranging tastes in books and is usually reading about 2-4 books at a time. Some of her recent/current reads are: *Fortunate sons: The 120 Chinese boys who came to America, went to school and revolutionized an ancient civilization* by Liel Leibovitz and Matthew Miller, *The warmth of other suns: The epic story of America's great migration* by Isabel Wilkerson, *Acceptable loss: A William Monk novel* by Anne Perry, and *How to raise a Jewish dog* by Rabbis of Boca Raton, Barbara Davilman and Ellis Weiner. She is not much for TV or movies, except *Dancing with the Stars!* – remember the social graces have a special appeal. Eve enjoys the holidays, especially the fall and winter ones, and likes to cook and bake. Of course the best holidays are those where you can do all of this cooking and baking without being stressed and rushed! She can't wait to do more cooking in retirement. Eve is an avid public library user, and may look into

volunteering after retirement if she needs more things to do.

One other hobby of Eve's is weightlifting. Well, actually, more than just lifting weights -- I've seen photos of Eve punching away at the heavy bag and working on the rings. Eve delights in sharing that she once dead lifted 250 lbs and bench pressed 165 lbs three times!

Eve and Jane have been together for over 30 years, which is a pretty amazing accomplishment. After Jane's retirement in early 2012, they are considering relocating to Tucson, Arizona. Regardless of where they live, I'm sure they will be very active—knowing Eve's boundless energy I can't imagine her retiring to a rocking chair.

What has really struck me in getting to know Eve is that she epitomizes the personal spirit, free and respectful exchange of ideas, and unity of purpose that makes NASIG a special organization. Eve's NASIG is more than just professional friendships—although she has plenty of those across the industry—but personal friendships, which make our sometimes crazy-beyond-rational-belief serials world no less crazy, but a lot more FUN!

