

Annie People



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The Newsletter for Annie Fans

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"ANNIE 2" IS COMING!

The sequel is finished! It was announced in June that the long-awaited Annie 2 Broadway show by Martin Charnin, Charles Strouse, and Thomas Meehan is done and is set to open in Washington late this year and on Broadway early in 1990. Its subtitle is Miss Hannigan's Revenge.

"This story is not really as much a sequel as it is a continuation," says Martin Charnin. Instead of picking up the character's life sometime later, such as is done in most movie sequels, this story about Annie will simply go on where the first one left off. As we all remember, in the last scene of Annie Miss Hannigan is seen carted off to jail for her part in the Mudge scam with Rooster and Lily. "In Annie 2, which takes place six weeks after the original, Miss Hannigan is still in prison," Mr. Charnin continues. "Her one dream is to wreak havoc on Annie and get revenge. She succeeds in doing just that. But there are many other complications that will keep you on the edge of your seat, I hope."

This is all we know so far about the plot; whatever else happens will be a surprise to all of us when the play opens. It is scheduled to begin a seven-week run at the Kennedy Center in Washington on December 14th, after which it will go to Boston, probably to the Shubert Theatre there. And then--BROADWAY! March 8, 1990. A specific Broadway theater has not yet been booked.

Annie 2 was being talked about as far back as 1981, just after the movie rights were sold. And then Mr. Charnin made the climactic announcement about Annie 2 to the audience present when the curtain to Annie came down for the 2,377th time back on January 2, 1983 (see AP #1, page 4). Ever since then, the creators have been working on the play--going through three outlines and four script drafts--but not pushing full time on it, because all three of them have had other projects they have been working on. In recent years it was hoped by the creators to have had Annie 2 open on Broadway on April 21, 1987--which would have been the 10th Annie-versary of the opening of the original--but script drafts have continued to come and go ever since then. So, it has been a lengthy process for everyone concerned, getting it finished so casting could begin.

(There will be an open call for the kids. Late news on the last page.)

