

Annie People



The Little Orphan Annie Fan Club Newsletter

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Broadway Ends; National Tour Begins....

October 19 marked the final performance of the 20th Anniversary production on Broadway, having begun previews last March and opening on March 26 and having toured for several months before that. Now the cast is out on tour again to begin a series of performances that are currently scheduled to run through next July.

Fortunately, things have calmed down considerably at the show throughout the late summer and early fall, regarding the bad publicity that we reported in our last issue. The controversy that plagued the show for months seems to have ended, and the newspapers have been quiet.

Nell Carter is committed to touring only until the end of the year; after that, Sally Struthers will reportedly take over the role. Sally played Miss Lynch in *Grease* a couple of years ago, and is best known, of course, as Gloria on *All in the Family* and *Archie Bunker's Place* in the 1970s opposite Rob Reiner.

Brittney Kissinger will be touring, having done the role now since late February. Casey Tuma as July will be touring only for a short while; then she will leave the show. After Casey leaves, Brittney will then be working with a completely different set of Orphans from the group she was with when Broadway began. Courtney Leigh, who plays Tessie and is a veteran of last year's Goodspeed Opera House 20th Anniversary production, will be Brittney's understudy for Annie. Brittney will turn 9 years old on November 15.

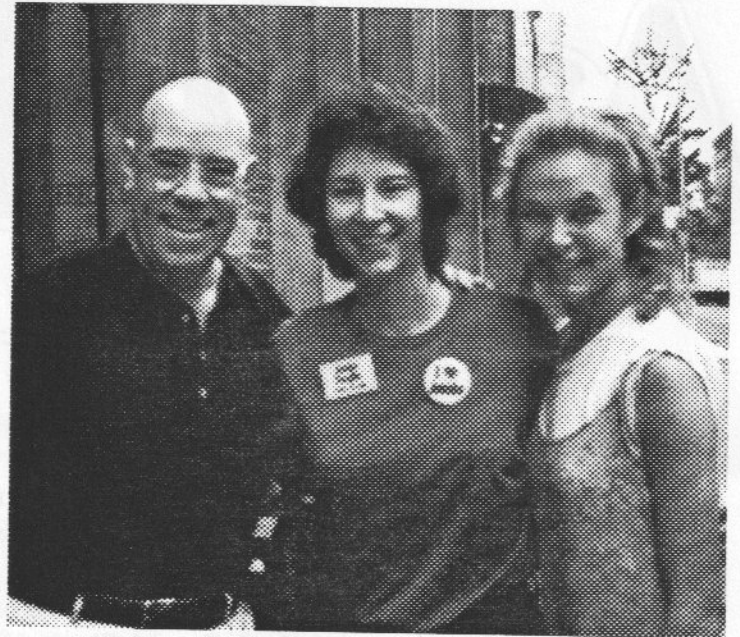


with Brittney Kissinger
Broadway's Annie
July 30, 1997

LATE NEWS: As of the Boston leg of the tour in early November, here is the Orphan lineup: Brittney Kissinger (Annie), Kristen Alderson (Molly), Jordan Upmalis (Pepper), Courtney Leigh (Tessie), Bianca Collins (Duffy), Casey Tuma (July), Tessa Kim Ludwick (Kate), Jane Bailey Patterson (swing Orphan).



September 1997—Tricia and Rick Talley from West Hollywood, CA with Nell Carter (Miss Hannigan).



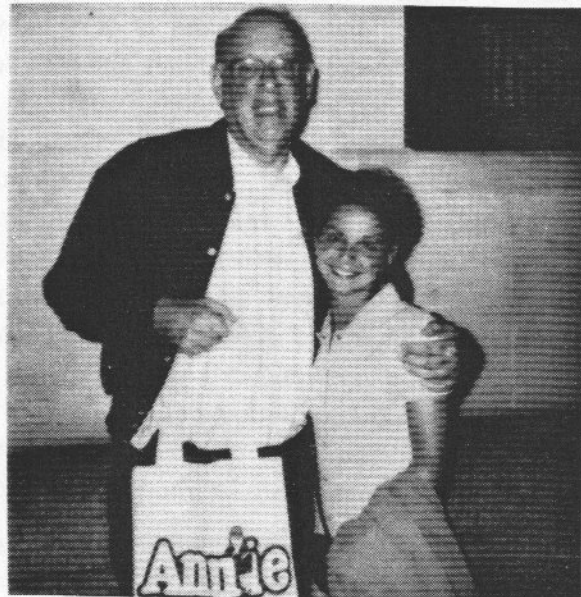
September 1997—Tricia with Conrad John Schuck (Oliver Warbucks) and Colleen Dunn (Grace Farrell).

