Story -

(continued from page 1)

Snark wasn't talking, either. He did his work, then went right to his bungalow and didn't come out until the next morning. At first, no one noticed. After all, when dozens and dozens of elves with blue, green, orange, purple, pink, striped, polka-dotted and checkered hair are around, it's easy to miss one, especially if his hair is orange, which is the most common color of elf hair.

But after a while, Snark's best friends started to wonder where he was. When they asked him where he had been the night before, his answer was always the same: "You'll find out soon enough, and you'll thank me."

The weekend came and the elves were busy with their usual weekend activities - skiing, hot air ballooning, ice skating and a number of pursuits that make sense only to elves. Snark didn't do any of it. He stayed in his bungalow and elves who passed by late at night noticed his lights were on well after midnight.

Finally, Tuesday, the day of the Elves Congress, rolled around. While most of the elves usually attended the Congress, since elves are, if nothing else, public spirited and responsible, this time the Halls of Congress were packed to overflowing.

Jovial had been chosen by the rest of the elves to make the motion, since his devotion to Santa was well-known and went back many, many centuries.

"Fellow elves," Jovial shouted. "Since he has had no opposition in any election since the beginning of time, I move we proclaim Santa Santa forevermore."

A deafening cheer arose, vibrating the hall and sending the elves into a frenzy of delight.

"Wait!" cried a voice from the back in a tone commanding enough to silence the countless

All the elves craned their necks to see who had spoken. All except Snark, because it was he who had

silenced the crowd. "This year, Santa has opposition in the election," Snark said.

The thousands of elves gasped as if they were one. "Who?" they cried. "Who would run?" they asked. "Who could challenge Santa?" they said.

"Me," Snark said, smiling. "I'm running for Santa."

Next week: The campaign be-



Toni Kravits, above, shows off a large poinsettia that's ready for the season at Hill the Florist. Below left, practiced hands prepare berries for a decoration. Below

right, Jackie Alusik puts the finishing touches on a vase of roses. Bottom right, Nancy Grabensteter adds just the right twist to a holiday bow





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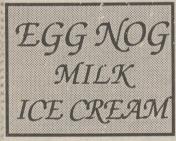
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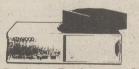
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