

# Annie People



MEMBER



A Newsletter for Annie Fans

No. 19, January 1986

Published by Jon Merrill, Box 431, Cedar Knolls, New Jersey 07927

Artwork by Tricia Trozzi, co-editor and columnist

Contents copyright (c) 1986 by Jon Merrill for the contributors

Price: Free

Annie People is published every other month in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Publication has been continuous since January 1983.

## NEW NATIONAL TOUR OF ANNIE TO OPEN!

As Annie People begins its fourth year of publication, we are happy to report that there will be a new national tour of Annie in 1986, beginning in January in Rochester, New York. The tour is produced by Rochester Theatrical Productions, Inc. and will be co-sponsored by the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The tentative schedule indicates that the tour will run through the eastern United States and Canada in the early part of the year, and then go to the West Coast later on. More accurate schedule information will be published in AP as it becomes available, so that you can be sure to catch the latest Annie national tour when it comes to your area.

Annie will be played by 12-year-old Sarah Bethany Reynolds, who played the title role in 1984 in a regional production of Annie in Rochester and just finished up a run on Broadway as Louise in Sunday in the Park with George. From Sarah's regional Annie cast is Robert Tiffany, who will reprise his role of "Daddy" Warbucks opposite Sarah. Miss Hannigan will be played by Teri Gibson, who appeared on Broadway in Marlowe. And Annie National Tour veteran Moose will be back on tour once again as Sandy.

Annie and Sandy help Tricia celebrate her 21st birthday on January 6th!

ORPHAN ANNIE



© Trillem Media Services, Inc.



I've just read with some interest--and a keen sense of disappointment--the second part of Annie People's interview with Robert Fitch, our original Rooster. It's a shame that so many vivid and permanent memories seem to be characterized as haphazardly as Robert chooses to characterize them--as well as the underlying all-abiding faith and belief that Charles and Tom and I merged with the vision and determination that was necessary to make it the milestone that it was--always was. Were we there, Bob? Who fueled all the engines--technical, material, emotional, spiritual, practical, familial--who drive the huge float that the musical was--who steered it? I reject out of hand that "we didn't know what to expect" in Washington and New York. I always knew what to expect. That was why I spent seven years of my life pre-Broadway and now ten years post-April 1977--emotionally, financially, and permanently attached to the core of the piece. There were some "mistakes," Bob, and an occasional "late decision" was made--but I think you were the one who thought it was impossible. You say "perhaps" the creators and producers could see its potential clearly. "Perhaps" wasn't in the vocabulary of the director of Annie. "Why not" or "What if" or "Let's try" or "Cut this" or "Go left" or "Think" or "Stop acting" or "Be real" or "Shut up and just do it" was. Shows that are mammoth hits do not occur as Bob implies because tarot cards fall the right way, or forces conspire mysteriously and miraculously overnight to smile on your show. It's hard work. But very carefully thought-out work, consistently changing and shifting as the process goes on, and I have more than a vague recollection of being the tiredest but happiest kid on the block.

MARTIN CHARNIN

Lots coming up in AP in the next few issues. We apologize for the fact that we have a rather large backlog of pictures and information which as yet have not been published. But, to those of you who have been sending us material, we haven't forgotten about it; we will get to it, even if we have to tell Mrs. Pugh we won't be having dinner tonight. The list of favorite Annie songs will be in the next issue, as well as some pictures of Annie kids who have been in other shows lately, including an update on the 2nd National's Marisa Morell. And--coming in 1986 in AP--a multi-part interview with Martin Charnin.

Marvel Entertainment Group, which produces Marvel Comic Books, is producing a new Broadway musical called Captain America, expected to open in the spring. Co-starring with Tony Award winner John Cullum will be a young girl, age 10 to 14, and the search for her is on right now. "This is the biggest role for a child on Broadway since Annie," says James E. Galton, president of Marvel Entertainment Group. AP readers interested may send photos and resumes to Lynda Watson, 157 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.

