

# Annie People



The Little Orphan Annie Fan Club Newsletter

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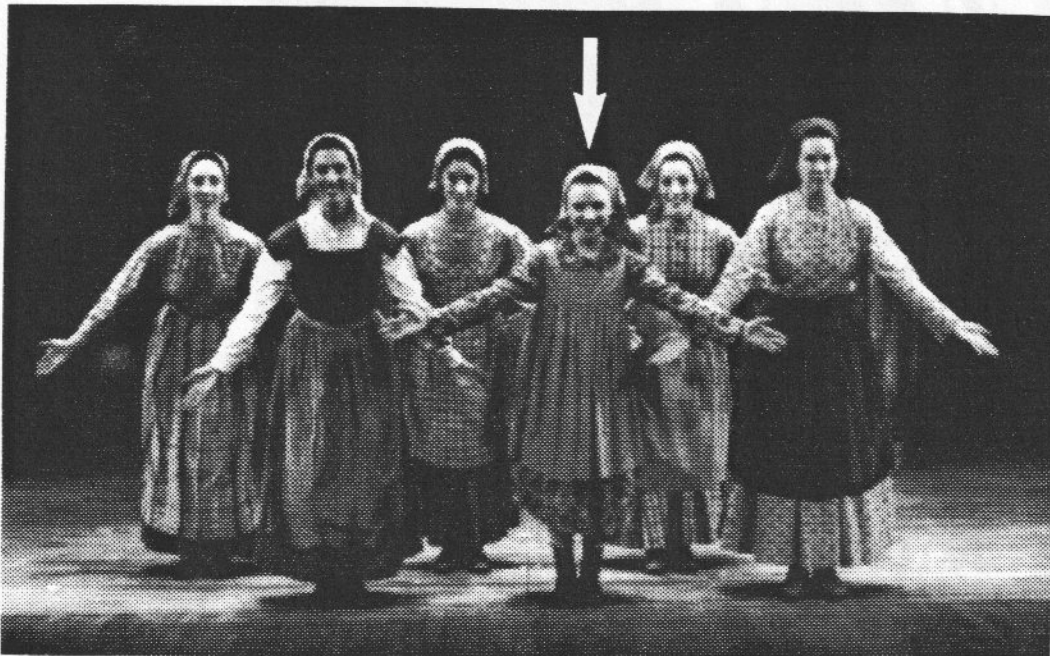


## FAVORITE ANNIE STARS ARE BACK ON THE STAGE

**Andrea McArdle**, 32, is back on Broadway starring in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *State Fair*. This is the stage adaptation of the film that was made in 1945 and featured the Oscar-winning and #1 hit song "It Might As Well Be Spring." Andrea's singing of the famous song is a highlight of the show. Co-starring with Andrea is **Donna McKechnie**, well-remembered for her portrayal of Mrs. Sheila Kelly in the 1993-94 Variety Arts Theater *Annie Warbucks*. It has been announced that Andrea's Broadway album will become a TV special later this year.

**Sarah Jessica Parker**, 31, also returns to Broadway this spring in *How To Succeed Without Really Trying*, playing opposite Matthew Broderick. Radio ads for the show mention that "the last time Sarah was on Broadway, she was singing about how the sun will come out tomorrow as one of the original Annies."

**Aileen Quinn**, 24, sent us this picture of herself in the national tour of *Fiddler on the Roof*, which will be running until July. Watch for it coming to your area.



Submitted by Aileen Quinn

SHOW

# Harve Presnell's second time around is a charm

By Susan Wloszczyna  
USA TODAY

"I started as a star, and now I have to climb the ladder again."  
That voice. It's a thunderclap of sheer virility.

The booming baritone practically shakes the telephone receiver out of your hand. No static would be foolhardy enough to interrupt.

It's the unshakable Harve Presnell, back in movies at age 62.

After a 25-year absence, he has four films this year, including the Coen brothers' acclaimed Minnesota-based black comedy *Fargo* (which expands to 411 screens Friday).

