

Annie People

A Newsletter for Annie Fans

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Artwork by Tricia Trozzi

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Hi there, Annie People! Issue #4 already! YIKE!!! Many thanks for all the articles, letters, clippings, and various bits of Annieness you have been sending in for Annie People. Thanks particularly to Rich Olson for his kind permission to reprint material from The LOA Reader, which ran in 1979-80. In this issue we look in on an Annie audition, and Tricia takes us on a visit to the bridge where the chase scene in Annie was filmed. Also, we have a nice reflection from Lara Berk on what Annie means to her, now that it has been two years since she played the part of Tessie in the movie. WANTED: Material from Harold Gray strip enthusiasts. How about something about Gray's villains?

AP'S STAFF GETS INTO CHARACTER:





Thank you for the copies of Annie People you sent me. I really enjoyed reading them. There are a lot of facts about Annie that I never knew...

Jenice Gasior
Sparta, NJ

Jenice is currently appearing as Annie at Neil's New Yorker dinner theater through September in northern New Jersey. --Ed.

Annie People #3 was very nicely done. I was pleased to see that the newsletter covers all three versions (play, movie, strip) of the character; I'm a big fan of Harold Gray's strip, and, despite its unfaithfulness to the strip, I liked John Huston's movie very much and was disappointed that it didn't get more attention...Count me in as an Annie Person, and please send issues #1 and #2.

Harry McCracken
Newton Corner, MA

Annie People is really coming along great! I really enjoy reading it. I really feel sorry for Shelley. If there is any way you can contact her, tell her that I think she is awfully brave!...Say hi to Aileen, Robin, Lucie, April, Rosanne, and Toni Ann for me!

Lara Berk
New York, NY

I just wanted to say that I really like Annie People and I hope that it stays in print for a very long time...I am desperately interested in obtaining the Topps Annie stickers that you speak of in the newsletter. I have never seen any Topps Annie stickers.

Deborah Mayers
Tacoma, WA

I was happy to hear from you and your Annie People. My mommy reads them to me and I hope Annie will come to New York. Do you think it will be there at Thanksgiving?...I passed the first grade and will be 7 in September...

Cindy Kirkpatrick
Altoona, PA

My friend Mollie Hall (touring company Annie) told me all about your newsletter. It would be really nice if you could put me on your mailing list. I played Pepper with the 3rd National Touring Company and appeared with Bridget Walsh and Becky Snyder.

Dana Michelle Matles
Arnold, MD

THE BRIDGE

by Tricia Trozzi

It's been just about two years now since the film company of Annie was in East Newark, New Jersey, filming the final chase scene at an old railroad bridge. My town of West Caldwell is only ten miles away from this honest-to-goodness Movie Location, and I visited the spot on September 12, 1982.



The bridge looked very different; my visit being in the daytime and the grass having grown over. There was also a lot of graffiti, mostly obscene, covering the structure. Don't they know Annie was filmed here?? The small white shack next to the tracks was somebody's house; not a very good place to live. When I was there, two guys had climbed the stairs along the bridge's side and were standing on a platform. They watched me take pictures with my mother and father and an Annie doll. The photos later served as inspiration for some artwork I did. I also took a small piece of one of the railroad ties! (How's that for a souvenir?)

I walked all the way out to the edge, even climbed up a step or two reminiscent of the scenes in the movie. The ties are suspended over the water and I can respect the nimble-footedness of Aileen Quinn when she ran out to the upright part. I can't report about the top of the bridge, though; I didn't have a stuntman with me!

The bridge looks much larger in person, especially when standing at the foot of it. The approach where the cars drove up is now covered with high grass and the whole area is fenced in. A factory of some kind is on the other side of the fence. Across the Passaic River are a railroad yard and large oil tanks, the latter visible in the film during shots of the autocopter flying.

Now, almost a year later, I see the bridge each day as I commute by bus into New York City to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Each time I see it from Interstate 280, I get my daily dose of Annie memories.

The bridge was great fun to visit, and any Annie-otics in the area should make a pilgrimage. I got a feeling of the magic of movies when I was there; of a special movie called Annie.

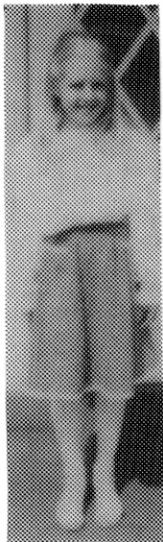


(P.S. If you go to visit the Annie bridge, wear long pants and good socks and shoes; getting up to it requires wading through thick thorny underbrush. --Ed.)

