

Annie People



Member



National Association
Of Fan Clubs

The Newsletter for Annie Fans

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Artwork by Tricia Trozzi, co-editor and columnist

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Hello, Annie People! The long hot summer of 1988 is over and we are getting ready for the fall. The latest news in the Annie world is that there is talk of a new National Tour going out in 1989. If it happens, it would be the first one in three years and the seventh U.S. national Annie road company since the Broadway show opened in 1977. Keep tuned to AP and we'll keep you posted.

Meanwhile, community and dinner theaters around the country continue to entertain enthusiastic crowds with Annie, including a fine one starring Wendi Rohan that I flew to Jacksonville, Florida to see in late July.



Jon with Wendi Rohan (Annie)

JACKSONVILLE, FL - Top row from left, Marcey Gilman, Wendi Rohan (Annie), Lindzee McClure, Laura Phaneuf; bottom row from left, Whitney McCrary, Jordan Thayer, Palmer Henson

★ Annie Stars Since Annie ... ★

Congratulations to **ALYSSA MILANO**, who has won an award as the Most Popular Young International Female Star from the Youth In Film Awards Committee. She will be presented with the honor at the 9th Annual Youth In Film Awards at the Hollywood Palladium in California on December 5th. This is Alyssa's fourth award from the organization....**STEPHANIE VINE** will be seen in January as the principal in a commercial for the Easter Seals campaign. Meanwhile, her sister **LIZ LARSEN** performed this summer in Girl Crazy in Birmingham, MI with Lorna Luft. Liz also played in Milford, NH in Starmites, which is expected to come to Off-Broadway soon....**JOHN SCHUCK** stars in The New Adventures of Pippi Longstocking with Tami Erin. Tami was cast for the film through a nationwide search conducted by **GARRISON TRUE**, who found **AILEEN QUINN** for Annie in a similar one in 1980....**CAROL-ANN PLANTE** was a guest solo singer on the Phil Donahue Show on June 17th with Peter Sklar accompanying. She has been a part of the ensemble in Peter Sklar's New York showcases for several years. Carol-Ann has also recently appeared on Steampipe Alley on cable; and--if you have the new talking Patty Playpal doll, her voice is Carol-Ann's....**SARAH JESSICA PARKER** and Less Than Zero star Robert Downey, Jr. have reportedly set an April wedding date....**DEBBIE GIBSON** took ill with tonsillitis out West in mid-August and was forced to cancel part of her tour. However, she came back to continue to perform to sell-out audiences and fine reviews all over the country. Debbie loved traveling on her tour bus with various members of her family, including her youngest sister **DENISE GIBSON**, who helped Debbie with her wardrobe and took behind-the-scenes photos for Debbie's fan club newsletter. The tour ended this month, and now Debbie is back home hard at work putting the finishing touches on her second album, which will come out around the end of the year. Meanwhile, her fifth single, "Staying Together" continues its move up the Billboard chart. Debbie's big 18th Birthday Bash took place in Los Angeles, and the guest list included **ALYSSA MILANO**. Many thanks to all of you AP readers who sent in local reviews of Debbie's tour from your home city....**LAURIE BEECHMAN** has left Cats on Broadway to perform in a new musical called Dangerous Music at the Burt Reynolds Jupiter Theatre in Florida. Says Laurie, "I can't wait to play a human being again onstage!" Laurie, who was A Star To Be and other ensemble roles in the original Broadway cast, will be replaced in Cats by **LONI ACKERMAN**, who played a Boylan sister in the movie....**SHAWNEE SMITH** (Topps Sticker #15) is starring in the current revival of The Blob....**ROBERT FITCH** was in Mike in Philadelphia earlier this year, written by **THOMAS MEEHAN** and directed by **MARTIN CHARNIN**. It is hoped that it will come to Broadway late this year. "I had a nice little part in it--" writes Bob, "my own solo tap number. At the same time I was helping a couple of people structure their magic acts. Fun!" As many of you know, in addition to creating the role of Rooster on Broadway, Bob has also performed as a magician for many years. During the summer he was in Sugar Babies, 42nd Street, Li'l Abner, and The Mystery Of Edwin Drood with a musical repertory company in Brunswick, ME....**JESSICA SAMPIERI** went from Annie this summer right into Coastal Disturbances with the Montclair (NJ) Summer Fun Theater group. Her Sandy, **DUFFY**, owned and trained by long-time AP reader Paul Goldie of Goldie Theatrical Dogs, Inc., did an upcoming episode of Bloopers And Practical Jokes. The show will involve a practical joke played on Keshia Knight Pulliam by fellow Cosby Show kids Malcolm-Jamal Warner and Tempestt Bledsoe....**SYBELLE FRANKLIN** competed in the national Free Church Youth Fellowship competition in Denver in July and won a Superior rating for her gospel solo. She was also one of a trio who won first place in the nation in the Bible Quiz competition....**HARVE PRESNELL** is planning to team up with Debbie Reynolds for a stage revival of their 1964 movie The Unsinkable Molly Brown....**KATHY SMIZER** played Laurie in Brighton Beach Memoirs in Montville, NJ and continues to perform weekly at the Pro-Kids showcase in Montclair, NJ....Birthdays: **MOLLIE HALL**, 18 on September 8; **MELISSA KALFA**, 17 on September 9; **HARVE PRESNELL**, 55 on September 14; **DOROTHY ANDRES**, 13 on October 13; **MONICA MILLER**, 15 on October 29.