TRIVIA QUESTION: The first time I saw Annie happened to be in London because I was out of the country at the time. The date was September 25, 1981. Suppose I had been able to go see it on Broadway on that date instead. (1) Who would I have seen as Annie? (2) How old was she? (3) What Broadway theater would I have been in? (First Prize: a shiny satin pillow from Coney Island)

ANSWERS: (1) Allison Smith (2) Eleven (3) I bet I gotcha there the ANTA.

# CALENDAR OF ANNIE-VERSARIES

1 9 8 6

## JANUARY

- 1 The movie's Molly, TONI ANN GISONDI, will be 11
- 2 The Broadway show closed at the Oris Theatre after 2,377 performances, 1983
- 3 The 1986 National Tour will open in Rochester, 1986
- 5 Sandy's first appearance in the comic strip, 1925
- 6 Annie People's co-editor and columnist, TRICIA PROZZI, will be 21
- 14 Broadway's fifth Annie, ALYSON KIRK, will be 16
- 14 Announcement was made that Aileen Quinn would be the movie's Annie, 1981
- 15 The movie's Pepper, and Annie in 3rd Nat'l, ROSANNE SORRENTINO, will be 18
- 20 Little Orphan Annie comic strip creator HAROLD GRAY born, 1894
- 22 Rehearsals for the Broadway show began, 1977
- 25 Annie in the 2nd National, MARISA MORELL, will be 16
- 26 Annie in the 2nd National and the 1st National, LOUANNE, will be 16
- 29 Allison Smith became Broadway's fourth Annie, 1980
- 31 The first issue of Annie People was mailed out, 1983

## FEBRUARY

- 6 The movie's Kate, and Tessie in the 1st National, APRIL LERMAN, will be 17
- 7 The Broadway show's 2,000th performance, 1982
- 23 Broadway's last Tessie, STEPHANIE VINE, will be 14
- 25 Broadway's last Duffy, JENNINE BABO, will be 15
- 28 Shelley Bruce became Broadway's second Annie, 1978

## MARCH

- 1 Annie preview opened at the Kennedy Center in Washington, 1977
- 6 Sarah Jessica Parker became Broadway's third Annie, 1979
- 22 Broadway's last Pepper, JULIE STEVENS, will be 16
- 23 The 1st National Tour opened in Toronto, 1978
- 25 Broadway's third Annie, SARAH JESSICA PARKER, will be 21

## APRIL

- 11 The 1984 National Tour's Annie, LISA LYNNE, will be 13
- 21 The Broadway show opened at the Alvin Theatre, 1977
- 21 Andrea McArdle became Broadway's first Annie, 1977
- 26 The movie's Miss Hannigan, CAROL BURNETT, will be 52
- 29 Filming of the movie began in New York City, 1981

## MAY

- 3 The London show opened at the Victoria Palace Theatre, 1978
- 5 Broadway's second Annie, SHELLEY BRUCE, will be 21
- 9 The movie's "Daddy" Warbucks, ALBERT FINNEY, will be 50
- 9 Harold Gray died, 1968
- 19 Bill Berloni found Sandy in the pound in Connecticut, 1976
- 21 The movie premiered in New York, Los Angeles, and Toronto, 1982
- 25 Annie People's editor, JON HERRILL, will be 41

## JUNE

- 5 Annie won 7 Tony Awards, 1977
- 7 Annie's composer, CHARLES STROUSE, will be 58
- 22 The 2nd National Tour opened in San Francisco, 1978
- 28 The movie's Annie, AILEEN QUINN, will be 15
- 28 Broadway's first Molly, DANIELLE BRISEBOIS, will be 17

## JULY

- 12 The movie's Tessie, LARA BERR, will be 14
- 20 Annie set designer, Oscar-nominee Dale Hennesy, died during filming, 1981
- 22 Broadway's last July, LAURA BAKER, will be 14
- 22 Allison Smith's 1,000th performance on Broadway, 1982
- 24 The 1984 National Tour opened in Atlanta, 1984
- 31 The 2nd National's first Annie, PATRICIA ANN PATTS, will be 19

