

Teen author has two published books

By **CORIN HIRSCH**
Staff Writer

BELLOWS FALLS — Like many teenagers, Ceara Comeau's days are filled with the rituals of adolescence: hanging out with her friends. Doing her homework. Writing and publishing books.

That's not a typo: Acworth resident Comeau has two published books under her belt, and is whittling away on her third, which she hopes to finish sometime this summer. And she's just turned 16.

This Saturday, March 21, Comeau will be signing copies of her books at Village Square Books in Bellows Falls. Amber Oaks Mysteries, Volume 1 and Adventures of the Young and Curious, which she calls "modern-day Nancy Drew."

Both are collections of short stories with a paranormal twist. The heroine of the first book, Amber Oaks, is a "spunky" but awkward 16-year-old that finds she has a talent for solving ghostly mysteries, and gradually finds social acceptance through her unusual talents.

Though Comeau has always been interested in ghost stories, her first story — written at age 11 — was a simple tale about a blue jay and his adventure away from the nest. "At 12 or 13" she started writing mysteries with a paranormal bent, inspired by her love of Nancy Drew, Hardy Boys, and Sherlock Holmes mysteries. She also gets ideas from the television show CSI, and from stories told to her by her father, aunts and friends.

The idea to publish her work came to her one summer night at Camp Northfield, when she "looked up at the stars and wished" for an opportunity to get her stories out into the world.



JESSE BAKER PHOTO

Ceara Comeau, 16, of Acworth, talks about her life as a young author of mysteries and her plans for a future in forensics. With two published novels, she will be signing books this weekend in Bellows Falls.

Seven weeks later, her mother happened upon Lulu.com, a website that helps authors publish and market their work. With her father, John, serving as editor and her mother as formatter, Charlotte, Comeau uploaded and then examined several proofs before settling on the final format for Amber Oaks Mysteries.

"I learned from my mom that if you want to do something right, you have to do it yourself," said Comeau who has the self-assurance of someone several years older. "You need to pursue your own dreams."

Comeau, a sophomore at Fall Mountain Regional School in Charlestown, has lately scaled back her writing to concentrate on her school work. But her ideas continue to evolve — her latest work has infusions of romance and fantasy. "It's really fun adding genres," she exudes. She is currently rapturous about the

mysteries of Agatha Christie, who she has just discovered.

Comeau always writes her material in longhand, and often doesn't know the end of the story until she writes it herself. Thought she has not received any royalties yet, she expects her first check within the next few weeks. How does she plan to spend it?

"Driver's Ed, or a car. I'd really like to have a car," she says. She will also plow some back into marketing.

Despite her early literary prowess, Comeau insists that she hopes "to get a real career," and plans to study forensics in college.

Saturday's signing is from noon to 2 p.m. at 32 The Square in Bellows Falls. Those who can't make it to Village Square Booksellers can find Ceara's books online at Amazon, or sold at Toadstool Bookshop in Keene, N.H.