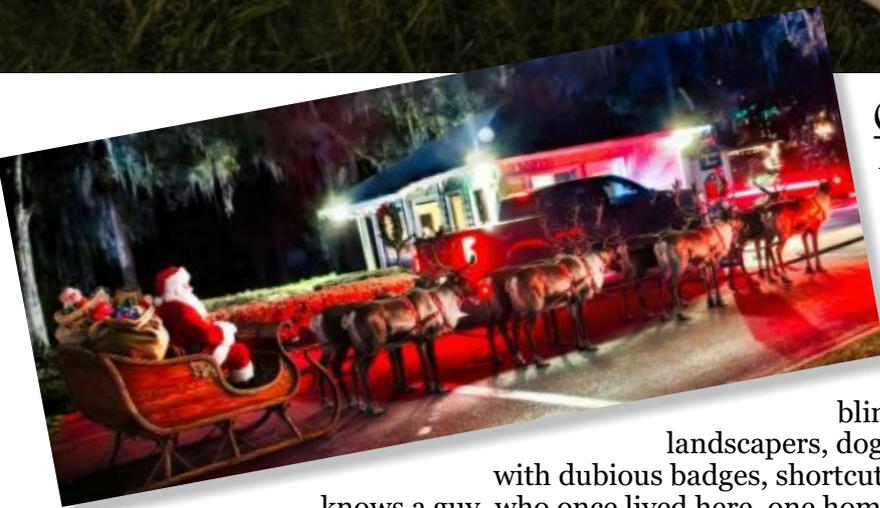


EXTRA!

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 1

“BREAKING NEWS FROM BEHIND THE HEDGES”

JANUARY 2026



CLICK BAIT

At the gated edge of a neighborhood that basks in the glow of safety, hums a quiet scandal, a soft click in the night, a red eye winky-blink, untracked, uncounted, passed palm to palm like contraband candy.

For years they whispered: *‘The clickers are out there!’*, Hundreds, or more, roaming free, blinking little garage-door grins in the hands of landscapers, dog walkers, best friends of friends, delivery drivers with dubious badges, shortcut seekers, or the guy who just know a guy, who knows a guy, who once lived here, one home with 24, *because it’s so big!*

And then, Christmas 2025, the truth arrived, *four hooves times eight, not too early or late!*

Santa, yes indeed, *that* Claus, lined up at the front gate with the patience of someone who has seen centuries of nonsense in many far flung lands, and, quite frankly expects a bit more from a neighborhood in possession of the full list of *‘Cliqueurs non Comptabilisés’*, and still debating, year on year, as to what should be done about it! And then and there, he was seen to hold up a clicker, black-market chic, the kind that changes hands on quiet front porches and diners and where folks park next to each other, far from all other cars.

The guard blinked, the reindeer did snort, and someone in line whispered, *‘Oh no...even Santa?’*

Santa just winked, as if conspiracies were cookies on a plate near the fireplace. Said he could’ve flown over, yes, oh, course, but he had a list, and every good gift deserves a *field test*.

“Clickers,” he confided, “are more popular than *ever* this year,” wink, and pressed the button, nice and slow.

And through the gate did the team and sleigh go.

- STORY, PHOTOS: EDITOR