## AUGUST

- 5 Harold Gray's Little Orphan Annie comic strip began, 1924
- 5 The movie's director, JOHN HUSTON, will be 80
- 10 Annie, starring Kristen Vigard, opened at the Goodspeed Opera House, 1976
- 14 Annie's writer, THOMAS MEEHAN, will be 57
- 19 The movie's Duffy, ROBIN IGNICO, will be 16

## SEPTEMBER

- 4 Principal filming of the movie ended, 1981
- 8 The 4th National's first Annie, MOLLIE HALL, will be 16
- 8 Alyson Kirk became Broadway's fifth Annie, 1982
- 11 The 4th National Tour opened in West Point, 1981
- 12 The Broadway show's 1,000th performance, 1979
- 14 Broadway's last "Daddy" Warbucks, HARVE PRESNELL, will be 53
- 27 Annie meets "Daddy" Warbucks in the comic strip, 1924

## OCTOBER

- 3 The 3rd National Tour opened in Dallas, 1979
- 13 Broadway's last Molly, DOROTHY ANDRES, will be 11
- 18 Ann Marie Mudge Warbucks born, 1922 (movie version)
- 27 The comic strip was dropped from the Chicago Tribune, 1925
- 28 The comic strip was reinstated in the Chicago Tribune, 1925
- 28 Ann Elizabeth Mudge Bennett Warbucks born, 1922 (play version)
- 29 Announcement was made that the Broadway show would be closing, 1982

## NOVEMBER

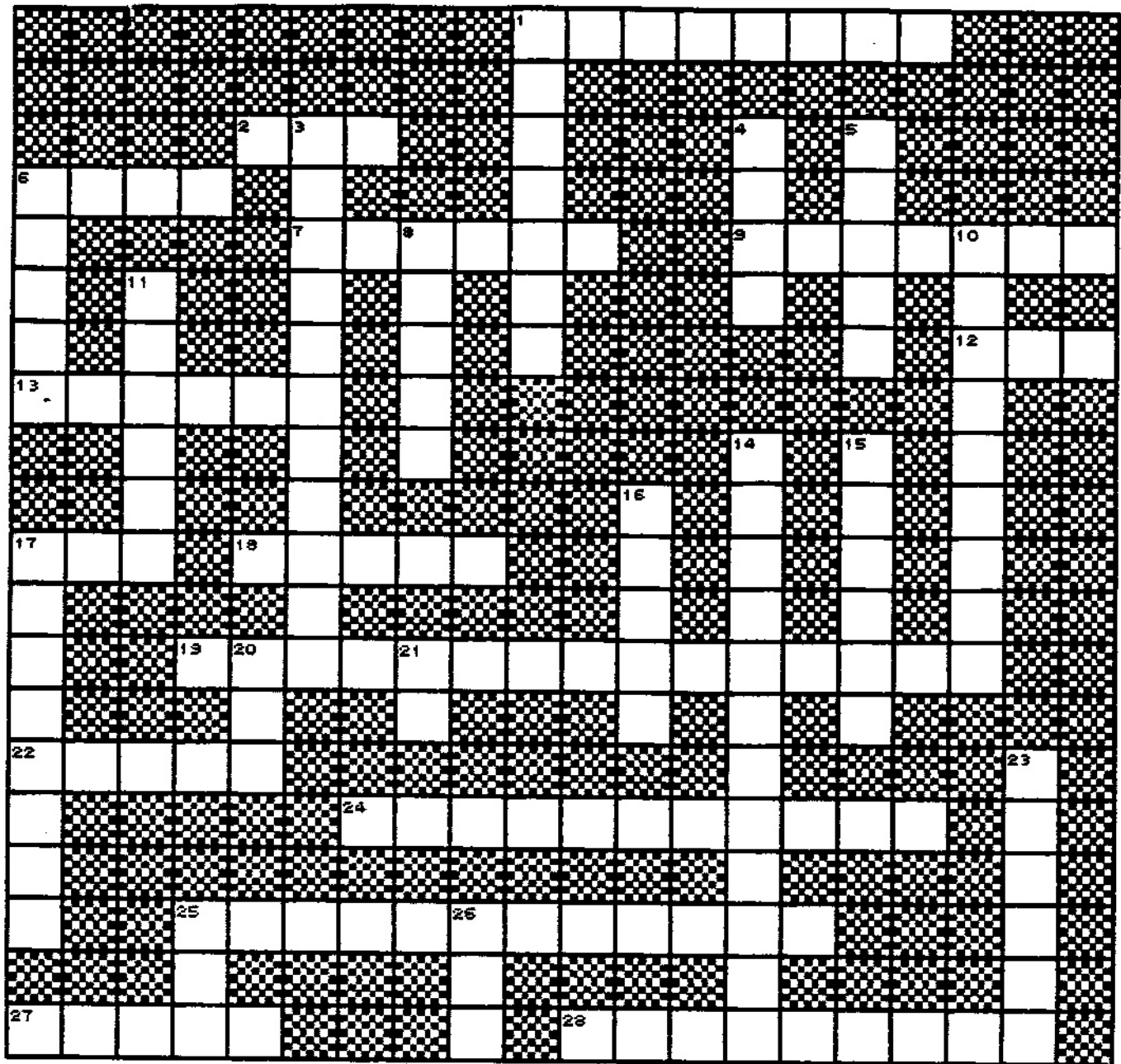
- 2 Little Orphan Annie Sunday comic strip began, 1924
- 5 Broadway's 1st Annie, ANDREA McARDLE, will be 23
- 19 BILL BERLONI shares his birthday with Broadway's SANDY, who will be 12
- 24 Annie's lyricist and director, MARTIN CHARNIN, will be 52
- 30 The second Little Orphan Annie movie, starring Ann Gillis, premiered, 1938

