

Hardin Northern graduate uses her adventures as background for love story

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Author at work

Hardin Northern graduate Ashton Stevenson works at the Seneca County Park District now after having jobs fighting fires and shooting the rapids of the Snake River. In her spare time, Stevenson has become an author of two books which rely on her journal during those years of her life. A third book is in the works, she said.

By DAN ROBINSON
Times staff writer

Five years ago, Ashton Stevenson was a senior at Hardin Northern High School.

In the short time since her graduation, Stevenson has been a college student, a firefighter in Oregon, a trained water rescuer in Wyoming, a raft guide on the Snake River in the Western United States, and has more recently returned to Ohio to work as a natural resources coordinator for the Seneca County Park District. Now, she is an author.

Through it all, Stevenson has kept a daily journal of her experiences.

"People were always telling me, "You should write a book," she said.

So, she did.

"I've also always been an avid reader. I could sit all day reading a book, or two," Stevenson said. "It's been a fun experience to be the one creating the story rather than jump into someone else's world."

She relied on her notes from her time fighting wildfires, such as the huge the Kincaid Fire near San Francisco, as a background for the book. But this was no autobiography or non-fiction story.

"I've always been a sucker for Hallmark movies," she said. "And I wanted to get the word 'Love' into the title."

The result is "Love on the Frontline," a romantic novel set in a wildfire.

"It is rated PG13," said Stevenson. "There is nothing too bad in it for high school students. There is adventure and romance. An 18-year-old boy should like it the same as a 25-year-old girl."

The book is available on the Amazon and Barnes and Noble websites.

A second book, "Kindling Love," is set to be released soon. The two books are not a part of a series, said Stevenson, but each stands alone.

Stevenson is working on research for a third book, she said. This story was inspired by the time the author spend in training for water rescues with the Coast Guard and she intends to travel to a Coast Guard base in upper Michigan for research.

Creating stories for the books is a great way to relax, said Stevenson. She again falls on her past for guidance in the process.

"Writing helps me remember our family stories," she said. "My dad is a very avid storyteller and about half of the stories are true."

She spends her time away from the park district at her cottage in Port Clinton and her family home near Dunkirk, said Stevenson. She enjoys being back in Ohio, but looks forward to the time she will settle down in Hardin County.

But just because her jobs may not take her across the country rafting on the rapids or fighting walls of flames, doesn't mean she has retired from that way of life, said Stevenson.

"You had asked if I got all of my wild adventures out... the answer is no," she said during a phone interview with the Times. "While yes, I still want to live in Hardin County, I will continue traveling and having adventures while I can. Job-wise, I am much more settled, but I plan to still go backpacking, kayaking, rafting and every other adrenaline-filled activity in my off time. (But) Hardin County will forever be my home and my home base."