

Annie People



Member



National Association
Of Fan Clubs

The Newsletter for Annie Fans

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1933

This LOA strip panel by Harold Gray is from a story in which Annie and Sandy go on a tour of singing engagements on stage.



Each year when we send out our AP subscription forms, we always think up a question to ask the readers about what they think of some aspect of Annie--their favorite song, their favorite scene, and so forth. This year we asked the following: IF YOU COULD MAKE ONE CHANGE IN THE ANNIE SCRIPT OR STORYLINE, WHAT WOULD IT BE? The replies we received were rather interesting. Here is a sample from the subscription forms that were sent in:

Several readers made similar comments about the ending of the movie: "I would not invite Miss Hannigan to the adoption party...."; "Change ending from the bridge scene on--to what? Who knows? But the bridge sequence and circus party are just a bit much, especially having Miss Hannigan at the party...."; "In the movie, I would never have invited Miss Hannigan to the big celebration party at the end of the picture. She didn't deserve to come!"

Other comments about the movie: "I would have had Warbucks sing 'Something Was Missing' in the movie....."; "Make Grace and Warbucks kiss before or instead of 'We Got Annie'...."; "I would have had Thomas Meehan write the movie screenplay...." (Note: Mr. Meehan submitted a first draft movie script in December 1979, but by August 1980 Carol Sobieski had submitted her version, and it was hers that went through several more revisions before it was final. Mr. Meehan's script had been very close to an early storyline for the musical and would have resulted in something like a four-hour movie.)

When it came to the play, a very large percentage of readers seemed to think that the very fact we should even dare to ask such a preposterous question was practically bordering on the sacrilegious, as why in the world would anyone want to (horrors!) CHANGE THE SCRIPT? Sample comments: "This is a hard question to answer--this is the 'perfect' musical...."; "It's fine the way it is...."; "I wouldn't change a thing...."; "None! It's great just the way it is...."; "No change at all--each production is its own interpretation of the words in the script, so each show is different...."; "Nothing! I love Annie and I love the script just the way it is. I grew up on Annie and I'm used to the script being that way...." An Orphan from the 4th National stated, "I wouldn't even touch it!" But perhaps the most appropriate comment from any of our readers was best articulated by a fan and former Orphan who just so happens to be named Annie: "Nothing--don't mess with perfection!"

However, oddly enough, we did receive a few comments regarding the play: "Have Sandy mentioned in Act II, possibly when Warbucks tells Annie, 'You can have anyone in the world to your adoption party....' Annie: 'Well, I'd like Miss Farrell here, and Mr. Drake, and Sandy my dog....'"; "More dancing in the stage play...."; "Grace should do the 'cheese' song ('He Doesn't Know I'm Alive') and develop the relationship with Warbucks more. The ending, as is, is a bit sketchy between them...."; "Make Annie non-sectarian--get rid of the 'X-mas' idea...."; "Insert a few more lyrics into 'Easy Street' so the tricky trio can do more than just shout 'Wooo!' and 'Yahooo!' while they dance a certain few blank measures...."; "Allow each Orphan's unique personality to develop more on stage...."; And "Give FDR a couple of songs, of course!" was a rather appropriate idea from FDR in the 2nd National.

We did receive some interesting "creative" ideas: "'Daddy' Warbucks adopting all the Orphans...."; "Have Annie find out that she was related to Pepper--they

were sisters!..."; "I would place Annie and Sandy out somewhere on an Indian reservation, so she can be giving them back a reason to hope that things will get better. Annie can be seen singing 'Tomorrow' to a whole group of Indian chiefs from several nations of Indians...."; "Have Grace as Mrs. Warbucks originally and had them getting a divorce and have Annie fix it all up...."

A couple of LOA strip fans offered the following: "Annie (the strip) is moving too slow. I'm tired of wondering what that van is doing...." And another strip enthusiast remembered something from the old Harold Gray strips and made a couple of suggestions for the current strip: "A revival of Annie's holiday and end-of-the-year predictions, and a few of those famous blizzards...."

To conclude our 1987 AP subscription survey, here is a comment made by a former 4th National Orphan that perhaps might be echoed by a lot of young Annie performers who loved being in the play and will never forget it: "Make Annie and the Orphans older so that all the talented ex-Orphans could have their day again...."



The latest addition to Tricia's Annie room - a glass front cabinet for her old LOA dolls



Allison Smith back when she was on Broadway. This coming December 9th Allison will be 18.

Submitted by Julie Stevens



A pair of little Annies on Halloween

NEWS JUST IN: **ANDREA McARDLE** became engaged to songwriter Edd Kalehoff this fall. Congratulations, Andrea!

