

New novel on the road

By ALLI VAIL

NEWS REPORTER

Crissa Constantine heads south this week to a place she hasn't been to in 17 years.

The local author is off to Louisiana State University in Shreveport to participate in an author's reception (held yesterday). She received some of her education degrees from the school.

"I'm so excited," said Constantine. "This was a big part of my life down there. It will be interesting to see what happens."

Constantine's latest book, *Broken Doll*, is going to be published in early October at the latest. The book is partially set in Louisiana.

"It was very loosely inspired by my life in Louisiana and California," Constantine said. "I had to be very careful to change a lot of things. But the spirit was there."

She sent the information about her book to the school, fortuitously just in time to get an invitation to the school's author's reception. Her book is in the school library's system and will be on display there as well — as soon as it arrives from the printers.

Constantine described her book as a suspenseful, dramatic story.

"It shows as a new way of living that was not possible 20 years ago," Constantine said. "It's also showing how loyalty can help you survive."

The book is about two friends, both teachers, called Sunny and Lisa. Sunny lives up fully to her name and befriends the more sedate Lisa. But Sunny has a particular penchant for emotionally dangerous situations.

Constantine said people need good friends to handle



ALLI VAIL PHOTO

CRISSA CONSTANTINE HAS published a second book and is off to Louisiana to promote it at her old university.

hard things and said even if you don't understand your friend, you love them anyway.

"I did have a friend like that," Constantine said. "It is a novel but inspired by some very powerful things that happened in real life."

Part of the reason Constantine wrote the book was because of encouragement from her mother, who died in 2004.

Constantine's first book, called *Banished From the Homeland*, was based on her mother's life in Estonia during Stalin's rule and the Nazi invasion.

"[My mother] said 'don't stop now, do something else,'" Constantine said.

Constantine said she felt it was her duty to write her mother's story.

"Until the end of the Cold War that story would not have been possible," Constantine said. "[Estonians

and Lithuanians] suffered so much. So many people were sent to Siberia."

Constantine, also a composer and pianist, said she has always enjoyed writing.

It took Constantine two years to write *Broken Doll*, one year for the rough draft and one year to satisfy the book's chief editor.

"I kept rewriting it and rewriting it," she said. "[It was] a real challenge because I knew my first draft would need a lot of improvements. I needed to be extremely focused. Luckily, it's not a long story so I could really polish what I was working with."

Now, she said she's happy with the book.

Constantine has spoken at several local clubs about the book. For more information see www.crisa-constantine.com or www.sterlinghouse-publisher.com.

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