

Annie People

A Newsletter for Annie Fans

No. 7, January 1984

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

Artwork by Tricia Trozzi

Contents copyright (c) by Jon Merrill for the contributors

Price: Free

As Annie People celebrates its first Annie-versary, we expect that 1984 will be an exciting year for Annie fans, with both sequels coming, in addition to the Annie Fan Club. Don't forget to write to Lee Costello, Annie Fan Club, 850 7th Avenue, New York, NY 10019 to get on the mailing list for the upcoming club when it is formed. And don't forget to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. No new developments to report at this time on the Broadway sequel; it continues to be worked on.



HAPPY NEW
YEAR, EVERYONE!
T-2

JON AND TRICIA CELEBRATE AP'S 1 YEAR "ANNIE-VERSARY" WITH A FEW FRIENDS.

The Progress in Essex County, New Jersey, did a front page article on Tricia and her Annie collection, just after she had set up an Annie display for public viewing in her local library. Tricia's Annie room now contains over 450 items and continues to grow, although somewhat more slowly now. A very rare recent addition is described on page 5 in Tricia's Collector's Corner column.

Annie plate collectors: The third William Chambers plate in the Annie series from the Bradford Exchange is out; it is entitled "Annie and Grace" and looks as nice in the picture as the first two Annie plates.



...I enjoy Annie People and reading about my friends and fans. Thank you for sending them to me...

Toni Ann Gisondi
Mays Landing, NJ

Wouldn't it be terrific if (TV) would make the Annie comic strip come to life as an early Saturday morning cartoon show, featuring the "Tomorrow" song as its theme and using all of the other beloved songs in it too!?!

Tammy Saphiloff
Granada Hills, CA

...I want to tell you--I still love Annie People! I always will! It will run forever, just like Annie will!!

Polly Mortensen
Hollywood, FL

OPTIMISM!! ("Now, that's something I haven't heard since 1928....") --Ed.

...I found out about Annie People from Lee Costello, from the Annie Fan Club. Am I going to get the Annie newsletter every month?

Annie Sigal, age 8
New York, NY

Sorry, Annie, the best we can do at this time is every other month, but as the publisher, I can say those two months in between issues go by awfully fast! So, the next one coming out in March will be there in your mailbox for you before you can say "Leapin' Lizards!" --Ed.

...every time you send us an Annie People newsletter I learn so much...

Alyson Kirk
Waldwick, NJ

...I have been a fan for 1 1/2 years...I have seen the film 83 times now... It's hard to express how much Annie means to me...

Stephen M. Russo
Revere, MA

Sufferin' catfish!! Makes my 37 times seem bush-league! --Ed.

...I got started with Annie when my grandmother bought me the album when I started fifth grade. I listened to it every day, and I got to learn the story by reading the inside of the album cover. I begged my mom to take me to see it on Broadway. She did, and I loved it. Then there were tryouts at Neil's New Yorker, and I begged my mother again to take me down to audition...

Jenice Gasior
Sparta, NJ

CALENDAR OF ANNIE-VERSARIES

1 9 8 4

JANUARY

- 1 The movie's Molly, TONI ANN GISONDI, will be 9
- 2 The Broadway show closed at the Uris Theatre after 2,377 performances, 1983
- 5 Sandy's first appearance in the comic strip, 1925
- 6 Annie People's art editor and columnist, TRICIA TROZZI, will be 19
- 14 Broadway's 5th Annie, ALYSON KIRK, will be 14
- 14 Announcement 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 16
- 20 Little Orphan Annie comic strip creator, HAROLD GRAY born, 1894
- 22 Rehearsals for the Broadway show began, 1977
- 29 Allison Smith became Broadway's 4th Annie, 1980

FEBRUARY

- 6 The movie's Kate, and Tessie in 1st Nat'l, APRIL LERMAN, will be 15
- 7 The Broadway show's 2,000th performance, 1982
- 23 Broadway's last Tessie, STEPHANIE VINE, will be 12
- 25 Broadway's last Duffy, JENNINE BABO, will be 13

MARCH

- 1 Annie preview opened at the Kennedy Center in Washington, 1977
- 7 Shelley Bruce became Broadway's 2nd Annie, 1978
- 6 Sarah Jessica Parker became Broadway's 3rd Annie, 1979
- 22 Broadway's last Pepper, JULIE STEVENS, will be 14
- 23 1st National opened in Toronto, 1978
- 25 Broadway's 3rd Annie, SARAH JESSICA PARKER, will be 19

