

## Westshore native Katie Leimkuehler not shy about using her writing talents



### Jeff's Journeys

By Jeff Gallatin

Westshore native and current Chicago writer, blogger and social media maven Katie Leimkuehler continues to write interesting new chapters in her life story.

Last year, we detailed how Katie, a former West Life intern, had written a screen play for an independent film about the life her grandfather Paul "Bud" Leimkuehler, who had a leg amputated as a result of World War II wounds, but became a champion skier, created his own artificial leg, designed ski outriggers and founded the highly successful family prosthetic and orthotic firm which has aided many Greater Clevelanders with innovative devices since 1948. The film's screenplay ended up in the top 20 of an Internet contest for an International Movie Trailer Festival last year.

Leimkuehler has continued the family tradition of business innovation, and in addition to her blogging and social media work, founded the website [www.ConquertheEdge.com](http://www.ConquertheEdge.com), which helps people overcome their fears. As if all that isn't enough, she's currently involved in a four-part series of novels called "Shy Town



Katie Leimkuehler

Girls," a collaborative publishing project involving four different writers. Each of the four is writing a single book in the series.

"It's about four girls in Chicago who are trying to find out who they are in the world and find the right guy to be with as well," Leimkuehler said.

She said the books combine romance, their lives and adventures in Chicago and how they plan to make their dreams come true.

Leimkuehler said the series can be looked at as a sort of "'Sex and the City' in Chicago with a lot of use of social media and imagination in the books."

The four-book series will start being released in the spring, with a new book coming out once a month. Her book is the second in the series and is scheduled to come out in May. Leimkuehler said true to the book's social media threads, funding for the series is being raised on Publush, an online forum where readers can pre-buy books. They also will be available on Amazon.

Leimkuehler said there is some of her experiences and a lot of imagination in her book.

"It's told from the perspective of that book's main character, Ivy Westin," she said. "She's a small-town girl who comes to Chicago to make her mark in the world. And while she's doing that, she also wants to meet a guy she actually likes and wants to spend more time with. When we started this collaborative project, I decided I wanted to write about a character I would love to interact with and be doing things that made people laugh and gasp."

During the holidays, Leimkuehler came back to the Greater Cleveland area and did an interview on "Live on Lakeside," which can be accessed at <http://shytowngirls.com/media/>. She also did a two-day Dec. 26 and 27 book signing at Mademoi-

selle, a Westlake boutique operated by longtime family friend Fadia Marie Nemeah.

Leimkuehler said she loved being back home for a few days.

"It's always great seeing family and friends from school and where I grew up," she said. "It's been really busy, but it's been good."

Leimkuehler said she enjoys the interaction in interviews since she also spent time working for the Chicago Tribune several years ago.

"It might be a little easier for me to know what interviewers and writers might need when we're talking about the book," she said. "It's a lot of fun because I'm talking about something I've enjoyed being a part of creating."

The other authors are Kate Clinesmith, Melissa Giovagnoli Wilson and Jennifer Yih. None of the other four have Leimkuehler's Northeast Ohio connections, but she said they all are friends and get along with each other.

"We all have our own personalities, but that should make the books more interesting and unique," she said.

In addition to the aforementioned sites, the books will be sold at Akira stores in Chicago. She said there are no plans yet for selling them in northern Ohio, but indicated they'll be watching how the sales go.

"Right now we plan on writing the four-book series and if it does go really well, I'm sure we'll continue to write more, but there are no definite plans yet," she said. "The project evolved from the idea that every girl has these moments all women can relate to where a bond of friendship starts to form. These moments, from sharing the same love of shoes to relationship ins and outs, bring women together, even shy girls, an instant connection."