He met the inscrutable siblings for the first time at their favorite hangout, the Shangri-La Hotel in old Santa Monica. "We talked for two hours. Finally I said, 'Don't you want me to do the scene?' Joel said, 'Oh, yeah. If you want to.' Ethan said, 'That's a good idea.'"

There was never a doubt the part of the gruff, tightfisted father-in-law who unwittingly sets the murderous mayhem in motion was his.

He's also in Bill Murray's *Large as Life*, stars in the indie feature *The Whole Wide World* and is about to shoot *The Chamber*, based on the John Grisham best seller.

Why such a long break? "I've been doing eight shows a week on Broadway, and they forgot where I was," he says with a resonating laugh. "I haven't had a day off."

He began as an opera singer at 16. Following in the boot prints of Howard Keel (*Kiss Me Kate*), the strap-



No more *Daddy Warbucks*: Harve Presnell is back on the big screen as a tightfisted father-in-law in the dark *Fargo*.

ping 6-foot-4 leading man burst onto the big screen walling manly songs opposite Debbie Reynolds in 1964's *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*.

He had already done the show on Broadway with Tammy Grimes (*The Music Man*'s Meredith Willson wrote the part for him). The film, for

which he won a most promising newcomer Golden Globe, should have been his stairway to cinema fame.

Too bad the Hollywood musical was rapidly going the way of the brontosaurus just as Presnell was making his mark.

After a few forgettable films (in-

cluding 1965's *When the Boys Meet the Girls*, the misbegotten rehash of *Girl Crazy* with Herman's Hermits and Liberace) and one notorious flop, 1969's *Paint Your Wagon* with Clint Eastwood and Lee Marvin, Presnell retreated back to the stage and "old *Arnie* forever. From 1979

## Lee Marvin's 'Wagon' pain

The 1969 film of Lester and Loretta's Western musical *Paint Your Wagon* was pretty much doomed. Especially considering that Harve Presnell, whose rendition of "They Call the Wind Mariah" was the lone highlight, was the only real star in the cast.

Even grizzled Lee Marvin was shaking at the prospect of exposing his vocal falsettos. Presnell: "Lee tended to drink a little. He came to me in his inimitable, fashion- and said, 'Listen, old, I'm nervous. I said, 'Lee, don't drink. You are really going to destroy yourself when you sing drunk.' He said, 'It's the only way I can get through it.'"

"Lee got caught up in reaching for something he couldn't get to. There was an 80-piece orchestra waiting for him and he disappeared. So, instead, they put him at a place with a few drinks and he did a hell of a job with *Wagon*." *Fun Star*

domed billionaire more than 2,000 times. "All the Annies are grown now," says Presnell, who worked with such actresses as Sarah Jessica Parker. "They put their arms around my neck and say, 'Remember me? I'm the one who loves you.'"

He returned to film to spend more time with his six children and 12 grandchildren. Could it be he was tired of hearing *Tomorrow*? "A little bit," he snickers. "As they say in the parody, it's redundant."

Presnell is in an expansive, yarn-spinning mood, as befits a guy who grew up on a Modesto, Calif., ranch, rode in rodeos and now lives in Colorado with his wife of 29 years, Veeva. For fun, he flies airplanes and claims to have logged more flight time than any other civilian pilot.

He was ticked off when Albert Finney did *Daddy Warbucks* in the movie version directed by John Huston. "I own that character. But we won. It was a disaster. I met Huston at the premiere at Radio City and asked him, 'What were you thinking?'"

"He told me," says Presnell, his voice sinking into a Hustonian rumble. "Listen, we can do them bad, too, kid. They cost a little more, but we can do them bad, too."

He would love to do a movie musical again and has high hopes for *Evita* with Madonna. But, "I've lost the will to gamble, and we've lost the people who can make the magic happen." And he decries Broadway's electronic age, where voices are miked and, worse, prerecorded.

"I'm not going back unless there's something exciting and new."

