

Annie People



A Newsletter for Annie Fans

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Artwork by Tricia Trozzi, co-editor and columnist

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THE FIRST ANNIE PEOPLE READER'S POLL "The Most Popular Annie Song"

Here's something new for you devoted Annie People readers, to answer a question that's been puzzling the AP editors ever since we were left on the steps of the Hudson Street Orphanage. As AP is the only fan organization for Annie-otics in the USA (that we know of, anyway), we would probably be THE medium most likely to be able to answer the musical question, "What is the favorite song from Annie?" So we'd like to find out which song is the most popular with you--the fans and performers who make up our list of readers. This is your chance to vote for the song of your choice to become The Most Favored Annie Song As Voted By The Readers Of Annie People (And If They Don't Know, Nobody Would). So don't just sit there as if you've just been served a bowl of cold mush; tell your private secretary to forget about the figures on the iron ore shipments from Toledo and write down your three favorite songs from Annie and send them to us at AP. Jot down a line or two why the number one song is your favorite--The music? The words? Something special happen the first time you heard it? Some of the reasons will be published when we give the results of the poll. When the results are all tabulated and the songs are ranked in order by your votes, we will publish the list in AP, as well as give Martin Charnin and Charles Strouse an "official notification" of the first Annie People Reader's Poll. Looking forward to hearing from you! Thanks!!



Waving hello to her fans is California's LOUANNE in '79 just after she became Annie. You'll meet her on page 3.



...I really love anything having to do with Annie. Of course, I've seen both the play and movie. I love them both. I saw the play when it first opened in 1977 when I was only seven and a half years old. It was my first Broadway show, and I've been mesmerized by that little red-headed orphan ever since. Last night there was a commercial about coal and gas. The background music turned into the song "Tomorrow"...

Robin Lustig
Woodmere, NY

...I have been looking through my Annie collection and I found a lot of things that might interest you. The first thing is an old Playbill dated April 7-19, 1981 at the Marshon Auditorium. In this program it listed Alyson Kirk as Kate. I am sure this was when she was first getting started, because in her bio she didn't have any plays behind her and Annie marked her professional debut. I was 8 years old when I saw that and I have been collecting ever since. My mother bought me the Andrea McArdle record version and Andrea taught me how to sing. My dream came true last year. I played Pepper in Annie at the Westgate Dinner Theatre in Toledo, Ohio.

The year before last I was riding home from swim practice and I got a call from a radio station. I had won two tickets to go see Annie at the Masonic Auditorium starring Kathleen Sisk as Annie. Before the show I had lunch with all of the Orphans at Smartee's Pizza. I had a nice talk with all of the Orphans. It seemed to me that they were very lucky kids and I should almost bow to them. But then we all got along and I found that they were normal kids just like me. I talked a lot to Kimi Parks (Tessie). She was very nice to me and we had a good conversation together. The show was very well done and Kathleen Sisk, known as Kacky, delivered herself very well. At Smartee's I got a picture and autograph of Kacky and my picture in the paper with her....

Jennifer Perry
Sylvania, OH

...With the present Annie story (Hucky Flynn's return) by Leonard Starr, he has finally, after five years, done a story which is as good or better than anything Harold Gray ever did....

Stephen Russo
Revere, MA

...I really like Gray's Annie--she gets on the ol' soapbox and really rips away. Starr's Annie has a tendency to be passive and unable to do anything without the help of some other people....A vital element missing in Starr's Annie is the noticeable lack of servants in the Warbucks mansion--we do not see any maid tidying about or Gray's butler that he gave to Warbucks....

Chris Whelan
Madison, WI

"Annie Stars Since Annie..." late addenda - KIA GOODWIN, Broadway's last Kate, will be seen on Saturday nights on NBC in a new series called 227. Kia got her Annie start back in the 1st National....JULIE STEVENS was in Evita this past summer in Loch Sheldrake, NY, and she will continue singing the National Anthem this season in Philadelphia at some of the home games of the '76ers (basketball) and the Flyers (hockey)....Andrew Lloyd Webber's Song and Dance, starring BERNADETTE PETERS, will open on Broadway on Wednesday, September 18.

