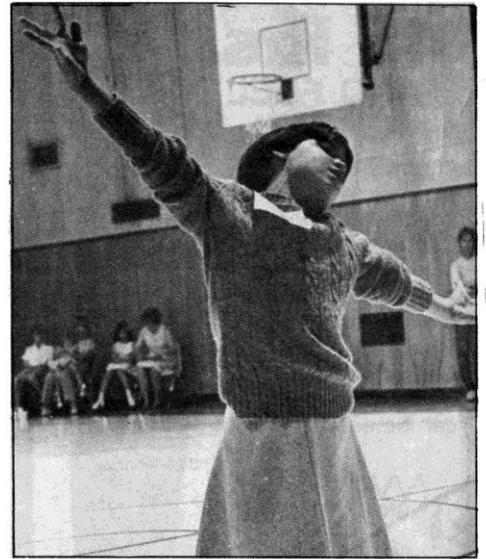
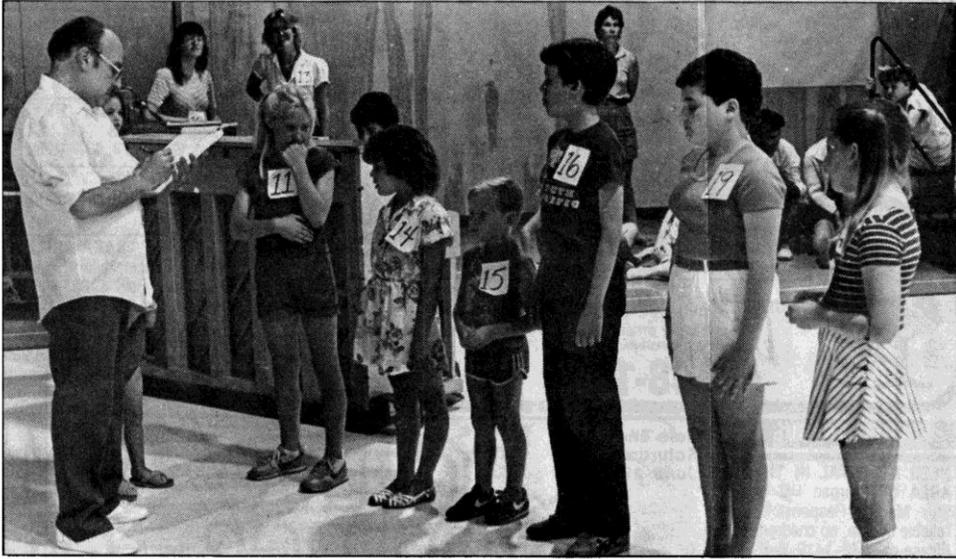


Tryouts for musical 'dripping with little girls'

