

Two Shores Books

**SEALED WITH A KISS:
AN AMERICAN LOVE STORY IN LETTERS**

Trade Paperback & Kindle E-book

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NEW MEMOIR BY VERO RESIDENT CELEBRATES AMERICAN LIFE, LOVE, AND THE POWER OF LETTERS

VERO BEACH/JANUARY 22, 2014: A timeless love. An innocent time. An America on the brink of change. And an awful lot of stamps.

Drawn from an extraordinary collection of over 400 personal letters, Vero Beach resident Bob Zielsdorf's new memoir, *Sealed with a Kiss*, is a coming-of-age story, a romance, and a glimpse of an exceptional time in our nation's history. Anyone who remembers having a pen pal or scribbling envelopes with codes like *S.W.A.K* will recognize themselves in its story—and savor its vision of not just a unique moment in time, but also a timeless love.

Zielsdorf has lived in Vero with his wife Fran since 2007. The inspiration for the book came when he re-read the box of letters they had sent each other before their marriage, all saved and perfectly preserved over the decades. "It struck me that what we wrote captured unique moments, not only from our lives but also from a pivotal time in American culture," he explains.

He credits a Vero Beach Museum of Art memoir-writing class with local author Suzanne Fox as the impetus for committing seriously to the project; Fox eventually worked as a consulting editor on the book, while another Vero Beach resident, CJ Madigan, devised a book design that merged Zielsdorf's text, excerpts from the letters, and visual images from postmarks to snapshots.

The book is available on Amazon.com in both trade paperback and Kindle editions and hit #1 in its category on Amazon on its official launch date of January 22. It appears under Zielsdorf's new publishing imprint, Two Shores Books.

Mike Peters, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the *Mother Goose and Grimm* comic strip, is among the advance readers who have awarded the book high praise. "Be warned, you will fall in love with this book," he writes. Barbara Morgan, former Editor-in-Chief of Reader's Digest Books, concurs. "This is a warm, wistful, wise love story. Told with the help of hundreds of letters written and cherished through the years, *Sealed with a Kiss* is a wonderful evocation of love in a simpler time. Bob and Fran met as young teenagers, and as their relationship developed from flirtation to

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infatuation to college romance and finally to marriage, they faithfully confided in each other with frequent letters. This charming snapshot of mid 20th-century America is a joy to read, and will touch a chord with the young and the young at heart,” she comments.

The story it tells begins in 1957, when the 13-year-old Zielsdorf was living an ordinary middle-class suburban existence in York, Pennsylvania. On a trip to Massachusetts to visit a friend, he met 14-year-old Fran Jordan. Though they spent less than an hour together, they agreed to write. Remarkably, they did, beginning a correspondence that would last for eight years and end with an enduring marriage.

As Bob and Fran moved from middle school into high school and college, they never lived in the same town or even the same state. The teenagers’ bond, which began as friendship and only later deepened into love, was forged through writing. Describing high school and college, family and friends, home and travel, frustrations and dreams, companionship and “chemistry,” the letters paint a vivid and unselfconscious picture of two lives in transition from childhood innocence to adult choice.

Zielsdorf, 70, was the longtime owner/CEO of The Peerless Group, headquartered in Sidney, OH. In 2007, he sold the company to Illinois Tool Works. Now retired, he decided to tackle the book project that had been in the back of his mind for years.

“I’m glad I was wise enough to wait until retirement! I knew that getting the book from concept to finished product would be hard work, I just didn’t know how hard,” Zielsdorf says. “But the collaborative process was not only productive but fun.”

Zielsdorf hopes that his book celebrates a rich time in American history and the power of letter writing.

“I think that email is one of the best inventions of the 20th century,” Zielsdorf comments. “I use it constantly—I even text with my kids and grandkids. But I just don’t think it reveals the true depths of the writer, or builds enduring relationships, like handwritten letters.”

Zielsdorf is available for media interviews and book events. Contact zielsdorfbob1@gmail.com to set up an interview. For media resources including author photo, book cover photo, author Q/A and more, visit www.bobzielsdorf.com.