Update on LOUANNE, the 2nd National's 9-year-old Annie

At the age of 9 she won the role of Annie in the 2nd National after only six weeks as Annie's understudy. She was also the youngest recipient of the Drama-Logue Critics Award for outstanding achievement in theater performance. She then won the Award of Merit for Best Actress from the Academy of Family Films and Family Television. And, she is thought to be the only person in the history of Hollywood to walk in and star in all three media (stage, movies, TV) without ever having had any training or a bit part; all before age 12.

These unique distinctions and more belong to a unique girl named Louanne. For those readers who were fortunate to have seen Louanne on stage as Annie (a category in which I, alas, do not qualify), and also for those of us who have been curious about the later aspects of her career, Annie People is proud to present an update on this most remarkable and talented performer.

Louanne (yes, her real first name) was born in January 1970 in Texas, but she grew up in the Los Angeles area. A talent scout discovered her at school when she was just six years old, and she went on to win many trophies and awards over the next couple of years, the most important one being her winning performance on Chuck Barris' The Gong Show. Only one contestant winner on that show ever went on to bigger things in Hollywood; that person was Louanne.

In March 1979 nine-year-old Louanne joined the 2nd National Tour of Annie as understudy to all the Orphans, but after only a month and a half, Martin Charnin moved her into the title role to replace Patty Patts. Audiences were captivated by this new tiny girl with the huge voice, especially since no one had ever seen an Annie on stage as young as nine up to that time. Louanne starred as Annie for seven months in Los Angeles through December of 1979.

With Louanne being so young in assuming the role of Annie, it seemed logical that she might have the role for a while longer, but, being right there in L.A. at the Shubert Theatre, the inevitable happened--she was picked to star in a new movie--Oh God, Book II with George Burns--for Warner Brothers. For that role Louanne earned many awards; among them, the Award of Excellence for the most promising actress from the Film Advisory Board, and the Golden Scroll Award of Merit for outstanding achievement (plus a Best Actress nomination) from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films.

Now Louanne was 11, and the television part of her career was about to begin. ABC signed her up in a holding deal, during which time she appeared as guest lead on Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, Mork and Mindy, and The Love Boat. A year and a half later a pilot called Mean Jeans was finally filmed starring Louanne and Vicki Lawrence, but the pilot was not picked up.

Fortunately, for Annie fans, that meant that Louanne was now available to come back to the stage. She replaced Theda Stemler as Annie in the 1st National in 1981 and toured in Boston, Toronto, Los Angeles. and Washington.

Just as Louanne was turning 12 in 1982, she was signed by ABC again, this time as Shelby in Two Marriages. There were only ten shows filmed, four the first year and six the second year. Meanwhile, there were a few more pilots and a couple of Movies of the Week as Louanne entered her teens.

At 14 Louanne retired from show business. Her last public appearance was on Chuck Barris' Anything for a Laugh show. It seemed fitting, since her career really had begun back when she was a winner on The Gong Show.

Now in 1985 Louanne is 15 and working toward a scholarship for college and is looking to pursue a completely new career in the science field. It was quite an interesting bunch of years for the little girl who delighted scores of West Coast Annie fans as well as movie and TV watchers across the country. We wish you all the best with school, Louanne, and we are sure that you will be just as successful in your second career as you were in your first.

Annie People would like to thank both Louanne and Lorene Evans, president of Star Productions, Inc., for generously providing us with the information for this article. (Louanne has been a corporation since she was nine years old!)