I thought the listing of "Rare Modern Annie Collectibles" was very interesting. Here's what I have from that list: Applause music box, "Tomorrow" single by Aileen, cassette of Bobby's Girl by Aileen, Swensen's movie glass, one style of Annie lamp, set of 12 Argus postcards (yes, there is a collector with all 12!), movie cassette standee.

Something else I have in my collection that might be rare are four other postcards (two with Aileen and two Leonard Starr cartoons) that were made by F. J. Warren. Ltd. in England. They are metallic-looking; I found them at a postcard dealer in Indiana--I wish I had bought more than one of each.

I haven't heard anything on the Annie movie sequel--have you? I'm worried it might never be made. And whatever happened to (Aileen Quinn's upcoming movie) The Frog Prince? It seems like forever since I heard that was coming out. I'm looking forward to the next Annie People; maybe you could answer some of these questions.

Rick Talley
La Habra, CA

Thanks for your list, Rick. As for the Annie II movie, here's the latest we've heard, according to the New York Daily News: "Don't look for Annie II to tap-dance into theaters this Christmas as planned. Depending on who's talking, production on the sequel to 1982's (Annie movie) will begin after the first of the year....'We needed a polish on the script, and we couldn't get it because of the writers strike, that's all,' says a Rastar spokesman. 'It hasn't been canceled; it's been delayed until the first of the year.' Others aren't so sure. A representative for director Lewis Gilbert confirms that his client considers the film canceled. And reports from several industry outsiders have it that Ray Stark has become disenchanted with the project and has decided to abandon Annie II. Not true, according to an NBC executive, who says the bottom-line problem with Annie II is money. The budget came in higher than expected--way too high for a project that some consider chancy as best. Reworking the budget will mean reworking the script. And until that's done, stay tuned...."

The release date for The Frog Prince was going to be Easter 1987. We have not heard anything lately as to what has happened, or will happen, to it. --Ed.



Submitted by Carol-Ann Planté

Carol-Ann Planté with Phil Donahue and Peter Sklar
The Phil Donahue Show, June 17, 1988

RARE MODERN ANNIE COLLECTIBLES

(Part II)

by Tricia Trozzi

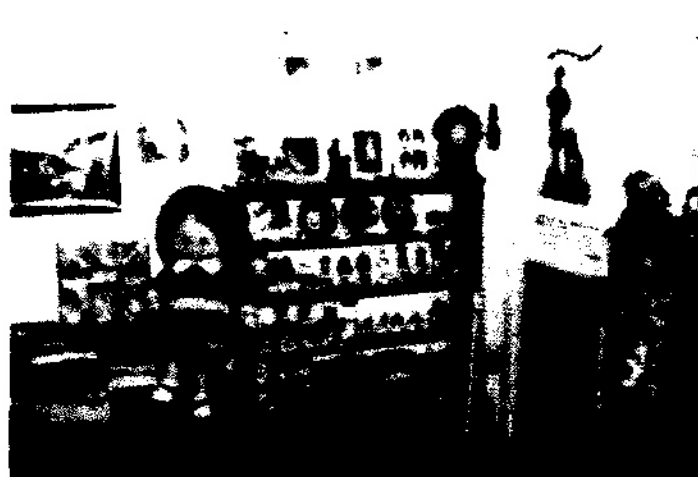
The following items are what we at AP consider to be among the rarest of the many Annie collectibles that have been manufactured since 1977 when the play came out. The number "known" is a count of how many of these items exist in the collections of Annie People readers as far as we know. This is a continuation of the rare collectibles listing from the last issue of AP.

