

Annie People



A Newsletter for Annie Fans

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Artwork by Tricia Trozzi, co-editor and columnist

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AP IS THREE YEARS OLD!

Happy holidays, Annie People! Many thanks from the staff to all of you for your votes for the All-Time Favorite Annie Songs. We are in the process of tabulating all the votes, and then the results will be published in the next issue following this one, to give those who have not yet voted a little more time. But, as a small preview, some of the songs picked by AP readers and the reasons they picked them are on the next page.

As you can see, Shelley Bruce is engaged! Best wishes and congratulations from AP and its readers to you, Shelley!!

A new fan club for Sarah Jessica Parker is in the works. Long-time Annie People reader Pam Powers Gaddie has just begun to put it together, and fans of Sarah Jessica can write to Pam for further information. Write to:

Mrs. Pam Gaddie
Box 894

Shepherdsville, KY 40165



SHELLEY: August wedding.

'Annie' to marry Love conquers Shelley Bruce

The sun will come out tomorrow, bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow there'll be sun.

Remember the way Shelley Bruce brought the house down in "Annie" while singing that song about a brighter tomorrow when she starred as the little orphan on Broadway?

And later, the way she drew tears from Cardinal Cooke when she told him how she suffered from leukemia and lost her bright red hair in chemo-therapy treatments?

And how Shelley fought and won her battle over leukemia and told First Lady Nancy Reagan at the White House that she would prove to the world that she could lead a normal life?

Well, there is another brighter tomorrow for her.

Love has come Shelley's way. The pretty redhead from East Rutherford, N.J., will become engaged Sept. 21 to Paul McNamara, of Rutherford.

"I feel fantastic and really excited about it," said Paul, who works in Fortunoff's in Wayne. He was at Shelley's house waiting for her to come home.

"We will announce the engagement at a private party and we plan to be married on Aug. 30 next year in St. Mary's Church in East Rutherford. The priests there are good friends of Shelley's." And Shelley, how's she feel? "Fabulous. Absolutely fabulous."

New York Daily News
September 5, 1985



...I really feel so much better lately and I think much of that is due to all the cards and letters I've received from all of my Annie friends. I even got cards from people--other AP readers--who I've never even heard of! I think most of my medical problems are over with for now, and my friends have really helped me deal with it. I've been hospital-free for almost 3 weeks and I feel better every day....

Deana Brinkmann
Florence, KY

...I feel there should be an article in each issue, or a dedication or something for Andrea. She is the original Annie, and as I said, if it wasn't for her, Annie wouldn't be as big as she is. It's not only right, it's also respectful. I've seen big articles on Aileen and absolutely nothing special for Andrea, and everything of Annie wouldn't exist without her. I don't mean to sound rude or anything, but I feel it should be confronted with. Well, there's my gripe, and with great work you've been doing with dedicated Annie fans, I know you'll use your best judgment with this....

Gina Donofrio
Union Beach, NJ

...It was so nice to read some news about Aileen. I've always said that of all the people that had anything to do with the Annie phenomenon, she is the one I like best. I've always kept an ear out for news about her....

Matthew Pancake
Ironton, OH

* * * * *

Here is a sampling so far of AP readers' first choice songs and their reasons:

MAYBE (teenage fan) because I relate to that song very well. I am adopted and I always wonder what my natural parents are like....IT'S THE HARD-KNOCK LIFE (local Annie) because I won my audition for Annie by singing it...TOMORROW (adult fan) because it's a very uplifting song and I love the way Andrea McArdle sings it...MAYBE (movie Orphan) because I auditioned for the movie with it...YOU'RE NEVER FULLY DRESSED WITHOUT A SMILE (nat'l tour Orphan) because that was the Orphans' main scene and the most liked....I DON'T NEED ANYTHING BUT YOU (adult fan) because my husband and I had it played at our wedding. The words of the song say exactly how we feel about each other....SIGN (adult fan) because it's the best part of the film...TOMORROW (B'way Annie) because of the great feeling I get when I sing it...MAYBE (teenage fan) Specifically, the "Maybe" Reprise in the movie. The first time I saw it, I felt so bad for Annie and "Daddy" and Grace I cried, and it will always remind me of the first time I saw the movie...YOU'RE NEVER FULLY DRESSED WITHOUT A SMILE (movie Orphan) because I had fun singing it!...SOMETHING WAS MISSING (adult fan) because my relationship with my own father wasn't/isn't very good, but getting better. That's maybe the reason I like the whole show so much...MAYBE (B'way Orphan) - nice tune!...IT'S THE HARD-KNOCK LIFE (local Orphan) because it's a fast paced song and I love the tune and the movements that go with it...DUMB DOG/SANDY (local Orphan) because I like how the music goes and I think Sandy is cute....IT'S THE HARD-KNOCK LIFE (child fan) because I hate cleaning!