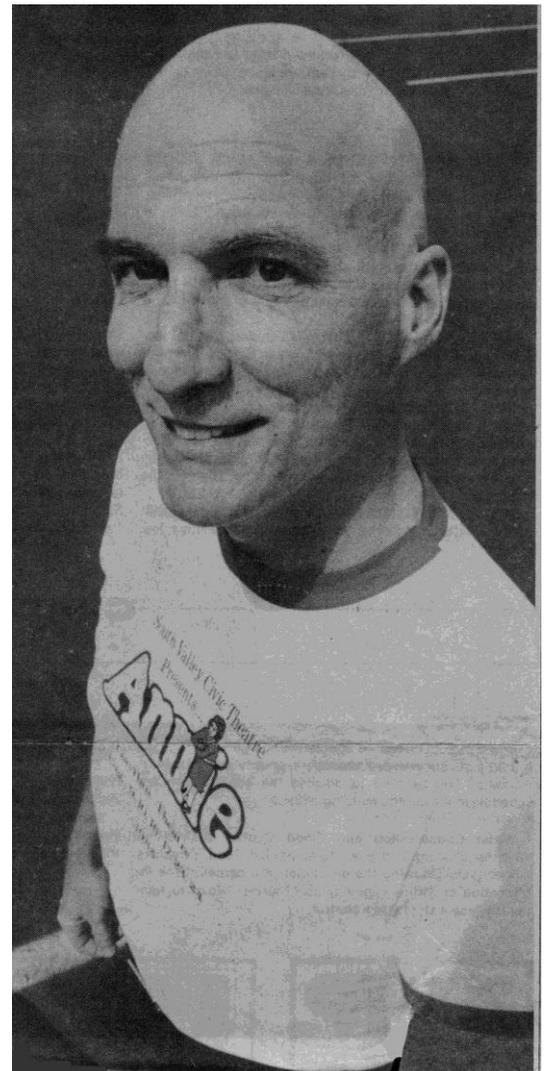


Over 50 small children auditioned for the parts of Annie and the other orphans in the South Valley Civic Theatre production of *Annie*. Nervous parents, and a few grandparents, sat through countless renditions of "Tomorrow," "I Don't Need Anything But You," and "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile," songs which the orphans sing in the show. Who could blame the auditioning board if they felt a little like the director of the orphanage who complained that she was "dripping with little girls." Above left, director George Costa tells (from left) Kristen Sweet, Megan Stocks, Aric Morgan, Simon Pintello, Laura Pasquariello, and Sonia Gariaeff to sing out. Above right, Mandy Duarte, one of several pint-sized show-stoppers, belts out "I Don't Need Anything But You." The musical, the first since Gilroy Community Theater changed its name, opens August 9.