## CALENDAR OF ANNIE-VERSARIES

### 1996

#### JANUARY

- 2 The Broadway show closed at the Uris Theatre after 2,377 performances, 1983
- 3 The 1986 National Tour opened in Rochester, 1986
- 5 Sandy's first appearance in the comic strip, 1925
- 14 Broadway's fifth Annie, ALYSON KIRK, will be 26
- 15 The 3rd National's first Annie, ROSANNE SORRENTINO, will be 28
- 20 *Little Orphan Annie* comic strip creator HAROLD GRAY was born, 1894
- 20 *Annie 2: Miss Hannigan's Revenge* finished its one-month run in D.C., 1990
- 25 Annie in the 2nd National, MARISA MORELL, will be 26
- 26 Annie in the 2nd National and the 1st National, LOUANNE, will be 26
- 29 Allison Smith became Broadway's fourth Annie, 1980
- 29 *Annie Warbucks*, starring Lauren Gaffney, opened in Chicago, 1992
- 30 *Annie Warbucks* finished its seven-month run in New York, 1994

#### FEBRUARY

- 7 The Broadway show's 2,000th performance, 1982
- 28 Shelley Bruce became Broadway's second Annie, 1978

#### MARCH

- 1 The Broadway preview opened at the Kennedy Center in Washington, 1977
- 1 The 5 Broadway Annies had a reunion at an Englewood, NJ Annie show, 1986
- 4 Annie in the 1st National, THEDA STEMLER, will be 29
- 6 Sarah Jessica Parker became Broadway's third Annie, 1979
- 23 The 1st National Tour opened in Toronto, 1978
- 25 Broadway's third Annie, SARAH JESSICA PARKER, will be 31

#### APRIL

- 11 The 1984 National Tour's Annie, LISA LYNNE, will be 23
- 21 The Broadway show opened at the Alvin Theatre, 1977
- 21 Andrea McArdle became Broadway's first Annie, 1977

#### MAY

- 3 The London show opened at the Victoria Palace Theatre, 1978
- 5 Broadway's second Annie, SHELLEY BRUCE, will be 31
- Annie in the 4th National, KATHLEEN SISK, will be 24
- Harold Gray died at age 74, 1968
- 17 *Annie 2*, starring Lauren Gaffney, opened at Goodspeed-at-Chester, 1990
- 19 Bill Berloni found Sandy in the pound in Connecticut, 1976
- 21 The movie premiered in New York, Los Angeles, and Toronto, 1982

#### JUNE

- 5 *Annie* won 7 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, 1977
- 7 *Annie*'s composer, CHARLES STROUSE, will be 68
- 22 The 2nd National Tour opened in San Francisco, 1978
- 28 The movie's Annie, AILEEN QUINN, will be 25

#### JULY

- 8 *Annie 2* finished its two-month workshop run at Goodspeed-at-Chester, 1990
- 8 *Annie Warbucks*, starring Kathryn Zaremba, opened in New York, 1993
- 18 Annie in *Annie 2: Miss Hannigan's Revenge*, DANIELLE FINDLEY, will be 18
- 22 Allison Smith's 1,000th performance on Broadway, 1982
- 24 The 1984 National Tour opened in Atlanta, 1984
- 27 The 1986 National Tour's Annie, SARAH BETHANY REYNOLDS, will be 23
- 31 The 2nd National's first Annie, PATRICIA ANN PATTS, will be 29

#### AUGUST

- 5 Harold Gray's *Little Orphan Annie* comic strip began, 1924
- 5 The movie's director, JOHN HUSTON, was born, 1906
- 10 *Annie*, starring Kristen Vigard, opened at the Goodspeed Opera House, 1976
- 14 *Annie*'s writer, THOMAS MEEHAN, will be 67
- 28 John Huston died at age 81, 1987
- 29 Broadway's Sandy died at age 16, 1990

#### SEPTEMBER

- 4 Principal filming of the movie ended, 1981
- 7 Annie in the 1991-92 National Tour, SARA ZELLE, will be 15
- 8 The 4th National's first Annie, MOLLIE HALL, will be 26
- 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
- 24 Annie in *Annie Warbucks*, KATHRYN ZAREMBA, will be 13
- 27 Annie meets "Daddy" Warbucks in the comic strip, 1924