- Black and white Annie face long sleeved sweater** 2 known
- Red and black Annie face on pink short sleeved shirt** 1 known
- These shirts show a blank-eyed non-Harold Gray cartoon Annie with a pattern of stripes on the sleeves. All three of these came from a boutique in Vermont and may possibly have not been mass-produced.
- "The Empire Brass Plays Annie" album** 3 known
- "The Empire Brass Plays Annie" cassette** 1 known
- This 1981 recording by the famous brass quintet of the play score is interesting and has one of the ugliest covers I've ever seen.
- "Sunday Funnies" cartoon glass** 4 known
- This glass shows Harold Gray drawings of Annie, Sandy, Warbucks, the Asp, and Punjab. It is copyright 1976, the New York Times Inc., and perhaps was a premium item, since it predated the play.
- Bronze statuette** 1 known
- Sculpted and signed by Leonard Starr, this attractive item was a very pricey mail-order-only item in 1983. A limited number were cast.
- Daily News Great Comic Heroes #2 poster** 3 known
- The second of a series of full-sheet (equivalent of two pages in size) newspaper posters, Annie and Sandy as drawn by Leonard Starr appeared in the New York Daily News on Sunday, January 17, 1982.
- Set of 100 European movie bubblegum cards** 10 sets known
- Not marketed in the U.S., these photo cards show behind-the-scenes of making the movie as well as unusual views of the familiar scenes (see AP #12, p. 3).
- View Master reels** 5 known
- Featuring the Harold Gray story of Annie's stay with the Futils in Cosmic City, the reels were marketed in 1978. View Master reels made in 1982 of the movie are much more common.
- Pursuit board game** 4 known
- This game with Harold Gray art was marketed in 1978. Again, the one produced in 1982 with the movie as its theme ("Path To Happiness") is relatively common.
- How To Cartoon kit** 2 known
- Includes paper, pencils, markers, and Leonard Starr drawings to copy for making your own comic strips.
- Wood Dream dollhouse** 1 known
- This kit for making a mansion fit for "Daddy" Warbucks comes with cutout figures of Annie, Sandy, "Daddy," and Punjab, and a separate kit contains furniture. It was marketed around 1980.
- Applause line wholesale catalog** 2 known
- Shows the dolls, figurines, mugs, etc. of the very nice line of Annie collectibles made by the Applause Company. Includes an order form.
- Wallpaper - Leonard Starr** 2 known
- Wallpaper - Harold Gray** 1 known
- The same pattern of Starr cartoons as on the bedspread was available to cover your walls in the summer of 1982, while the Gray cartoon-panel paper was made earlier.

- Ovaltine '82 mug and shaker** 3-4 known each
 "Ovaltine's Golden 50th Annie-versary" mug and a shake-up featuring cartoon and movie Annie were premiums in 1982. Does anyone have the second shaker--advertised on the Ovaltine label--one with a photo of movie Annie and Warbucks? I sent for it but never received it, so I think it may never have been made.
- Sears bedspread and curtains** 3 known
 The pattern of Leonard Starr cartoons with blue ruffled borders transform an ordinary bedroom into an Annie museum.
- Sleeping Bag - 2 designs** 4 known
 There are two Leonard Starr cartoon versions of this product.
- Bubble bath decanter** 2 known
 This 1977 plastic figure of Annie contains scented bubble bath and looks somewhat like an Academy Award "Oscar."
- Doll carriage** 1 known
 Jon found this unusual item, perfect for taking your Annie dolls out for a stroll, at a flea market this year.
- Vocal score** 2 known
 From the Overture to the Exit Music, every bit of the music of our favorite Broadway show is here (see AP #9, p. 7).
- "New York Loves Annie" poster** 2 known
 This poster for the Broadway show measures 5 feet by 3 feet and has the standard logo art on a black background. The same design is on a smaller plastic sign that once advertised Annie on the outside of a New York bus (1 known).
- Phonograph** 2 known
 The phonograph comes with a "sing-along mike" so you can be one of the Orphans in "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile." It is decorated with Leonard Starr cartoons.
- McCall's September 1982 pattern book** 2 known
 When McCall's put out the children's clothes patterns based on the movie fashions, and the doll patterns, their monthly pattern catalog for that month featured Aileen and Bingo on the covers.
- Windup alarm clock** 1 known
 Annie's and Sandy's smiling cartoon faces are on this 1982 item.