Collector's Corner

by Tricia Trozzi

From 1933 to 1949 the Whitman Publishing Company produced Big Little Books (called Better Little Books in the later years), those 4-1/2" tall, 3-5/8" wide, and over 1" thick books that alternated a page of text with a page of illustration. Little Orphan Annie was one of the more popular BLB series, with 18 titles, including a few variations of those in length or cover style. The LOA BLB stories cover a wide time span of strip stories of Harold Gray, from the late 1920s to 1944. The BLBs were not published in the order of the strip stories, however, so the copyright date in the book may not be the date of the original strip, a fact which is apt to confuse the fledgling Orphan Annie BLB collector. A book like Arf! The Life and Hard Times of Little Orphan Annie can help in identifying and dating the story sequences in BLBs. This can work in reverse also; there are a couple of three-week gaps in the Eonite sequence in the Arf! book, but a collector who also has the \$1,000,000 Formula BLB can easily figure out what was happening in those storyline gaps.

BLBs adapt the dialogue and action of the comic strips into descriptive prose, and sometimes a story would be slightly rewritten to fit the format. This BLB format was much easier for children to understand, since the original LOA strips were really written for an adult audience and were sometimes difficult for a child to comprehend fully. The picture on the right-hand page of a BLB would usually illustrate a sentence from the left-hand page of text, and this panel too had to be altered from Harold Gray's original work. The word balloons were removed, their spaces filled in with appropriate background, and the art extended to fill up the square. One can examine the panels in BLBs and compare the lines drawn by the Whitman artist from those drawn by Gray by observing the texture and "character."

Big Little Books are popular collectibles today; some people collect all the different series. For us Annie-otics, BLBs are strip-related collectibles that are relatively available and reasonably-priced, compared with other "antique" Annie items. For that reason, they are a very good introduction to the old Little Orphan Annie comic strip for collectors who so far have specialized only on the play and the movie. Their distinctive shape is something not duplicated in Annie books of today, so BLBs are a worthwhile and very enjoyable addition to any collection of Annie memorabilia.

- 708 LOA
- 716 LOA and Sandy
- 748 LOA and Chizzler
- 1103 LOA with the Circus
- 1140 LOA and the Big Train Robbery
- 1154 LOA and the Ghost Gang
- 1162 LOA and Punjab the Wizard
- 1186 LOA and the \$1,000,000 Formula
- 1414 LOA and the Ancient Treasure of Am
- 1416 LOA in the Movies
- 1417 LOA and the Secret Well
- 1435 LOA and the Gooneyville Mystery
- 1446 LOA and the Thieve's [sic] Den
- 1449 LOA and the Mysterious Shoemaker
- 1457 LOA and the Junior Commandos
- 1461 LOA and the Underground Hideout
- 1468 LOA and the Ancient Treasure of Am
(shortened version)
- 1482 LOA and the Haunted Mansion



Jon's complete collection of 18 Little Orphan Annie BLBs, in order from left to right, top to bottom