## DECEMBER

- 3 Leonard Starr's Annie comic strip began, 1979
- 9 Broadway's fourth Annie, ALLISON SMITH, will be 17
- 14 The movie's July, LUCIE STEWART, will be 15
- 24 The first Little Orphan Annie movie, starring Mitzel Green, premiered, 1932
- 27 Annie in the 2nd National, KRISTI COOMBS, will be 15
- 31 Annie was left on the Orphanage steps, 1922

# ★ Annie Stars Since Annie ... ★

Lots of news on SARAH JESSICA PARKER, thanks to a new update from her mom. In 1985 Sarah has starred in a feature film (Girls Just Want to Have Fun), an ABC-TV Movie of the Week (Go for the Gold), and a play in Los Angeles (Tiger Is Wild). She also filmed an episode of Hotel for ABC to be aired soon and is now working on location in Florida on a new film called The Navigator....The Young People's Showcase was recently at the Paper Moon club in downtown NYC. Performing in November were MELISSA KALFA, SUSAN LIPTON, CAROL-ANN PLANTE, and TANI TAYLOR POWERS. Since the long-running Youngstars showcase is now no longer in existence (The Something Different club in NYC closed last fall), several of those performers came down to the Paper Moon, including LARA BERK and her sister Melissa, and KIMBERLY STERN. 11-year-old Kim, who was in the tail end of the 4th National and in the 1984 National Tour, brought AP up to date on her latest activities: She was in an ABC-TV Special called Jeeter Mason and the Magic Headset and will be seen in a feature movie, Starlight, to be released this spring. She also starred in the part of Sarah in a traveling show called Peppermint Bear....TIM CURRY stars as The Butler in the current movie Clue. The movie is very funny and Tim is terrific. Don't miss it!.... MOLLY RINGWALD will star in an upcoming episode of Shelley Duval's Tall Tales and Legends, a new series on Showtime....ALLISON SMITH rode the Cabbage Patch Kids float in Macy's Parade during the rainiest Thanksgiving Day in recent memory. Allison also was featured in a benefit for missing children in December in which she sang "Never Go With a Stranger." Her singing voice becomes better every year and the song (she wrote the lyrics) is wonderful. It was very well received at the benefit, and perhaps more radio stations will be playing it now. Also, watch this winter for a special episode of Kate and Allie which will feature Allison--Jennie persuades her mom to let her take a job at a croissant shop. I was at the taping and it was one of Allison's best so far....The premiere of Jerry's Girls on Broadway was delayed a few days because DOROTHY LOUDON broke her foot on a treadmill during one of the previews and was laid up for awhile. Does that mishap of Dorothy's sound familiar?.... 