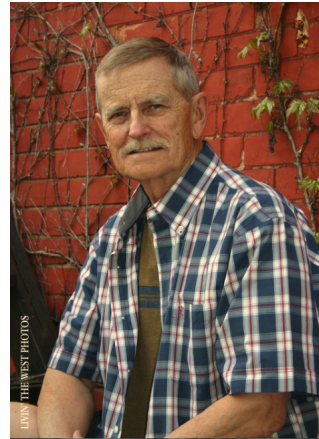




The Author: David Poulsen

David A. Poulsen has been a broadcaster, teacher, football coach, stage and film actor and—most of all—writer. His writing career began in earnest when his story "The Welcomin' " won the 1984 Alberta Culture Short Story Competition. Now the author of more than 25 books, many for middle readers and young adults, David's newest teen novel, And Then the Sky Exploded, is scheduled for an October release. It's the story of Christian Larkin who learns that his great-grandfather helped build the A-bombs dropped on Japan and wants to make amends ... somehow.

David recently made his inaugural foray into the world of adult crime fiction with Serpents Rising, the first book in the Cullen and Cobb Mystery series. The follow-up novel, Dead Air, will be arriving in January of 2017. A UBC Creative Writing alumnus and former Writer in Residence at the Saskatoon Public Library, David lives with his wife Barb on a small ranch in the foothills of southwestern Alberta. You can reach him at poulsend@telusplanet.net.



I have spoken many times of the journey that has taken me to being a writer. It's a journey that has involved laughter, joy, heartbreak, pain, (sometimes excruciatingly) hard work and wonder.

It has also involved libraries and librarians, a part of the journey I have always been aware of but until I had the opportunity to address the delegates at the recent Pacific Northwest Library Association conference in Calgary, it's a part of that journey and of my life to which I had not paid nearly enough attention.

My first real encounter with a library took place not long after I had started first grade at a brand new school, Parkallen Elementary, in Edmonton. The school was so new, in fact, that it did not yet have a library, a deficiency this six year-old was unaware of. Oh, I already knew the joys of reading, largely because of the modelling of my dad who was a voracious reader and instilled the love of books and stories in his son almost from birth.

But it wasn't until my grade one teacher lined up her charges at the door of our classroom and led us out to the front of the school that the magic of the library first touched me. For there, parked at the curb, was a sparkling orange and blue school bus. It was orange and blue, rather than the traditional yellow, because this was no ordinary school bus. I discovered that when I was chosen as one of the first group of students to mount the steps that led up and onto the bus. And as I looked into the interior, where the seats should have been, I was stunned to see no seats at all—in- stead there were shelves, lots of shelves, all of them filled with books.

I had entered the wonderful world of the Bookmobile...the library on wheels.

But that was just the beginning. The driver of that bus (and what kid hasn't thought bus drivers are cool? they are in charge of big machines and they have excellent uniforms) was also the librarian. And no doubt sensing—in that intuitive way librarians have—that this kid was extra-excited and maybe deserving of a little more attention., she walked me around the bus, explaining how a library works and pointing out the various kinds of books. She even recommended a few I might like. And to top it all off, I learned that I could take some of the books out of that bus and

into the school where I could then read them. It was a game-changing day in my life. And not the last one I would have inside a library. From that day to this, librarians and libraries have been an almost ever-present and very important part of my life.

It was fitting then that some years later when I made the promise to myself that someday I would be a writer—I made that commitment in a library. I remember that day. It was at the Central Memorial branch of the Calgary Public Library. That library, like all libraries at that time, had, right next to the librarian's desk...card drawers. I remember two kinds of drawers though there may have been more—there were those for book titles and those for authors. On that particular day I went to the author drawer that housed cards for authors whose names started with "P".

I flipped through that drawer—Po...Pou...Pouls...and finally came to the place in that drawer where the card with my name on it would have been. If I had actually written a book. Not to be deterred by such a small detail, I found a piece of paper, cut it to the right size and wrote on that piece of paper all the information I saw on the other authors' cards—this one for David Poulsen.

I placed that card in that space and promised myself that one day there would be a real card in that drawer because David Poulsen had written a book or maybe even more than one.

And, happily—it happened. Well, sort of. By the time my first book was published the card drawers had slipped into virtual extinction but that book and my subsequent ones were included in library computer databases. Not as romantic, but it was close enough to fulfilling that 13 year-old's promise of so many years before.

And today, libraries and librarians continue to play a major role in my life. When my teen novel, *Numbers*, won the Sakura Medal in Japan, the equivalent of the Pacific Northwest Library Association's YRCA award, it was librarians in Japan that nominated the book for the award. And after *Numbers* was voted by the students as their favourite novel of 2011, it was librarians who invited me, then hosted me during my subsequent tour of Japan and South Korea.

On three occasions I have been honoured to be selected as Writer in Residence in libraries, the most recent as the 32nd WIR at the Saskatoon Public Library. The opportunity to work with emerging and established writers has truly been one of the most rewarding facets of my writing career. To do that and watch them progress toward the fulfillment of their literary dreams—and to do it in a library setting—has been very special.

I hope librarians know that just as they are so important to readers and those who want to be readers, they are equally important to writers and those who want to be writers. From those first tentative steps into the magical world of the Bookmobile to the present--with 25 books written and published and hundreds of libraries visited and enjoyed—I am constantly reminded of the impact libraries and the people who work in them have had on my life as a writer. It was in a funny little library on wheels where my lifelong love of books and stories began. And all these years later it is libraries and librarians that continue to fuel the absolute joy I find within those walls and within the pages they contain. I would not and could not have written my books without them.

And without you.

I am forever grateful.