★ Annie Stars Since Annie ... ★

MARCIA LEWIS and JOHN SCHUCK recently reprised their Broadway Miss Hannigan and Oliver Warbucks roles in Annie in Long Beach, California. Marcia starred last year in a pre-production workshop of CHARLES STROUSE's Rags and in another workshop for a musical called Miami. We may see Marcia again on Broadway if one or both of these shows make it to Broadway this coming season. John just finished six months in London on stage in The Caine Mutiny Court Martial, directed by Charlton Heston. LISA ROBINSON (Grace) and TOM HATTEN (FDR) who played in the 2nd National, were back in their old roles in this production also. And Sandy was played by MOOSE, continuing as the most-traveled Annie dog over the last couple of years. Annie was played by KRISTA LEONARD, well-known among California Annie fans, having played several times there. The 8th grader has also been in several other musicals and on numerous TV shows, including Kids Don't Tell....MARTIN CHARNIN's musical revue Back on the Town (formerly called Nancy's Turn) starring Nancy Walker and Liliame Monteverchi is expected to go into rehearsal on the second of December....ANDREA McARDLE is working on her new club act, which she will be doing this fall in Atlantic City among other places. Andrea writes that she is also being sent to school to learn to do "major tricks" on roller skates. Why? Because she is preparing for a callback for a new Andrew Lloyd Webber musical called The Starlight Express, a show which will be performed entirely on skates. Please be careful, Andrea, no more hurt arms....STEPHANIE VINE recently played a teenage boy in a contemporary opera based on Moby Dick in Newtown, Pennsylvania. Stephanie expertly handled not only dancing barefoot on a raked (slanted) stage, but also one of the most difficult vocal scores I've ever heard....TONI ANN GISONDI will be seen this winter in a new movie called Harem, which will be released in December. Look for 10-year-old Toni Ann in a wedding party scene filmed in New York City....Filming for Kate and Allie for ALLISON SMITH has begun for the season in New York. By the way, as of now, it is planned that Susan Saint James' pregnancy will not be written into the script....SYBELLE FRANKLIN, who played Pepper at Neil's New Yorker dinner theater in northern New Jersey two years ago, has played the title role in Annie three times since then, most recently in Beach Haven, New Jersey....SYDNEY WEEKS, who was Tessie in the 3rd National with BRIDGET WALSH, performed regularly in the Rising Star Showcase in Cape May, New Jersey during the summer at a place called "Sandi's On Broadway." The picture wall at Sandi's looks like an Annie Who's Who--KRISTI COOMBS, SHERRI LEIDY, and SHARON JORDAN, to name a few local Cape May area Annie national tour alumnae who have performed there with Sydney. Others from Sydney's Annie company who came from out of town to perform there this summer included TARA CARNES, MONICA MILLER, and MELISSA KALFA. I discovered Sandi's and its Annie connection quite by accident during my own summer vacation at Cape May, located at the southernmost tip of New Jersey....By popular demand, nine-year-old RENEE SHIELDS was invited back by the Miami Dolphins to sing the National Anthem at the Orange Bowl in August. She first performed it there last October, when she became the youngest person ever to sing the National Anthem at a Dolphins home game. She has been seen recently in commercials for Trix cereal and Heath ice cream....ROGER MINAMI, The Asp in the movie, produced and choreographed a revue in Atlantic City this past summer called Wild....DANIELLE (KELLY) TETRO played Annie for the second time this year, this time at Jennerstown, Pennsylvania....CHARLES STROUSE's musical Mayor, based on the life of New York Mayor Ed Koch, has been having a fine year this year....Birthdays: HARVE PRESNELL, 52 on September 14; DOROTHY ANDRES, 10 on October 13; ANDREA McARDLE, 22 on November. 5; SANDY, 11 on November 19, MARTIN CHARNIN, 51 on November 24.

Interview with ROBERT FITCH, Broadway's Original ROOSTER

by Tricia Trozzi

Part I

AP: Hello, Mr. Fitch, thanks for your time. First of all, what are the dates of your association with Annie?

RF: In the beginnings: At Goodspeed Opera House, 1976, three weeks rehearsal and eight weeks performances, plus rehearsals (a summer stock contract), and the Broadway-bound edition, Feb. 1, 1977, four weeks rehearsal and five weeks in Washington, D.C. Two weeks N.Y. Broadway previews--then I left on 1/27/80.

AP: What was your audition like?

RF: I never auditioned. I was recommended by Harriet Conrad to Martin Char-nin, who suggested to her that I call him (she was in a production of Lorelei that I'd staged for Carol Channing). I called Martin and invited him to see me perform in a revue that reopened the New York Playboy Club. He came down to see it and cast me in Annie subsequently (it took place of the audition).