- end of two-part article -

Let us know at AP if you have any of these rare Annie items, or if you have any other examples of Annie memorabilia in your collection that you believe are rare or unusual (see pages 3 and 6).



Part of Jon's Annie room, c. 1984



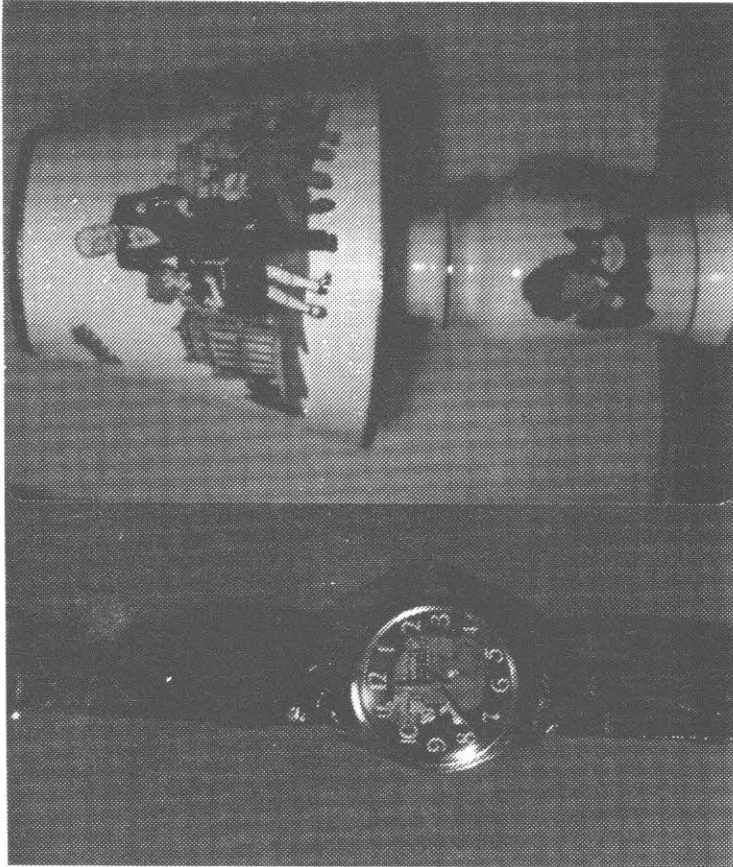
ORPHAN JULYS - Both of the popular teen stars played the same character in Annie; Debbie in Farmingdale, NY in 1983, and Alyssa in the 2nd National Tour in 1981-82.

Debbie Gibson cancels tonight's S.L. appearance

Teen singing sensation Debbie Gibson has canceled her Salt Lake appearance, scheduled Friday at the Jon Huntsman Center, due to tonsillitis. The virus has forced Gibson to cancel about 10 days of her concert tour. The canceled shows will not be rescheduled.

DESERET NEWS, FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 1988

Submitted by Don Miller



Don Miller of Wisconsin sent in pictures of his very rare Annie watch and lamp. The watch is not the 1980 one mentioned in Tricia's article in the last issue; we believe it is much older--around the 1950s. The background behind the numbers is dark blue and the large circle in the middle is light blue or grey.

'Annie' nut watches it for the 76th time here

N.J. fan flies in for Alhambra show

By CHARLIE PATTON
Staff writer

Leapin' lizards! When it comes to *Annie*, Jon Merrill went past mere devotion years ago.

Merrill's attendance at a performance of *Annie* at the Alhambra Dinner Theatre last Saturday marked a significant milestone in his *Annie* obsession — the 75th time he had seen the play performed.

