

My name is William Benjamin Norris, but everyone calls me Billy. I turned 15 on November 18th. I have always loved writing. In the spring of 1998, when I was 10 and in the 4th grade, I applied to be a member of the *St. Petersburg Times X-Team* (a team of 12 young journalists between the ages of 10 & 17 chosen each year, who contribute stories to the Times' Xpress, a weekly section in the paper devoted to kids. I was one of the kids picked for that '98-99 team.

At the end of a productive year with the paper, I was offered the job as the Xpress film critic—a position I still hold today (this is my 5th year with the Times and my 4th year as their youth film critic.)

During the spring of 2000, I was a frequent guest doing movie reviews on WWBA 1040AM radio's morning show, *The Breakfast Bunch with Paul Porter & Karin Williams*.

That same spring, I applied for and became the *Tampa Bay Radio Disney* station's first Kidcaster. I did weekly on air reports on behind the scenes activities at Devil Rays games.

After my term doing that was up, I was offered a position as host of their new public service talk show called *Kids' Concerns*. The first show aired in August of 2000, and I remained the host for 1-½ years, until I started to get too busy with other endeavors and "retired."

During that time period, I also did several radio voiceover commercials for local and national products. And I even did a commercial for the Devil Rays that aired on *Fox SportsNet*. I was also forced to watch it before every home D Rays game on their Jumbotron! That was brutal!!

During that 2001 baseball season, I wrote a series of 4 baseball-related articles on the St. Pete Times' pages in the Rays Magazine. One appeared in each of their 4 issues that year.

In August of 2001, I started doing movie reviews on *Tampa Bay's 10 News* alongside of the Times' Movie Critic, Steve Persall. I am still their teen film critic and make frequent appearances on *Life Around the Bay* when appropriate movies open in the Tampa Bay area.

In April of 2002, the biggest event of my life took place! I was a guest on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. Not only was it an awesome experience, but it also opened a lot more doors for me.

On that trip to NY, I also appeared on *Good Morning America* and *CNN Live*. And when I returned home, I was absolutely deluged with requests to appear on radio shows all over the country!

I have since written an article for *Florida Trend's NEXT* magazine about popular teen movies. The magazine goes out to 750,000 high school students all over the state each September. I am currently working on an article for their 2003 issue about the thrill *and* responsibilities of learning how to drive.

I've appeared on Fox News Channel's *On the Record* with Greta Van Susteren doing movie reviews. And I have made several appearances as a film critic on CNN's *Saturday Morning Show* during the past year.

I have been a keynote speaker for Pinellas County Schools and in November of 2002, I moderated a political debate locally for Teens Take On Politics, a national

event. Also in November, I was a guest speaker at the Times' Festival of Reading held annually at Eckerd College.

In January of 2003, I participated in a conference at the *Sarasota Film Festival* where I was the Jury Mediator for a panel of middle school students acting as film critics for family and kids' movies being shown at the festival.

I've been keeping very busy doing reviews and other articles for the Times. But, I also go to school—Seminole High School, where I am a freshman. I am an A student and participate in French Club. As a French 4 student, I have just become eligible to join the French Honor Society this spring. I am also a member of Mu Alpha Theta, the National Math Honor Society. And I am a musician. I am a member of the SHS String Orchestra, Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band.

I am active with the youth group at my church, Anona United Methodist in Largo, where I am also a member of the adult contemporary band, *The Nineveh Project*.

Music is my other passion. I sing, play electric guitar, electric and acoustic bass, drums, percussion and some piano. I fill in with the Pinellas Youth Symphony and Jazz Ensemble when my schedule allows and have performed with several local musicians. That's pretty much it. I keep very busy doing things I really like.

Right now, my plans are to study Jazz Performance and Journalism in college. I aspire to be a professional journalist (broadcast and or written) and a renowned musician someday.