AP: How did you shape Rooster's character?

RF: Partly from the name "Rooster" which suggests a cocky bird, a show-off (so I adopted bird-like mannerisms). And an old farmer-type that I saw in Connecticut--for the old couple who come to reclaim Annie. Plus con-man-like suspicions about everyone, e.g., "who can I rip off"--or "take advantage of"--type feelings. My relationship with Lily and Sis, the scary switchblade idea--that helped the audiences be unsure and frightened of me.

AP: What were rehearsals like at Goodspeed? Was the show constantly changing? Were actors allowed to change lines to help with their characterizations?

RF: Since we were on a stock contract, we had only three weeks to rehearse, discover, put together this show--discover concepts; "how" a show is done is never really clear in the putting together phase--working with the kids, changing and adding scenes went on throughout the performance weeks as well. Yes, actors changed lines, their characters, even came up with some of the concepts and scenes for the show. We improvised upon basic ideas--I came up with the idea of fake parents and conning Grace and getting Annie and the check, Tom Meehan made it Warbucks and then wrote the Mansion scene, for instance. But we all did that. Martin was very liberal in allowing spontaneity and improvisation. It was an exciting time. Only summer fun, we thought. Then four months after the closing, the Broadway Annie became a reality.

AP: Is there a sense of "family" when working on a show that hopes to go to Broadway, especially since Annie had children in the cast?

RF: Well, you may be right. Annie was one of the most marvelous ensemble experiences I've ever had. The company was very competent and extremely professional. Martin had done an excellent casting job. No prima donnas and very talented people. I think the children did help; everyone had lots of fun with the kids. After all, actors are like children--their

emotions are open and child-like. So kids enjoy adults being able to play with them on an open, non-patronizing level. And it's fun for actors to get honest reactions back. Mutual play, if you like. The possibility of going to Broadway had nothing to do with it. In fact, we did not think we were—it was a nice job for the summer and Annie at Goodspeed was not that good, though I do think the possibilities existed. Only at the end of the run did we begin to think it might really happen.

AP: What was opening night like at the Goodspeed Opera House?

RF: A DISASTER! There was a storm and the lights went out and stayed out. The emergency floods in the auditorium went on and we finished the show about 1 a.m.—with very few people left in the audience. It was pretty hard to see the stage in the grey of the lights. Platforms smashed into each other and splintered. Not much room. It was tiring and then got funnier as we realized nothing would stop it.

AP: What were some of the differences in the show at Goodspeed compared to the Broadway version we all know?

RF: The version at Goodspeed was an attempt to find out if there was a show, e.g., write it, develop it, structure it. At first the point of view was to make it become a cartoon as the show progressed. The comic strip never did establish when and how Warbucks and Annie met. So the show was to establish that and then become the basis for Harold Gray's cartoon. So no villainous plot was established when we first rehearsed. (One of the original possibilities for the show was to make it a "camp"—a modern-day spoof of Lolita with Bernadette Peters possibly playing Annie.) The Broadway version laid the basis for the point of view of reality, not cartoon. Thus the hardships of the orphans and the Hooverville-ites was real—it was the Depression Era. And you rooted for Annie because she had spunk and hope and helped people and touched them. And we, as audience, responded because we believed the people, the atmosphere, the reality. And we were able to endow the characters with our hope for them and identify with every parent's wish and every lost childhood's fears and expectations.

AP: There were a lot of songs and characters and scenes that were cut, right?