#### OCTOBER

- 3 The 3rd National Tour opened in Dallas, 1979
- 16 Annie in *Annie 2* and *Annie Warbucks*, LAUREN GAFFNEY, will be 17
- 18 Ann Marie Mudge Warbucks was born, 1922 (movie version)
- 20 The 1992-93 National Tour opened in Bloomington, Indiana, 1992
- 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 was born, 1922 (play version)
- 31 The 1991-92 National Tour opened in Rochester, 1991

#### NOVEMBER

- 2 *Little Orphan Annie* Sunday comic strip began, 1924
- 5 Broadway's first Annie, ANDREA MCARDLE, will be 33
- 11 Annie in the 1992-93 National Tour, HEATHER SOROKA, will be 15
- 18 *Annie: A Royal Adventure*, starring ASHLEY JOHNSON, aired on ABC-TV, 1995
- 21 Annie in the 1991-92 National Tour, MISSY GOLDBERG, will be 15
- 24 *Annie*'s lyricist and director, MARTIN CHARNIN, will be 62
- 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 27
- 22 *Annie 2: MHR*, starring Danielle Findley, opened in Washington, D.C., 1989
- 24 The first *Little Orphan Annie* movie, starring Mitzi Green, premiered, 1932
- 27 Annie in the 2nd National, KRISTI COOMBS, will be 25
- 31 Annie was left on the Orphanage steps, 1922

## 'State Fair' is long on apple-pie appeal

NEW YORK — *State Fair* is the last and lightest Rodgers & Hammerstein score to make it to the stage, so it's easy to expect the dregs. But the show (★★★ out of four) that opened Wednesday at Broadway's Music Box Theater is as stageworthy and engaging as some of this hitmaking team's supposed classics.

It was already old-fashioned when written for the screen in 1945, and now this story of Iowa farmers who find blue ribbons and romance at the fair can't be recommended to all.

Mainly, you have to accept the corn factor. Written during the era of post-war populism, with a utopian vision of rural America, the title song is full of homespun humor that lauds "the best state fair in the state." If

### Stage Review

By David Patrick Stearns

you wince at that, best to stay away.

Others will find one of the year's more winningly cast musicals, with a sturdy new libretto by Tom Briggs and Louis Mattioli that makes dramatic sense of the seven songs interpolated into the plot from other shows. Who cares about the blue ribbons? Just enjoy the story's feather-weight charm. Co-directors James Hammerstein (Oscar's son) and Randy Skinner provide lots of room for star turns in ways that few modern shows do.

John Davidson and Kathryn Crosby provide the genial framework for

the romantic coming-of-age of their children, amiably played by Andrea McArdle (*Annie*'s original star) and Ben Wright (Jack the Giant Killer in *Into the Woods*). But the objects of their affections generate a Dionysian heat that sends the show airborne.

Scott Wise, one of Broadway's best dancers, has never been so stylish as in his portrayal of an amorous newspaper reporter. Donna McKechnie, the original Cassie in *A Chorus Line*, plays a big-band performer who dances with her own mesmerizing magnetism. Because everybody onstage is having a blast, it hardly matters that the scenery is flimsy and the choreography is so-so. This may be what the golden age of Broadway was really about.

© USA Today

# Opening Night Was 'Hari'-Kiri

Ill-fated '67 musical returns, and creators hope new production is a different 'Mata'

By **LENORE SKENAZY**

Daily News Staff Writer

**J**UST HOW HORRIBLE WAS THE opening night of the musical "Mata Hari" in 1967? "I use it the same way a Stanislavski actor conjures up the death of a parent," says the show's lyricist, Martin Charnin.

You would, too, if you needed to summon tears.

One of theater history's greatest musical fiascos, "Mata Hari" gets a new lease on life starting Thursday at the York Theatre. On *this* opening night, one presumes, no sets will collapse, no cables will hit the lead actor in the head, no straying spotlights will catch the leading lady in her undies. And this time, the authors swear, when she dies, she stays dead.

Unfortunately, recalls Edward Thomas, the show's composer, that was not the case 29 years ago. "There's an eight-man firing squad, 'Ready, aim, fire!'" he reenacts. Boom! She's dead. "Then the captain administers the *coup de grâce* — a bullet to the head." Bang! She's deader. And then? "An itch."