What Goes On at an Annie Audition

Does my dress look all right?... How does my hair look?...I hope I don't trip while doing my tap!...What if I forget the words in the middle of the song?... They're all so much better than I am!...I wonder if Aileen was this nervous!

It is Saturday morning, May 21, 1983, at the Junction Playhouse in White River Junction, Vermont. The Green Mountain Guild is about to start the auditions for its summer production of Annie. The room begins to fill with pretty little young ladies, each with only one thought: Boy, do I want to be ANNIE!! Some are visibly a little nervous, whispering questions to equally nervous mothers as they file in; others seem cool and collected, as if they have done this many times before. The girls and mothers check in at the desk and then sit in a row of chairs against the wall to wait for their names to be called. The walls of the room are covered with pictures of performers in past theatrical productions at this theater, lending an extra aura of anticipation and excitement to all the prospective Annies who have gathered here.



MIRANDA RUEL of dance lessons. One of the 7 Years Old youngest of the group, little blonde-haired Miranda Ruel of Meredith, New Hampshire, has taken ballet and/or tap for five of her seven years. Another seven-year-old, Nelle Thompson, came with Judace Keilitz, 9, with whom she had been in school productions of Alice in Wonderland and Fiddler on the Roof in Rutland County in Vermont. Also from Vermont was fifth grader Krissy Gosh, whose father is Bobby Gosh, Vermont's most famous singer and songwriter ("A Little Bit More" in 1976). And from the small town of Quechee, Vermont, came two sixth graders named Kim Kohler and Tricia Hundhausen. The range of moods on mothers and



JUDACE KEILITZ, NELLE THOMPSON waiting with their mothers for their auditions for Annie.

daughters alike was wide, as, one by one, names were called out to go behind the screen to the piano for the first part of the Annie audition.

The audition song that morning was "Maybe;" I was surprised that it was not "Tomorrow," which is the traditional Annie audition number. Once in a while a little smiling face in a frilly dress would disappear behind the screen only to crack on the high note on "May-be far a-WAAAY," but they were given another chance right away, and the second time was usually much better as they sang through the tune to the piano accompaniment. This first part of the tryout also consisted of a one-minute recitation of a memorized poem or story, in addition to the singing of the song.



KELLY DUNLEAVEY and MICHELLE BLOOD after their auditions. Kelly will play Duffy; Michelle will be July.

The girls were asked back a few minutes later in twos or threes to do some impromptu dance steps to see if they were potentially able to handle learning the dance routines required for Annie. Yes, there were some frowns and some tears as the auditionees emerged from behind the screen, but a mother's hug and a reassuring "You did just fine, dear!" seemed to make it all seem not quite so discouraging, now that it was over. After all, first and foremost, auditioning is meant to be fun.

I was pleased to learn a couple of weeks later that during my half-day at the Junction Playhouse I did meet a few of the ones who were eventually picked to be in Annie. Kelly Dunleavy and Michelle Blood, both 12 and sixth graders from New Hampshire, have taken dancing lessons since they were small and did a nice tap routine together as part of their audition. Kelly and Michelle said they loved the movie and admitted that they liked "It's the Hard-Knock Life" the best (didn't we all?). They will be Orphans in the upcoming Green Mountain Guild production of Annie, which will be at three different theaters in successive weeks in Northern New England in late summer.

Nine-year-old Sarah Christie, who is in third grade in Rutland, Vermont, will play the part of Molly. She told me that she is really more interested in gymnastics than in dancing (guess what part of the movie she liked best!), but she was enchanting in her red dress during her audition, and I was really pleased to learn that she got a part. I am looking forward to attending the performance and seeing these talented girls perform, as well as the others who got parts as a result of tryouts on other days. For a small regional theater audition, I was very impressed with the talent I heard and saw that day, and I didn't even see the two Annies (the part of Annie will alternate each performance, and each girl will play Kate when she is not Annie). The two girls who will share the Annie role for the Green Mountain Guild are Elyse Allen and Colleen Lynch, both Vermonters.



Full of smiles, SARAH CHRISTIE will be Molly.