APRIL

- 21 The Broadway show opened at the Alvin Theatre, 1977
- 21 Andrea McArdle became Broadway's 1st Annie, 1977
- 26 The movie's Miss Hannigan, CAROL BURNETT, will be 50
- 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 2nd Annie, SHELLEY BRUCE, will be 19
- 9 The movie's "Daddy" Warbucks, ALBERT FINNEY, will be 48
- 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 MERRILL, will be 39

JUNE

- 5 Annie won 7 Tony Awards, 1977
- 7 CHARLES STROUSE, Annie's composer, will be 56
- 22 2nd National opened in San Francisco, 1978
- 28 The movie's Annie, AILEEN QUINN, will be 13

JULY

- 12 The movie's Tessie, LARA BERK, will be 12
- 20 Annie set designer, Oscar-nominee Dale Hennesy, died during filming, 1981
- 22 Broadway's last July, LAURA BAKER, will be 12
- 22 Allison Smith's 1,000th performance on Broadway, 1982

AUGUST

- 5 Harold Gray's Little Orphan Annie comic strip began, 1924
- 5 The movie's director, JOHN HUSTON, will be 78
- 10 Annie opened at the Goodspeed Opera House, 1976
- 14 THOMAS MEEHAN, Annie's writer, will be 55
- 19 The movie's Duffy, ROBIN IGNICO, will be 14

SEPTEMBER

- 4 Principal filming of the movie ended, 1981
- 8 Alyson Kirk became Broadway's 5th Annie, 1982
- 11 4th National opened in West Point, 1981
- 12 The Broadway show's 1,000th performance, 1979
- 27 Annie meets Oliver Warbucks in the comic strip, 1924

OCTOBER

- 3 3rd National opened in Dallas, 1979
- 13 Broadway's last Molly, DOROTHY ANDRES, will be 9
- 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 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 21
- 19 BILL BERLONI shares his birthday with Broadway's SANDY, who will be 10
- 24 Annie's lyricist, MARTIN CHARNIN, will be 50

DECEMBER

- 3 Leonard Starr's Annie comic strip began, 1979
- 9 Broadway's 4th Annie, ALLISON SMITH, will be 15
- 14 The movie's July, LUCIE STEWART, will be 13
- 24 The first Little Orphan Annie movie starring Mitzi Green premiered, 1932
- 31 Annie was left on the Orphanage steps, 1922

(ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS WELCOME!)

