

“Librarian’s Shelf” by Melodee Pedersen

Mystery Writer Coming to the Library

On August 29th, mystery author Sean Doolittle will speak about his books and career at 2:00 p.m. in the Columbus Art Gallery. This event is sponsored by the Friends of the Columbus Public Library and Central Community College, Columbus Campus. Cost is \$5 for adults, \$2 for youth 15 years and younger and includes refreshments. To register, call the Extended Learning Service Department at (877) 222-0780, ext. 1293 or (402) 562-1293 by Aug. 27.

Sean is the award-winning author of several crime and suspense novels, most recently "Rain Dogs", "The Cleanup", and "Safer." His work has been praised by the New York Times, the Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and People magazine. Doolittle is a Nebraska native now living in Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he is working on a new book. Sean commented, "My folks still live in the house where I grew up, and I spent many a childhood holiday visiting my aunt, uncle, and cousins in Columbus."

Sean was always a big reader, but didn't think about writing for publication until his senior year of high school. Then his English teacher, Ed Baker, read to the class some short stories by Stephen King that really inspired Sean. He says, "My first college writing professor at UNL, Gerald Shapiro, set the hook for good."

Do you make your living solely from your writing?

I still work a regular day job in an office in Omaha. I earn money from the books, but it would be quite a stretch to live on that income, and I'm too old now to play starving artist. And the kids need health insurance and cheese sticks. But writing fiction full time is still very much my goal

What do you like most about your job?

I've been very, very lucky in my day job in that it provides me with enough flexibility to make my schedule work. I essentially work two full-time jobs, but my night job (the books) sometimes makes unusual demands, both in writing the books and in traveling to promote them. My day job has always been terrific about accommodating those demands

What do you like the least?

I would never complain about having a good job in this economy. At least in print. Jokes aside, of course the books are my passion, so it's easy to wish that I could focus more of my time on them. But I still need the health insurance and cheese sticks.

What advice do you have for others considering this field?

I would say that anybody who wants to write should write. Creative expression can be extraordinarily rewarding in and of itself, and nobody needs permission, or even advice, to do it. Anybody who wants a career in publishing, on the other hand, probably needs to come equipped

with more than a casual desire. It's a tough business, and the marketplace can be unkind. And there are far easier ways to make money. An old pro once told me: "If you can quit, then you probably should." That's some tough love, but I've never heard it said a better way.

What was the most exciting experience you have had that was related to your job?

The books have given me the opportunity to travel to some wonderful places, and in my travels, I often get to meet my heroes--the writers I read, whose work I love, and whose example gives me constant inspiration to keep striving in my own work. That's pretty exciting to me, and the excitement hasn't worn off yet.