

Golden anniversary



Submitted photo

Local residents George and Linda Kennedy will celebrate 50 years of marriage on Oct. 15. They got married in 1971 in Backshear and together have three children. They will be celebrating their anniversary with family and friends.

Local author published in holiday anthology series

“We all need a little escape from reality sometimes, and I hope this anthology of short stories will help readers get into the holiday spirit,” said Melody Johnson, local author living in St. Marys. “The holidays are sometimes a reminder of the people or traditions that one has lost, but through the magic of storytelling, we are never alone.”

Johnson is one of 14 First Coast Romance Writers (FCRW) contributing to *Romancing the Holidays*, Vol. 2, the second installment in the group’s holiday anthology series. This compilation of short stories transports readers from Halloween and Thanksgiving antics to Christmas and Valentine romantics with over a dozen unique happily-ever-afters, ranging from sweet to steamy. Readers who enjoy contemporary, historical, or paranormal romance will be whisked off their feet and away to worlds where love prevails.

“Usually, I write full-length novels, so participating in this annual anthology is both fun and challenging,” said Johnson. “Fun because I love taking a break from the project I’m currently working on to return to *Witchy Business*, a world I’m already in love with. But challenging because developing a relationship, motivation, high stakes, and finding a satisfying resolution in only thirty pages is a wild ride. I hope people take as much pleasure in reading these stories as we did in writing them.”

In addition to Johnson, the other contributing au-

thors in this anthology include: Debby Grahl, Elise Darby, Barbara Whitaker, Maggie FitzRoy, Leah Miles, Karen Renee, Sara Walker, Vickey Wollan, Abigail Sharpe, Gloria Ferguson, Laura Salas, P.K. Brent and Candese Nieves. All 14 women are members of FCRW, and proceeds from this anthology benefit their organization, a non-profit chapter of Romance Writers of America, that helps writers hone their craft and expand their knowledge of the publishing industry.

“I’ve been a member of First Coast Romance Writers for six years. I’m a past event coordinator, treasurer and president of the chapter, and have helped to bring publishers, agents and other industry professionals in person to speak to our members. But participating in this anthology is the accomplishment I’m most proud of,” Johnson said. “It just feels right that we are writers raising money for our chapter by doing what we’re most passionate about: writing romance.”

Johnson’s contribution to this year’s anthology is *Fated by Fire*, a Halloween romance and the third installment in her *Witchy Business* short story series. When the hero of *Fated by Fire*, Marcus Kyle, stops to assist a stranded driver change a flat tire, the last person he expects to face is Jenavieve St. Clair, the young witch whose unnervingly accurate visions consistently cast him as the harbinger of death and destruction for their covens. Crossing paths with her is

unsettling, but perhaps fate has intervened on his behalf, granting him the opportunity to prove to her that he’s just a man, not the monster that her visions predict him to be.

“I chose to feature Halloween for this anthology because what better holiday to frame a romance brimming with witches, sparking with magic and fighting against fate?” Johnson said. “I’m a voracious paranormal romance fan. My heroes are Laurell K. Hamilton, Chloe Neill, Anne Rice, and Karen Marie Moning. Besides the obvious perks to the genre — danger, action and adventure — I’m drawn to paranormal romance because of the world building. I love taking a beloved genre and putting my spin on it with my rules in a world of my creation.”

In addition to her contributions to Volumes I and II of *Romancing the Holidays*, Johnson has also published the “out of this world” full-length sci-fi romance novel *Beyond the Next Star* and the gritty, four-book paranormal romance *Night Blood Series* with Kensington Publishing/Lyrical Press. The *New York Times* and *USA TODAY* Bestselling Author, Lynsay Sands “laughed out loud” reading *Beyond the Next Star*, and *Kirkus Reviews* praised it as, “an engaging and unusual otherworldly tale.”

Romancing the Holidays, Vol. 2, is available online in ebook and paperback formats.

White Oak native serves as member of ‘Silent Service’

A White Oak native is serving aboard USS West Virginia, one of the world’s most advanced nuclear-powered submarines.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Devin Strickland, a 2016 Camden County High School graduate, joined the Navy two and half years ago.

“I joined the Navy because I wanted to make my family proud,” said Strickland. “Previous family members have served, and I wanted to start a career and retire at a young age.”

Today, Strickland serves as a machinist’s mate (nuclear), whose responsibilities include making steam to make the boat run.

According to Strickland, the values required to succeed in the military are similar to those found in White Oak.