15-year-old MARISA MORELL, Annie in the 2nd National, was Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz at the Westbury Music Fair in New York. That makes four former Annies who have played Dorothy in the past year or so--Marisa, SHELLEY BRUCE, ALLEEN QUINN, and ANDREA McARDLE. CRISTINA CONOMOS was a Munchkin at Westbury again this year, and she recently played the starring role in the IBM Holiday Show in Kingston, NY....It has been a busy season for the VINE family. STEPHANIE VINE and her mom PENNY LARSEN recently participated in a staged reading of The House in the Woods, a brand-new musical project in New York produced by Musical Theatre Works. Also in the reading were JANE CONNELL (Miss Hannigan in the 1st National with KATHY-JO KELLY) and SHERRI LEIDY. Stephanie's sister LIZ LARSEN is playing the lead in Hamelin, currently doing very well in an Off-Broadway run....Tammy Saphiloff has sent a clipping of 15-year-old MEREDITH SALENGER, who is starring in the new Walt Disney film, The Journey of Natty Gann. The article states that Meredith was an Orphan extra in the Annie movie. Can anyone out there tell us which one Meredith was and where she appeared in the movie?....KIMI PARKS will be in the movie Heartburn, starring Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson, which will be coming out in the summer.... GARRISON TRUE, who was hired by RAY STARK to conduct the search for the movie Annie during 1980, is out on the road again, this time looking for the girl who will play the lead in Pippi Longstocking. Several former Annie Orphans have tried out and gotten callbacks--Good Luck to all of you!....Birthdays: ALYSON KIRK, 16 on Jan. 14; ROSANNE SORRENTINO, 18 on Jan. 15; MARISA MORELL, 16 on Jan. 25; LOUANNE, 16 on Jan. 26; APRIL LERMAN, 17 on Feb. 6; MOLLY RINGWALD, 18 on Feb. 14; STEPHANIE VINE, 14 on Feb. 23; JENNINE BABO, 15 on Feb. 25; and belated greetings to ALYSSA MILANO, 13 on Dec. 19.



## ACROSS CLUES

1. Directress of the Orphanage, Miss \_\_\_\_\_
2. Month in 1982 Annie opened
6. Annie's gymnastics instructor, Bill \_\_\_\_\_
7. A silver \_\_\_\_\_ around her neck
9. Played Molly, \_\_\_\_\_ Gisondi
12. 1 Across made it in her bathtub
13. Director John \_\_\_\_\_
17. "Maybe \_\_\_\_\_ away..."
18. The "Dumb Dog" in real life
19. Stood in for 987 Fifth Ave.
22. Shape of 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Across
24. New York critic who rated the movie better than its Broadway antecedent
25. Orphanage Annie came from
27. Littlest Orphan
28. Had planned to help produce The Perils of Annie with Ray Stark; half of Turnstar

## DOWN CLUES

(Answers on last page)

1. Died during filming, Dale \_\_\_\_\_
3. Star of Annie
4. Sentimental Orphan
5. 10-year-old red-headed Orphan
6. Annie was 1982's \_\_\_\_\_ highest grossing movie
8. "The truck is on \_\_\_\_\_ Street, heading east..."
10. 1 of three finalists for Annie, had a very small part in the film
11. Annie's production company
14. Had own TV show before Annie
15. Briton who lost his heart to 3 Down, Albert \_\_\_\_\_
16. Played by Ann Reinking
17. "Number One \_\_\_\_\_, we gotta go to 987..."
20. Month of Annie's birthday
21. "Daddy"'s initials
23. Oldest Orphan
25. "It's the \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_" (initials)
26. Where Annie took place

14-year-old Jo Annie of Clark, NJ created this puzzle on her home computer.

by Tricia Trozzi

Part III - Conclusion

AP: Was anything special done to keep the whole show "fresh" during the run?