Dressed entirely in black except for her oh-so-conspicuous white gloves, the late lamented Mata Hari reached up and scratched her nose.

All this has provided endless fodder for chroniclers of the theater. In the midst of their hilarity, however, most of them note that the script itself showed great potential. "The one genuinely ambitious musical of the year," is what William Goldman called "Mata Hari" in his book "The Season."

These days, the authors generally concur that their difficulties began the moment David Merrick, the greatest producer of them all, fell in love with their piece. He snagged the greatest director of them all, Vincent Minnelli.

Now, Minnelli was a great director. Of movies. Big, bright baubles like "Meet Me in St. Louis" and "Gigi." Only problem was, "Mata Hari" was a serious meditation on the horrors of war and betrayal. The three writers wanted to make A Statement, Charnin recalls. "[Minnelli] wanted to direct 'The Student Prince.'"

Minnelli got his way, as did the costume designer, who devised outfits so ornate they clanked, and the set designer, whose overwrought scenery re-

Martin Charnin revived his 1967 *Mata Hari* this winter, starring Marguerite MacIntyre and Allen Fitzpatrick from *Annie Warbucks* in 1993-94. Unfortunately, the run this year was a short one as well. The show's best song, "Maman" (French for Mama), survives in a recording by Martin Charnin himself on an Extended Play 7" 1977 record called *5 Great Songs from Not-So-Great Shows*.



**MIND OVER 'MATA':** Marguerite MacIntyre has the title role in the York Theatre's revival of "Mata Hari," which also features Allen Fitzpatrick.

fused to budge. At one point, in fact, a terrace and chateau were supposed to separate and glide off stage, but only half actually did so. Stranded aboard the stubborn other half, the actor finally cradled his head in his hands.

All this might not have been so bad, insists Jerome Coopersmith, the book writer, had opening night not been hosted by Lynda Bird Johnson and the Women's National Democratic Club.

"The audience consisted of cabinet secretaries, members of the Supreme Court and other VIPs," he recalls. "In a sense, these were the people who were apologists for the Vietnam War."

And just what was the opening num-

ber that fateful night?

"This Is Not a Very Nice War."

"It was like doing a command performance of 'Fiddler on the Roof' for Yasser Arafat," moans Charnin.

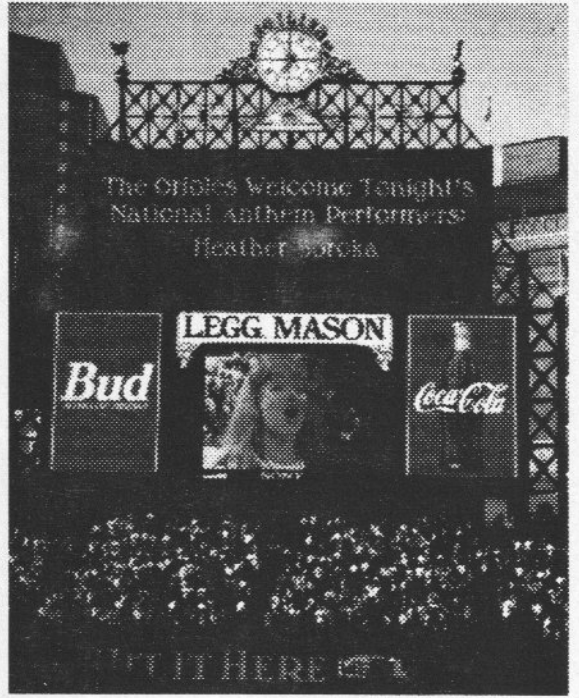
This time around, Charnin himself is the director. No changes have been made in the script, but plenty have been made in everything else. The sets are simple, the costumes fluid, and the war is over. The authors are even ready to see the show again. All they are saying is: Give this piece a chance.

"Mata Hari" is at the York Theatre, 619 Lexington Ave., at 54th St. Tickets: \$30-\$35. For more info: (212) 935-5820.