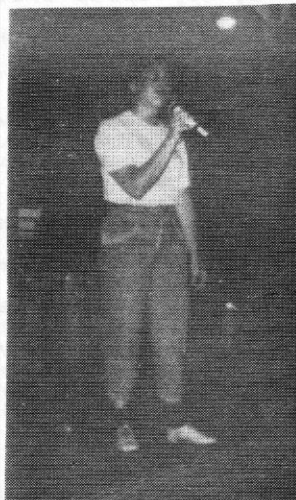
RF: Not a lot of songs were cut: (1) "We Got Annie" and its scene, the Beanery (where Hooverville is now—the music is used as underscoring now). (2) "He Doesn't Know I'm Alive" (first line of a song Grace sang about a one-way romance, i.e., her feelings about Warbucks). (3) A song fake parents sang (four couples) about Annie's being theirs (for the reward). It followed the Cabinet scene. (4) "That's the Way It Goes" was replaced by "Easy Street." Scenes: Hooverville replaced the Beanery Coffee Shop—the scene with the couple "adopting" Annie to work in their Beanery. Scenes were tried: Rooster and Lily getting Annie back to the Orphanage. Most of the extra characters were names of people at the adoption Christmas party at Warbucks' house. A scene in the alley with boys tying cans to the dog's tail and Annie beating them up. Different versions of "N.Y.C."—also scenes were added at Goodspeed that did not appear in the original script suggested by the actors and encouraged by Martin and Tom.

(to be continued...)

(Look for Part II of the Robert Fitch interview in the November issue of Annie People, in which we will hear about the 1977 Washington, D.C. opening, Dorothy Loudon's near-catastrophic accident on stage, and then—on to Broadway!



RISING STAR SHOWCASE - Top row from left, Sydney Weeks, Tara Carnes; bottom row from left, Holly Gryning, Heather Gryning. Heather was Annie and Holly was Molly in Annie in 1983 in Swainton, New Jersey.



Sydney Weeks sings in Cape May, NJ, August 1985.



...And here they all are, doing a routine from Annie familiar to us all.



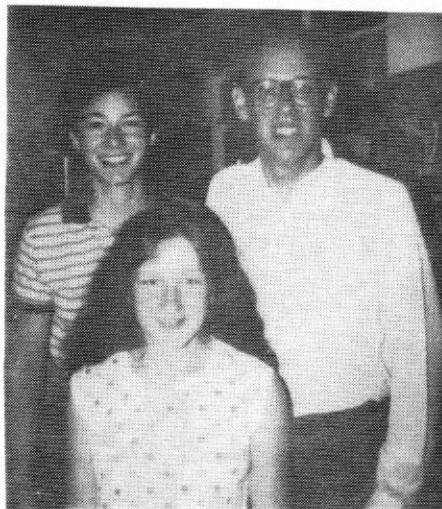
JENNERSTOWN, PA - Top row from left, Nicole Maust, Angie Saylor, Shelby Patrick, Danielle Tetro (Annie), Jodi Allison, Karen Weimer, Heidi Jo Reddecliff; bottom row from left, Vicki Cochran, Danielle Fogie, Missy Maust, Tamera Gindlesperger



SPRING LAKE, NJ - Top row from left, Tara Ford, Shaena Mullaney, Colleen Ryan, Katie Freeman, Jaime Boedart, Caroline Steiger; middle row from left, Nina Smuckler, Anne Dreyer, Pam Sweeney, Debbie Behrens (Annie), P. J. Peduto, Gretchen Brown, Susie Murray, Jessica Renk; bottom row, Caryn Zieve with Fred



BEACH HAVEN, NJ - Top row from left, Hope Hines, Sybelle Franklin (Annie), Debra Carozza, Jeanine LaBarbera; bottom row from left, Molly Reeder, Valerie Hines



With Stephanie Vine, August 1985



WINDSOR, ONTARIO - Sarah Charley (Annie, standing at right) and her Annie Orphans ride a parade float. By popular demand, their production of Annie will be back in Windsor for a repeat run in November.

Submitted by Larry Skrdla

THE ANNIE COLLECTORY
(Catalog #6, September 1985)

Lots of brand-new very scarce Applause Annie items are now in stock in The Annie Collectory. Now is the chance for you Annie collectors to pick up some nice items for your own display or do some early holiday shopping for your favorite Annie fan!