★ Annie Stars Since Annie ... ★

Teddy And Alice, a musical about President Theodore Roosevelt and his daughter, opened on Broadway on November 12th. In its cast are SARAH REYNOLDS, now 14, whom many of us across the country saw as the 1986 National Tour's Annie. This is Sarah's second Broadway show; her first was Sunday In The Park With George two years ago just before she went on the road in Annie. Also in the cast of Teddy And Alice is RAYMOND THORNE, whom we remember as FDR in Broadway's Annie. He played the role for Annie's entire run, all the way from Goodspeed to closing. Like Annie, the costumes for this show are by THEONI ALDREDGE....ALLISON SMITH and Brian Bloom occupied a square together on Hollywood Squares in November when the show was playing at Radio City Music Hall in New York....TONI ANN GISONDI has been busy performing at the Jersey Shore and at talent competitions (see separate story)....STEPHANIE VINE and MARISA MORELL have a scene in Call Me, a forthcoming movie. Stephanie is also involved in backer's auditions for a musical by Peter Sklar called The Kid Who Played the Palace. Her mom was in a revue of Harold Arlen songs in New Hope, PA, and her sister, LIZ LARSEN, is currently with JEANNE LEHMAN in the current off-Broadway revival of Company....DEBBIE GIBSON's second hit "Shake Your Love" is currently moving up through the Top 20 on both the pop and the dance chart, just as "Only In My Dreams" completes six full months on the pop Top 100. Her Out Of The Blue album is doing well also and is reportedly "close to going gold." Debbie has been doing TV appearances on American Bandstand and Solid Gold In Concert singing her two hits, as well as filling a square on Hollywood Squares. This month she will leave to tour in Japan, and then it's back to senior year in high school before more U.S. appearances begin this winter. Debbie still has two very talented male dancers who perform with her, and she has recently formed a band to back her up on stage....DIANA BARROWS, one of ANDREA McARDLE's original Orphans on Broadway, appeared on NBC-TV's Rags to Riches....ROBIN IGNICO, now 17, was the guest star on a recent episode of Brothers on Showtime....At the Little Miss Brooklyn pageant in New York in October, the two guest stars who entertained were pop singer Krista and TANI TAYLOR POWERS. Tani sang "New York, New York" in honor of the 41 five- to eight-year-old Brooklynite contestants. The winner of the pageant will soon appear with Tani on TV on the Joe Franklin Show....Into The Woods starring BERNADETTE PETERS as a witch just opened on Broadway and also features LAUREN MITCHELL, Grace Farrell in the 3rd National and the final Grace on Broadway....CHARLES STROUSE's Rags, which ran for an all too brief run on Broadway earlier this year, recently played at the Niagara University Theatre in upstate New York. Mr. Strouse was on hand for the opening night of the show. Several of his works have been performed in the past few years in that area, including Nightingale and I And Albert, a Shakespearean musical by Mr. Strouse. Oh, yes, Annie has played in the Buffalo area numerous times too. Rags will go out on tour when this production finishes its run....NORWOOD SMITH reprised his role of "Daddy" Warbucks twice last summer; Fort Worth, Texas and Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Norwood was in the 1st National with MARY K. LOMBARDI and in the Jupiter Theatre production in Florida last winter....Shortly after her run as Annie this past summer in Pittsburgh, MONICA LEE GRADISCHEK starred there in the title role in Really Rosie....JOHN SCHUCK guest-starred on an episode of Golden Girls....HOPE HINES won first runner-up in talent in the Miss Hemisphere Show Biz competition in Philadelphia....Birthdays: ANDREA McARDLE, 24 on November 5; THERESA DIANE, 18 on November 19; SANDY, 13 on November 19; MARTIN CHARNIN, 53 on November 24; KIMI PARKS on November 27; ALLISON SMITH, 18 on December 9; DANA DEWES, 16 on December 10; HALLY McGEHEAN, 16 on December 18; ALYSSA MILANO, 15 on December 19; CHRIS NOEL CANTERA, 17 on December 20; MARTHA BYRNE, 18 on December 23; SHERRI LEIDY, 13 on December 26; KRISTI COOMBS, 16 on December 27.

JOHN HUSTON AND MOLLY

By Toni Ann Gisondi

On the morning of August 28th when they announced on the news that John Huston had passed away I realized for the first time that the man who was responsible for what was the most exciting time in my life was gone from this world. Tears came to my eyes as I reminisced on how I had come to know him.

When I first auditioned for Molly they said I would be meeting the director "John Huston." I was only 5 years old at the time (it was October 1980). I was taken through these great big doors to a room where I saw a man like my grandfather. He spoke to me very gently and I could tell he was a very nice man. He was just like Santa Claus. He knew just what to say to make me laugh and feel comfortable. I was able to be myself and not feel afraid. He said, "You are truly a Molly." I came out of the room smiling and very confident. We were told on the set later during filming that whenever stars brought in their daughters for the part he would say, "We already have our Molly."