★ Annie Stars Since Annie ... ★

Half a dozen Annie kids were on hand as part of the Young People's Showcase at the opening of A Discovery Of Soho in New York in September. MELISSA KALFA and MONICA MILLER sang and danced with the Show Biz Kids Rock Star Review (see related article), and Long Island's CRISTINA CONOMOS and TANI TAYLOR POWERS performed at the opening also, as did SUSAN LIPTON and AMY KUNEN. Susan was the 4th National Swing Orphan with KATHLEEN SISK and later on was Annie with MARTHA RAYE in 1983, and Amy has been an Orphan in three productions of Annie in her native Massachusetts....According to late word from her fan club, it looks like a busy winter ahead for ANDREA McARDLE. She will be doing her club act with Shecky Greene at Resorts International in Atlantic City on November 15 and 16. MARTIN CHARNIN is currently developing Andrea's act, and Andrea hopes to go on tour with it eventually. She will travel to Birmingham, Michigan, where she will be in Snoopy from November 20 to January 6. Then it's back to NYC for her cabaret act at Freddie's nightclub. Meanwhile, casting of The Starlight Express, mentioned in the last AP, has been postponed until January. Watch your PBS station in January for a program on the current plight of theater in New York--Andrea will be featured on the show, along with producer Joseph Papp....REID SHELTON stars on the HBO sitcom 1st and Ten and is seen frequently in a recurring role on St. Elsewhere on NBC. He also was to perform at the 75th birthday celebration of ROGER STEVENS in Washington, D.C. Roger Stevens, you may remember, was responsible for bringing a brand-new Goodspeed Opera House show called Annie to the Kennedy Center, which paved the way to Broadway. Reid, of course, was the original Oliver Warbucks and later went on tour with the 2nd National and KRISTI COOMBS....The movie Commando, with ALYSSA MILANO playing Arnold Schwarzenegger's daughter, is doing very well around the country....CAROL-ANN PLANTÉ, who played Tessie in a 1983 dinner theater production of Annie with the 3rd National's LIZ LARSEN (STEPHANIE VINE's older sister), is now singing at Pro-Kids and is one of the five kids in the Krypt-a-Kids group ("Kid Stuff") who have been in Annie. She is also currently acting in an Off-Broadway play, The Marriage of Figaro....ROBYN LEE TUERKHEIMER played Nanette in No, No, Nanette this past summer in Loch Sheldrake, New York....CRISTINA CONOMOS appeared last month on the Martin Sheen CBS-TV movie Out of the Darkness....An Off-Broadway show, Dames At Sea, stars former Broadway Rooster and Lily RICHARD SABELLICO and DOROTHY STANLEY. Dorothy also was Lily in the 1983 Paper Mill Playhouse production with TARA KENNEDY and the 1983 tour with ALYSON KIRK directed by ROBERT FITCH. This show is a revival of the original 1968 show which starred BERNADETTE PETERS....RENEE SHIELDS will be back as Annie in south Florida when a new production at the Marco Polo Hotel in North Miami gets underway in November. The show will run until January....DOROTHY LOUDON has taken over Carol Channing's role in Jerry's Girls, which may come to Broadway as early as this month. Leslie Uggams will continue in the show, and ANDREA McARDLE's part will be played by Chita Rivera....TANI TAYLOR POWERS will be in a new Off-Broadway show called Only In America, which will open in December. Tani will be taking a short break from Pro-Kids to sing and dance in the new musical, which will feature music by the 1950s hit songwriting team of Lieber and Stoller....ALLISON SMITH has recorded a song of her own composition called "Never Go With A Stranger" on the topic of missing children. Allison also sang in the finale of Live Aid this summer and has been performing for Juvenile Diabetes....TRACY GROSS, who played Annie in three Pennsylvania productions of Annie last year at age 14, recently was Bet in Oliver! and Kim McAfee in Bye Bye, Birdie....SHAWNEE SMITH starred in the NBC-TV movie, Crime of Innocence. Shawnee was an Orphan extra in the Annie movie and is the one pictured on Topps Sticker #15....Birthdays: SANDY, II on November 19; MARTIN CHARNIN, 51 on November 24; ALLISON SMITH, 16 on December 9; LUCIE STEWART, 14 on December 14; SHERRI LEIDY, 11 on December 26; KRISTI COOMBS, 14 on December 27; TONI ANN GISONDI, 11 on January 1.



Leapin' Lizards! Pat Benatar and Madonna in Annie People??? Actually, it is MONICA MILLER and MELISSA KALFA, who are starring in an act called the Show Biz Kids Rock Star Review. The group, consisting of about a dozen young rock star imitators, appears weekly in New York and also travels around the area. The singing and dancing talents of Monica and Melissa as seen in the 3rd National (Monica was Molly; Melissa was Duffy) make them fit right into their new roles in the Review. Melissa's energetic dancing makes her a natural for Madonna, and when Monica comes out on stage with the swaggering sneer she is Pat Benatar. Perfect.