Sunday, the 43-year-old computer programmer returned to the Alhambra for his 76th viewing. Sunday night, he flew back to his home in Cedar Knolls, N.J.

Merrill, the founder of the Annie People Fan Club and publisher and co-editor of *Annie People*, a bimonthly newsletter, said he decided to attend the *Jacksonville show* because of his interest in Wendi Rohan, who plays Annie, and Marcey Gilman, who plays Pepper, one of the orphans.

Both girls are long-time members of the fan club and he has been following their careers from afar, Merrill said. They appeared together last year in a production of *Annie* at the Burt Reynolds Dinner Theatre in Jupiter (with Miss Rohan as Duffy and Miss Gilman as Pepper) but Merrill was unable to see that show. So Saturday was the first time he actually met the two girls.

Merrill pronounced the Alhambra production "very good," and admitted that despite his affection for the show, he does see some bad productions. "This director had a real feel for it," Merrill said, alluding to Tod Booth, the Alhambra's owner who produced and directed the show. "That's usually the difference between a good show and a bad show."

Although *Annie* opened in 1976, Merrill didn't see it until 1981. After spending a decade as an elementary school music teacher in rural Vermont, he re-enlisted in the mid-1970s in the Army with the intention of becoming trained

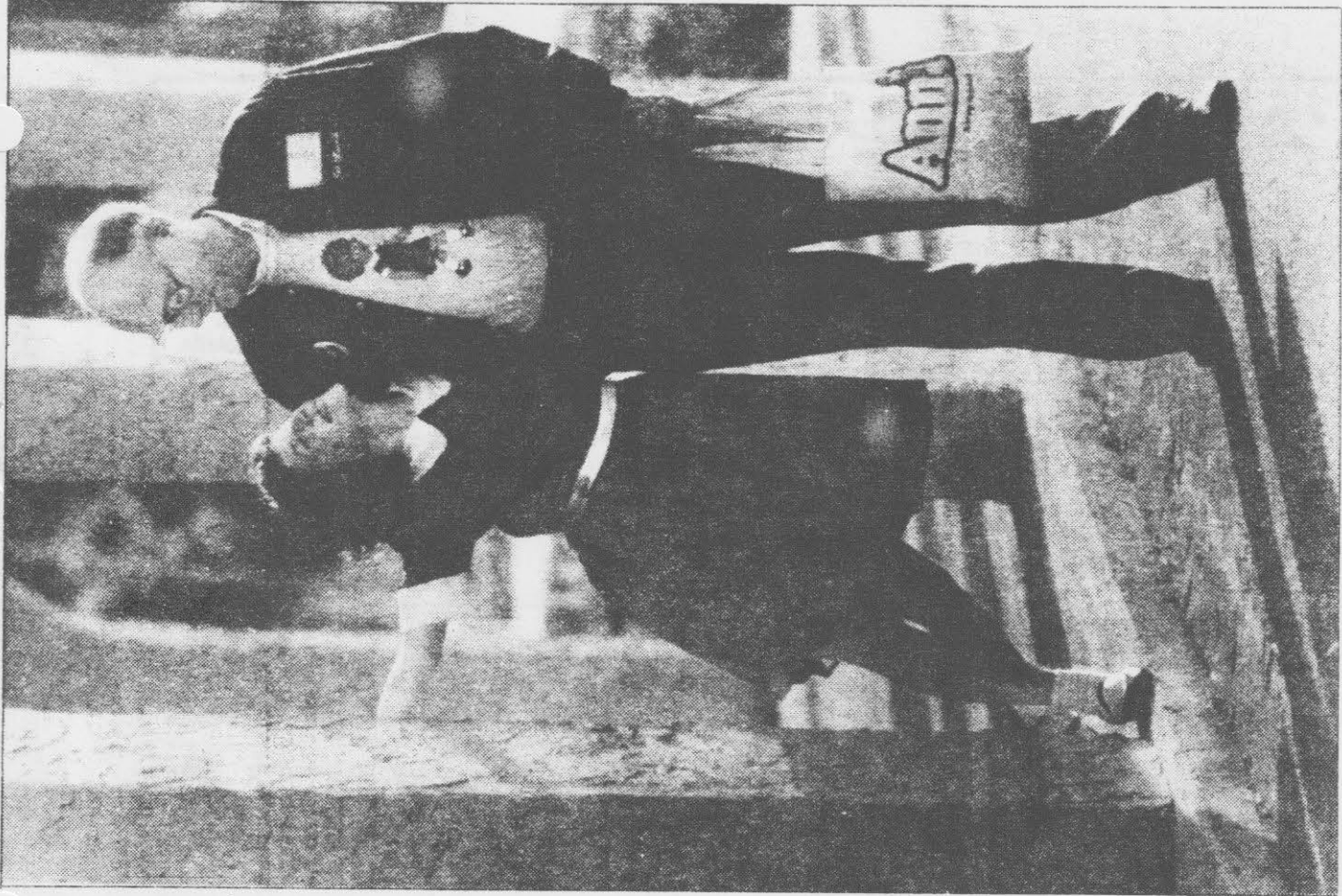
as a computer programmer and was stationed in England. It was there he first saw the show. "I saw it totally by chance in London," he said. "I was interested in singing and dancing children. When I saw *Hard Knock Life* [the orphans' big production number] I thought it was the greatest thing that ever was."