★ Annie Stars Since Annie ... ★

The Annie II movie, starring AILEEN QUINN, will begin filming in March. So far, the budget doesn't look anything like what was spent on Annie, but, then again, it will be a different sort of movie entirely. It will have music, but no big production numbers, according to director Jan Egleson. ALBERT FINNEY will be "Daddy" Warbucks once again, and the character of Grace Farrell will be brought back by ANN REINKING. The plot involves the kidnapping of "Daddy" and Annie's coming to his rescue, most probably with Sandy along too. Look for it in the theaters next Christmas...ANDREA McARDLE sang the National Anthem at one of the World Series games in Philadelphia last fall. She also appeared recently on The Merv Griffin Show and sang a dynamite version of Linda Ronstadt's hit, "Heat Wave." Andrea has been appearing at clubs in the New York and Philadelphia areas, pursuing her latest career interest in becoming a rock singer. "At this point in my life," says Andrea, "I feel I can best express myself through singing rock." Word has just come that Andrea has signed a record contract for an album to be done this year...CAROL BURNETT's TV special with opera star Placido Domingo will air on January 27. She is also very excited about the new play she will be working on, which will be directed and choreographed by the film Annie's JOE LAYTON and based on journals left by Mr. Layton's late wife, Evelyn Russell. Carol says that if it does well on the road, it might come to Broadway later this year...ALLISON SMITH has done several benefits, including a recent one in New York with Annie composer CHARLES STROUSE and opera star Anna Moffo...Broadway's SANDY paid a surprise visit with BILL BERLONI to Neil's New Yorker in Mountain Lakes, NJ for the special Christmas vacation performances of Annie on December 28. Having finished their 5-month run there in October, rotating Annies JENICE GASIOR and TRICIA DeLALLA each came back to do one show that day. When questioned about the Broadway sequel, Mr. Berloni wasn't talking, preferring instead to keep us all in Annie-ticipation for the time being. As for Sandy, all he would say about it was, predictably, "Arf!"...SENTA MOSES, Molly in 3rd National, appears in the movie, D.C. Cab, which stars Mr. T...Broadway's last "Daddy" Warbucks, HARVE PRESNELL, was in a starring role in a new musical which premiered in Montclair, New Jersey, called Nobody Starts Out to Be a Pirate. The production was choreographed by Annie's PETER GENNARO...MOLLY RINGWALD, who played Kate in 2nd National, is pursuing a film career as she nears her 16th birthday. Molly recently did Fifteen Candles for Universal and has been signed to do another Universal film, Breakfast Club. She also sings with her father's jazz band in the San Fernando area of southern California. One of the club's regular customers is Warren Beatty, who has been admiring Molly's work so much that he has "a big screen project in the works" for her...ANN REINKING starred recently in New York in One More Song/One More Dance, featuring Ann's singing and dancing...A recent TV movie, License to Kill, featured KRISTEN VIGARD, Andrea's understudy on Broadway and Goodspeed's first Annie before Andrea... I. M. HOBSON, Drake in the movie, was recently on stage in A Flea In Her Ear in Philadelphia, part of a cast that included STEPHANIE VINE's mother, Penny Larsen...THOMAS MEEHAN has just been signed to write the book for a Broadway musical based on the life of the late producer, Mike Todd...KATHLEEN SISK, Annie in 4th National, was on an NBC-TV movie called Hard Knox this past month...From Chris White's Andrea McArdle Fan Club newsletter comes news of two of the earliest Orphans: DONNA GRAHAM, the original Duffy, is singing with a band in New York; and congratulations to JANINE RUANE, the original July, who is getting married next month. Birthdays: APRIL LERMAN, 15 on Feb. 6, STEPHANIE VINE, 12 on Feb. 23, JENNINE BABO, 13 on Feb. 25.

Collector's Corner

PLAYBILL \$1.00
The Movie of Tomorrow
Annie
by Tricia Trozzi

"Who's that little chatterbox; the one with pretty auburn locks? Who do you see? It's Little Orphan Annie." That's the melody that starts the first Annie film, the 1932 RKO Pictures release, Little Orphan Annie. The film is available on videocassette from Blackhawk Films in Davenport, Iowa.

The story opens with "Daddy" Warbucks (Edgar Kennedy) hopping a boxcar to make his fortune. Annie (12 year old Mitzi Green) and Sandy (a talented German shepherd) soon find the newly-orphaned Mickey (5 year old Buster Phelps). Annie takes Mickey to where she lives with Warbucks, who is shown as an inventor and a Jack-of-all-trades instead of an industrialist. Annie feeds Mickey too much food, and he has an animated dream which is very cleverly done. Mickey is brought to the "Helping Hand Orphanage" for treatment by the doctor (Matt Moore), but Annie is also forced to stay.

Wealthy Jenny Stewart (May Robson) arrives at the Orphanage, and Annie gets her to adopt Mickey. But Annie is lonely, so she and Sandy go to visit Mickey at his new home. They take food from the kitchen, to the surprise of the butler (Sidney Bracy), and Annie and Sandy entertain Mickey. Some minor chaos erupts and "Grandma" Stewart throws Annie out. Mickey wants to go after her and accidentally falls from a window. He is all better by Christmas, when Oliver Warbucks returns for a party in diamonds and tux.

The film received not-so-good reviews and didn't do well at the box office. The plot is quite thin, and the direction and editing are primitive. The saving grace is the acting. Mitzi Green is totally believable as Annie, although she is almost too big for the role. She is capable, tough, caring, smart, and utterly talented, particularly when doing impersonations of the Marx Brothers. She is matched by Buster Phelps, who demonstrates a talent for crying and also for just plain being adorable. May Robson plays Rich-Old-Lady to the hilt, but never becomes a caricature. I would have liked to have seen more of Edgar Kennedy; I think he was a fine Warbucks. (Incidentally, Kennedy and Sidney Bracy were alumni of the Our Gang films; Kennedy played a cop, and Bracy again played a butler.) Even Sandy performs tricks such as walking on his hind legs and tumbling!