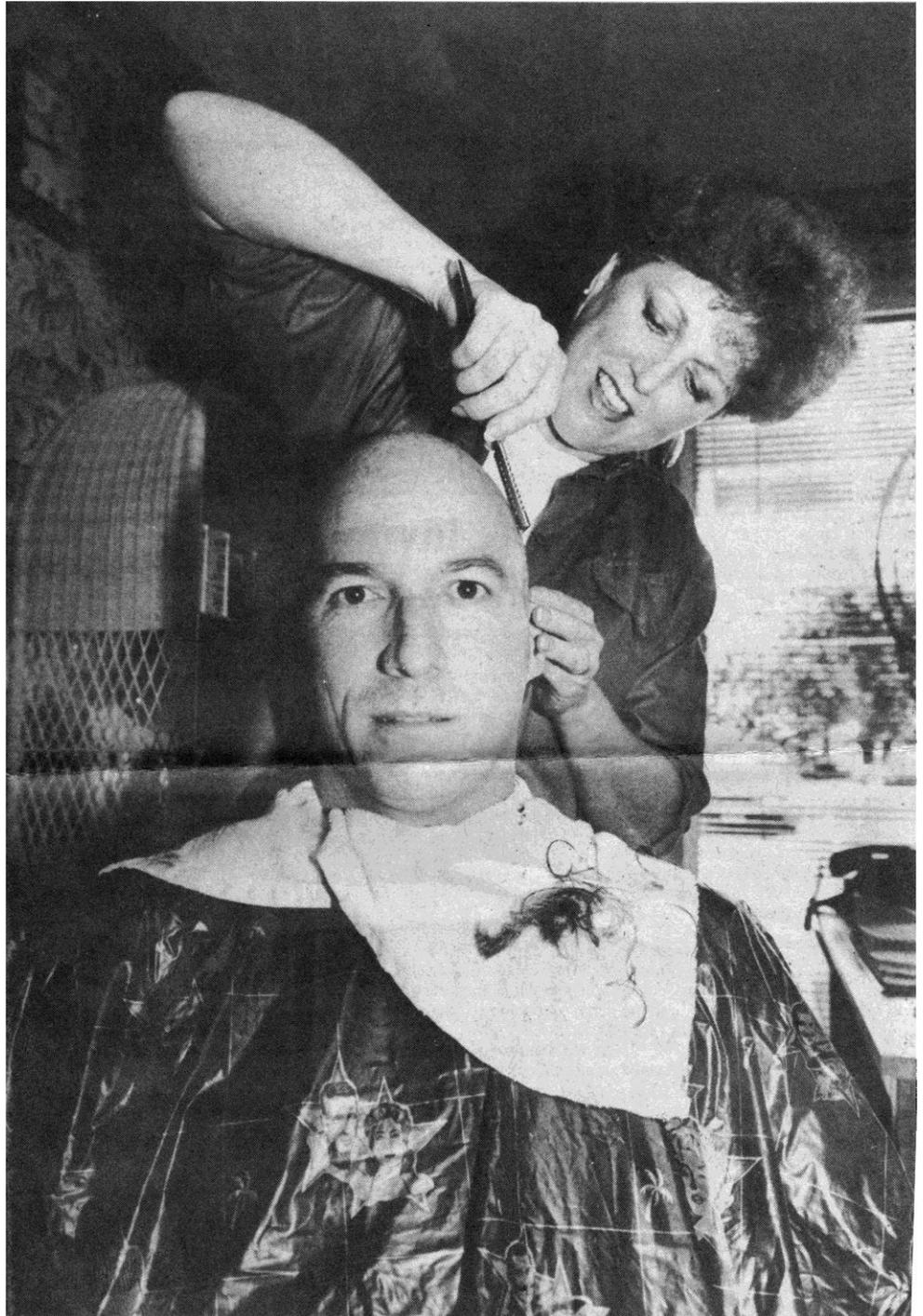
Bald Is Beautiful

EVENING FREE LANCE, Tuesday, August 6, 1985

If you're going to play Daddy Warbucks, then you need to have a shaved head. So when Hollister's Rod Pintello got the Warbucks part in the musical play "Annie," he knew it was only a matter of time before all his hair came off. And come off it did last week inside a Morgan Hill styling shop. Pintello and the rest of the "Annie" cast will take to the stage in their opening show this Friday night. Performances are scheduled Friday and Saturday nights for the next three weekends at the Gavilan College Theater. Ticket information can be found on Page 4, along with a photo of Pintello before his haircut and some action shots of a barber at work.



"It's a little chilly," Rod Pintello admitted after receiving his new non-haircut. The transition from his formerly hairy self (top left) to polished perfection is all in the name of drama. Pintello, a Hollister resident is playing the part of Daddy Warbucks for the South Valley Civic Theater production of the musical play "Annie," which opens this Friday night at the Gavilan College Theater. Pintello's haircutter was Priscilla Theroux of Priscilla and Co. of Morgan Hill. She volunteered not only to give Pintello a free haircut, but to keep his pate neat during the run of the play. "Annie," based on the famous comic strip "Little Orphan Annie," relates how the wide-eyed orphan girl came to be adopted by rich -- and bald -- Daddy Warbucks. The play will be staged this Friday and Saturday and the same days the next two weekends, August 16-17 and 23-24. Curtain time is 8 p.m. for each performance. Admission to the play is \$7.50 for adults and \$5 for seniors, students and children. Tickets may be reserved by calling 842-



Free Lance/Ray Pierce

SHOW or by going to the Theater Angels Art League office at 140 Fifth St. in Gilroy between 1 and 5 p.m. weekdays. "Erica Rizzi (who portrays Annie) is probably the most talented girl in Gilroy," Pintello said And the rest of the cast is "just wonderful." Pintello said he's become accustomed to the lack of hair since his chop-job last week. "But it still surprises me sometimes when I walk by a mirror or window," he said. My father hasn't seen it yet," Pintello said. "But I know he'll like it. It's just a little shorter than the haircuts he gave me as a boy." Pintello's children, Whitney, 16, and Simon 12, are in the chorus of the play.



Little Orphan Annie (Erica Rizzi) comforts Molly (Katie Porter) in a scene from the musical Annie, which opens this weekendpage 3

'Annie' tickets on tap

GILROY — Advance tickets will be available next week for the South Valley Civic Theater production of the musical *Annie*, which opens Aug. 9 at the Gavilan College Theater.

Admission is \$7.50 for adults, \$5 for seniors, students and children. Tickets may be reserved by calling 842-SHOW, or at the Theater Angels Art League, 140 Fifth St., starting Monday between 1-5 p.m. weekdays.

Additional play dates are Aug. 10, 16, 17, 23 and 24. Curtain time is 8 p.m.

Directed by George Costa and produced by Richard Nelson, *Annie* stars Erica Rizzi of Gilroy in the title role. Rizzi has also starred

in *Cinderella* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

Playing other leads in the 60-member cast will be Rod Pintello of Hollister as Daddy Warbucks; Ruth Mullins of Morgan Hill, Miss Hannigan; Dennis Charvez of Gilroy, Rooster Hannigan; Susie Chastang of Morgan Hill, Lily St. Regis; and Paul Kloeker of Gilroy, Franklin Roosevelt.

Phil Robb is musical director, Nelson will lead the orchestra and Debbie Nelson is choreographer.

Annie, a musical based on the comic strip *Little Orphan Annie*, tells the story of a little orphan girl who is adopted by a wealthy man, but goes on searching for her real parents.



Erica Rizzi
...as the loveable orphan

Stories behind scenes fill tuneful Annie

Viva Thursday, August 8, 1985

By Nancy McCarthy

Staff Writer

What's it like to direct scores of children? To be bald as an egg? Can a stray dog find happiness on stage?

