

Would-be well-wishers victims of hoax

By TELA GOODWIN MANGE
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One of the students said to be careful what the class wrote to Buddy.

"If we write about how we like to play, it might make him think about

himself and make him unhappy," the Lamar Elementary School third grader said.

The other third graders agreed that it would be best to carefully consider what to say to an 8-year-old Scottish boy named Buddy who was dying of cancer.

Little did the third graders know that it didn't matter what they said to him. Buddy could never die, because he had never lived.

The touching story of Buddy, a boy from Scotland with an international dream, apparently has been circulating around the world for

about five years. Buddy — who British postal officials say has never existed — has been getting about 40,000 cards and letters per week from well-meaning people around the world.

The Lamar students sent postcards to Buddy on Friday, thinking

it would help him realize his dream: to get into the Guinness Book of World Records as the person receiving the most postcards ever.

But all the effort got them was a place beside thousands of other people around the world — including

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Buddy's letters will never find him

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President Ronald Reagan — as folks who tried to make a little boy happy.

The Lamar teacher who organized the writing exercise learned that Buddy was a hoax on Monday — after her students and another class had written postcards and mailed them.

Kay Belanger said she would explain to her students what happened.

"They're a real mature group," she said. "I think they'll understand."

Belanger's class and Lucille Garcia's class wrote the postcards

Friday morning as part of their language arts creative writing lesson.

"It's a shame (that Buddy isn't real). But they did do a good job on the postcards. At least I got them to do a writing assignment," Belanger said.

According to published reports this weekend, the mythical Buddy — thanks to letters-to-the-editor and wire-service stories — has been getting more mail than the Royal Family and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher combined.

The whole affair started after five years ago, the reports said, after a Scottish man named Cam-

eron Black heard the story about Buddy on a citizens band radio. Black began spreading the word about Buddy on his CB and gave his post office box as an address. Once he found Buddy, he had planned to forward all the cards.

Despite a concerted effort to find Buddy all over Scotland, Black cancelled his postal box and hoped the rumors would die. But the heartwarming story charmed many people across the globe — including the Ronald Reagan, who sent a letter saying that he and Mrs. Reagan wished Buddy well.

And a spokesman for Guinness Book said that there is no

such entry in the book as the one "Buddy" wanted to be in.

A spokesman for the British Post Office in Scotland said that most of the cards for Buddy have been shredded over the years. But now, the cards have been given to various children's charities, which sell the stamps off the cards to collectors.

Belanger said that news cheered her. "At least some good came out of it apparently," she said.

Friday, all the children had said they felt good about writing Buddy because he was dying.

"I'm glad we're writing him

because he's real sick and it's sad that he's sick," said eight-year-old Jamie Kinney.

George Alex Cortez, 8, said on his postcard, "I wish you feel better."

Several students in Garcia's class invited Buddy to Texas, thinking that might make him feel better. Adam Vela drew a picture of the United States and Texas flags and colored them in. Adam said he drew the flags "Cause I care."

Chris Witzel drew a Martian and spaceship for Buddy.

"I like Martians," Chris said.