If you are in the New England area this summer, I know this will be a quality performance of Annie. It will be presented at the following places on these dates:

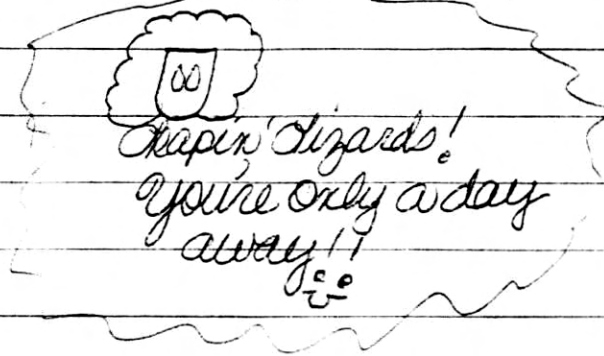
White River Junction, Vermont	August 16-20
Weirs Beach, New Hampshire	August 23-27
Killington, Vermont	August 30-September 3

Call or write the Green Mountain Guild, White River Junction, Vermont 05001, (802) 295-7016, for details.

Annie Forever

By Lara Berk

Annie is such a wonderful girl. Everyone should learn from her. Her optimism brightens everyone's heart. She should always be known for "Tomorrow." If there is anyone in this world who should never be forgotten, ~~it's~~ it's Annie. Annie forever.....

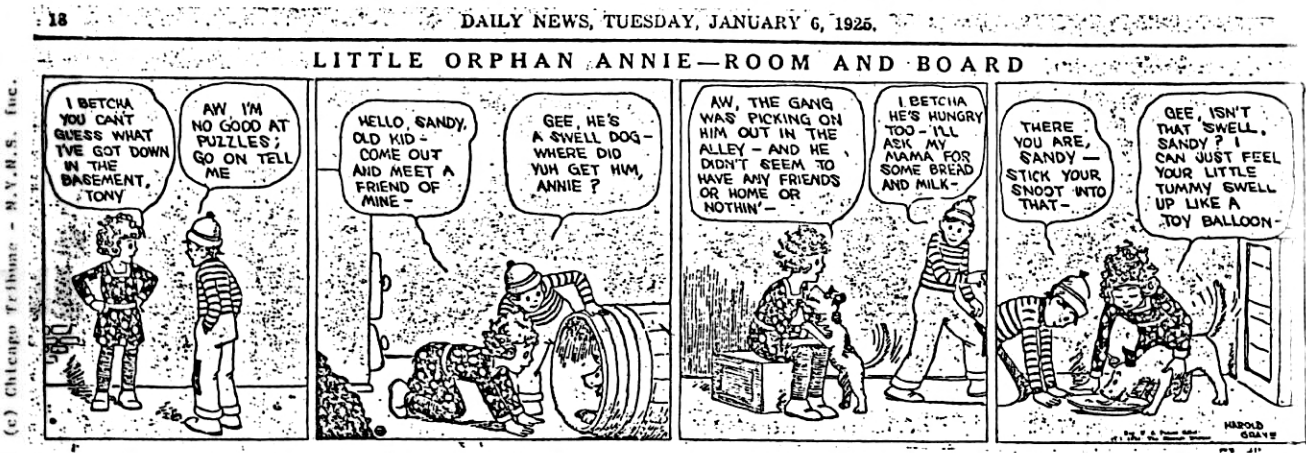
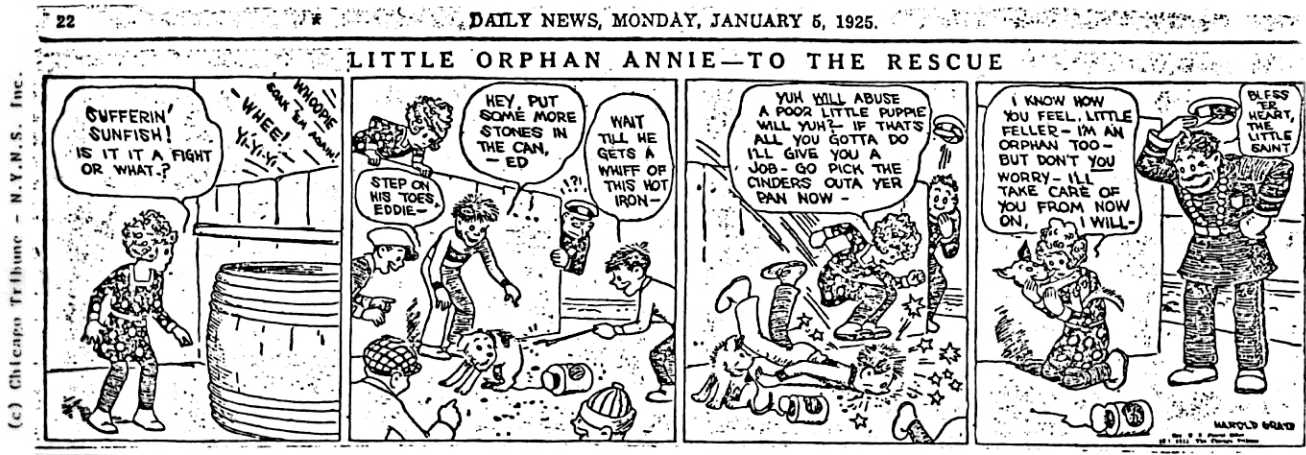