Submitted by Cynthia Moser



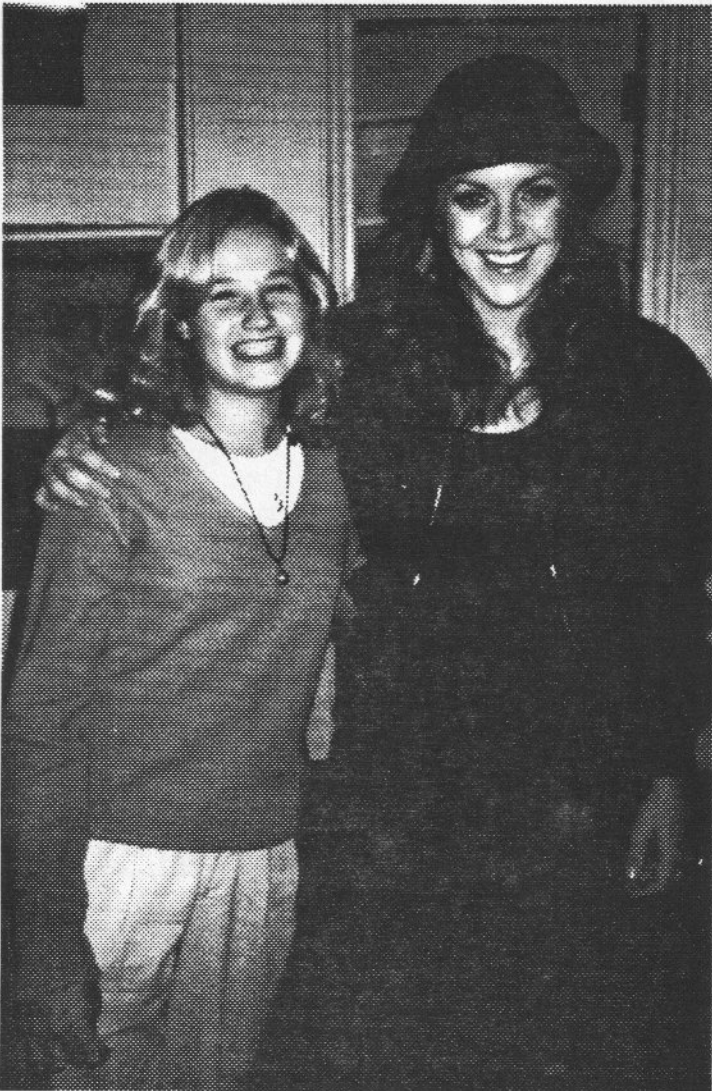
1996 National Tour in Akron, Ohio in February 1996—Frankie Goldstone (Pepper), Christina Lynn Skleros (July), Grace Ann Pisani (Tessie), Dina Goldstone (Duffy), Lindsay Canuel (Molly), Laura Baum (Kate)



Submitted by Heather Soroka

Heather Soroka performing the National Anthem for the Baltimore Orioles.

Submitted by Heather Soroka



Two Annies - Heather Soroka, Annie in the 1992-93 National Tour, greets Andrea McArdle backstage at Andrea's latest Broadway show, *State Fair*.

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Annie

# Leapin' Lizards!



The "tomorrow" girl  
is back!



# Annie

## What a past! What a future!

Since first arriving on the scene in 1924, the world's most famous orphan has charmed the world with her grit and spunk. Now she's ready to beguile a whole new generation.

Annie's a classic. She has been up to her eyeballs in adventure in the funnies, the movies, and on stage—through war and peace and through good times and bad. The girl who belted out "Tomorrow" on Broadway is now bringing her gentle wit and strong values to today's families.

Between 1977 and 1983, the musical "Annie" ran 2,377 performances on Broadway. It has been translated into 21 languages and been performed in

27 foreign countries. Seen by more than 20 million people, the musical has grossed well over \$200 million. National tours continue even today! And the musical served as the basis for a 1982 Columbia Pictures movie produced by Ray Stark.

Annie, her dog Sandy and Daddy Warbucks continue to make friends on the comics pages of newspapers around the world. An astounding 94% of newspaper readers in a recent TMS survey recognized Annie—including 92% of readers with children in their households.