RF: Theoretically, we had clean-up rehearsals that presumed to help that. In some instances it did. Mostly they were changes in "bits"--additions to the show. Even "threat" and "chastising" sessions, and replacements helped give the show a revitalization. For instance, the second Lily was a completely different kind of person altogether, so my relationship with her was totally different. Therefore, my choices changed. That was refreshing to me. The mistake, however, was the "Saturday Massacre" (in Jan. 1980) when twenty of us were "let go" for just this purported reason.

AP: What was your favorite part of the show?

RF: My favorite parts were connected with the original performers. Like Ed Bordo's (Drake) little leap and how he got laughs from reading that no one else did. Barbara Irwin's (Lily) ditsey look and high pitched voice. Dick Ensslen's wonderfully human way with any role. Ray Thorne's (FDR) direct-economical way with voice, props and wheelchair, and compassion. Reid Shelton's indefatigable energy (Warbucks). Sandy's solo cross. Dorothy Loudon's double-takes (Miss Hannigan). Sandy Faison's (Grace) absolutely "period" treatment of her role. Egotistical Bert Healy. For me, the "Easy Street" number and the disguise to fool the audience.

AP: Did you get to keep any props, costume, et cetera, when you left the show?

RF: My moustache and a derby hat which I'd worn at one point (before it became a longshoreman's cap, then a felt fedora). Also the dance boots, which laced up like old-fashioned high-tops. Also my steps and my tricks.

AP: What was your reaction when you heard the show was closing? Were you at the final performance on January 2, 1983?

RF: I was sorry to see it close. I thought it could have stayed open longer had it not been bounced around the various N.Y. theaters. It was, after all, the "musical of the decade" as Hello, Dolly had been in the Sixties. No, I was not at the final performance; I was in Patent Leather Shoes in Philadelphia at the time.

AP: What did you think of the Annie movie?

RF: I will perhaps offend all of your readers here--it made me ill. It was cloying, distasteful, badly thought out, and structured weakly. It killed any real emotion between Annie and Warbucks. Its obvious attempts to get away from the Broadway production with broad movie techniques destroyed the heart of the story. "Hard-Knock Life" became a joke and a lie. "Easy Street" became a celebration and not a pivotal plot moment. The 4th of July depersonalized the sharing of love between characters. Hannigan's sexploits and the camera crotch shots were banal and non-period. There was no reality to the movie; therefore, no believability in the characters' struggle. There was no way to have any real feelings for the leads nor to root for Annie's efforts. They made the movie a tribute to '30s movie musicals, Radio City, and Garbo and attempted to make Annie the reincarnation of Shirley Temple--all smiley and cute--no hard times

for this kid. '30s musicals were all about lifting people's spirits out of the Depression. Annie is about a tough kid--fighting hard to make it. The result of the play is joy and realization. If they're so happy throughout, why do they need us? Punjab was not fully utilized in an imaginative way--the idea was merely attached to what already existed. It seemed irrelevant. At any rate, movies have the ability to elevate--but splash and bigness is not the answer--closeness and intimacy is the other possibility that movies can achieve. They should have with Annie.

AP: If Annie ever comes back for a revival, would you like to play Rooster?

RF: Well, it could be fun to do it again. One always gains from time, and it's a good way to measure that growth. But not just to do it--only if there was a good cast doing it. People tend to think Annie is a fool-proof show to perform. It is not!

AP: You directed a tour of Annie in 1983 with Alyson Kirk. How did you find directing the show after acting in it for so long?

