

Intriguing PEOPLE of 1992

Photography by
Jacque Brund, Jr.

*We single out 10
who captured
our attention last
year for their
work in fields as
wide ranging as
banking and
fastpitch softball,
architecture and
trailblazing.*



William Young

Saving an S&L

These days most stories involving savings and loan institutions don't have a happy ending. This one does. Two years ago Metro Savings Bank, formerly Washington Shores Federal Savings and Loan Association, was struggling and looked like it was in serious trouble. Undercapitalized, the thrift had no reserves and was a prime candidate to be taken over by federal regulators. But William Young, 36, a former S&L examiner who has been with the thrift for eight years, couldn't see letting the only black-owned financial institution in Florida go down without a fight. Young and others in the S&L went to the black community for investors and found them. Metro Savings beat a June 30 federal deadline for raising sufficient capital by one month. Now Metro is turning a profit, and is even planning to open a new branch in the coming year. "It took some hard work," says Young, "but it is very gratifying to know that there are people in this community who believe this institution was worth saving."

Cindy Westra

Warring Against Toxins

She doesn't mind using scare tactics in her one-woman war against toxins in the environment. In her strategy to increase awareness, she drops bombshells like: At a recent convention of funeral directors, a speaker said it was hardly necessary to use formaldehyde in embalming because we absorb so much in a lifetime. When you buy new sheets, if you don't wash them first, you go to sleep in a formaldehyde sandwich. It's hard to find a doctor who will admit that chemical exposure can cause real sickness; the medical establishment still thinks it's in your head. A victim of chemical exposure when she was researching the toxic effects on wildlife at old dump sites, Westra said it took her seven months to recover after her immune system broke down. Now her mission is to spread the word about the dangers of chemicals to a new generation. She wants to reach all seniors in Orange and Seminole high schools through her lectures for the non-profit Save the Wildlife Inc. After she gets their attention with alarming information about toxins, Westra arms students with the Green Lifesaver Series, a list of ways to avoid or to fight the harmful effects of chemicals.