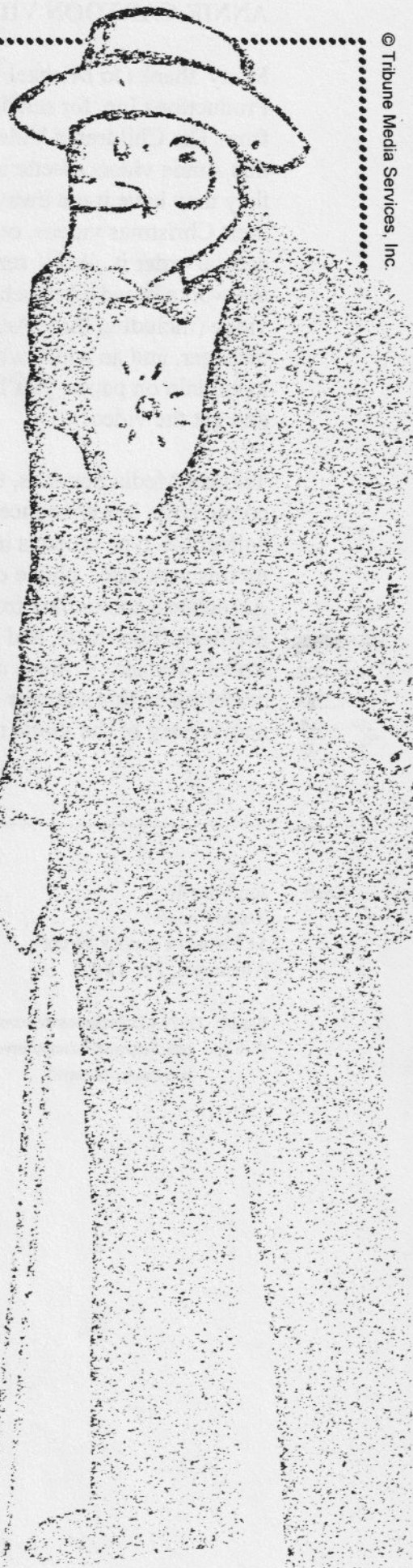
Isn't Annie the kind of pal you want on your team?

For character licensing or syndication information, contact Tribune Media Services at 800/245-6536.

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## ANNIE CARTOON VIDEOCASSETTE!

Many thanks to Michael Usan from Batfilm Productions Inc. for sending us this review from The Children's Video Report. Look for this Annie videocassette in your video store; they may have it put away in the back among their Christmas videos, or you may have to special order it. A TV series next fall is in the works based on the characters in this video (including three Annies: a child, a teenager, and an adult, which is very difficult to explain on paper; you'll just have to go and get the video!).

Tribune Media Services, the licensee for the comic strip, has announced there are some collectible-type projects in the works coming up this year also: phone cards from TCM Associates, cookie jars from Treasure Craft, needlecraft products, and a porcelain doll by Robert Tonner. Tribune also plans to begin celebrations this summer for the 20th anniversary of the *Annie* musical.

■ Videos for children 6-12-years-old ■

**LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE'S**

**VERY ANIMATED CHRISTMAS**

GoodTimes Home Video 1995. 22 min

\$14.99. Ages 6-12. Animated. CV# 51:

**Warning:** *Annie is tough; in an early scene she plunges a boy's head into an icy pond until he confesses to hurting a dog.*

This fast-paced, slickly-produced story is a rip-off of Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol.' Ever so, it manages to slip into the story some excellent messages, particularly for girls. It also boasts a soundtrack and voiceovers that are a cut above the norm.

Oliver Warbucks is acting ogre-ish on Christmas Eve, insisting his employees work late. His loyal sidekick, Punjab, is giving handouts to the needy and stumbles on Annie and her dog, Sandy. When he brings them home, Warbucks kicks them out and his conscience (in the form of the ghosts of past, present and future) catches up with him. His heart yearns to help Annie, he finds her and becomes her legal father.

Striking middle ground, the video has a sophisticated screenplay for older viewers and bright animation for younger ones. The messages range from the practical (don't take gifts from strangers) to the philosophical (your decisions will determine your fate) in what is a very tightly written story. Good editing, too. JP

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Little Orphan  
**Annie**