The musical tale of an orphan seeking parents and happiness holds the answers. *Annie*, the musical version of the comic strip *Little Orphan Annie*, opens at 8 p.m. this Friday at the Gavilan College Theater.

Directed by George Costa, the South Valley Civic Theater production stars Erica Rizzi of Gilroy in the title role, Rod Pintello of Hollister as Daddy Warbucks, Ruth Mullins of Morgan Hill as Miss Hannigan, Dennis Charvez of Gilroy as Rooster Hannigan, Susie Chastang of Morgan Hill as Lily St. Regis, Paul Kloeker of Gilroy as FDR and Sarah Taylor of Gilroy as Grace Farwell.

A veteran director of adult as well as children's theater, Costa says of the 30 youngsters in the cast, "Kids are easy to work with. It's the adults that make you wonder sometimes. Kids don't have hangups.

"As actors get older they start to concentrate on their insecurities. Children can laugh at their mistakes. With adults it becomes an ego thing."

How do children feel about working with Costa?

"It's fun," said 9-year-old Robert Fordham. "OK, except when he gets mad." replied another youth.

Familiar with Costa's directing is Pintello, who discovered that shaving his head for his role as Daddy Warbucks has produced some surprises. Major benefits, said the former bearded and mustachioed actor, are that it makes him look younger and has helped him "to really get into the role." Pintello's head was shaved last week.

"People tell me I look younger with my head shaved, and my shoulders look broader," said Pintello. "You can't tell what my age is. I was very thin on top, and all the gray is gone."

His family expected to see him bald, and so adjusted quickly to the change. His mother, who didn't know about the shave, was shocked, he said.

Far hairier than Pintello, but also becoming a popular member of the cast, is Annie's stage pet, Sandy, a English shepherd/Australian shepherd cross found at the South County animal shelter. The gray and white pooch will be washed with tea to give him the brownish look required by the part.

This is the third "Annie dog" rescued from pounds and trained by LaJoie West of Gilroy and her 13-year-old daughter, Tamari. Tamari starred in two Peninsula productions of Annie, but decided she was too old to try out for the local theater group's summer musical this year.

Since taking him home, the Wests have given Sandy lots of love, and have trained him to sit, stay, beg, speak, lie down, and are now working on "roll over."

"He loves being on stage -- all the attention," said LaJoie. "When we didn't have rehearsals for two days, he paced the floor, trying to figure out why we weren't going to the theater.

"People keep saying we won't be able to give him up when the play is over. I think they are right, but we've had a lot of offers by people who would like to have him."

Sandy's future will not be determined until after the run of the play. Additional dates are this Saturday, and Aug. 16, 17, 23 and 24 at the Gavilan College Theater. Curtain time is 8 p.m.

General admission is \$7.50. Seniors, students and children pay \$5. Call 842-SHOW for tickets or visit the Theater Angels Art League house box office at 140 Fifth St., weekdays from 1-5 p.m.



Evan Yee/Viva

Above, Lily (Suzie Chastang), at left, Rooster (Dennis Charvez) and Miss Hannigan (Ruth Mullins) sing



Waiting over for Annie Cast

Miracle Miles - Friday, August 9, 1985

by Greg Guerin Miracle Miles Staff Writer

Tomorrow isn't a day away any more for the cast of *Annie*, it's tonight, and the time of long rehearsals, sore throats, and missing props is over. The South Valley Civic Theatre production of the musical based on the comic strip "Little Orphan Annie" opens tonight at 8 p.m. at the Gavilan College Theater and continues through the next two weekends.

The production is dedicated to the memory of Rosalie Andrews, a long-time theater volunteer and former president of Gilroy Community Theater, who died recently.

Annie relates the events surrounding the adoption of the orphan with the red curls, played by Erica Rizzi, by wealthy Oliver Warbucks. Set in the early part of the Depression, the musical contrasts the optimism of Annie, expressed in the popular song, "Tomorrow," with the Hoovervilles and apple sellers of the times.

Playgoers who remember the comic strip will recognize Annie's dog, Sandy, who appears briefly when Annie "adopts" him on the street after she has run away from the orphanage where her parents left her as a baby. The familiar dress Annie wore in the comic strip appears in the final scene, as does the tuxedo in which Warbucks was always dressed.

The audience will also recognize Warbucks instantly. Rod Pintello, who plays the part of the billionaire industrialist who is charmed by Rizzi's million-dollar smile and big, brown eyes, has shaved his head to create the appearance his character calls for. Pintello commented, "I shaved my beard and mustache for *Winter Chicken* (a Center Stage production), and now my head for *Annie*. They'd better not do *Oh, Calcutta!* next. I've gone about as far as I can go!"