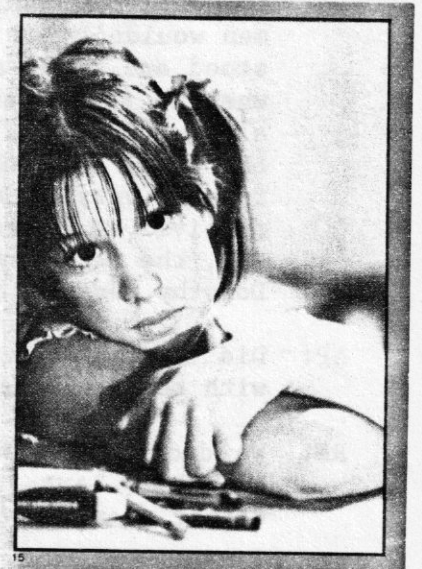
Monica just turned 12 in October and will be playing Baby Louise in Gypsy this December and January in a four-week run at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, and 14-year-old Melissa will be doing a dance number in the upcoming film release of Brighton Beach Memoirs. Both of them have been with the Show Biz Kids group since its beginning, formed as a performing element of a singing, dancing, and acting school for kids in Edison, New Jersey called the Show Biz Professional Training Center. Incidentally, 3rd National readers may remember Melissa's brother Mark, who recorded an album called Yo Little Brother in 1984 under the stage name of Nolan Thomas.



Tani Taylor Powers, Carol-Ann Planté
Pro-Kids, Montclair, New Jersey



Amy Kunen, Susan Lipton
Young People's Showcase
New York City



Shawnee Smith

by Tricia Trozzi

Part II

AP: March 1, 1977--opening night of previews at the Kennedy Center. How was that opening, and also the Governor's Dinner at the White House, what did the cast of Annie do there?

RF: It was exciting, but most wonderful was surviving through a series of mishaps. We'd "teched" until 1 a.m. the night before--were up at the White House gates at 9 a.m. in costume in order to rehearse our 35-minute show for the East Ballroom Banquet. But no one had given Security our names, so the two buses sat there for an hour and a half waiting for clearance. We then had no time to rehearse at the White House. We ran in, looked around at the set-up, photographers took pictures, and we left. Remember, we'd not finished our tech for opening night. We rushed back to the theater and worked till an hour and a half before going on. We never got through the 2nd Act, only the 1st. Oh, my goodness! All those set moves, things going up and down and on and off. We went on and just before Scene 7 of the 1st Act (Enter Rooster and Lily) the treadmill went the wrong way with Miss Hannigan (Dorothy Loudon) standing on it between the doors of her orphanage vestibule. She fell on her face, orphans screaming off-stage left in the semi-darkness. I jumped through the double doors and a stagehand from the other side, we grabbed her, telling the kids to quiet down and get out of the way. Her foot had been caught in the mill and had gone under the protective plate. Her loafer looked like wet confetti, and later (after the White House show) we found two toes were broken. She was taken to her room to relax and find another pair of shoes; in the meantime, intermission was called. So the last two scenes of Act I were never done on Opening Night, i.e., Rooster and Lily never entered--"Easy Street"--the villains and the basic plot were never revealed. Annie's adoption papers never given to Miss Hannigan by Grace, and the Tiffany locket never given to Annie. Warbucks' and Annie's breakdown, the FBI song and the touching finale to Act I never occurred. The curtain opened for Act II. After the show (and it was difficult due to not teching the 2nd Act, but we got through it pretty well), we rushed to the White House with ten minutes to spare before we performed our 35 minute brief synopsis of the show. At the end we all realized we didn't know how to finish and get off--we'd not rehearsed, as you remember. (It's like flying a plane but not learning how to land it.) So we continued singing "Tomorrow" four times--the Secret Service men wouldn't let us off stage--we wondered what we did. President Carter stood and sang; all the governors rose and sang or hummed. We all cried when we saw Governor Wallace in his wheelchair in the front row singing along--"Tomorrow" is, after all, a song of hope. The President shook all our hands and told everyone that this should be his theme song, that he related very much to the feeling of hope that this show espoused. We all received pictures personally signed by the President. And needless to say, the next day we were sold out for the next five weeks in Washington. Dorothy went to the hospital for the broken toes.