★ Annie Stars Since Annie ★

JO ANNE WORLEY began her Annie mini-tour as Miss Hannigan in Pittsburgh in late June. Joining her on stage there was LAUREN MITCHELL, the final Grace on Broadway who closed the show at "2,377." Newcomer to Annie but a veteran of numerous shows, HEATHER MAZUR did a very fine job as Annie opposite Jo Anne. LANE HAVERLY brought MOOSE, the canine favorite of many national Annie tours, to play Sandy; and Orphans from previous Pittsburgh Annie shows LISA WURZEL and JACKIE URSO were there also. Jo Anne went on to Indianapolis and played opposite Indiana's best known Annie MONICA LYNN RAMEY, who went on in the title role as a last minute replacement with less than a week's warning....ROBERT FITCH directed and choreographed Pajama Game in Washington state and then went on tour with DOROTHY STANLEY in Anything Goes, performing in Massachusetts, Maine, and upstate New York. Then Robert is off to St. Louis and Detroit for the JO ANNE WORLEY packages of Annie, which he is appearing in and staging....JEANNE LEHMAN was a guest star on Kate And Allie and then did a series of concert dates in Minneapolis doing numbers from several Broadway shows. She also played in Pittsburgh in My Fair Lady as Eliza, a role she has always wanted to play and finally had the chance to do so. Jeanne also did another favorite role--Maria in The Sound Of Music in the New England states....ALLISON SMITH was on MTV's School's Out '89 at William Paterson College in New Jersey in May....Veteran actress EILEEN BRENNAN was to play Miss Hannigan this summer in Kansas City, MO, but she fell off the stage during rehearsal and broke her leg and was replaced by her understudy....DEBBIE GIBSON will begin her Electric Youth World Tour in Worcester, MA this summer. On June 25th Debbie substituted for Shadoe Stevens in counting down the hits on American Top 40--coincidentally, the anniversary of her first #1 record on the survey, "Foolish Beat," last year. Her third hit from Electric Youth called "No More Rhyme" is in the national top 30, her eighth consecutive single release to do so....For the second summer, MONICA LEE GRADISCHEK is a regular performer at the Idlewild Amusement Park outside Pittsburgh doing various shows each day. Monica's exceptional versatility shines in her many varied types of shows: 1950s and 1960s oldies, country music, comedy routines, and a Wild West show....EDWIN BORDO is currently playing in The Sunshine Boys Off-Broadway at the Jewish Repertory Theatre in New York....As The World Turns' MARTHA BYRNE was again nominated for a Daytime Emmy for Best Juvenile Actress, an award she won in 1987....DOROTHY LOUDON just finished her nine-month much-acclaimed run in Daisy Miss Daisy in Chicago. She'll have a few weeks rest before rehearsals begin in September in New York for you-know-what....TANI TAYLOR POWERS will be traveling to St. Louis and Detroit to be in Annie, her first time in the show since she was Molly with CRISTINA CONOMOS and DEBBIE GIBSON back in 1983 on Long Island....Now that DAVID BRUMMEL's hair is back after his stint as "Daddy" Warbucks in Akron, Ohio last winter, he has been on All My Children as Reno Hoskins. David also began a 12-city tour of Evita in Dallas on July 11th....A former Miss Hannigan in a different Ohio production a couple of years back, DONNA RIZOR recently starred in Oliver! in Canton....SANDY MICHAELS will be in Setting Fires in Toronto until August 21st. The play is about Canada in the 1790s....CARYN LYN JONES and her sister Kristin had a lot of fun appearing in DEBBIE GIBSON's "Electric Youth" video playing "young Debbies." Caryn played Molly with SUSAN LIPTON in front of the 5 Broadway Annies at their reunion in Englewood, New Jersey in March 1986....AISLING MULHERN will play the title role in Annie in Auburn, New York in late July and early August. She had played the role last winter at the Carousel Dinner Theatre in Akron with DAVID BRUMMEL and RENE Glicker. Aisling (pronounced "Ashling") was born in Ireland and lives on Long Island....Birthdays: LARA BERK, 17 on July 12; TARA CARNES, 19 on July 16; LAURA BAKER, 17 on July 22; PATRICIA ANN PATTS, 22 on July 31; KIA GOODWIN, 16 on August 2; KIMBERLEE DAVIS, 17 on August 7; KIMBERLY STERN, 15 on August 12; THOMAS MEEHAN, 60 on August 14; KRISTEN SCHMITZ, 19 in August; ROBIN IGNICO, 19 on August 19; JENNIFER BLAIRE, 19 on August 20; ALLISON HARVEY, 16 on August 30.

ANNIE A SENIOR CITIZEN?!

Tricia and I were talking about how we editors could celebrate the 65th birthday of Annie in the pages of the AP issue closest to the actual anniversary on August 4th. After all, it is a pretty big birthday; just like President George Bush and former President Jimmy Carter, Little Orphan Annie becomes a "senior citizen" in 1989.

In commemoration of this important event, it seems appropriate to look back over all those many years in order to try to find the most memorable moments in Annie's life. Actually, there were two rather significant ones--one was in 1944 and one was in 1945. Let's turn back the clock and see what happened.

First, the weather in August of the year 1944 on the East Coast was just as we remember last summer, 1988, only even hotter. But each day, the record heat wave was forgotten as faithful readers opened their morning papers "LOA-first" in order to follow the most gripping sequence ever in Annie's life which was at that moment unfolding. Here is what was going on:

Like the Annie strip of the 1980s, the Annie strip of the 1940s involved frequent separations between Annie and her "Daddy" Warbucks. Back during World War II "Daddy" was off fighting in the war with Punjab and the Asp, and Annie and Sandy were having adventures of their own together back in the United States. That summer Annie was all excited when she learned that "Daddy" was back from overseas and they would soon be reunited. However, over the course of that fateful August, Annie became aware that the reason "Daddy" was back from the Army was that he was very ill from a mysterious fever, and it was obvious that he was in pretty bad shape and sinking fast.

"LEAPIN' LIZARDS!" readers were saying, "Gray would never let 'Daddy' DIE!"