RF: I directed three packages of Annie--the third in Boston and the second in Washington state. Alyson Kirk's was the second package to be professionally produced in summer stock in both proscenium and in the round. I loved it--the entire job of casting, planning, consulting in costumers, sets, tech rehearsals, and coaching the actors. I also loved the show--it is very special to me, and I attempted to do it as honestly as I could, to make it as pure as when it first opened. It vindicated my faith in it and in my own ideas about what was appropriate. But even this is a compromise, because the actors have to work well together, and that is the most important factor. There must be joy. Otherwise why do it? Anyway, all three were marvelous successes. I was exhausted, but very happily so.

AP: What have been some of the other things you have done since Annie?

RF: Broadway: Do Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Upwards? - as Father O'Reilly, Alvin Theatre

Broadway: Accidental Death of an Anarchist - Belasco

Broadway: Can-Can - Hillaire Jussac with Zizi Jeanmarie

Can-Can - as Boris, Tropicana in Atlantic City (with Yvonne DeCarlo and Russell Arms)

Stock: Pajama Game with John Raitt - as Heinsey

Stock: The Wizard of Oz productions with Paul Williams - as Scarecrow

Stock: George M - as Ken Berry's father (Pittsburgh and production tour)

Pennies from Heaven - Steve Martin movie

Pepsi Industrial, with Michael Jackson

ABC-TV - Night of 100 Stars

PBS - 5 promotional commercials (magic and juggling - wrote and performed)

Staged and choreographed Oklahoma, Washington state, played Will Parker

Acted on soaps: Another World, Ryan's Hope, Nurse, One Life to Live.

Just finished acting in The Yearling, Atlanta, GA (a pre-Broadway tryout)

AP: Thanks for sharing your memories with us. Best of luck with your career!

RF: Thanks for asking--if you have other questions please ask. As you can see, I am pretty straightforward. I think your questions were very perceptive. I did think twice about answering some of them. But feelings are what I work with and this is the business I love. It's like religion--keep it honest and pure and the faith will come. So I answered as honestly as I could. My best wishes to you!

1985 ANNIE PEOPLE INDEX

- Update on Shelley Bruce--The Wizard of Oz, Issue 13, page 5
- Report on LOA Feature Book #7, Issue 13, page 5
- 1984 Annie People Index, Issue 13, page 6
- List of Leonard Starr Annie Comic Strip Story Dates, Issue 13, page 8
- On the Set of Kate and Allie with Allison Smith, Issue 14, page 3
- Bios of Annie People Editors, Issue 14, page 6
- Annie-Related Fan Club Directory, Issue 14, page 8
- Update on Alyson Kirk--Take Me Along on Broadway, Issue 15, page 3
- Photo of Goodspeed Cast with Kristen Vigard as Annie, Issue 15, page 6
- Update on Aileen Quinn--The Wizard of Oz, Issue 16, page 3
- Report on Harve Presnell and Laura Baker in Annie, Issue 16, page 4-5
- Update on Louanne, Annie in the 2nd and 1st National, Issue 17, page 3
- Interview (Pt. I) with Robert Fitch, Orig. B'way Rooster, Issue 17, page 5-6
- Collector's Corner: The Little Orphan Annie Big Little Books, Issue 18, page 3
- Interview (Pt. II) with Robert Fitch, Orig. B'way Rooster, Issue 18, page 6-7



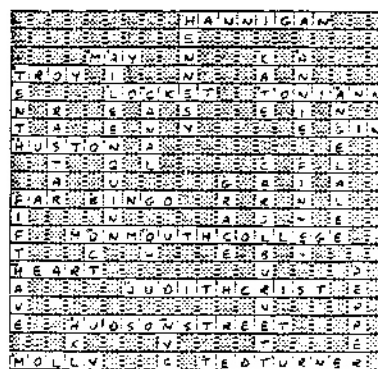
### What's the first thing you do on Christmas?



#### Allison Smith

15-year-old star of 'Kate & Allie'

"When I was little, my five older brothers and sisters would wake me at the crack of dawn. Now, I'm getting them back. I wake up first. I go into their rooms and spray them with cold water."



Jon Merrill  
Annie People  
Box 431  
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