The film is full of '30s jargon with jokes about castor oil and the importance of eating spinach. The story is also pretty sappy stuff, probably hard for some to swallow, but if one has a marshmallow center, she will probably enjoy it a lot. David O. Selznick was executive producer (he later produced another little picture called Gone With the Wind), and Harold Gray received screen credit for the characters. The film is not only interesting as LOA's movie debut; it is also in itself a pretty neat film.

ORIENTAL
JOHN HARRIS
GRAND AVE. & E. MORRISON

EVERY DAY
25c 7PM 35c After 7PM

STARTS TODAY!
ONLY 4 DAYS
'OO! GOTTA
HURRY!

**HELLO, FOLKS!
WOW!**

"Lendin' li'ards, I've jumped right out of the funny papers onto the screen! And it's a human heart story bursting with laughter and tears! Yes, sir, I'm here in **REAL LIFE!**

(Not a Cartoon)
"Young or old, if you're human, you'll love me."

"And meet my pal Mickey! Buster Phelps is him, and he's just the cutie for words!"

Little Orphan Annie

With **MITZI GREEN**
May Robson
Buster Phelps
Matt Moore

Added Joy!
AUNT JEMIMA
500 pounds of melody
in
"The Lense Breakers"

Hey!
Don't forget—I'm here, too, with more fun for everybody!
MICKEY MOUSE
in
'Whoopee'
with Minnie and the gang!

Coming
CHILDREN 10¢ ALWAYS!

Submitted by Doug Kendig

Annie Across the



Cynthia Moser reports seeing Annie at the Promised Valley Playhouse in Salt Lake City this past fall. Annie was played by 12-year-old Candace Payne of Arcadia, California. Candace and her troupe of Salt Lake area Orphans also performed in a little mini-production of Annie at a local shopping mall.

Pam Powers recently saw Annie at the Derby Dinner Playhouse in Clarksville, Indiana. The program for the show was unusual in that it included pictures of every single Orphan, even all the understudies, one for each part. Eighth grader Kim Brown from Denver was Annie. Kim said that she was experiencing a dream come true in playing Annie. She thought she would be "too old" before the opportunity came her way.

The staff of Annie People has been busy also, going to local productions of Annie: Cristina Conomos played Annie at the Broadhollow Theater in Farmingdale, NY. We had seen her sing in Youngstars in New York last summer, and we were very eager to again hear her exceptional singing style, this time on the Annie songs. Pretty 10-year-old Cristina, bewigged throughout the show to cover up her un-Annie-like long black hair, was a real crowd-pleaser and showed off her great voice to the fullest. But it was a little charmer named Tania Taylor Powers who ran away with the show as a truly outstanding Molly. The "Maybe" scene with Cristina and Tania was unforgettable.

We saw another production at Pax Amicus Theater in Budd Lake, NJ, in which 12-year-old Lisa Thomas played Annie. The overall show was enjoyable but was marred by a couple of miscastings and by the fact that there were some changes in the script that were downright painful (LOA cartoon drawing instead of the Mona Lisa? YIKE!). It's nice to see a few creative original touches in an Annie show, especially for someone like myself who sees so many different productions of Annie, but--for goodness sake, please don't monkey with the greatest tradition of all, the curly wig and the red dress at the end!!

An excellent production of Annie took place at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, PA. New Hope's own Stephanie Vine, 11, having played several different Orphans on Broadway during Annie's last year, moved into the title role at Bucks, giving Annie a sensitive treatment, very much in the Broadway tradition. Sandy was played by Muff, who was expertly trained by James Cro of the local police department. Mr. Cro had Muff perform some of his tricks for us outside in the parking lot after the show. In this show Oliver Warbucks was played by a bald-domed William Conrad, best known for being TV's Cannon.

Have you seen Annie near your home town lately? Write to us at Annie People and tell us about it so we can pass it on in this column. If possible, it would be great if you could get us an extra program for our files.

Be sure to notify Annie People if you move so that you don't miss out on any issues. AP will remain free for its readers, but if you haven't written lately, drop a note once in a while to let us know you're still out there at the address we have in our files and whether you are continuing to enjoy AP. Let us know what features you like and anything else you'd like us to put in it. Your opinions, information, and support are what make Annie People go, and we appreciate any and all comments about America's favorite red-haired orphan!