For Ruth E. Mullins, who plays the orphanage director, Miss Hannigan, Annie fulfills a long-standing goal. "This is the first character part I've gotten to do down here. I always end up with the pretty lady parts," said Mullins, who previously appeared in local productions of *Oklahoma*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Guys and Dolls*, *South Pacific*, *Rodgers A La Carte*, and *Side by Side by Sondheim*.

She added that although Carol Burnett, who played the Miss Hannigan role in the movie version, had been her idol since she was ten years old, she and director George Costa were taking pains to make sure that her portrayal was not a Carol Burnett imitation.

The experience of Mullins and Pintello is easily matched by that of the show's eleven-year-old title character. Starting at the age of eight, Erica Rizzi has appeared in seven different plays and musicals. She was also chosen as 1984 California Little Junior Miss and was named second runner-up and Miss Photogenic in the national pageant. She also performs with the South County Express, SVCT's resident touring group.



Oliver Warbucks' secretary, Grace Farrel, played by Sarah Taylor, falls in love with Annie (Erica Rizzi) when she comes to an orphanage looking for a child to bring to the billionaire's home for the Christmas holidays. The SVCT production of the musical *Annie* opens tonight at 8 p.m. at the Gavilan Theater.

Getting to the opening night, as usual, has not been easy. Properties manager Judy Langley noted that they had had "a heck of a time tracking down a Mona Lisa." She added that finding an "enormous" Christmas tree and period items like 1930's telephones had also been difficult.

Furniture for the Warbucks mansion had not been quite as hard to find. "Rosso's has been really good. We just walked in and started asking for things," Langley commented.

The cast had to weather the absence of Gilroy City council member Paul Kloecker, who plays Franklin Delano Roosevelt, for two dress rehearsals when car trouble kept him in Clear Lake.

Cast members have also been going through a last-minute scramble to locate costumes which would satisfy Costa's critical eye.

Karen Rizzi, Erica's mother, said that after their mothers made the costumes, they were told to wash them without drying them, and then to "put dirt on them and do anything else to make them look crummy."

For the orphans shoes, she added, Costa suggested that they get an old pair of shoe skates, either roller skates or ice skates and remove the blades or wheels to create the high, laced-up boots such as children would have worn.

Tickets for *Annie* cost \$7.50 for adults, and \$5 for children, students, and senior citizens. Reservations can be made by calling 842-SHOW

Miracle Miles - Friday, August 9, 1985
by Jim Maya Miracle Miles Correspondent

Annie opens tonight!

The countless hours of rehearsal, memorizing lines and music, building and painting sets, production meetings, making and hunting down costumes, typing, folding, ironing, setting lights, selling tickets, sweeping, screaming, sweating, and dreaming come together tonight at 8:00 p.m. The Gavilan stage will come alive with the magic that this wonderful show has sparked across this land.

And it has just been magic seeing the show come together this past week during dress rehearsals. All the elements, sometimes painfully, sometimes comically, and even at times, smoothly, have blended, harmonized, and jelled. Director George Costa, choreographer Debbie Nelson, producer and conductor Richard Nelson, and choral director Phil Robb have said the magic words. They weren't always "Abracadabra," but they were the right ones --

The sights and sounds of the rehearsals in this South Valley Civic Theatre production are a blend of a 2500-year-old tradition and the unique qualities of community theatre . . . a Norman Rockwell-esque symphony.

The sights that vividly stand out are those of the families. The young star of *Annie*, Erica Rizzi, has had the constant support of her family. Her mom, Karen, herds the orphans when not on stage, her dad, Vic, has hammered and painted, Erica's grandmother Gloria has produced a Broadway class set of costumes.

And the ubiquitous Hepners . . . Tom, one of the real talents to emerge recently in the South Valley, not only plays a major role (I should say roles) on stage, but has worked tirelessly on the sets. Mom Hepner, Anne, has been rehearsal secretary and assistant to the director, box office manager, costume seamstress for her daughter, Lizzie, and program folder. Sons Andy and Matt have worked hard on the sets and are on the stage crew.

And the Stocks . . . eight-year-old Megan, one of the adorable and talented orphans, dad Dave, a Morgan Hill fireman and super set builder, and mom Robin, in charge of cast ticket sales and a constant source of energy.

