



'In Search of Xanadu,' which airs this week on public television, follows writer Bill Belleville (below) as he visits some of the same spots along the St. Johns River that naturalist William Bartram explored in the 18th century.

What ever happened to ...

### Bill Belleville, writer and environmentalist

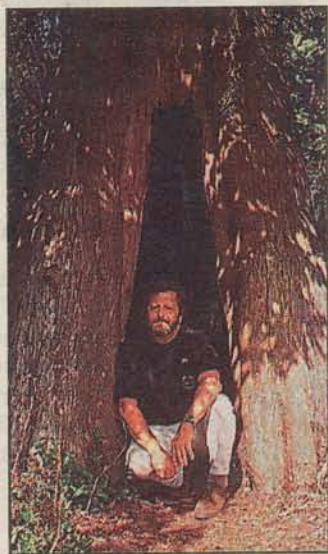
**F**or years, writer Bill Belleville has explored our Earth and penned award-winning articles about the environment. But the Sanford resident recently decided to take his favorite subject matter to another medium: television.

His latest adventure is "In Search of Xanadu," a 30-minute documentary he wrote and hosted for the television series *Florida Crossroads*. (The segment airs this week on Florida stations. Locally, it can be seen Thursday at 8 p.m. on WCEU-Channel 15 or Saturday at 6 p.m. on WMFE-Channel 24.)

Belleville used the work of 18th-century naturalist William Bartram as a guide for the piece, which follows Belleville for two weeks as he navigates a houseboat along the St. Johns River and revisits a number of the same sites Bartram visited in the late 1700s.

"It's the same subject I've written about for years," Belleville said. "You're creating a narrative of your adventure, that's all."

Bartram's work influenced authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson



PHOTOS: BILL BELLEVILLE (RIVER), EUGENIA STEFAN (BELLEVILLE)

and Henry David Thoreau and naturalists such as John Audubon. *Bartram's Travels*, which chronicled his Florida trip, inspired Belleville.

"It was wonderfully romantic and gothic at the same time," he said of the book. "The Florida I have inside me is the Florida Bartram wrote about. It's mysterious and enchanting."

Belleville's TV segment tries to capture that same mystery as he explores underwater springs and hidden creeks. Produced by Bob Giguere, the film has underwater footage of the birds and animals of the St. Johns as well as glimpses of locals who have a strong personal or professional connection to the river.

"You don't have to go that far today to see what he wrote about — just get off the interstate," Belleville said.