Applause Ceramic Mugs, 6 different: Tomorrow, Hard-Knock Life, Fully Dressed, I Don't Need Anything But You, Leapin' Lizards, Have a Rainbow Day each \$4
 Applause Ceramic Figurines, 6 different: Fully Dressed, I Don't Need Anything, Tomorrow (sun), Tomorrow (rainbow), Hard-Knock Life, I Think I'm Gonna Like It Here each \$13
 Applause Porcelain Doll, 10" tall, beautiful, a bargain at \$25
 Applause Ceramic Round Vase, Box, or Bell each \$7
 Applause Ceramic Heart Vase, Box, or Bell each \$7
 Applause Key Chains, 6-different: Annie skipping rope, Annie standing, ~~Amber and Sandy~~, Annie and Sandy without logo, Annie on stool, Sandy and rainbow each \$3
 Applause Jewelry, 8 different: 4 varieties of Pins (Annie and Sandy, Annie standing, Annie lying down, Annie in heart); 2 varieties of Necklaces (Annie and Sandy, Annie in heart); Pierced Earrings; Ring each \$5
 Applause Rag Dolls: 11" doll \$9 14" doll \$11 16" doll \$14
 Applause Pajama Bag, 25", like an oversize Applause doll \$20
 Applause Clip-On Doll, 4-1/2" tall \$4
 Knickerbocker Miniatures, 12 different: Annie (red), Annie (sailor), Annie (orphan), Molly, Pepper, "Daddy" Warbucks, Sandy, Grace, Miss Hannigan, Punjab, Rooster, Lily each \$2
 Knickerbocker Fashions, 1 available (Dress-up Coat) \$5
 Mad Super Special, Fall 1981, parodies of Annie strip \$4
 Mad Magazine #236, Jan. 1983, movie parody "Awful Annie" \$3
 Cracked Magazine #191, Nov. 1982, movie parody "Acnnie" \$3
 Annie Gumball Bank, 7-1/2 inches high, has real gumballs \$7
 Annie Activity Book, "Annie Finds a Home" Book each \$2
 Annie Puffy Stickers, 4 different packs, set of all 4 for \$5
 Crayola Annie Coloring Books, "Tomorrow," "Travels" each \$1
 Annie Shoulder Rest for your telephone, has Annie and Sandy \$8
 Norcross Annie Address Book, Snapshot Album each \$3
 Norcross Annie Wrapping Paper, 3 different, set of 3 for \$7
 Milton-Bradley Annie Jigsaw Puzzle (Annie, "Daddy", Punjab) \$4
 Topps Sticker Book, filled, has all 120 movie stickers \$10
 Topps Stickers, I have most, send numbers wanted each 10¢

Orders over \$5 include a FREE Annie daily newspaper strip.
 Orders over \$15 include a FREE Annie Sunday strip, in color.
 Orders over \$30 take a 10% discount off the total.

Satisfaction guaranteed; return any item within one week for a full refund. All items are in original boxes or wrappers. In most cases, I have good quantity on the Applause stuff, but it will go fast. All prices include postage and handling. Please make checks or money orders payable to Jon Merrill. Send your order to: Jon Merrill, Box 431, Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927.

Items I need for my own collection and will trade generously for:

Applause Jewelry: Necklace (Annie sitting)
 Applause Jewelry: Necklace (Annie standing)
 Applause Sandy, 11" (the larger of the two)
 (—These are the only 3 items I lack from the Applause catalog—)
 Milton Bradley Jigsaw Puzzles (I have 2 and need 2)
 1982 50th Annie-versary Ovaltine Shake-Up Mug
 Knickerbocker Sandy, large, in red shirt

If you ever see these items available, please let me know, as I would like to obtain them in order to offer them in The Annie Collectory to fill the want lists of other Annie collectors:

Annie—A Theater Memoir book by Martin Charnin
 Annie—An Old-Fashioned Story book by Thomas Meehan
 Arf! The Life and Hard Times of LOA book by Harold Gray
 Bobby's Girl LP by Aileen Quinn
 "Tomorrow" (long version) 45rpm single by Aileen Quinn
 Knickerbocker Annie Fashions, any
 Knickerbocker Molly Doll
 Any of the 3 Annie Knickerbocker Miniatures, and the Sandy
 Applause Music Box
 Topps Stickers in quantity

Many thanks for supporting The Annie Collectory. Let me know if there is a particular item you'd like me to see if I can find for you. Happy autumn to all of you! Best,
 Jon

*** REMEMBER SAMANTHA SMITH ***

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