And the Hetzels . . . Bill, Judy, Billy and Linda all on stage, all painting, taping, sewing, hammering, and laughing.

And the Warfields . . . Mom Brenda having discussions with daughter Ginger about costume and on stage with her daughters Ginder and Amamon, and dad Warfield, on top of the the scaffolding, painting in his good clothes.

And the Porters . . . Katie, one of my wife's all-time favorite students, the littlest orphan, Molly, and sister Holly in the orphan chorus, and mom Janet, fixing hair, folding programs, sewing, and being a rock.

And the Sweets . . . Vickey on stage and Paul, showing his son how to use an electric screwdriver, working on sets, and counseling various members of the crew.

And the Pintellos . . . Rod, head shaved for Daddy Warbucks, providing tears and laughter while on stage, building sets and interrelating as a real dad with his talented children, Whitney and Simon, while wife (maid) Marion oversees the whole shebang as President of the SVCT.

And the Nelsons . . . So talented, so caring, so giving . . . Dad Richard, the producer and conductor, Mom Debbie, the choreographer and director's advisor, confidante and right-hand person, daughter Melanie, the orphan Tessie and son Jeff, member of the ensemble.

And the Klockers . . . Councilman Paul, doing a wonderful F.D.R. among other roles, and daughter Valerie, member of the orphan chorus.

And on and on . . . the Garaieffs, orphans Sonia & Tasha and mom Polly, or stage and passing out posters.

And the Lloyds . . . Talented Sabrina, painting on reception decorations with brother Chris, with mom Carla as the great back-upper.

And the Duartes . . . Mom Linda, dynamic in red, and daughter Mandy, as Duffy, the orphan.

And the Harris' . . Mom Carol, a bright spot wherever she moves on stage, with daughter Nancy.

And the Myers-Goodwin team--Chuck in the pit (not pits) and Becky on stage and pushing the paint brush.

And the Loceys . . . Dad John, building and acting and recovering from the Garlic Festival, and daughter Shannon, orphan chorus member.

And the Petners . . . and the Montalvos . . . and the Mullins . . . and the Cornmessers . . . and the Fallises . . . and the Mayas . . . and the typesetter . . . and all the thousands of others who have made Annie a truly "Family Show"

The production has been dedicated to the memory of Rosalie Andrews. A Memorial Scholarship Fund has been set up at Monterey Savings, 1177 1st St., Gilroy, CA 95020.

SVCT's 'Annie' has exuberance to spare

Wednesday, August 21, 1985. The Dispatch

By Billy Allstetter

Dispatch Staff Writer

GILROY -- It's not Broadway, but South Valley Civic Theater's production of *Annie* is a fun, contemporary musical that should appeal to families in the South County.

The sheer scope of the production is impressive and makes it an exciting evening. Whether it is the 22 orphans singing and dancing *It's a Hard Knock Life* in the first scene, the 17-member orchestra playing the songs or the large and elaborate sets wheeling silently on and off stage between scenes, it feels like a major production.

Director George Costa even added a 15-member orphan chorus, which was not a part of the original Broadway play. More than 100 children auditioned for the seven original orphans in the play.

As is often the case, the villains have the juiciest parts. Ruth E. Mullins plays orphanage manager Miss Hannigan to the hilt. From her first whiskey and yelling at the orphans she is an excellent over-the-hill alcoholic shrew we can't help laugh at. Denis Carvez, who plays her shady brother Rooster, also hams up his flimflam man character with entertaining excess. Mullins, Charvez and Suzie Chastang sign one of the play's best songs, *Easy Street*, with slinky abandon.

Rod Pintello, bare head and all, is not a particularly strong singer, but he is a convincing industrialist unused to love. The difference between his overbearing behavior with the nation's most powerful politicians and his unease around a real live girl is excellent.

Sarah Taylor also plays a convincing Grace Farrell, personal secretary to Oliver Warbucks. She may be a teenager in real life, but anyone who didn't know that would swear she is Warbucks' 40-year-old secretary.