Back in the United States, Merrill made pilgrimages to Broadway to see first Alison Smith and then Alyson Kirk performing in the title role. He also fell in love with the 1982 movie version of *Annie*, which he has seen more than 40 times.

Merrill began collecting *Annie* memorabilia. He now has about 600 items in his collection, including every copy of the Little Orphan Annie comic strip that has run since Leonard Starr revived it in 1979. (The strip, created by Harold Gray, who died in 1968, began in 1924 and Merrill has reprints of many of the older strips.) The rarest item he owns is a 46-inch tall Little Orphan Annie doll, one of only 2,000 such dolls produced by the Krückerbocker Co., which went out of business in 1983. Only four dolls are known to still exist, he said.

The fan club and newsletter were born when Merrill attended the final Broadway performance of *Annie*, which closed on Jan. 2, 1983, after 2,377 performances (currently 10th on the list of longest Broadway runs). What Merrill discovered was that he was not alone in his obsession. He and Tricia Trozzi, now 23, became co-founders of the fan club and co-editors of the newsletter.

The primary thrust of the newsletter is to keep track of former *Annie* performers and to provide updates on the current status of *Annie* productions. The most recent issue ecstatically proclaims the success of Debbie Gibson, who once acted in a regional production of *Annie* and whose song, *Foolish Beat*, in late June reached No. 1 on the Billboard pop



BILL SIKES/staff

Wendi Rohan, who plays the title role in the Alhambra production, welcomes *Annie* fan Jon Merrill after he flew in from New Jersey to catch the stage play for the 75th and 76th times over the weekend.

Please see 'ANNIE,' page 208

'ANNIE': One man's obsession

Continued from page 7

charts. The issue also reports that Andrea McArdle, Broadway's first Annie, recently gave birth; that the television show *Kate and Allie*, which features Allison Smith, who gave more than 1,000 performances as Annie on Broadway, was recently renewed by CBS; and that Aileen Quinn, who played Annie in the movie, recently performed with the Pottstown Symphony Orchestra.

Although he has seen *Annie* in such distant locales as London and Utah, Merrill said the longest trip he

has made specifically to see the show was his trip to Jacksonville. The finest non-Broadway production he has seen, he said, was a 1986 show in North Carolina, where Miss Quinn co-starred with Harve Presnell, who had played Daddy Warbucks on Broadway.

Merrill, who helps support his *Annie* habit by running a mail-order business in *Annie* memorabilia, furnishes his newsletter at no charge to anyone who requests it. He currently sends it to about 200 people, he said. Anyone interested in receiving *Annie People* can write Merrill at Box 431, Cedar Knolls, N.J. 07927.

Submitted by Dana King and Whitney McCrary

FAN CLUBS

ANDREA McARDLE Fan Club - Chris White, 1010 Elm Street, St. Charles, IL 60174

ALLISON SMITH Fan Club - Polly Mortensen, 3600 W. Park Rd., Hollywood, FL 33021

The D.G.I.F. (DEBBIE GIBSON International Fan) Club, Box 489, Merrick, NY 11566

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