He was kind and gentle to everyone on the set. He never told anyone how to say the lines. He just let everyone be themselves, and he laughed at all the orphans' antics.

He will live on in the memory of all the orphans as a kind, gentle man. Among my memories of John Huston I have a few pictures and his autobiography which he signed for me on the first page: "For Toni Ann - My Very Favorite Actress, John Huston."

* * * * *

TONI ANN GISONDI is now 12 years old and in the seventh grade near Atlantic City, New Jersey. She continues to sing frequently in children's showcases on the Boardwalk there, as she has ever since her days back when she was Molly on the Annie movie set. This past summer she was named "Miss Garden Pier" in Atlantic City and won a \$300.00 certificate to the Valba School of Modeling. She then represented the modeling school on its float in the Miss America parade in September. Toni Ann also won first prize in the talent division of the Miss New Jersey Pre-Teen Pageant last spring in Somerset, New Jersey.

Toni Ann was born on New Year's Day of 1975 and is the eldest of four girls; Lisa is 10, and twins Linda and Kristen are 5.

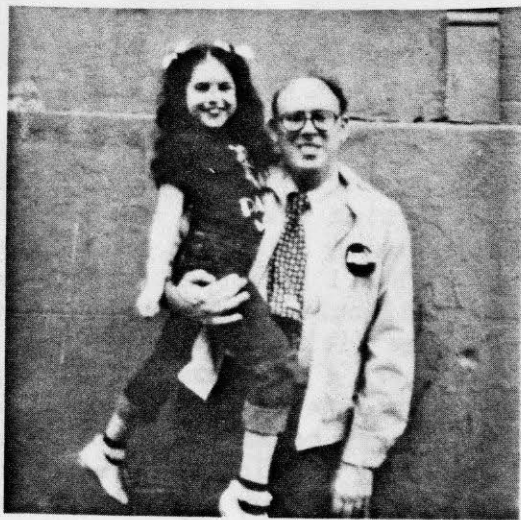
Submitted by Toni Ann Gisondi



Toni Ann with John Huston on the Annie set



The Gisondi family in January 1984. Toni Ann is holding the Knickerbocker Molly doll that bears her likeness.



TANI TAYLOR POWERS was just 7 when she sang at the Paper Moon club in New York in the spring of 1984 (left). In October 1987 the talented fifth grader was a featured guest soloist at the Little Miss Brooklyn pageant in New York (right). Tani's first experience in musical theater was at 6 years old when she was Molly in Annie (with Cristina Conomos and pop star Debbie Gibson) in the fall of 1983 in Farmingdale on Long Island. Since then she has been in several more plays, sung on TV, and performed in several area showcases, but she says that what she would like to do most of all is to play Annie. Having finally passed four feet in height, Tani (rhymes with Annie; short for Tania) will be 11 in February.

SAD DAY

Surely, every former Annie and Orphan out there remembers what it was like at the curtain call of the very last performance of your Annie run, as well as the mood in your dressing room immediately after leaving the stage. No matter how long the production run is, for performers in Annie it is just plain never long enough. That's just one more thing that makes Annie the special show it is.