But it soon became obvious that this was exactly what was about to happen. Harold Gray dragged out "Daddy"'s last days over the next couple of weeks, with Annie's doing her best to keep her chin up while he offered bits of philosophy to leave with her ("I taught you to take care of yourself--to be independent--the way I was raised...."). There was probably not a dry eye at any breakfast table in America during the next few days leading up to when "Daddy" hugged Annie for the last time and then was taken away on a boat bound for a hospital wrapped in blankets with Annie waving. As if that wasn't enough, Gray dragged out the melodrama for still another week, ending up with the famous strip* of Saturday, August 26, 1944. Warbucks was really gone!



But what prompted Gray to decide to rid the strip of Oliver Warbucks after twenty years? Well, as students of Harold Gray's work know, Gray was certainly no fan of President Roosevelt and his New Deal during FDR's long run in the Presidency. Here is how Bruce Smith told it in The History Of Little Orphan

*This strip was used appropriately on the invitation that was sent to all former Broadway and National Tour performers to attend the party in New York following the 2,377th and final performance of the Broadway show on January 2, 1983.

Annie: "In the summer of 1944 the Democratic Party nominated Roosevelt for an unprecedented fourth term as President. It was more than a 'Republican right down to his toenails' could stand. Clearly, the world was not big enough for both Franklin Roosevelt and Oliver Warbucks. Gray killed off Warbucks."

Reactions in mail to Gray from the LOA reading public were mixed, but most missed old "Daddy" and sent appropriate condolences to mark his passing. Who knows whether Gray at that time had even considered ever bringing Warbucks back somehow at a later date, but for all practical purposes Warbucks was forgotten as Annie began her legendary adventures with Mrs. Bleating-hart.

The Mrs. Bleating-hart sequence deserves another article the size of this one at some time in the future, but for now let us just recall that she was a phony society woman with a phony accent who took Annie in for two reasons: one, to make her look good in front of her equally phony friends; and two, so that she would have a built-in servant. Of course Annie wasn't allowed to have Sandy, so Mrs. Bleating-hart had him sent to the pound to be put to sleep (but he was rescued by the dogcatcher and kept safe for Annie).



Things went from bad to worse for Annie and hit rock-bottom by the end of 1944 when Mrs. Bleating-hart's only Christmas present to Annie was an old beat-up alarm clock (to make sure she was up early to start cleaning the house). However, in early 1945 Mrs. Bleating-hart was drowned accidentally while chasing Annie, and Annie was framed for her murder, put on trial, found guilty (by a jury of townspeople who would not hear of anything against dear Mrs. Bleating-hart), and sent to jail to await sentencing by Judge Fudge. Poor Sandy didn't know what to think as he walked forlornly out into the street outside her cell.

Can you imagine what it must have been like for dedicated LOA fans to open up their Sunday paper on July 22nd, 1945? There he was--"DADDY" WARBUCKS--right there in the strip!! He was driving by in his car with Punjab and recognized Sandy in the street, and then he got out and greeted a flabbergasted Sandy, who then led him to the jailhouse to prepare for the all-time Little Orphan Annie reunion in that memorable first panel on Monday, July 23rd.

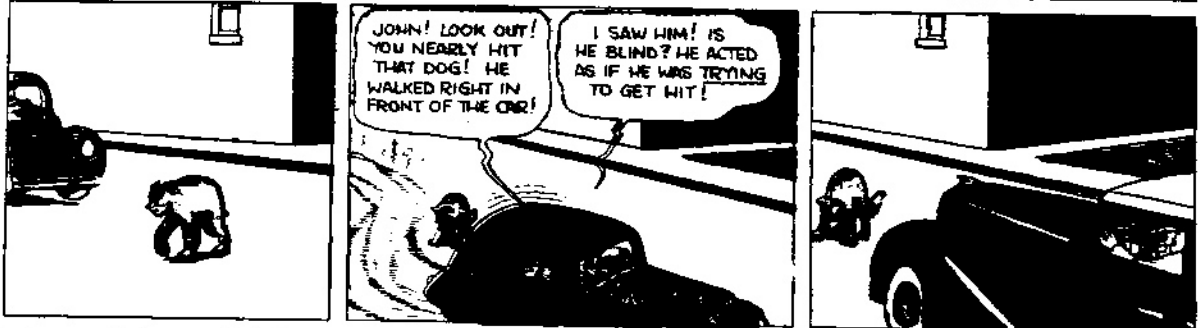
Not much was said about the circumstances of "Daddy"'s return for a couple of weeks, for he was hard at work reversing Annie's jail sentence (199 years) and proving that she was innocent so that her name would be cleared. Once that was done, he explained his secret to Annie--on Monday, August 27th.