GIRL SCOUTS MEET ANNIE - Jenice Gasior (Annie) and Susan Hart talk with Jon's Girl Scout Troop #311 after they saw Annie at Neil's New Yorker on Oct. 22.



MOVIE MOLLY -- Tricia with Toni Ann Gisoni and 6-year-old sister Lisa.

Submitted by Deana Brinkmann



POOPER-SCOOPER - Allison Smith and Sandy help promote New York's new law for city dog owners, July 1982



BROADWAY ORPHANS VISIT -- Jennine Babo and Stephanie Vine stopped by on Dec. 30 to see Jon's Annie room.



LONG ISLAND ANNIE CAST - with (1. to r.) Lisa Rudin, Tania Taylor Powers, Cristina Conomos (Annie), Jennie Rudin.

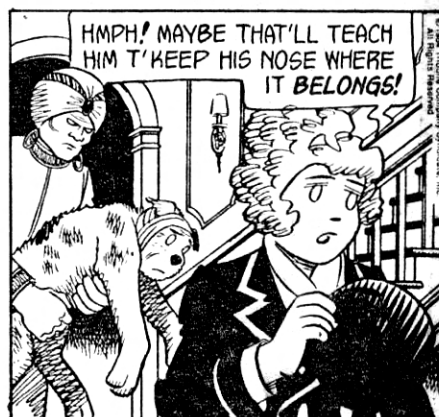


CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF -- Shelley Bruce takes a break from singing to pose with Jon and Theresa Drummey, 9, at Somerset County's United Way fair.

WHAT IS WITH OUR FAVORITE ORPHAN in the latest Leonard Starr strip, which started a few weeks ago? First, the mysterious Mr. Rune tutors 11-year-old Annie in Existentialism and Quantum Physics, and now her personality has gone completely off the wall! The way she is treating Sandy is deplorable. YIKE!! Well, we'll just have to wait and see whether she comes out of whatever mind control she is under and again becomes her nice, good-natured self. Anyway, I think this story is one of the most interesting and unusual Starr Annie strip stories yet, and I am now especially eager each morning to pick up the Daily News. In my opinion, the last story about Angela Pease dragged on a little too long on its way to a Leonard Starr Annie strip story record of 22 weeks. Personally, I think about three to three and a half months is about right.

ANNIE

(c) Chicago Tribune - N.Y.N.S. Inc.



1983 ANNIE PEOPLE INDEX

Report on Annie Broadway Closing Day - Issue 1, pages 3-4
 Reviews of Annie Story Records and Aileen's Bobby's Girl LP, Issue 2, pages 3-4
 Annie Word Search, Issue 2, page 7
 Report on Leonard Starr's Lecture at Cartoon Museum, Issue 2, page 8
 Reports on 1983 Annie Tour "In the Round," Issue 3, pages 1-2, 8
 Collector's Corner column: Aileen's "Tomorrow" on 45 RPM, Issue 3, page 5
 Index of Leonard Starr Annie Strip Story Dates, Issue 3, page 6
 A Visit to the Annie Movie Bridge, Issue 4, page 3
 What Goes On at an Annie Audition, Issue 4, page 5
 Sandy's Introduction in the Strip in 1925, Issue 4, page 7
 Update on Lara Berk, the Movie's Tessie, Issue 5, page 3
 Local Summer Productions of Annie, Issue 5, page 5
 Report on 10-year-old Annie Collector Julie Shaflucas, Issue 5, page 6-7
 Collector's Corner column: Annie Movie Cardboard Standee, Issue 6, page 3
 Update on Jennine Babo, Broadway's longest-running Orphan, Issue 6, page 5
 Review of Shelley Bruce's Book, Tomorrow Is Today, Issue 6, page 6
 Annie People's Annie Paper Doll, Issue 6, page 8

Watch the next few issues of AP; there'll be updates on the Annie sequels as they get nearer, a special update on Toni Ann Gisondi, more items from Collector's Corner, and an article about a Boston fan who watched the movie for 60 hours straight in an attempt to get into the Guinness Book of World Records.

"ANNIE IS, AND ALWAYS WILL BE..."
 (Martin Charnin, Uris Theatre, January 2, 1983)