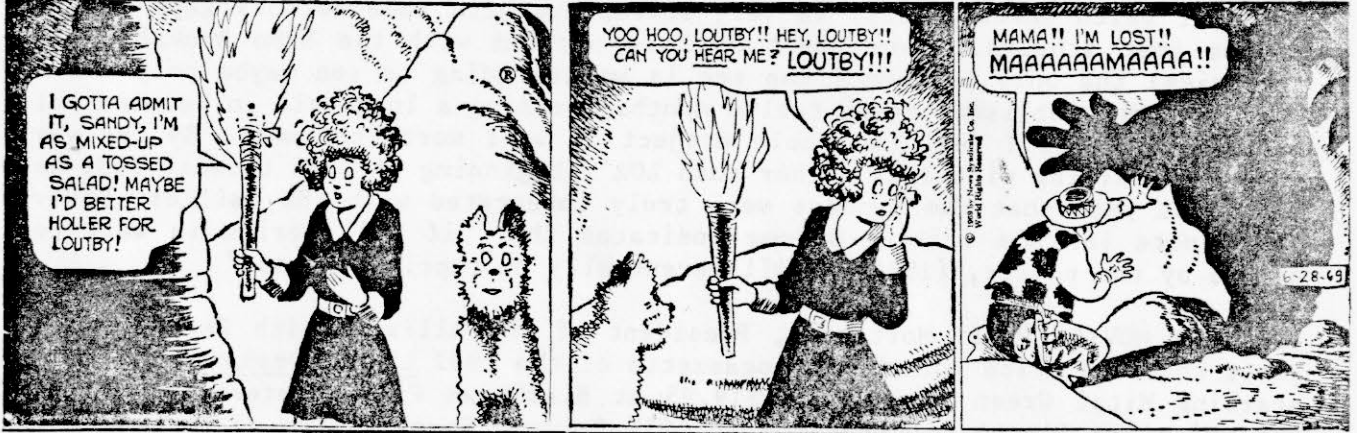
Submitted by Wendi Rohan



This picture, sent in by Wendi Rohan ("Duffy"), was taken just after the closing performance last winter at the Burt Reynolds Jupiter Theatre in Jupiter, FL.

LOA Comics

ORPHAN ANNIE



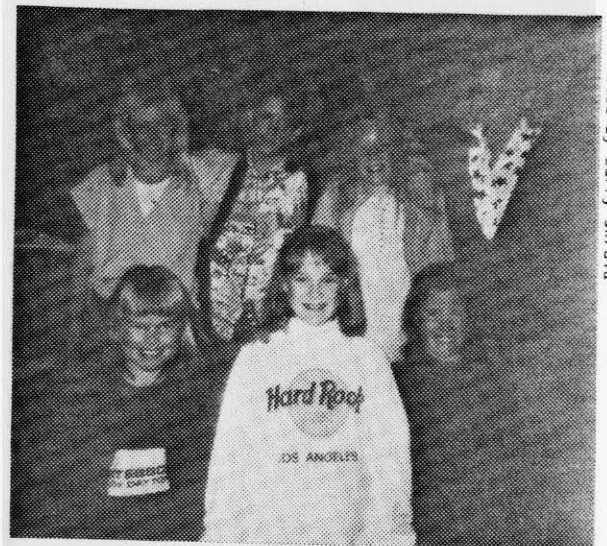
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Kathy Weinberger sent in this LOA strip (which she found while helping to clean out a friend's house) which shows how Annie and Sandy looked during the period after Harold Gray and before Leonard Starr. Between 1968 and 1973 the strip was plotted by Elliott Caplin (brother of L'il Abner's Al Capp) and drawn by Philip "Tex" Blaisdell. Incidentally, this particular LOA strip just happens to be dated the same day that original Broadway Molly Danielle Brisebois was born.

Submitted by Aimee Gray



NORTH BRUNSWICK, NJ - Top row, Raeanne Henson, Joy Silberstein, Alison Rebeck, Jennifer Rubio, Jennifer Sussman, Maura Rahman (Annie); bottom, Aimee Gray



Submitted by Larry Skrdla

DAYTON, OH - Top row, Rachel York, Kristina Harrison, Carrie Anne Gorsuch, Jenny Fair; bottom row, Angela Gaylor, Alison Puthoff (Annie), Mollie McIntosh

LOA STRIP ANTHOLOGY: The Nemo Bookshelf Little Orphan Annie anthology series published by Fantagraphics Books has begun at last! The first volume, just out this fall, contains every strip from 1931 including the Sundays. This volume begins the series that will continue forward with the Harold Gray strips, year by year. Rick Marschall is probably the definitive LOA strip expert, and the product is being edited by his capable and dedicated hands, which means that it will be done right--i.e., nothing missing. By that I mean that I am comparing it to the Arf! The Life And Hard Times of LOA book published in 1970 which a few of us strip fans own and devour--a book which covers the dailies from 1935-1945 but which unfortunately is very incomplete with some serious gaps in some of the best stories. There won't be this problem with the Nemo Bookshelf anthologies; the only problem I can see is we are going to see maybe only two or three volumes published every twelve months, meaning a long wait in between volumes for us. But I feel the whole project is well worth the wait. By the way, they are starting with 1931 rather than LOA's beginning in 1924 because 1931 was the first year that the Sundays were truly integrated with the dailies. However, a note in this initial volume indicates that "if this series is well received by the public, (1924-30) will eventually be reprinted also."

1932 LOA MOVIE: Polly Mortensen, President of the Allison Smith Fan Club, reports that the price for the videocassette of the 1932 Little Orphan Annie movie starring Mitzi Green is down to \$19.95 at Blackhawk Films. Interested readers may write for Blackhawk's catalog at 5959 Triumph Street, City of Commerce, CA 90040, or call them at (213) 888-2229. This movie is well worth it and would be enjoyed by Annie fans; for more detail about it see Tricia's review of the movie on page 5 of Annie People #7, the January 1984 issue.

ELECTRONIC MAIL: If any AP readers have access to a computer that is hooked into CompuServe, you can reach me by electronic mail using my ID # 73677,135.

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