Again, attempting to probe the inner mind of Harold Gray and the reason he decided to bring Warbucks back from the dead; perhaps it might not have happened--or at least not as soon as it did--had it not been for the death of FDR on April 12th, 1945. Perhaps Harold Gray, who had been thinking the previous year that the world wasn't big enough for them both, decided that with FDR gone, there was no reason not to bring "Daddy" back.

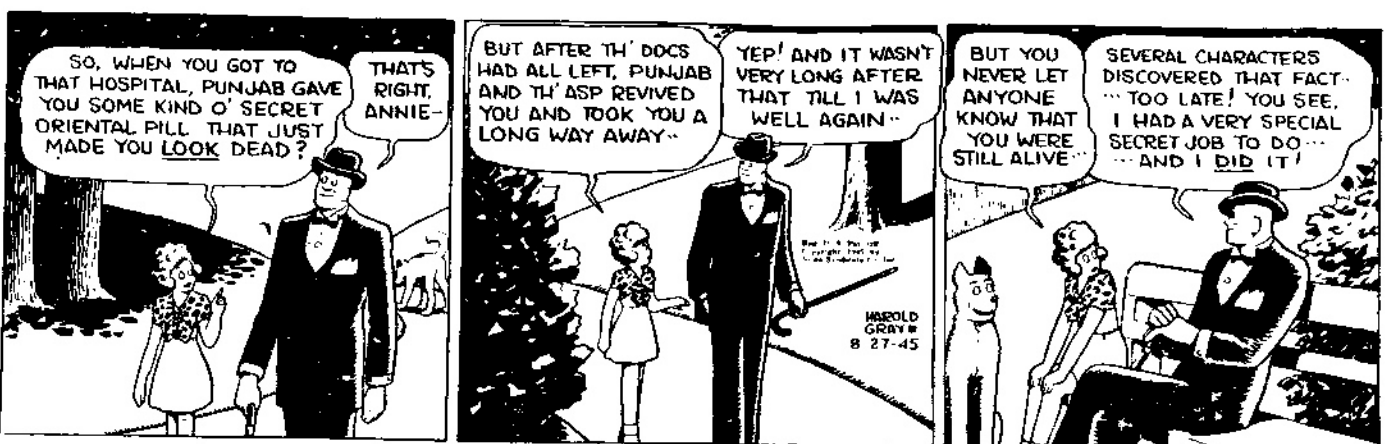
Anyway, in 65 years of reading about Annie, both in the Harold Gray version and the Leonard Starr version, the idea of characters from previous stories coming back into the strip is commonplace. But there certainly was no more dramatic "recurrence" of a character than that experienced by funny papers readers right along with Annie herself back on that July Monday back in 1945.

