

Annie People



A Newsletter for Annie Fans

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Artwork by Tricia Trozzi

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Hello again, friends of Annie! This marks our third issue of Annie People, and by far our largest issue thus far. A lot has been happening in the world of Annie lately, most notably an excellent tour in the East plus numerous other productions cropping up helping to keep our favorite red-haired orphan alive and well on the stage. Also, right at the time of this printing, the movie is back with us all over this area for Memorial Day weekend matinees. It is always great to know that both musical and movie Annie performers are reading and enjoying Annie People, as well as lots of Annie fans like us, including LOA comic strip devotees. This issue introduces a new feature, "Collector's Corner," which will be devoted to unusual Annie collectibles. Do you have anything you would like to write about? We welcome any contributions to the newsletter and encourage readers to send in anything they would like to share with other Annie People. Speaking of collectibles, I just received a new candidate for my LARGEST Annie collectible. For my birthday on May 25th, Tricia presented me with the Knickerbocker 46-inch Annie rag doll, which makes my Annie room seem a lot smaller, or at least a whole lot more crowded!

ALLISON SMITH SHINES AS ANNIE AT WESTBURY MUSIC FAIR Fine Orphan Troupe Brings Annie Back "In the Round"

On Saturday, April 2, 1983, I had the pleasure of seeing Annie on the stage at the Westbury Music Fair on Long Island outside New York City during its 5-week limited engagement there. The cast was composed almost entirely of former Broadway and national touring company performers, and many were familiar to those who had seen Annie on stage sometime during the last few years.

Returning to the role she held on Broadway between January 1980 and September 1982 for a record 1,056 performances was Allison Smith. For me, it was extra special to learn that Allison would be playing the lead, since she was the first Annie I ever saw on Broadway. Today she seemed even more radiant in her performance than she did last summer on Broadway when she was already beyond a thousand performances and nearing the end of her run. Perhaps a little half-year rest from Annie has piqued her enthusiasm. There was a noticeable difference in Allison's singing voice, which is now showing new power and maturity. But how fortunate it is that at 13 she is still of diminutive Annie-size

so that she could come back on this tour to fill the role. It was a big treat for all of us to see Allison, who is a serious and dedicated performer already branching out into new areas. It is sad that the day will finally come when Allison Smith will become too tall for the role of Annie, and that day will be Annie's, and our, loss.

Also a big treat on the bill was Marcia Lewis back as Miss Hannigan, a role she played on Broadway during 1981 and part of 1982. Her exuberance as the infamous harridan of the Orphanage has become a delight for all fortunate enough to see her in that role. From a national touring company of Annie some years back was Gary Holcombe as a fine "Daddy" Warbucks. Robert Fitch was a superb Rooster, the best I have ever seen. It was he who originated the role on Broadway back in the Shelton-Loudon-McArdle days in '77, and seeing him was one of the highlights of the day. As for Sandy, today he was the original, one-and-only, incomparable Sandy, right from Broadway. I guess his vacation was a short one. Welcome back, old friend.

In this production was a conglomeration of seasoned Broadway and national touring company Annie Orphans, who seemed as if they had been together on the stage for years. Leading the pack was Jennine Babo, who has spent almost half her life on the Annie Broadway stage, first as Molly, then Tessie, then Duffy. At Westbury she was back to being Molly, still small enough next to Allison to make the "Maybe" sequence as convincing and touching as ever. Equally at home in their (sometimes) new roles at Westbury were former Annie national touring company alumnae Tammy Kauffman (Pepper), Kristi Coombs (Duffy), Jennifer Gottesman (Tessie), Arlene Kulis (Kate), and Denise Meredith (July). I have always considered "It's The Hard-Knock Life" my favorite part of any Annie production, right from my first seeing in London two years ago, and this show by these excellent Orphans was no exception.

I know that the difficulties encountered by producing Annie in a "Theater in the Round" were numerous, but it seemed to be accomplished just fine. Seeing the entrances and exits done by running up and down the aisles was a thrill to the audience, especially to the young children present at this Saturday matinee (Miss Hannigan's scream, at learning of Oliver Warbucks' decision to adopt Annie, was done halfway up the aisle, and lifted everyone within a ten foot radius a yard off their seats).