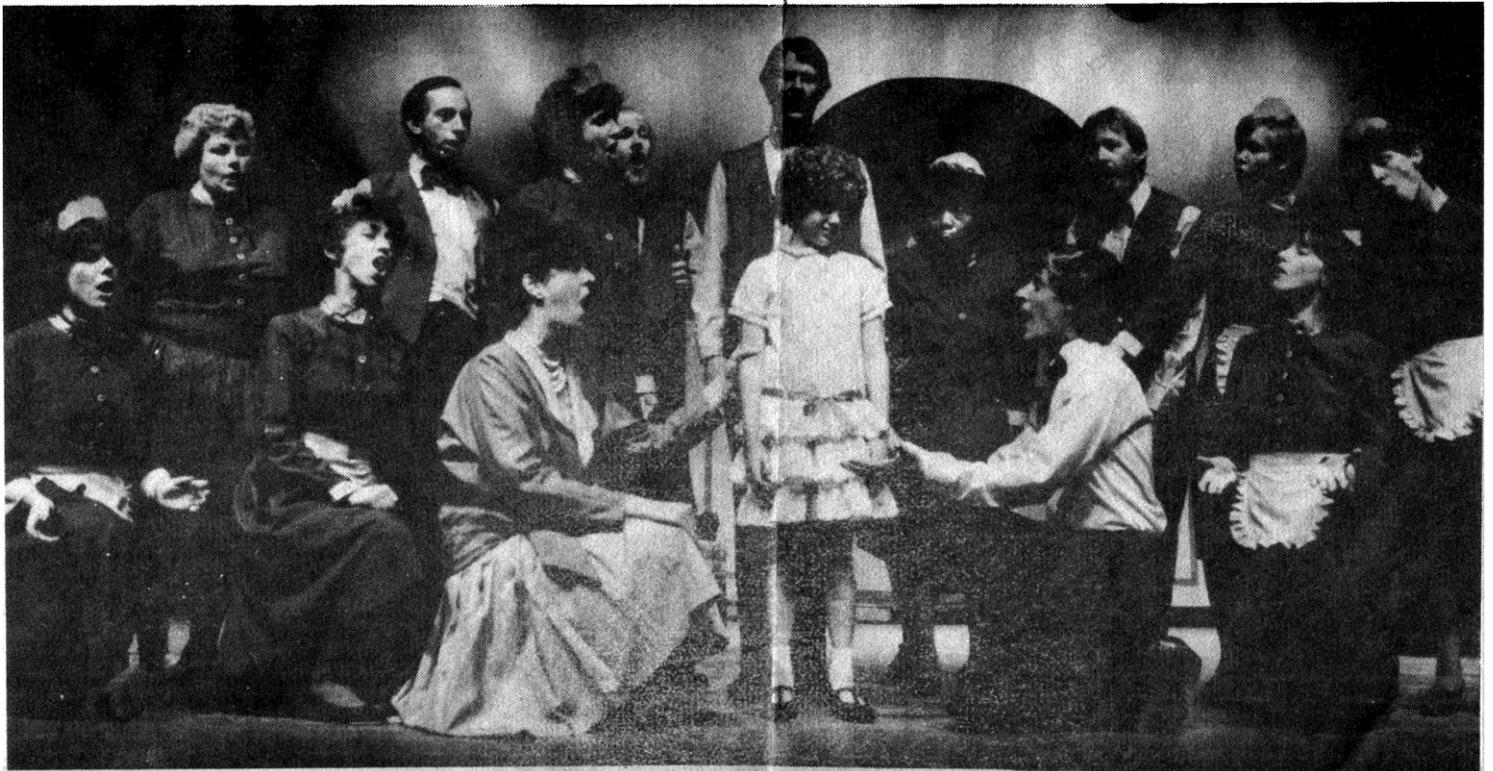
Erica Rizzi plays a solid Annie. She showed considerable stage presence the first night retrieving the dog Sandy when he refused to make his entrance. But Annie is an extremely demanding role. Rizzi is certainly cute enough to be Annie, but she would be better if she showed a more convincing range of emotions the role demands.

All the chorus songs, but the orphan chorus and the primary adult ensemble, are rousing numbers. The sets designed by George Costa and built under the direction of Tom Hepner are impressive. The continuous action, set changes, large numbers of characters and costume changes all make it a very lively play.

Annie will close this weekend with performances Saturday and Sunday nights at 8 in the Gavilan College Theater.

'Annie' adds to its run

Thursday, August 22, 1985. Viva By Billy Allstetter Staff Writer



Annie has proved so popular with local audiences that the cast will give an additional performance on Saturday at 2 p.m. Viva file

Due to extraordinary ticket demand for its production of the musical *Annie*, South Valley Civic Theater has added another performance at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Gavilan College Theater.

This marks the first time the group has ever added a performance, according to board members. It is also the first production to show a profit in several years, and will help lighten the financial load that almost closed down the theater group at different times during the past two and a half years.