ORPHAN ANNIE



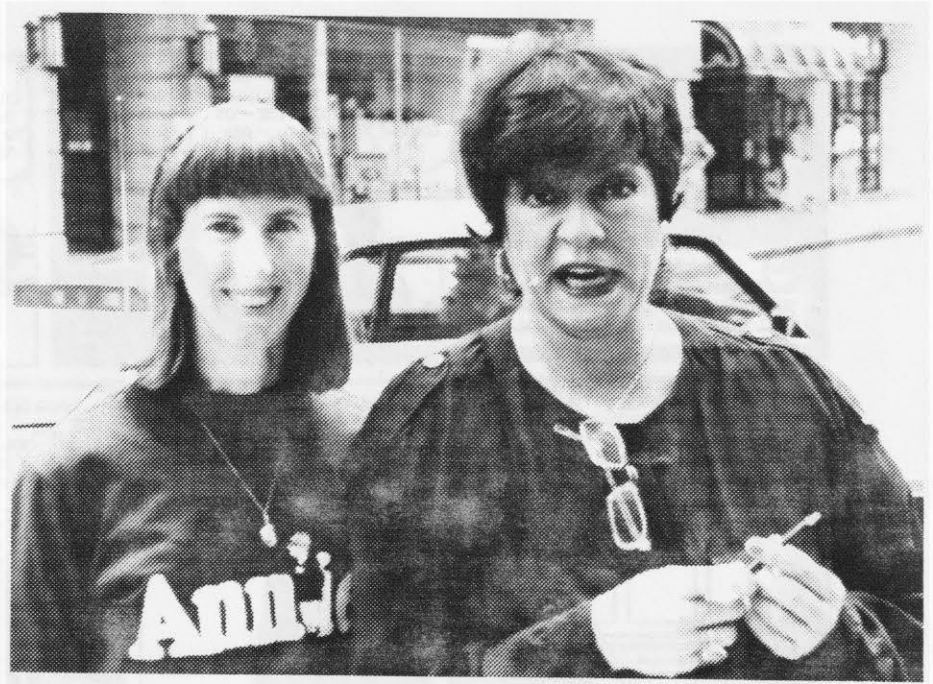


"DADDY" WARBUCKS' RETURN - Sunday, July 22, 1945



"Daddy" explains to Annie how he faked his own death - August 27, 1945

Ohio Annie fan Cynthia Moser
with Jo Anne Worley
Pittsburgh, PA



PITTSBURGH, PA - Top row, Taryn Kollar,
Jackie Urso, Gina Philistine, Stephany
Katsur, Lisa Marinacci; bottom row,
Heather Mazur (Annie), Christal Condon,
Lori Marinacci, Lisa Wurzel



submitted by Larry Benton

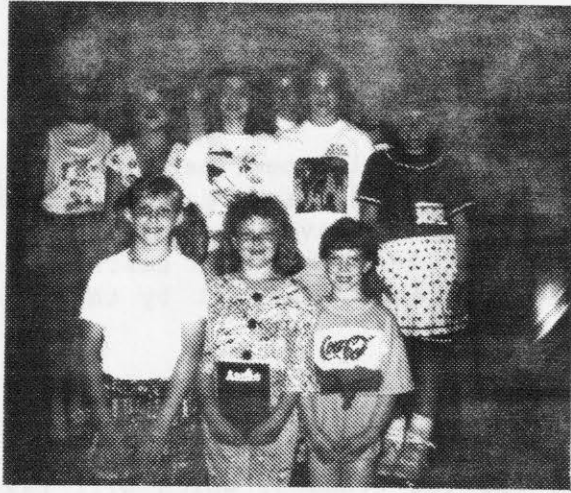


submitted by Cynthia Moser

Kelsi (left) and Cassidy Osborn
(with little sister Karli)
performing at Disneyland
Anaheim, CA

Paula Smith, Jennifer Stacy,
Elizabeth Boggio, Jaclyn Lincicome
performing in Akron, OH