All in all, the current mini-tour (from Westbury they go to Valley Forge) of Annie is thoroughly enjoyable, priced right for the whole family to go, and a must for Annie fans in this area. Keep your eyes and ears open in your part of the country for tours, dinner theaters, etc. Maybe the Annie mystique is so strong that none of us will ever be without a stage production of Annie for very long. If we continue to have casts the quality of this one doing Annie on the stage, that just may happen.



WITH ANNIE AND ORPHANS--Jon Merrill and Tricia Trozzi with, from middle left, Jennine Babo, Allison Smith, Tammy Kauffman; from bottom left, Jennifer Gottesman, Kristi Coombs, Denise Meredith, Arlene Kulis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I thoroughly enjoyed reading your "Annie" newsletter. It's fun to know what the other Annie people are doing...I can't wait to get more issues of Annie People! It's great!...I love the puzzle crossword in Issue #2...

Robin Ignico
Los Angeles, CA

There is no Little Orphan Annie #4 comic in the Dell series and I got Bob Overstreet to terminate its listing. FC 206 has the publication date and contents that would have been appropriate for a #4.

Rich Olson
New Orleans, LA

Rich was the publisher of The LOA Reader, which ran for five issues in 1979-1980. It contained a lot of great material on Annie, and Rich has said that I can reprint parts of it in Annie People. Thanks! --Ed.

I think it's a great idea to make Annie People a regular thing. I am sure a lot of people will contribute letters and possibly stories and recommendations, best buys, and other writings to advise people how to advance their Annie memorabilia collections...

Julie Shaflucas
Morris Plains, NJ

See the next issue for a feature story on Julie and her Annie room. --Ed.

In reference to the question in the first issue about touring company Annies, I have seen the following: Kathy-Jo Kelly (Detroit), Theda Stemler (Detroit), Marisa Morell (Cleveland), Kristi Coombs (Cleveland), Mollie Hall (Toledo), and Bridget Walsh (Detroit).

Larry Skrdla
Lambertville, MI

And Becky Snyder did it in Washington. Anyone know of any others? --Ed.

When you asked about reprints of the strip, did you mean in comic books too? Annie strips were the stories in some early Popular Comics and most issues of Super Comics as well as LOA titles in the Four-Color series. Big Little Books and related items are also strip reprints. When you get a run of these comics, you have quite a bit more than just small bits of the strip.

Doug Kendig
Cassidy, BC, Canada

I really liked your Annie People -- Good Luck!

Aileen Quinn
Yardley, PA

ANNIE STARS SINCE ANNIE...

SHELLEY BRUCE's book, Tomorrow Is Today, in which she talks about her serious illness, will be released in November. Said Shelley about her hospital stay, "...actually it was the discipline learned while working in a Broadway show that paved the way for my recovery..." She was recently awarded the National American Cancer Courage Award by First Lady Nancy Reagan in a ceremony at the White House and was named "Jerseyan of the Week" in the March 27 issue of the Newark (N.J.) Star Ledger. Congratulations, Shelley, and happy 18th birthday on May 5...An actor of several varied roles, ALBERT FINNEY will portray Pope John Paul II in a TV movie on CBS in December. It will cover the life of the pope and will be filmed partially on location at the Vatican...ROBIN IGNICO has been in numerous TV guest star roles this year, including a recurring role on Trapper John, M.D. She was also in two TV movies, Don't Go to Sleep and Cry for the Strangers, and wrote me recently about a visit by TONI ANN GISONDI to the Ignicos' new home in California...ANDREA McARDLE will be doing They're Playing Our Song at the Bucks County Playhouse in Pennsylvania this summer. That's the same place where AILEEN QUINN and numerous Broadway and national touring company Orphans got their feet wet in theater before they auditioned for Annie...What has ALLISON SMITH been doing? Annie, of course...Word comes from the office of MARTIN CHARNIN that plans are still underway to bring Annie back to Broadway for Christmas, although nothing is definite yet. Keep your fingers crossed!...Question: What do the two movies Annie and Monty Python's The Meaning of Life have in common? Nothing, you say? Wrong! They were both choreographed by ARLENE PHILLIPS...A preliminary draft of a movie follow-up to Annie has been written by CAROL SOBIESKI. So far it sounds as if the new movie will not be an actual "sequel," such as the one being planned for the stage by MARTIN CHARNIN, but rather a different story with the same characters. In fact, there is talk of making it an animated feature. Well, why not?