"It's been really tremendous," said SVCT treasurer Jeanene Morgan. "The word of mouth spread so well we had to turn people away last weekend."

Morgan said she would not know how much profit SVCT will make until after the show closes and all bills come in, but predicted it could earn between \$1,500 and \$3,500.

That should help pay off some debts, which reached a high of \$8,000 in June and now stand at about \$3,500, said Morgan. Local businesses have extended credit to the group and several board members provided private loans to keep the company afloat several times during the past year and a half, said SVCT past president Mike Dorn.

"The last two and a half years we've been up against the wall," said longtime board member Mary Ann Bruegmann. "If it hadn't been for personal loans, we would have closed down."

Morgan said SVCT will probably remain in the red after *Annie* but should have some breathing room and seed money for its next production, *Same Time Next Year*, which is scheduled for November.

Morgan said Wednesday that all private loans have been paid off, thanks to memberships and ticket sales from *Annie*.

Summer musicals have traditionally done well, said Bruegmann, but SVCT has not made money on one since *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 1982. SVCT has survived with money made by members working at the Gilroy Garlic Festival, membership sales, grants and ticket sales. Bruegmann said increasing material costs and royalties have hit the theater group especially hard.

Annie director George Costa attributed the show's success to the fact that it is a cute show with many children and a large cast, which he said has sold tickets and generated community interest. Morgan said SVCT produced the show on a tight budget, depending upon more volunteer labor than recent productions.

'Annie' helps area theater group leap into the black

Wednesday, September 18, 1985. The Dispatch

By Billy Allstetter

Dispatch Staff Writer

For the first time in three years, South Valley Civic Theater board members are not seeing red.

Due to seven near sell-out performances and a penny-pinching budget, SVCT treasurer Jeanene Morgan reported a net profit of \$7,000 on the theater's production this August of musical *Annie*.

"We are paid off!" exclaimed Morgan Wednesday. "If those people haven't gotten their money yet they will because all their checks are in the mail ... and that isn't a joke."

Morgan said a few bills and receipts are still trickling in, but figures the show cost \$5,000 to produce and grossed approximately \$12,000. Wednesday night she reported a positive balance of \$5,400 in the SVCT accounts.

"That's amazing," said board member Mike Dorn when told of the balance Wednesday afternoon. "I don't think we have ever had that much money."

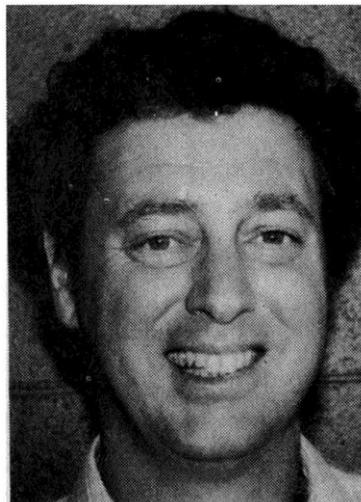
The South Valley Civic Theater has been struggling financially for several years. It has been especially strapped during the past two and a half years and was only saved from shutting its doors with the help of loans from private individuals. The theater debts reached a high of approximately \$8,000 two months ago.

"We've been operating a lot on a float," said board member Dorn, who was president of the group last year.

Annie and SVCT membership sales have brought the theater finances to their current rosy state. Both Morgan and Dorn attributed the success to community support, both from merchants and individuals.

Local businesses kept the theater afloat by extending the theater group credit, said Dorn.

Community members were also instrumental in producing the play for \$3,000 under budget, said Morgan. Volunteers did costume design, set design and set construction. Cast members purchased many of their own costumes, and the parents of many of the children in the play bought and sewed their children's costumes, said Morgan.



**'This is a
community theater
and we need the
community to
make it work'**

**— Mike Dorn,
SVCT board member**

"Give my heartfelt thanks to the community," said Morgan.

Dorn said SVCT is trying to increase support by making a more conscious effort to choose plays that will appeal to the community. SVCT has also tried to involve more community members by enlarging the board of directors. Dorn said he hopes the theater will soon have an auxiliary group to help with fund-raising.

"This is a community theater and we need the community to make it work," said Dorn.

Choosing home over Hollywood

Gilroy Dispatch

Posted: Thursday, February 26, 2004 12:00 am



Erica Romero holds a photo of herself from the South Valley Civic Theatre's 1985 rendition of the play 'Annie,' which she starred in.