submitted by Larry Skrdla

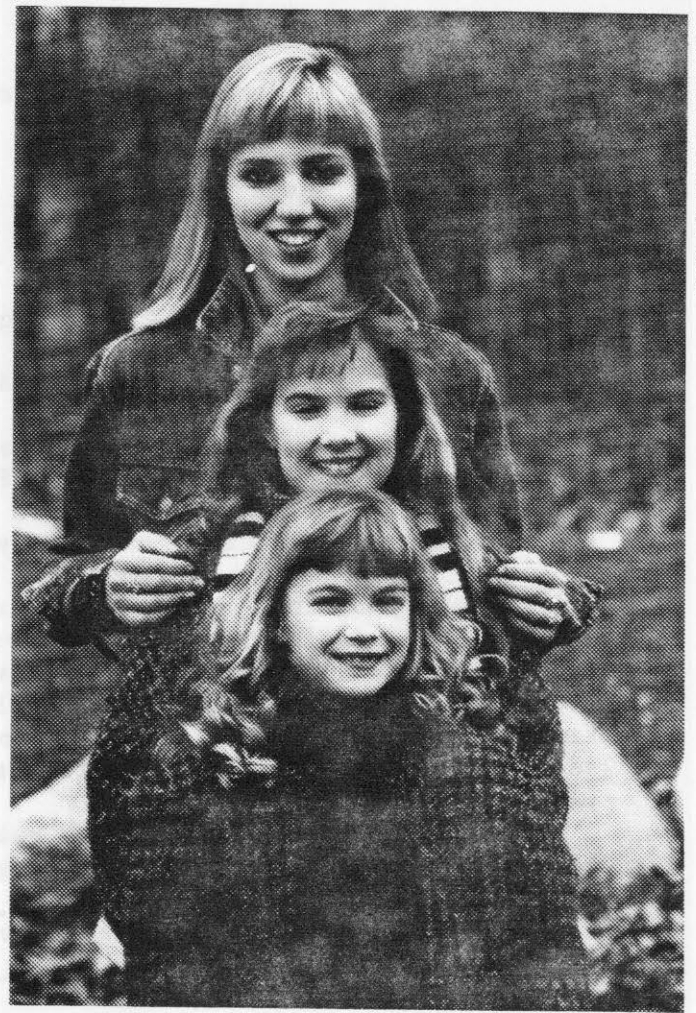


OAK HARBOR, OH - Top row, Jenny Mills (Annie), Angie Laughlin, Rachel Harder, Amy Wares, Angie O'Connor, Kelly Wendley, Shannon Peiffer, Tracy DeMargos, Lisa Lochotzki; bottom row, Cyndy Lawrence, Alana Renfro, Leah Harder



California Annie fan Tammy Saphiloff sent in this shot of Christmas at her house with two of her favorite friends

submitted by Caryn Lyn Jones



Debbie Gibson had some good help in her "Electric Youth" video from Caryn Lyn Jones (center) and her sister Kristin, who played Debbie as a 10-year-old and Debbie as a 7-year-old. The picture was taken last spring in the Gibsons' yard at the time the video was shot. Debbie and Caryn go back many years as fellow performers at showcases in NYC during the mid '80s.



EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ - Top row, Meghan Roberts (afternoon Annie), Missy Woodruff, Karen Pierson, Heidi Pierson, Tracey Shull; bottom row, Danielle Erkoboni, Amy Warschawski, Amy Erenrich (evening Annie)

MORE ON ANNIE 2....

Dorothy Loudon As Miss Hannigan

Broadway's first Miss Hannigan, Dorothy Loudon, will repeat her Tony award winning role in Annie 2. Ray Thorne will again play FDR, the role he played in Annie from Goodspeed to "2,377." As of this writing, we have not heard whether the role of Oliver Warbucks or the remaining adult leads had been cast. A new Sandy is also being looked for. We will know more about the cast by the time our September issue of Annie People comes out.

Open Call for Annie and the Orphans

As was the case in the Broadway show and its touring companies over the years, there will be an open call for Annie and the Orphans, which will take place on September 11th and 12th in New York (as of when we went to press the location of the auditions had not yet been selected; watch Show Business and Backstage over the next few weeks to find out where the call will take place--it will probably be in a Broadway theater because of the anticipated large numbers at the call). As in the first play--since this is a "continuation"--the character of Annie will again be 11 years old. Presumably, the characters of the Orphans--we don't know how many--will be some younger, some older. But you will find out all about that when you come to the open call. Suggestion: Read the section of the Annie People interview with Martin Charnin about his auditions (AP #23, page 7) before you come.

The casting director has already reportedly received an "avalanche" of calls from hopeful parents, and judging from the quantity of mail we have received at AP since the news of Annie 2's coming hit the newspapers, we expect a lot of AP readers will be joining the call. Lots of luck to all of you!

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