Former 4th National Tessie KIMI PARKS Praises Brittany's Performance

On July 30 I had the great pleasure of attending *Annie* with **Kimi Parks**, who played Tessie in the 4th National with Kathleen Sisk in 1983. After finishing her *Annie* tour, Kimi did Tessie in summer stock in *Annie* with Alyson Kirk, and then she starred in *The Rink* on Broadway (in the Martin Beck Theatre!) in 1984 with Chita Rivera and later with Liza Minnelli. Then came a critically-acclaimed 9-month stint on the *Guiding Light* soap starting in 1985. Kimi still lives on Long Island and has always been a most enthusiastic *Annie* fan, and she was extremely admiring of Brittany Kissinger's portrayal in the title role. Going backstage after the show was especially fun for Kimi, having worked in the same theater years before ("I know every nook and cranny in this place...."), and we both enjoyed talking with Brittany, her mom, and little sister Chelsea in Brittany's dressing room.



Brittany and Kimi
July 30, 1997



with Kimi Parks
Tessie, 4th National, 1983
July 30, 1997

Former West Coast Annie LOUANNE Revisits Her Past....

On September 19 I had the distinct honor once again of attending *Annie* with another of its enthusiastic former celebrities. **Louanne** started out as the Swing Orphan in the 2nd National on the West Coast in 1979 at age 9, but she was almost immediately elevated into the title role following the 2nd National's first Annie, Patricia Ann Patts. During her run, Louanne was proclaimed by many critics as being among the very best actresses to ever play the title role anywhere. While she was in *Annie*, she was discovered by movie talent scouts who plucked her out of theater to star in *Oh God, Book II* with the late George Burns in 1980. You might remember the little dark-haired girl named Tracy who was commissioned by God to think up an advertising slogan for him, which she did, and then she proceeded to write "Think God" everywhere to spread His message.

After Louanne finished the movie, the 1st National needed a new Annie to replace a retiring Theda Stemler, so Louanne was asked to return to *Annie* for several more months. She also did several TV movies before landing a series called *Two Marriages*, which ran in 1983-84. A TV pilot called *Cowboy Joe* came next, followed by her second movie, *A Night in the Life of Jimmy Reardon* in 1988, in which she played Suzie Middleberg opposite the late River Phoenix in the title role.

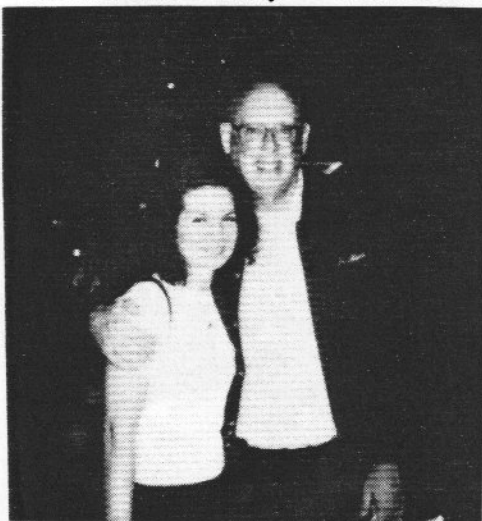
Following a pattern exhibited by many famous child stars, Louanne left the business in high school, having been in show biz steadily for almost her whole life. Now that she has graduated from college, she would like to get back into it again. Louanne went by only her first name always, much in the manner of Madonna, Prince, or Cher. When I asked her about this, she told me, "When I started out on *The Gong Show* when I was 7, that's the way Chuck Barris always introduced me—'...here's Louanne!'—and it stuck."