NOTES FOR ANNIE COLLECTORS

With the expected demise of the Knickerbocker Toy plant in New Jersey, some stores that still have Applause and Knickerbocker Annie items are fearing that they may be overstocked. As a result, many Annie items have been marked way down, and with luck, you may find some bargains. As recently as last month (April), I found a set of the six Applause boxes/bells/vases for half price. The higher value Applause items, such as the "Tomorrow" revolving music box and the porcelain Annie doll, are now extremely scarce. They were available last year after the movie came out, but only in certain gift shops. Applause has been bought out by another company, but it looks as if Knickerbocker will no longer be making Annie products or anything else. In late April they had a huge sale at the warehouse, featuring many Annie items at give-away prices. It is sad to see Knickerbocker go under, since they provided Annie collectors with so many fine keepsakes, which we will continue to treasure.

Most of the drugstores that stocked the Topps Annie stickers and the sticker book now no longer carry them, but you can still write to Topps at the address in the back of the sticker book to obtain missing stickers to complete your set. Be sure to follow the directions exactly; you will get your stickers, although it may take several weeks. I decided to put my second set in a photo album in the correct order; the makers of the sticker book obviously never saw the movie! Some of the stickers are grossly out of order, but who cares, if you saw the movie only once or twice and have forgotten that Annie's red dress did not appear until just before she went to the White House. The stickers, 120 in number, are very attractive color photos from the movie (and some of scenes that ended up on the cutting room floor and never appeared in the film).

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

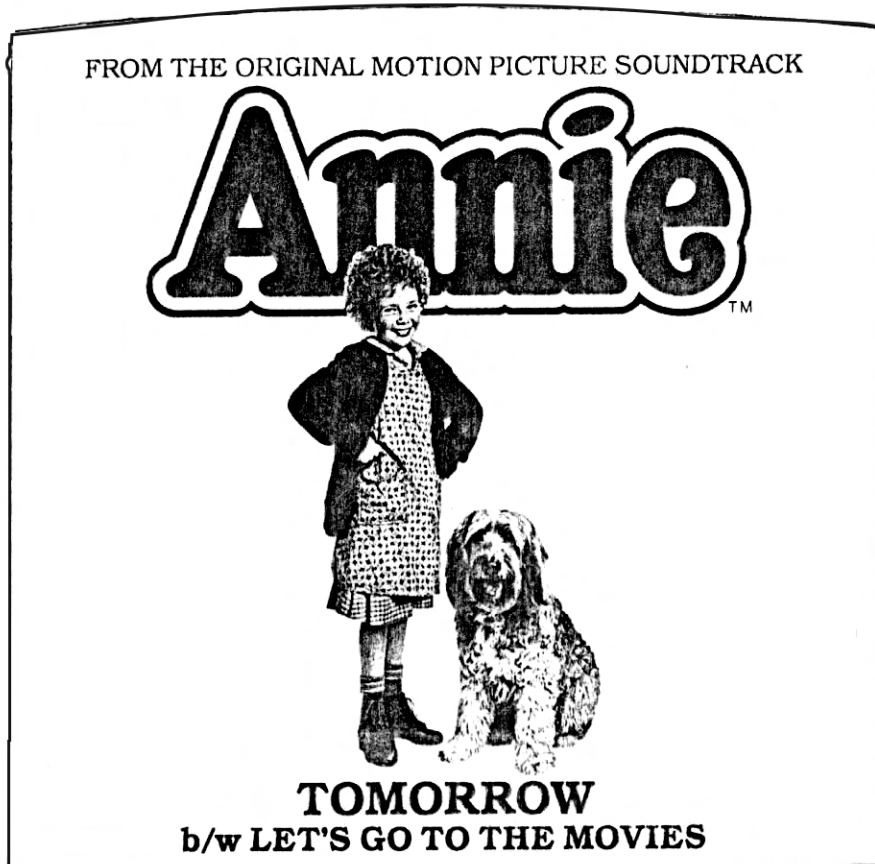
This column in Annie People will be devoted to some of the more unusual recent Annie collectibles. What do you have in your collection that you would like to tell other readers about? Let's hear from you--photos too!