“White Oak taught me respect, sheer determination and having a no-quit attitude,” said Strickland.

Known as America’s “Silent Service,” the Navy’s submarine force operates a large fleet of technically advanced vessels. These submarines are capable of conducting rapid defensive and offensive operations around the world, in furtherance of U.S. national security.

There are three basic types of submarines: fast-attack submarines (SSN), ballistic-missile submarines (SSBN) and guided-missile submarines (SSGN).

Fast-attack submarines are designed to hunt down and destroy enemy submarines and surface ships; strike targets ashore with cruise missiles; carry and deliver Navy SEALs; conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions; and engage in mine warfare.

The Navy’s ballistic-missile submarines, often referred to as “boomers,” serve as a strategic deterrent by providing an undetectable platform for submarine-launched ballistic missiles. SSBNs are designed specifically for stealth, extended patrols and the precise delivery of missiles.

Guided-missile submarines provide the Navy with unprecedented strike and special operation mission capabilities from a stealthy, clandestine platform. Each SSGN is capable of carrying 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles, plus a complement



Submitted photo

Petty Officer 3rd Class Devin Strickland, a 2016 Camden County High School graduate, joined the Navy two and half years ago and currently serves aboard the USS West Virginia.

of heavyweight torpedoes to be fired through four torpedo tubes. As a member of the submarine force, Strickland is part of a rich 121-year history of the U.S. Navy’s most versatile weapons platform, capable of taking the fight to the enemy in the defense of America and its allies.

Serving in the Navy means Strickland is part of a team that is taking on new importance in America’s focus on rebuilding military readiness, strengthening alliances and reforming business practices in support of the National Defense Strategy.

“The Navy contributes to national security through nuclear deterrence to make sure everyone knows they can’t mess with the U.S.,” said Strickland. “That’s why nuclear deterrence is so important.”

With more than 90% of all trade traveling by sea, and 95% of the world’s international phone and internet traffic carried through underwater fiber optic, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity and security of the United States is directly linked to a strong and ready Navy.

A major component of that maritime security is homeported at Naval Sub-

marine Base Kings Bay.

“We do two big things here in Kings Bay: we send SSBNs on Strategic Deterrence Patrols and we forward deploy our guided missile submarines overseas,” said Rear Adm. John Spencer, commander, Submarine Group Ten. “This work is essential to uphold the number one mission of the Navy: strategic deterrence. And this is the only home port for both of these types of submarines on the East Coast.”

Strategic deterrence is the Nation’s ultimate insurance program, and for decades, Kings Bay has been home to Ohio Class SSBN ballistic-missile submarines. Beginning in 2028, the new Columbia Class ballistic-missile submarines will arrive and provide continuous sea-based strategic deterrence into the 2080s.

As Strickland and other sailors continue to train and perform the missions they are tasked with, they take pride in serving their country in the United States Navy.

“Serving in the Navy means holding yourself to a better standard every day and trying to improve every day to be a better sailor and a good shipmate to your peers,” added Strickland.

Change of command



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The Ohio-class guided-missile submarine USS Florida (SSGN 728) Blue Crew held a change of command ceremony onboard Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Georgia, Sept. 16. Capt. Gabriel Anseeuw relieved Capt. Brian Tothoro as the commanding officer of the ship’s Blue Crew during a ceremony held at the base chapel.

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Weekly Tide Chart

This Week’s Tide

	HIGH TIDE		LOW TIDE	
	AM	PM	AM	PM
10/14 Thurs.	3:20	4:06	9:43	10:36
10/15 Fri.	4:22	5:06	10:50	11:33
10/16 Sat.	5:22	6:01	11:50	—
10/17 Sun.	6:17	6:51	12:24	12:44
10/18 Mon.	7:06	7:36	1:10	1:33
10/19 Tues.	7:50	8:17	1:53	2:19
10/20 Wed.	8:31	8:56	2:33	3:01

TIDES CALCULATED FOR OUTER BAR

Cumberland Wharf, Cumberland River add 40 min.; St. Marys, St. Marys Entrance add 15 min. Crooked River Entrance add 1 hr. 23 min.; St. Marys, St. Marys River add 1 hr. 21 min.; Crandall, St. Marys River add 2 hr. 10 min.; Harrietts Bluff add 2 hr. 9 min.; Dover Bluff add 1 hr. 10 min.; Satilla Cove add 1 hr.; Christmas Creek add 25 min.; Satilla River, Todd Creek Entrance add 43 min.

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