AP: Did anyone expect Annie to be such a big hit in Washington, let alone with the tough New York City theater audience?

RF: We didn't know what to expect. Certainly not a hit. So many mistakes were made--late decisions--it seemed impossible. One number in the show didn't seem to work--"N.Y.C." (there's always one). Peter Gennaro came

up with a new version every day for almost two weeks. Finally, doing nothing (i.e., people frozen, in pictures, moving on the treadmill did the trick). We had only two days in Washington for tech—it took a day and a half just to do the musical numbers with the treadmill and sets. Moving, etc.—a half day to run the show. We never finished our tech run-throughs. To make a long story short, I think we were too involved in surviving and getting through the day-to-day routine to even begin to muse over its potential as a hit. Perhaps the creators and producers could see more clearly, but only "perhaps." One note, through hindsight, that I have is, that Rocky came out just before us. It was without much substance, but the work in it was real and honest—about an underdog trying very hard to make it (like Annie). It, too, was a smash. We had a new President, with a new message. I think the country was in the mood for such a faith—"Roll up your sleeves and let's get to work, each man sufficient unto himself." Critics, mostly, miss the psychological implications of such identification and dwell narrowly on only the literary values, etc.—Annie and Rocky both fulfilled that National need. Yes, it surprised us all!

AP: The Alvin Theatre, April 21, 1977--The Big Night! What was it like?

RF: It's hard to remember--seemed like six curtain calls. The party at Gallagher's upstairs, the crowds outside. Seems like we couldn't get out of the theater. The hugging and crying onstage after the curtain went down. Seeing my wife's and my kid's face--all bright, open, smiling. The audience laughter was loud and full, and so were their tears.

AP: What were some funny things that happened onstage during Annie's run?

RF: The dog went to sleep in the middle of the stage (in Washington) on his long cross. He sat center, looked at the audience and laid his head down and slept--Blackout! A woman came backstage and said take him to a vet. They found Sandy had sleeping sickness--medicine cured him. Being booted on our entrances as the fake parents in the Mansion and during bows was funny to me.

AP: Did you or any other member of the company ever get fatigued doing the same thing night after night? What was done to alleviate that?

RF: There are nights when you don't feel like performing or even when it's easy to "walk through" a show--sickness, emotional and family problems, setbacks, even nasty management. We are, after all, as human as anyone else. But as a whole, we had a highly skilled troupe, and the caliber of the show was consistently high. Keeping a show fresh is perhaps the hardest thing to do after getting the job. The ensemble effort was strong. I, for one, was able to continue acting classes and would try various ideas and skills in the show (within limits, of course). That was sufficient for me to keep the show and performance fresh. Plus being able to work on outside projects—I did a concert for John Mineo--also quite a few commercials. We did things we always wanted to do and either didn't have the money for or the time to do them. I was sending kids through school. So a solvent job for a change was a wonderful thing. Certainly no one would do anything to jeopardize such wonderful associations. Besides, my feeling is that theater is like religion. If you're doing something you like—and so many people can't do that--then do it the best you can--always. We have only our work to speak for us. So keep it clean and fresh and full.

(to be concluded in Part III in the next issue...)

Many thanks for all the Annie Collectory orders. Thanks to some sharp-eyed readers, I now have the Annie sitting necklace, the big Knickerbocker Sandy, and the 1982 Ovaltine shake-up mug! I still have (or can get) some of the Applause ceramic items from the last list, in case you would like to surprise your favorite Annie fan at Christmas. I also am awash in Topps Stickers--about 900 of them--which ones do you still need?

There are two more items I would like to add to my "need for my own collection" list--two of the 12 Argus Annie movie postcards, specifically, the one of Annie in bed, and the one with Annie smelling the flowers. Anyone have extras? I have seen the Argus postcards in only one place, and that was in Canada.

I was unable to fill some of the many orders I had for Applause necklaces and earrings. Please let me know if you locate any in your town. The nationwide network of Annie collectors really seems to be working--since the last issue of AP came out, a new copy of the Bobby's Girl album was found in Utah, made its way through The Annie Collectory and is now in the hands of a very happy collector in upper New York State. The search goes on!



Annie Fan
JO ANNIE GOLDBERG, 14
in her Annie room
Clark, New Jersey

Jon Merrill
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Box 431
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Annie
A New Musical