Louanne was unique in being the *only* child star in the *history* of Hollywood to make it big in all three media—theater, movies, television—all before her 11th birthday.

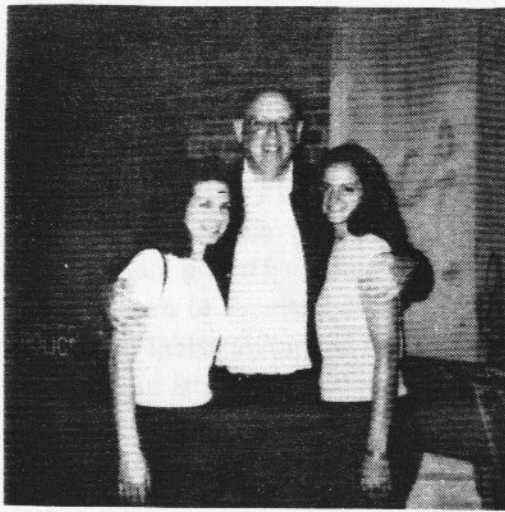
Seeing *Annie* this year was quite an emotional experience for Louanne, who had not seen the show since she left it 16 years ago. "Once I was seeing those characters and hearing those lines again, it all suddenly came back," she said to me at intermission.

After the show, Louanne sought out Conrad John Schuck, with whom she had worked when he was "Daddy" Warbucks in the old days. Boy, was *he* surprised when she walked in!

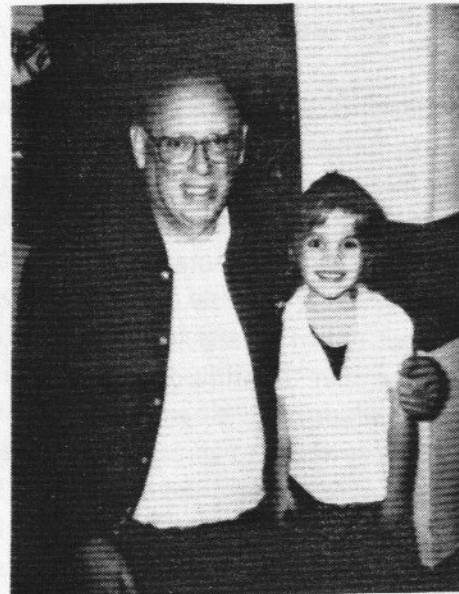
Louanne said that today *Annie* is "very different" from what it was when she did it; "the sets, the choreography, everything." In all the years of doing *Annie People*, despite having done many articles on Louanne, this was the very first time we had actually met face to face, and it was wonderful to finally meet one of *Annie's* most charming and loyal alumnae and hear what being in the show was like in the early days. "At that age," explained Louanne, "after I had done the role for a month or so, the part and I became one. I *was* Annie." Perhaps this is why her portrayal was such that in 1979, recently-retired Andrea McArdle had such high praise for Louanne's performance when Andrea came to see her do the show in Los Angeles. Andrea told Louanne, "You are the best Annie I have ever seen," but at the time, it did not even fully sink in to the 9-year-old what an extraordinary compliment she had been given from the originator of the role on Broadway.



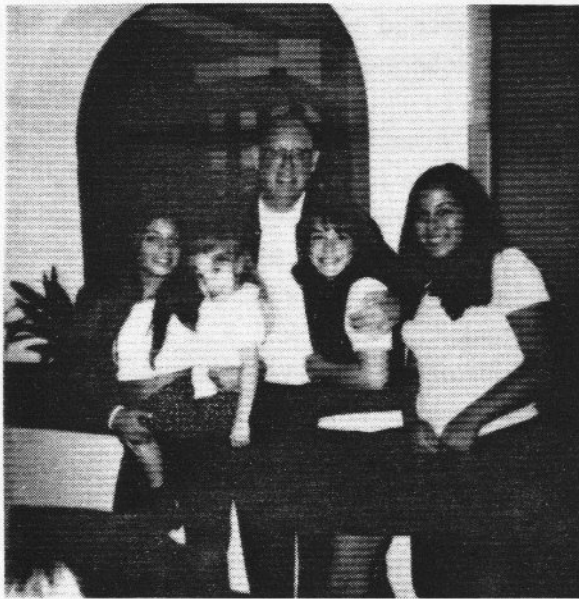
1979's West Coast Annie
Louanne
outside the Martin Beck
New York City
September 19, 1997