45 RPM SINGLE

"Tomorrow"

by Aileen Quinn and the Orphans

Columbia # 18-02951



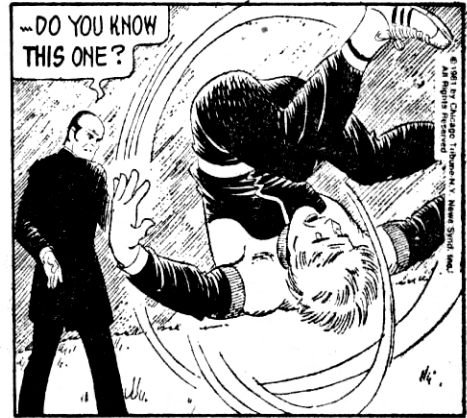
This record came out in June 1982, about a month after the movie soundtrack LP was issued. The single was reviewed in the trade magazines, but it did not get enough airplay to place it onto the Top 100 charts. As a result, it was stocked in very few conventional record stores. I found mine in a K-mart in Rutland, Vermont. The interesting thing about this single is that it is not the same cut of "Tomorrow" that opens the movie soundtrack album; it is a longer version of the song (2:21 instead of 1:35 on the LP), with an extra instrumental middle added. This rare cut of "Tomorrow" is available only on this 45 and is not on any album. It has a nice picture sleeve, resembling the front of the album, with another shot of Annie and Sandy on the back. Ask about it in large record stores that stock oldies; they might have it filed under "ANNIE" rather than "QUINN." The flip side of the 45 is "Let's Go to the Movies," the same cut as the one on the LP.

LEONARD STARR'S ANNIE COMIC STRIP

Leonard Starr began writing the new Annie comic strip in 1979, more than a decade after Harold Gray's death. Other writers had dabbled in continuing Little Orphan Annie, but it was not until Mr. Starr began doing it that the strip once more became part of America's breakfast reading. In the months before the debut of the new strip, reprints of Harold Gray's old strip had been appearing in the newspapers. Although Sunday, December 9, 1979, was the date of the first official installment of the Annie strip, Mr. Starr began on December 3 with six daily strips as a transition from the existing Harold Gray reprint story into his new story. The total weeks listed below reflect these transitional strips, since they were indeed written and drawn by Mr. Starr. (Many thanks, Richard West, for sending me those six transitional strips!)

<u>Story</u>	<u>Weeks</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1. The Lazarus Process, Sheik Bahd-Simel	15	12/3/79-3/16/80
2. Senator Stan, Huckie Flynn	12	3/17/80-6/8/80
3. May Flowers, Big Cheese International	16	6/9/80-9/28/80
4. Anya Toze, Skip Smith	19	9/29/80-2/8/81
5. The Grey Avenger, Medicare Fraud	11	2/9/81-4/26/81
6. Angela and Mark Pease	17	4/27/81-8/23/81
7. Save the Whales, Mr. Am	14	8/24/81-11/29/81
8. Toro, Goldie Rewel, Mrs. Carson	13	11/30/81-2/28/82
9. Sawyer Oates' farm, Wilda	9	3/1/82-5/2/82
10. Dog Pound, Kneck Brothers	13	5/3/82-8/1/82
11. Stella Han, Croesus	14	8/2/82-11/7/82
12. Libby, Dan Lyon	14	11/8/82-2/13/83
13. FIDO, Return of Skip Smith		2/14/83-

ANNIE



I have approximated the beginning and end of each story for the purpose of indexing, but it was the case all the way through that there was always some overlapping of one story into another. If there are any Starr fans out there that have any different ideas about where a story ends and the next one begins, please let me know, because I eventually plan to index each individual story. It seems consistent to me to end each story with a Sunday strip and begin the next one on a Monday, but this may not be entirely correct.

by Tricia Trozzi

Hi there, AP Readers! How many of you remember Pet Rocks? Red M&Ms? The last hit song by the Village People? Okay, how about Sara Stimson? Who? She was the little girl who was supposed to be "the next Shirley Temple" after starring in the remake of Shirley's Little Miss Marker a few years ago. Well, that one picture just about did Sara in, and she was never heard from again.