SARAH JESSICA PARKER has been very busy since filming for Square Pegs finished up last spring. She is currently in Utah filming a movie for Paramount called Footloose, and she has also done a cable TV movie called Somewhere Tomorrow, which will air in the fall...AILEEN QUINN likewise hasn't let any grass grow under her feet; she did the voice of one of the characters on a TV cartoon called Charmkins, which included a couple of nice songs by her. Aileen was also on the Fourth of July March of Dimes Telethon and will be filming an appearance on TV's Great Space Coaster. She turned 12 on June 28...LARA BERK is the headliner this summer in a children's revue in New York called Youngstars, which also includes KIMBERLY STERN, who played Molly in the fourth national touring company of Annie...ALLISON SMITH is still on tour as Annie, most recently in Cleveland. I have not seen their show since Valley Forge in May, but I hear that JENNINE BABO and TAMMY KAUFFMAN are still playing Orphans in the tour with Allison; the other Orphans are new...Speaking of Allison, her appearance on Silver Spoons was rerun recently, as was one featuring AMANDA PETERSON, who was one of the nine finalists for the film Annie and was very prominent in the Orphanage scenes...Remember IRVING METZMAN? (Who?) He's the one who played Miss Hannigan's favorite laundryman, Mr. Bundles, in the movie. He can be seen currently as a computer technician in WarGames.

LOA Comics

Here are some very rare clippings from 1925, showing when Sandy was introduced in Harold Gray's Little Orphan Annie comic strip. (I wonder if Carol Sobieski saw the first one before she wrote the screenplay for the movie!)

(Reprinted from The LOA Reader #3, October 1979)



FOR SALE: Little Orphan Annie daily comic strips from the 1930s and 1940s. A sample package of 10 different strips from a variety of years for \$1.00 postpaid. See Annie in a variety of situations with a variety of friends and foes over the year of this golden age. I also have several runs of strips from this period for sale or trade if anyone would like to contact me. Doug Kendig, Cassidy, British Columbia, Canada V0R 1H0.



Surprise!! Angela Pease is back! Of course, I'm referring to the latest development in the Annie comic strip by Leonard Starr. Angela, the beautiful woman who in the summer of 1981 stole "Daddy" Warbucks' heart and also took him for a ride, has surfaced again near the border town where Annie and Sandy became lost this past month.

Being a big fan and faithful daily follower of Leonard Starr's Annie strip, I enjoy seeing characters reappear after a long absence. It makes me feel that, although there have been fourteen stories since 1979, in essence we are following one life of one little red-headed orphan.

Bravo on recurring strip characters. Not that the most recent recurring characters are really very welcome to poor little Annie; probably not since the notorious Axel has there been anyone more nefarious and dastardly than Skip Smith, who recently reappeared in the strip after more than two years to threaten the lives of Annie and those around her. And Angela wasn't all that terrific a person way back when either, with her conniving ways around "Daddy." But maybe in the weeks to come she will prove to still be the friend to Annie she was in her previous appearance.

This technique of bringing back characters of course was a favorite of Harold Gray's, perhaps best demonstrated by his letting "Daddy" Warbucks leave this world in the weepy sequence of August 1944, only to bring him back from the dead a year later. Starr even paid tribute to Gray in late 1981 by having Gray's old Mr. Am resurface, after goodness knows how many years. All this just goes to show how truly ageless Annie herself is, which is one thing that makes both the Gray and Starr strips so appealing.

But, please, Mr. Starr; PLEASE, not Mrs. Bleating-hart. Never again.

ANNIE



ANDREA McARDLE FAN CLUB -- For information write to Christopher White, 1010 Elm Street, St. Charles, IL 60174.

Look for Annie People #5 in September. See yuh then!