Louanne (2nd National, 1st National Annie)
Melissa Kalfa (3rd National Tessie)
September 19, 1997



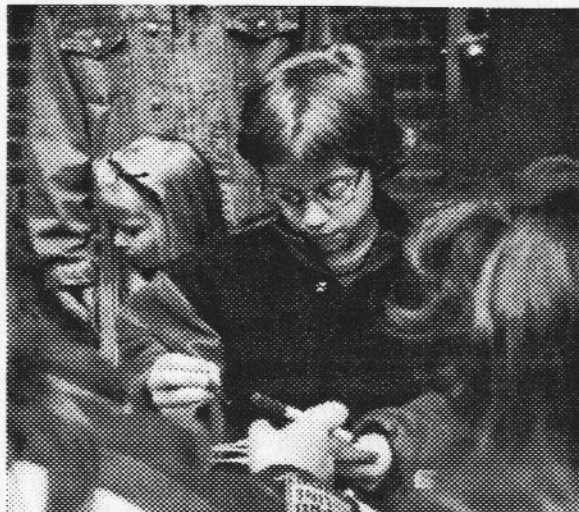
Jon and Kristen Alderson (Molly)



Jon with Divine Management kids:
Jolie Klein, Kristen Alderson (Molly),
Shannon Conklin, Jackie Yusuk
September 19, 1997



October 19th (final performance)—Alene Robertson
joins the 20th Anniversary revival company as Mrs.
Greer/Frances Perkins. Alene had played Miss
Hannigan at the Goodspeed revival in the fall of
1996 and also created the role of Commissioner
Doyle in *Annie Warbucks*.



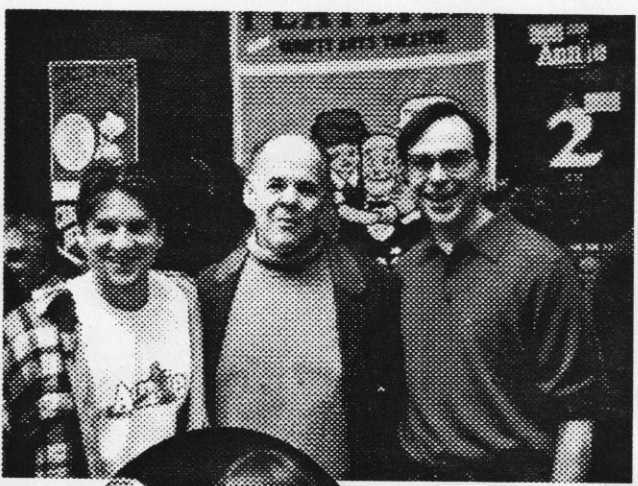
October 19th (final performance)—Brittny Kissinger signs
autographs for the last time at the Martin Beck in NYC.



September 1997—Tricia with Michael E. Gold (Mr. Bundles/
Sound Effects Man and Rooster understudy).

SEPTEMBER 27, 1997—11th ANNUAL BROADWAY FLEA MARKET TO BENEFIT BROADWAY CARES/EQUITY FIGHTS AIDS

Sunday, September 27th was a great day to be in the famous Shubert Alley in New York City if you were a Broadway show fan. Just about every show currently playing had a booth staffed by cast and crew selling items to benefit the Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS organization. Every table was piled high with homemade baked goods, autographed items like scripts, *Playbills*, and photographs, and real "flea market" items like used vinyl records, small appliances and paperback books. The 20th Anniversary Company of *Annie* had lots of great items on their table, including "paw-tographed" photos of Cindy Lou, *Playbills* and t-shirts signed by all of the Orphans, the Annie and Sandy plate from the movie series, a movie metal lunch box, a script from this production, and cakes, brownies and cookies. The most popular items were duplicates of the actual props used in the show: Annie's note from her parents, the fake birth certificate used by the Mudges, the \$50,000 check made out to "the jig is up," and the telegram to Warbucks from the Cabinet scene. Also, the *Annie People* Fan Club was pleased to donate several items to the table including a *Miss Hannigan's Revenge* showcard and *Playbills* from the various versions of the sequel. At the Grand Auction in the evening, a walk-on role for a little girl to be an Orphan for one performance went for \$2600! Most of the cast either worked the booth before the matinee, or visited after the matinee.



