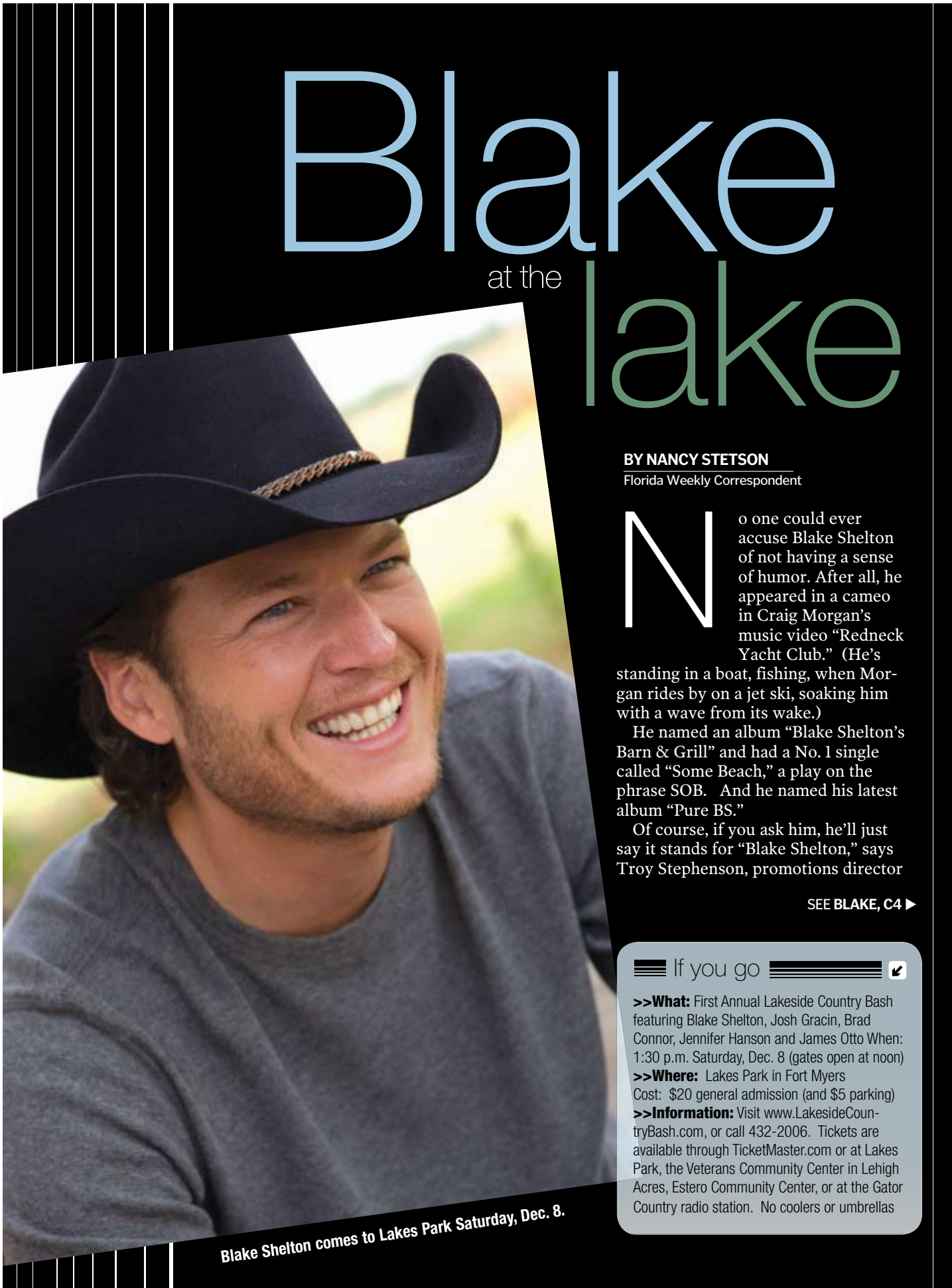


WEEK OF DECEMBER 6-12, 2007 A GUIDE TO THE GREATER FORT MYERS ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT SCENE



Blake at the lake

BY NANCY STETSON
Florida Weekly Correspondent

No one could ever accuse Blake Shelton of not having a sense of humor. After all, he appeared in a cameo in Craig Morgan's music video "Redneck Yacht Club." (He's standing in a boat, fishing, when Morgan rides by on a jet ski, soaking him with a wave from its wake.)

He named an album "Blake Shelton's Barn & Grill" and had a No. 1 single called "Some Beach," a play on the phrase SOB. And he named his latest album "Pure BS."

Of course, if you ask him, he'll just say it stands for "Blake Shelton," says Troy Stephenson, promotions director

SEE BLAKE, C4 ►

If you go

>>What: First Annual Lakeside Country Bash featuring Blake Shelton, Josh Gracin, Brad Connor, Jennifer Hanson and James Otto When: 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8 (gates open at noon)

>>Where: Lakes Park in Fort Myers
Cost: \$20 general admission (and \$5 parking)

>>Information: Visit www.LakesideCountryBash.com, or call 432-2006. Tickets are available through TicketMaster.com or at Lakes Park, the Veterans Community Center in Lehigh Acres, Estero Community Center, or at the Gator Country radio station. No coolers or umbrellas

Blake Shelton comes to Lakes Park Saturday, Dec. 8.

WEEK at-a-glance



Fall in love

Almost Maine: "Florida Rep once again has another hit," says Florida Weekly theater critic Nancy Stetson. **C8** ►



Southern Christmas

Meet Santa's brother, Leroy Claus, and his magical flying alligators. From local author Rob Andrys. **C5** ►



Fantasy film

"Beowulf" is an OK movie says film critic D.N.A. Smith. **C11** ►

Area's best Christmas fest at Edison & Ford Estates

BY PETE SKIBA
Florida Weekly Correspondent

Move over Rockefeller Center. The premier Christmas attraction in the country radiates from Holiday House 2007 at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers.

For the 32nd year the estates come alive with white lights sparkling on palm trees, antique houses decorated in Christmas finery and new this year — a Children's Tree Trail.

"Holiday House in Fort Myers brings a real Christmas feeling to me," said Nancy Black, of Sanibel. "It is as close as you can get to the Christmas feeling in all of Southwest Florida."

Someone who could be an expert on a traditional up-north Christmas, Carol

If you go

>>What: Edison & Ford Winter Estates Holiday House 2007
>>Where: 2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers
>>When: 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. daily until December 30 except Christmas Eve and day
>>Cost: \$15 for adults; \$1 for children 6 to 12 years old.
>>Info: Call 334-7419 or Web site: www.ewefla.org

Bruce, a snowbird visiting from Juneau, Alaska, agreed.

"I live in Alaska and I like the snow, but it is 24 degrees there," Bruce said. "This is a great place for Christmas decorations. It feels just like Christmas."

Fort Myers' Susan Bennett, 96 and a

native, started the Fort Myers Women's Community Club tradition at her home in 1957 that led to the Holiday House.

"I'm just so happy to be here for this Holiday House," Bennett said. "It really became big."

The Holiday House decoration event moved to the Edison and Ford Estates as a joint effort in 1975. It takes hundreds of volunteers from the women's club, Lee County schools, garden clubs and community organizations to produce the show.

With this year's theme "a Trip to the Past," the show opens every evening at 5:30 p.m. and runs through Dec. 30 with Christmas Eve and day closed. Various musical groups and entertainers such as North Fort Myers High School's

SEE HOLIDAY HOUSE, C15 ►



A new Venu

Exclusive club opens in the downtown River District. **C14** ►