Now we have the 7 principal girls from Annie. Are they destined to be one-shots too? It's been a year since the film's release, and so far only Robin Ignico has been seen in anything substantial. Aileen Quinn has done the Andy Williams Christmas Special and a few interviews and is waiting on Full House, another movie. But come on! The longer they wait to get these kids back in the public's eye, the worse it will be. Let's face it; the public is not going to rejoice at a brown-haired, grown-up Aileen in a few years if they don't see her now. (P.S., There was also a general lack of enthusiasm last year, possibly due to the appearance of a brown, wrinkled, turtle-ish thing.)

Okay, maybe you think I'm being a little harsh, but I want to see Aileen and the Annie Orphans in other projects. Talent like theirs should not go to waste. But they're growing up; the label "the little girl from Annie" won't work forever. Good management should keep these actresses in the limelight. (And how about some promotion for Bobby's Girl, Columbia Records??)

What is there for us diehard Annie-otics to do? Not much, I'm afraid. All we can do is hope that we will see Aileen, Rosanne, Toni Ann, Robin, April, Lara, and Lucie on the screen or stage real soon. Unless you happen to have a part for them, in which case, let's see that talent!



THE ANNIE TOUR MOVES ON TO VALLEY FORGE
Kristi Coombs As Annie Charms Her Way Into
"Daddy" Warbucks' Heart...And The Audience's

On Saturday, May 14, 1983, I went to see Annie at the Valley Forge Music Fair at Devon, Pennsylvania. This was part of the current Annie tour that was at Westbury, which I described on pages 1 and 2. As before, the show was performed "in the round" and had a cast almost identical to the Westbury troupe. I found this show to be equally enjoyable, and the two children with me, aged 10 and 7, got a big kick out of seeing Annie on stage for the first time.

While Allison is in California for a couple of weeks, the part of Annie in the meantime has been played by 11-year-old Kristi Coombs. Kristi had been playing Duffy on this tour, but she seemed right at home in the title role, having done it in the Second National Touring Company. Counting her Orphan roles on tour also (she was Molly in First National), back then Kristi was on stage an amazing 1,300 times, and that's without missing a performance! Being an understudy is never easy, particularly when one's name is announced just before the curtain goes up as being the substitute for the title role. However, in this case, I doubt that anyone was at all disappointed by the end by Kristi's fine handling of Annie, in both acting and singing. Particularly striking to me in this performance was Kristi's wonderful interpretation of the scene in "Daddy" Warbucks' office in which Annie is trying to get him to take her to the movies, rather than have her sent with Grace Farrell instead. Her facial expressions were perfect as "Daddy," on the phone with a financial bigwig, finally gives in and decides that business dealings would just have to wait until tomorrow. The audience laughed and cheered with delight.

The part of Sandy at Valley Forge was played by "Moose," also trained by Bill Berloni, and again, no one was disappointed by the change. As before, Marcia Lewis snarled and jiggled her way into the audience's hearts as Miss Hannigan. The exceptional Orphan troupe was back also (minus Duffy, of course, since a Swing Orphan is not used on tour). I will never ever tire of the Hard-Knock Life Orphanage scene, particularly when it is performed as convincingly as it was by Kristi, Jennine, Jennifer, Tammy, Arlene, and Denise. As I learned from chatting with the Orphans and their folks after the show, this tour of Annie will continue around the Northeast throughout the summer.

Watch the newspapers for this tour in your area (Cohasset, MA; Wallingford, CT; Niagara Falls, NY, Cleveland, OH); it should not be missed by any Annie fans living nearby. Keep on the lookout also for other runs of Annie in your area at small regional theaters and dinner theaters; there will be several this year. Larry Skrdla reports that a tour will be playing in Michigan and Ohio in July that will feature veteran comedienne Martha Raye as Miss Hannigan.

COMING NEXT ISSUE: A profile and interview with photos of a ten-year-old Annie fan and collector, more strip notes, more of the usual Annie People features, an account by Tricia of her visit to the Annie Bridge, and a special report entitled "What Goes On at an Annie Audition!"

So, until July (certainly a special month for all Annie People) and AP #4 --

"ANNIE LIVES!"