Left: Jim Ryan (Rooster), Michael John McGann (Drake), and Brad Wills (Harold Ickes). The *Annie Warbucks* sign in the background was made by Michael E. Gold for the *Annie Warbucks* booth at the 1993 Broadway Flea Market.



Left: Alexandra Kiesman signed autographs and posed for pictures with Buster, the understudy dog.



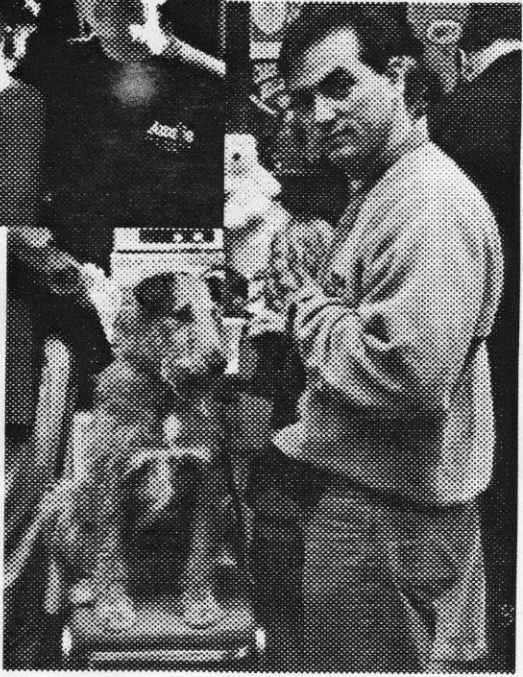
Nancy Kiesman (who worked at the booth all day and never took a break!) with her daughter Alexandra (understudy for Annie), Larry Kleiber (ensemble swing) and Tom Treadwell (Louis Howe).



Above: Tricia with Drew Taylor (Officer Ward/Cordell Hull)

Above: Jennifer L. Neuland (dance captain and ensemble) with Tricia

Right: People could get their picture taken with Sandy (Cindy Lou) for a \$5 donation. Todd Serenbetz is Cindy Lou's handler.





Clockwise from left: Bianca Collins (Duffy), Cassidy Ladden (Pepper), Casey Tuma (July), Courtney Leigh (Tessie), Gemini Quintos (Kate), Kristen Alderson (Molly).

This is the Orphan cast that ended up the Broadway run. Some of the parts are being played by other actresses now that the tour has started.

Annie People would like to thank Bianca Collins and her Mom for providing this picture.



New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and Pepperidge Farms asked Brittny and the *Annie* Orphans to kick off "Smile Week" in the city. Pepperidge Farm introduced their new "goldfish smile" crackers, and the girls sang "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile" for the press. Mayor Giuliani proclaimed it to be "Smile Week" and had the girls pose with him with the Proclamation. This took place in August 1997.

Annie People would like to thank Bianca Collins and her Mom for providing this picture.

Final Curtain Call for the 20th Anniversary Production of Annie on Broadway—3:30pm, Sunday, October 19, 1997

The 1:00pm matinee brought down the curtain on the 8-month run of the Broadway revival. There was no acknowledgement made to the audience that this was the final performance; no speeches or extra reprises of "Tomorrow" as was done when the original run closed on January 2, 1983. By the time the performance was over, several trailer trucks were parked at the curb of the Martin Beck Theater and load out for the tour began immediately. Audience members trying to get autographs had to dodge huge rolling trunks of scenery and props.



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Up-to-the-minute Annie news is at Web site

**Little Orphan
Annie**